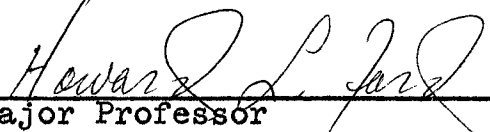
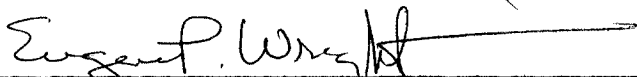
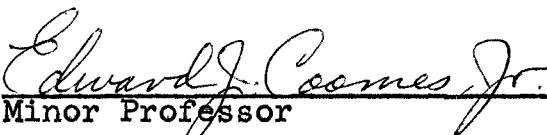


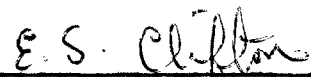
POLITICAL ALLUSIONS IN THE PLAYS OF  
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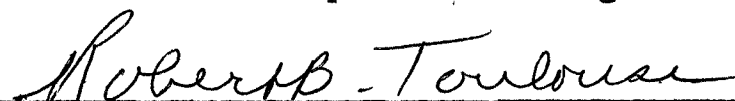
APPROVED:

  
Major Professor

  
Consulting Professor

  
Minor Professor

  
Chairman of the Department of English

  
Dean of the Graduate School

POLITICAL ALLUSIONS IN THE PLAYS OF  
PHILIP MASSINGER

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the  
North Texas State University in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

By

Rodney Earl Wilson, B. A.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Philip Massinger has long been recognized as one of the more important of the many minor dramatists of the early seventeenth century. Massinger's career, which spanned the reigns of James I and Charles I, is highly representative of the drama of the Jacobean and Caroline eras. His work includes the revenge comedies and romantic tragicomedies which were in vogue during the early part of his career, and it also includes such fine realistic comedies as The City Madam and A New Way to Pay Old Debts. Although some of his tragedies, such as The Duke of Milan and The Virgin-Martyr, exhibit some of the worst faults of the post-Shakespearean decadence, many of Massinger's comedies and tragicomedies reflect a keen theatrical mind and some very obvious dramatic talents.

Although Massinger has never suffered the neglect common to many of the lesser playwrights of his age, scholarly investigations of his plays have at times focused on rather narrow areas. The fact that Massinger became John Fletcher's chief collaborator after the retirement and death of Francis Beaumont undoubtedly gained Massinger more attention for a while than he would otherwise have enjoyed, for writers on

Fletcher had to give some notice to all other hands that worked on his plays. In criticisms of both his collaborations and his independent work, the same area received most of the praise, his craftsmanship. Critics recognize that Massinger is acutely conscious of the intricacies of fine stagecraft. Some of the tragicomedies, such as The Bondman and The Maid of Honour, are well constructed, but Massinger's reputation as a craftsman rests primarily on his comedies. His most famous play, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, is proof of his abilities, for it is one of the few Jacobean plays that is considered playable in its original form at the present time. Although his poetry is of high quality, Massinger "is rather the master craftsman of drama than the dramatic poet."<sup>1</sup>

In addition to his stagecraft, Massinger has also been complimented for the strong moralistic tone of his plays. As often as not, the plays assume the tone of a sermon, and the dramatist's affinity for honorable men and virtuous women is manifest in every play. It has been suggested that Massinger's morality is without real substance.<sup>2</sup> There may be some validity to the assertion, for there is an undeniable stolidity in some of his heroes and heroines;<sup>3</sup> but, nonetheless,

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas Marc Parrott and Robert Hamilton Ball, A Short View of Elizabethan Drama (New York, 1958), p. 268.

<sup>2</sup>T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, 1917-1932 (New York, 1938), pp. 189-193.

<sup>3</sup>T. A. Dunn, Philip Massinger, The Man and the Playwright (London, 1957), p. 105.

in certain portions of his major productions his didactic morality has a vitality and boldness which demand attention.

Massinger's tendency toward didacticism leads to the creation of plays that are largely talk; in fact, he is "a playwright interested rather in discussion than in action."<sup>4</sup> In this discussion a measure of social and religious comment appears--some of it being very satiric in nature. The City Madam and A New Way to Pay Old Debts, for two examples, are significant satires of the rising middle class and the corruption attendant upon its rise. Political comment--and political satire--appear also, though they are perhaps not as clear nor as specific as the social and religious statements. Nonetheless, even though they may be disguised in seemingly incidental references or in vague allegories, Massinger's political allusions are of great importance and deserve far more scholarly attention than they have previously received.

Much of the scholarship that has been done on Massinger mentions his political commentary only in passing; frequently the allusions have been used only to aid in dating the composition of the plays. There is no published work which gathers and discusses under one cover all of the political allusions in Massinger's plays. This study purports to fill this void. This investigation will enumerate and explain the meaning of

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<sup>4</sup>Parrott and Ball, A Short View of Elizabethan Drama, p. 268.

all possible political allusions in Massinger's plays; it will also attempt to show the reasons why Massinger might have employed these allusions. When these purposes are fulfilled, knowledge of the plays and understanding of the playwright himself--his morality, his political affiliations, his public awareness--will be greatly increased.

Since Jacobean dramatic collaborations form a most difficult scholastic labyrinth, this study will confine itself to an examination of only those plays which Massinger wrote independently. Of the plays which are now credited to Massinger alone, fifteen have survived. Of these, at least nine contain some political allusions, and will be dealt with in this investigation. They include three tragedies: The Duke of Milan, The Roman Actor, and Believe As You List; three tragicomedies: The Maid of Honour, The Bondman, and The Emperor of the East; and three comedies: A New Way to Pay Old Debts, The Great Duke of Florence, and The City Madam.

As a means of organization, this study has been divided into three broad divisions: first, the biographical facts which are relevant to a discussion of Massinger's allusions; second, the historical circumstances with which the allusions are concerned; and, third, the allusions themselves. Such a division is utilitarian, and it is intended that each section, by its individual contribution, should complement the other. For example, certain aspects of Massinger's biography seem to increase the possibilities that his allusions were intended to

benefit him socially and certain of his acquaintances politically. His family's class position and his father's association with the noble family of the Pembrokes certainly placed Massinger in a position to observe contemporary events, and his upper class training might have instilled in the young Philip a compelling need to make constructive comment with a kind of noblesse oblige attitude. Also, almost every aspect of Massinger's life seems to have been affected by the influence of the Pembrokes. Inasmuch as the opinions expressed in Massinger's allusions closely concur with the opinions held by the Pembroke family, the possibility that Massinger was seeking patronage by means of agreeable political allusions cannot be ignored.

The opinions that are expressed in Massinger's allusions are the key to proving that he is intentionally placing political comment in his plays. Aside from the fact that the opinions would have been flattering to the Pembrokes, the allusions are often expressed with a clarity and consistency that cannot be coincidence. To demonstrate this truth, a statement of the pertinent historical facts is necessary in order to establish the correlation between the allusions and the historical circumstances.

In his allusions, Massinger is attacking two general areas of seventeenth-century English politics: the corrupt conditions in the royal courts and the Palatinate issue. Of course, Massinger's most vivid comment on the corruption of the royal



court is to be found in the character of Sir Giles Overreach in the famous play A New Way to Pay Old Debts, in which Overreach is obviously intended to be a satire of the infamous cormorant Sir Giles Mompesson. But Mompesson was not the central figure of court corruption in Jacobean England. Any attack Massinger made on corruption would certainly have reminded his audience of George Villiers, the Duke of Buckingham, for Buckingham ruled the royal court during the 1620's in a ruthless and despicable manner that was known to every Englishman. The fact that Massinger was attacking Buckingham, directly and indirectly, as the personification of court corruption is substantiated by the many incidental allusions which can best be interpreted as a comment on Buckingham's activities. In fact, Massinger appears to have criticized not only Buckingham, but also James I's practice of favoritism, of which Buckingham was the chief recipient. Buckingham's power became so pervasive that he virtually ruled the nation in the last years before his assassination in 1628. The fact that Buckingham, by the misuse of his power, became one of the most detested men in all England naturally made him a likely target of political satire.

The allusions concerning the Palatinate crisis of 1618-1621 are of great importance in the study of Massinger and his works. Again, Massinger chose a topical subject which had aroused intense national interest. The Protestant cause

of Frederick, the husband of James's daughter, Elizabeth, was highly popular in war-hungry and anti-Catholic England; and, indeed, the love of the English people for Frederick and Elizabeth, particularly Elizabeth, was exceeded only by their hatred of Buckingham. Viewed comprehensively, Massinger's allusions toward the Palatinate are of a didactic nature: he seems to be exhorting the English government to intervene in Frederick's behalf. Furthermore, these allusions are organized to the point that they could not be coincidence, and it seems certain that Massinger was deliberately making political comment.<sup>5</sup>

If Massinger's political allusions were only occasional and isolated, then there would be some doubt as to whether or not he was intentionally making serious political commentary. But, rather than being disjointed, his numerous allusions deal pointedly with two significant issues: court corruption and the Palatinate crisis. This study, by showing the frequency and consistency with which these allusions appear and by pointing to the fact that Massinger was expressing the views of the Pembrokes, will prove that there can be no doubt of Massinger's intentional use of political allusions. Such a method will also serve to bring together and document in one place all of the political allusions that have been found in Massinger's drama, a task which, until now, has been neglected.

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 259, 263-264.

## CHAPTER II

### MASSINGER'S FAMILY AND PATRONS

A study of Massinger's biography reveals several facts which are pertinent to a discussion of his political allusions. For one, it shows that Massinger was of a high enough social position not only to observe contemporary events, but also to have such an awareness of his own class position that he would feel capable, and perhaps obligated, to comment on these events. Another biographical fact that is to be stressed is Massinger's relationship to the important Pembroke family. Although there will be a discussion of the Pembrokes' political position in the chapter concerning relevant historical facts, it is hoped that, by a discussion of Massinger's father and of Massinger's dependence on patronage, this chapter will show that the Pembroke power and influence touched every facet of Massinger's life and career.

Concerning Massinger's family, it can safely be assumed that Philip Massinger was reared in an atmosphere of no little distinction. Although the only documented evidence of the early years of Massinger himself is an entry in the registry of the parish church of St. Thomas at Salisbury

announcing the baptism of Arthur Massinger's son, Philip, on 24 November 1583,<sup>1</sup> quite a few reasonable speculations can be made on the social, religious, and political ideas that might have influenced Massinger in his childhood by an examination of his antecedents and immediate family.

Genealogical research on the Massingers has shown that the name of Massinger is frequently mentioned in the extant records of the area around Gloucester, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Salisbury, although the name is usually spelled "Messenger" or "Messenger." Moreover, the Massinger name is found in connection with prominent community positions long before Philip Massinger was born. For example, "a Thomas Messenger was sheriff and mayor of Gloucester at the beginning of the sixteenth century."<sup>2</sup> Also in Gloucester, a William Messenger was a member of Parliament in 1553 and later mayor of the city. In Salisbury itself, "at the end of the fourteenth and the beginning of the fifteenth centuries Ralph Messenger and his wife Olive were leaseholders of a considerable extent of land near Amsbury."<sup>3</sup> Ralph and Olive were closely related to, and perhaps the parents of, Walter Messenger, one of the most eminent men in the Massinger line. Walter lived in Salisbury, at Fisherton Anger, and he served in Parliament for "Old Sarum in 1427 and again in 1430-31."

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<sup>1</sup>T. A. Dunn, Philip Massinger, The Man and the Playwright (London, 1957), p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

He was apparently a kind of attorney, and he "is mentioned in many legal transactions from 1417-1460."<sup>4</sup> His two children did not leave any heirs, but Walter might have had brothers from whom Arthur Massinger, Philip's father, was descended. This conclusion is substantiated by the fact that Arthur Massinger, in performing his legal and confidential duties for the Pembroke family, had basically the same profession as Walter Messenger; and, although it is merely speculation, it does not seem unreasonable to assume that Walter Messenger might in some way have been a forebear of Arthur and Philip Massinger.<sup>5</sup>

If, as seems likely, Philip Massinger was related to the Messengers and Messagers who came before him, then it might consequently be assumed that Philip was born into a family who had long held high and honorable positions in the community. Such a heritage must have instilled in Philip an acute awareness of his own position in the class-conscious society of sixteenth-century England. The fact that the Massingers had retained an eminent position in the community up to the birth of Philip can be shown by pointing to Arthur Massinger, the father of the dramatist.

Philip's father is probably the same Arthur Massinger who was graduated B. A. from Oxford in 1571. The supposition that this particular Arthur Massinger was Philip's father is

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

supported by the fact that Philip, in his Oxford days, stayed at St. Alban's Hall, the same hall in which Arthur had lived thirty years before. After his graduation from Oxford, Arthur was elected fellow at Merton College in 1572 and was graduated M. A. in 1577.<sup>6</sup> He was also a "Member of Parliament for Weymouth in 1588-1589 and again in 1592-1593, and for Shaftesbury in 1601."<sup>7</sup> During most of this time, at least beginning some time before 1587, Arthur "was a servant at Wilton to Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke and, on the latter's death in 1601, to his son William, the third Earl. . . ."<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that Arthur was often described as a servant, he was by no means a menial servant; his position with the Pembrokes can be described in this manner:

Arthur Massinger's University qualifications and the business we find him transacting about the court of Queen Elizabeth are sufficient to clear us of any doubts we might have regarding his social status. Langbaine describes him as "a gentleman belonging to the Earl of Montgomery." [Dunn points out in a footnote to this passage that "Langbaine was wrong in styling Henry Herbert 'Earl of Montgomery.' This title was first conferred upon his second son, Philip, in 1605." ]<sup>7</sup> In a letter written by the Bishop of Salisbury to Cecil on 15th April 1596 he is described as "Mr. Messenger, the Earl's solicitor." He could, perhaps, be best described as house-steward and agent to the Earl, entrusted by him with business of a most confidential and important nature.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid. ,

There is abundant evidence in extant state papers, documents, and letters to substantiate this description of Arthur's relationship to the second Earl of Pembroke.<sup>10</sup>

The fact that Arthur Massinger was a university graduate in a time when literacy was at a premium suggests that Philip was raised in an intellectual family of some distinction. Also, Arthur's association with the Pembrokes would have given Philip ample opportunity in his childhood to observe both the Pembrokes themselves and the large coterie of literary figures grouped around Mary Sidney, the Countess of Pembroke. It is interesting to surmise that, while at Salisbury, Massinger might have "received his first taste of the theatre through the Earl of Pembroke's Men, who played at Wilton, and in whom naturally both he and his father would take an interest."<sup>11</sup> But still, until further evidence is uncovered, any knowledge of Philip's childhood must remain conjecture. For the purposes of this study, it will be assumed only that, considering Arthur's education and his connection with the Pembrokes, Philip must have had a greater awareness of society and of the nobility than most children of the period. Massinger's class position might be described by saying that:

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<sup>10</sup> See Robert Hamilton Ball, "Massinger and the House of Pembroke," Modern Language Notes, XLVI (June, 1931), 399-400; Maurice Chelli, Le Drame de Massinger (Lyons, 1924), pp. 39-42.

<sup>11</sup> Dunn, p. 10.

. . . his background was certainly not humble or lowly, as was that of many of his fellow dramatists. Yet it was not courtly. It was rather that of the professional class, a vantage-point from which to view both the Court and the City, a betwixt-and-between position. This factor of family background, when taken along with the classless, and consequently "social-climbing," position of the professional playwright, goes a long way to explain the range of the social interest and the social preferences and prejudices involved in the plays.<sup>12</sup>

It is necessary to qualify any statement of Massinger's social position by adding that:

It is well to remember . . . that throughout his career Massinger seems to have been treated with a certain amount of social consideration, as, for example, when he is referred to in Sir Henry Herbert's Office Book as "Mr." Massinger, a term of address not commonly used by the Master of Revels in describing a mere playwright.<sup>13</sup>

As an example of the fact that Massinger was aware of his own position in society it can be noted that, upon matriculating at Oxford, he signed the register "sarisburiensis, generosi filius," the son of a gentleman.<sup>14</sup>

Being born the son of a gentleman in the early seventeenth century had certain advantages in the form of associations with the nobility and the court, and it is highly probable that Massinger made use of his social position to acquire patronage from the nobility. Therefore, an examination of Massinger's association with the nobility, particularly the Pembroke family, is necessary to determine the extent of influence his

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., pp. 9-10.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 11.



patrons might have had on his use of political allegory in The Bondman, Believe As You List, and several other plays.

Beginning with the fact that Arthur Massinger worked for the Pembroke family, the name of Pembroke frequently recurs throughout Philip Massinger's life, and one of the more interesting aspects of Massinger's relationship with the Pembroke family concerns patronage. Massinger seems to have made great use of his father's employment with the Pembroke family, for most of Massinger's patrons can be found to have some connection with the name of Pembroke. Most of the information concerning Massinger's patrons is to be found in the dedications of his plays, and the predominance of the Pembroke name in connection with the people to whom these dedications are addressed is manifest. For example, Robert Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon, the dedicatee of the first quarto of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, was the fourth Earl of Pembroke's son-in-law; Lady Katherine Stanhope, to whom Massinger dedicated The Duke of Milan, was a first cousin, once removed, to Mary, Countess of Pembroke;<sup>15</sup> George Harding, Lord Berkeley, dedicatee of the 1630 quarto of The Renegado, was related by marriage to Lady Katherine Stanhope; and John, Lord Mohun, to whom the first edition of The Emperor of the East is dedicated, was related by marriage to both Lord Berkeley and

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<sup>15</sup>Donald S. Lawless, Philip Massinger and His Associates (Muncie, 1967), p. 44.

Lady Katherine Stanhope.<sup>16</sup> Of course, the most famous of Massinger's patrons was William Herbert's brother Philip, the Earl of Montgomery and later the fourth Earl of Pembroke. The dedication of The Bondman to Montgomery is important because it establishes the fact that Montgomery did not patronize Massinger before the production of the play:

How ever I could never arrive at the happiness to be made known to your Lordship, yet a desire borne with me, to make tender of all duties, and service, to the Noble Family of the Herberts, descended to me as an inheritance from my dead Father, Arthur Massinger.<sup>17</sup>

Also in this dedication, Massinger reminds Montgomery that, when The Bondman was first presented, "your Lordships liberall sufferage taught others to allow it for currant, it having received the undoubted stampe of your Lordships allowance . . . ." <sup>18</sup> Although it is fairly certain that Montgomery did not give Massinger patronage before the publication of The Bondman in 1624, it is equally certain that Montgomery patronized the dramatist from 1624 to 1640. The proof of this patronage lies in Massinger's poem of condolence, Sero sed serio (1636), upon the death of Montgomery's son,<sup>19</sup> and in Aubrey's report that Massinger received "a pension of

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 45.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Townley Spencer, editor, The Bondman (Princeton, New Jersey, 1932), p. 77.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Dunn, p. 23.

twenty or thirty pounds a year from Pembroke."<sup>20</sup> It seems certain that the fourth Earl of Pembroke patronized Massinger during most of his career. Also, regardless of the extent of the support provided by the fourth Earl of Pembroke, it seems quite evident that others connected with the Pembroke family contributed a large part to Massinger's income.

Another point that deserves attention in a discussion of Massinger's patrons is the extent to which Massinger depended upon patronage. Again, the main source is the nebulous information contained in the plays and their dedications. Many of Massinger's dedications contain solicitations for patronage as well as the perfunctory expressions of gratitude and praise. For instance, in Massinger's dedication of the 1630 quarto of The Renegado to George Harding, Lord Berkeley, "it is reasonably clear from his remarks that at the time Massinger was not personally acquainted with Lord Berkeley and that he was seeking his patronage. Furthermore, it would seem that the poet was promising his dedicatee that, if he were to secure his patronage, he would dedicate another work to him."<sup>21</sup> Also, in the dedication to Robert Dormer, Earl of Carnarvon (the fourth Earl of Pembroke's son-in-law) in the first quarto of A New Way to Pay Old Debts (1633), "it is clear that the dramatist was seeking Dormer's patronage and that the two were unacquainted."<sup>22</sup> Part of this dedication is worth quoting:

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>21</sup>Lawless, p. 45.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

. . . nor am I wholly lost in my hopes, but that your honour (who have ever expressed yourself a favourer, and friend to the Muses) may vouchsafe, in your gracious acceptance of this trifle, to give me encouragement to present you with some labored work, and of a higher strain, hereafter. I was born a devoted servant to the thrice noble family of your incomparable lady, and am most ambitious, but with a becoming distance, to be known to your lordship, which, if you please to admit, I shall embrace it as a bounty, that while I live shall oblige me to acknowledge you for my noble patron. . . .<sup>23</sup>

Furthermore, in addressing Lady Katherine Stanhope in the dedication of The Duke of Milan, "it would appear likely that the poet was in financial straits and was appealing to her for assistance."<sup>24</sup> His dedication to Lady Stanhope reads:

If I were not most assured that works of this nature have found both patronage and protection amongst the greatest princesses of Italy, and are at this day cherished by persons most eminent in our kingdom, I should not presume to offer these my weak and imperfect labours at the altar of your favour. Let the example of others, more knowing, and more experienced in this kindness (if my boldness offend) plead my pardon, and the rather, since there is no other means left me (my misfortunes having cast me on this course) to publish to the world (if it hold the least good opinion of me) that I am ever your ladyship's creature.<sup>25</sup>

The remarks to Sir Robert Wiseman, in the dedication of The Great Duke of Florence are a good example of how much Massinger depended upon patronage. Also, this dedication shows that Massinger overtly solicited new patronage, a

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<sup>23</sup> Arthur Symons, editor, Philip Massinger (London, n.d.), I, 105.

<sup>24</sup> Lawless, p. 44.

<sup>25</sup> Symons, p. 3.

fact which suggests that patrons supplied the large part of his livelihood.<sup>26</sup> An excerpt from this dedication will demonstrate these two points:

For myself, I will freely, and with a zealous thankfulness, acknowledge that for many years I had but faintly subsisted, if I had not often tasted of your bounty. But it is above my strength and faculties to celebrate to the desert your noble inclination, and that made actual, to raise up, or to speak more properly, to rebuild the ruins of demolished poesy. But that is a work reserved, and will be, no doubt, undertaken, and finished, by one that can to the life express it. Accept, I beseech you, the tender of my service, and in the list of those you have obliged to you, condemn not the name of

Your true and faithful honourer,  
Philip Massinger<sup>27</sup>

Also, the request for a continuation of Anthony St. Leger's patronage in the dedication of The Unnatural Combat in 1639 indicates that Massinger depended upon patronage until the end of his life in 1640.<sup>28</sup> Such a dependency upon the nobility probably influenced Massinger's writing, and a consideration of the views of the nobility, especially the views of the Pembrokes, must be included in a study of the political allusions in Massinger's work.

Quite a few inferences that are pertinent to a study of Massinger's political allusions can be drawn from an examination of his biography. For example, it will be shown that

<sup>26</sup>Lawless, p. 46.

<sup>27</sup>Symons, p. 205.

<sup>28</sup>Lawless, p. 47.

most of Massinger's allusions concern the affairs of the nobility, and this fact certainly reflects his dependence on patronage. But Massinger's concentration on the affairs of the nobility might also be interpreted as Massinger's awareness of his own social position, a position which verged on, but fell short of, the nobility. Considering Massinger's university education, the minor eminence of his antecedents, and the position of his father in the Earl of Pembroke's service, it might be assumed that Massinger thought of himself as being a step above the average Englishman. If indeed Massinger felt a familiarity with the nobility, then recognition of this possibility could add significantly to a study of his political allusions.

Perhaps more important than Massinger's own views is a consideration of the political views held by his patrons, Massinger's primary source of income. Any examination of the political and religious attitudes of Massinger and his patrons involves the basic question of what personal motives Massinger had in making political allusions in his plays, and the overall moral nature of the plays suggests that Massinger had a genuine concern for the political and religious conditions of his day. On the other hand, the political allusions in the plays are so closely aligned with the policies of the Pembroke family that one cannot help but consider the possibility that Massinger was attempting to please the nobility rather than following his own moral

conscience. The fact that Massinger relied heavily upon the patronage of the nobility has already been mentioned, and the possibility that Massinger was protecting his own financial position by making agreeable political comment cannot be ignored. This possibility has been mentioned by other writers, for T. A. Dunn notes that "in some of the early uncollaborated plays, notably The Bondman and The Maid of Honour, Massinger's criticism of Buckingham and of the foreign policy of James I was almost certainly conditioned to a certain extent by his adherence to the party of opposition, among whom William, the third Earl of Pembroke, figured prominently."<sup>29</sup> By the same token, because of the absence of documentation, it would be equally valid to argue that Massinger was a sensitive poet who was completely sincere in his criticism of political conditions. It will be necessary to take both of these possibilities into account in a consideration of Massinger's political allusions.

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<sup>29</sup>Dunn, pp. 21-22.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE HISTORICAL CIRCUMSTANCES OF MASSINGER'S POLITICAL ALLUSIONS

It is necessary, for the sake of clarity, to discuss the historical persons, actions, and places to which Massinger specifically alludes in his drama. The period of history that is reflected in Massinger's political allusions is primarily the decade 1618-1628, with a few allusions to people and events in the 1630's. Most of the topics of these years that Massinger mentions in his dramas involve either the abuses in the royal courts of the Stuarts or support for the Protestants in the Palatinate issue. Concerning the royal courts, Massinger criticizes the reprehensible political corruption that had permeated every level of government by creating unmistakable satire of George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, and Sir Giles Mompesson, both of whom personified the corrupt practices of favoritism and the granting of monopolies. As for the Palatinate issue, Massinger felt very strongly about what he thought to be England's ignominious policy toward the Palatinate crisis of 1618-1621. Massinger, in his allusions, not only is criticizing James I's policy of non-intervention, but he



also seems to exhort his countrymen to rise in full scale war in a united effort to rescue the Palatinate. An awareness of the conditions in the royal court and of the Palatinate, and an understanding of the popular sentiment these topics aroused in Stuart England, is essential to a discussion of Massinger's political allusions. Also, the opinions held by the Pembrokes on these topics must be stated in order to provide information for a later consideration of the impact these opinions might have had on Massinger's decision to write political comment into his drama.

Much has been written on the character of James I and on the inefficacy of his rule. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss all the shortcomings of James and his administration,<sup>1</sup> but it is necessary to mention his affinity for charming young men. Studies to determine whether James was a homosexual are inconclusive,<sup>2</sup> but, regardless of "whether or not he was a practicing homosexual, James's weakness for young men did influence the course of politics and indeed of English history, particularly through his infatuation with Buckingham."<sup>3</sup> The eminent historian

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<sup>1</sup> See G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (New York, 1965), pp. 69-123.

<sup>2</sup> See David Mathew, James I (University, Alabama, 1968), p. 292; Charles Williams, James I (London, 1934), pp. 104-105.

<sup>3</sup> G. E. Aylmer, A Short History of Seventeenth-Century England (New York, 1963), p. 39.

G. M. Trevelyan describes James's affinity for favorites in this manner:

The more intimate friendships which were a necessity to his life counteracted yet more disastrously his excellent intentions as a ruler. Choosing his favourites for no other merit but their charm as companions, he was too fond to deny them anything. Their power for evil was the greater, because he himself hated the details of administration, and loved to live in the abstract heights of a general scheme, oblivious of the monstrous distortions to which a plan is liable in action, and the terrible wrongs for which even a love of justice, if it despises <sup>4</sup> diligence, can easily be made the cloak.

Furthermore, James's aversion to administrative details and his poor choice of favorites were the primary causes<sup>5</sup> of the overall corruption and chaos that dominated his court:

From the end of [Robert] Cecil's life there is almost a divorce between formal responsibility at the top of the government, that is between the people who hold the major offices, and the enjoyment of actual power and influence. There is certainly a failure of integration or adjustment between the King's Court and the government of the country, between the monarch in his private and public capacities. Under Charles I this failure of integration probably helped to save England from successful royal absolutism. Under James the results are less dramatic, but they help to create an atmosphere of intrigue, jobbery and corruption, and to explain the lack of any consistent policies to <sup>6</sup> deal with the situations and problems which arose.

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<sup>4</sup>Trevelyan, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>G. P. V. Akrigg, Jacobean Pageant or The Court of King James I (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 227-247.

<sup>6</sup>Aylmer, p. 38.

The extent to which James's failure as a ruler affected English history is, of course, problematic, but, for this study, James's shortcomings are of the utmost importance, for, without his practice of favoritism, the Duke of Buckingham would never have come into power.

George Villiers was presented to James in 1614 by a court party (one of the leaders of which, it might be mentioned, was the Pembroke family)<sup>7</sup> who, for political reasons, wanted to exploit James's weakness for handsome young men. By 1618, however, Villiers had turned against the party which had sponsored him and had firmly entrenched himself as the most influential figure at court. The rise of Villiers, who was said to possess extraordinary beauty, was meteoric; he eventually became, and remained until his assassination, the most powerful man in England. Villiers dominated the court from 1618 to 1628, and when James made him Duke of Buckingham in 1623, he became "the first non-royal duke since the execution of Norfolk in 1572."<sup>8</sup> The power that Buckingham held during the decade of 1618-1628 was extensive, for, after Buckingham came into power,

the rule of a single faction--really of one man, his family and supporters--was more complete than that of the Cecils at the height of their power under Elizabeth or James. Particularly

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<sup>7</sup>Tresham Lever, The Herberts of Wilton (London, 1967), pp. 90-91.

<sup>8</sup>Aylmer, p. 36.

in the years 1623-8 Buckingham has an almost complete monopoly of royal patronage, of influence at court, of royal favour, and <sup>9</sup> even of control over government policies.

In fact, "for the politics of the court Buckingham's assassination in August, 1628, is more important than the King's death in 1625, because Buckingham dominated Charles just as completely as he had James, though in different ways."<sup>10</sup>

Three examples of Buckingham's ineptness as a governing influence in the royal court, an ineptness which is alluded to in Massinger's drama, will serve to demonstrate the power Buckingham exerted as a favorite. The first is the Mansfeld expedition in the latter part of 1624. Graf von Mansfeld was a German adventurer whom Buckingham supported with arms and men in an effort to re-conquer the Palatinate, although James could give little to these troops because of his lack of Parliamentary support. From the beginning the expedition was a startling case of Buckingham's absurd mismanagement:

. . . under command of the foreign soldier Mansfeld, twelve thousand English foot, or rather, "a rabble of raw and poor rascals," torn straight from civil employments by the press-gang, were landed on the coast of Holland with five days provisions, without money or credit, and with orders to march on the Palatinate and defeat the veteran armies that had been mustered for its defence from beyond the Alps, the Pyrenees, and the Bohemian Forest.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 36-37.

<sup>11</sup>Trevelyan, p. 125.

Mansfeld's troops were transported in open boats, and a heavy winter frost took its toll. Eventually, "the army perished of cold, starvation, and plague,"<sup>12</sup> and most members of Parliament blamed the failure of the unfortunate expedition on Buckingham. Mansfeld's expedition was Buckingham's first experience in waging war without adequate money and provisions, but it was not to be his last.

The second example is the Cadiz expedition in 1625. To conduct a war against Spain (a war encouraged by Buckingham), Charles I needed money which an intractable Parliament refused to issue unless Buckingham's power was restricted. That is to say, the commons refused to vote any money unless it was placed in the hands of people whom they could trust. Charles felt that one significant victory would quell any criticism that Parliament might have of Buckingham's ineptitude. Therefore, he sent a fleet with troops, under the command of Sir Edward Cecil, to capture Cadiz, the great Spanish port which every year received the gold and silver from America. But the expedition was as much a failure as Mansfeld's adventure. Morale was low among the ill-equipped sailors and soldiers, and Cecil allowed the Spanish treasure ships to slip by him into Cadiz while he searched for them in another part of the sea. Trevelyan describes the unsuccessful expedition by saying that Cadiz

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<sup>12</sup>Ibid.

was perfectly safe when assailed by crews prostrated by sickness and starvation, mismanaging rotten ships under the orders of captains ignorant of the sea, and by ploughmen and footpads suddenly collected according to the principles of Sir John Falstaff to do duty as English soldiers.<sup>13</sup>

Since the Cadiz expedition had ended so ridiculously, Charles's Second Parliament in 1626 was no more complaint than the first. Not only did this Parliament vote no money, but it attempted to impeach Buckingham. Charles was forced to dissolve Parliament to protect his favorite.

The final example of Buckingham's failure as a military leader is the expedition to the Isle of Rhé in 1627. As a result of their reckless foreign policy,<sup>14</sup> Charles and Buckingham had engaged England in a war with France as well as with Spain. One of the purported causes of this war was England's indignation at the persecution of French Protestants; and Louis XIII, in his constant battle against Protestantism, was preparing to lay siege to Rochelle, the last stronghold of the French Huguenots. To counteract this move, a fleet and army under the personal command of Buckingham was sent to the Isle of Rhé. The island was to be a base of operation from which Rochelle would be relieved; and, after landing on the island in July, Buckingham laid siege to the fort of

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>14</sup>See Trevelyan, pp. 125-129. Also see S. Reed Brett, The Stuart Century, 1603-1714 (London, 1961), pp. 68-77.

St. Martin, a French garrison. Before the fort could be starved into surrender, a French relief force arrived, and Buckingham had to call for reinforcements from England. But the English people would do nothing to help the hated Buckingham, and he was finally driven from the island with less than half of his original force left. The reasons for the failure of the expedition to Rhé were all the results of Buckingham's strategic and tactical mistakes:

The engagement in hostilities at once with France, with Spain, and with the Catholics of Germany, rendered success in any quarter impossible; the troops he [Buckingham] had prepared for himself to lead to Rhé were beggarly, untrained, and mutinous; England, that should have volunteered to support his efforts, was alienated by his politics and torn by a fierce struggle with the King's officers over the Forced Loan. As the whole system of government was out of gear, the fleet that should have reinforced the Duke on the Isle of Rhé never arrived . . . .<sup>15</sup>

Whatever remaining confidence the English might have had in Charles and Buckingham was completely shattered by the failure of the expedition to Rhé.

Buckingham's undeserved power and corrupt influences did not go unnoticed by James's and Charles's subjects, and the circumstances surrounding Buckingham's death readily illustrate the extent to which the English people came to hate him. Buckingham died on the morning of August 23, 1628, from a knife wound inflicted by John Felton, a disgruntled soldier whom Buckingham had refused to give a promotion. It is worth

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<sup>15</sup>Trevelyan, p. 131.

mentioning that Philip Herbert, first Earl of Montgomery and later fourth Earl of Pembroke, is thought to have been with Buckingham when he was assassinated and to have "shielded the assassin from the violence of the Duke's retainers."<sup>16</sup> Felton, impelled by the many criticisms of Buckingham's corruption and ineptness, deluded himself into believing that Buckingham's death was necessary to free England from tyranny. Felton made it clear that he thought of himself as an executioner rather than a murderer, and it seems that many Englishmen shared his opinion.

If Felton stood alone in conceiving his murderous purpose, he did not stand alone in regarding it with complacency after it was accomplished. The popular feeling about Buckingham was something like that with which the despot of a Greek city was regarded. He had placed himself above his King, his country, and the laws of his country, and he had no right to the sympathy of honest men. When the news was known in London, men went about with smiling faces, and healths were drunk to Felton on every side. "God bless thee, little David!" cried an old woman to the slayer of the Goliath of her time, as he passed through Kingston on his way to the Tower. Outside the Tower itself a dense throng was gathered to see him, and friendly greetings of "The Lord comfort thee! The Lord be merciful unto thee!" were the last sounds which rang in his ears as the gates closed upon him. Nor was the feeling of exultation confined to the illiterate and uneducated. Even Nethersole, courtier as he was, spoke of the murder as the removal of the

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<sup>16</sup> Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, editors, The Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1921-1922), XXVI, 209. Hereafter cited as DNB.



stone of offence by the hand of God, and as a means by which the King might be brought to perfect unity with his people.<sup>17</sup>

Felton, in fact, became a popular hero. A contemporary minister, Zouch Townley, wrote verses extolling Felton's act, and an excerpt from his verses serves as an example of the general popular feeling in England toward Buckingham's death:

Let the Duke's name solace and crown thy thrall,  
All we for him did suffer--thou for all;  
And I dare boldly write, as thou darest die,  
Stout Felton, England's ransom he doth lie.<sup>18</sup>

The fact that an act of assassination was considered a proper panacea for the nation's troubles tells much about the Englishman's hatred for Buckingham. Nor was the general feeling of the people ignored by Buckingham's friends and family, for when the funeral was held on September 11, 1628, in Westminster Abbey, "attended by only about a hundred mourners," the coffin was empty. "The day before the body had been privately interred in the Abbey, lest the people in their madness should rise to offer insult to the remains of the man whom they hated."<sup>19</sup> The satire Massinger made of the Duke of Buckingham<sup>20</sup> must have been well received and fully understood by his audiences.

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<sup>17</sup>S. R. Gardiner, History of England Under the Duke of Buckingham and Charles I, 1624-1628 (London, 1875), II, 341-342.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 343.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 344.

<sup>20</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 50-58.

Another aspect of court life which Massinger alludes to in his drama is the corruption which surrounded the granting and abuse of certain monopolies. Elizabeth, shortly before her death, had revoked the more odious of those monopolies which were criticized during her reign, but a desire to encourage English manufacturing and a need to have certain controls over commerce had prompted their return on such things as glass and precious metals. The House of Commons, as a means of opposing the favoritism and corruption of the court, began an investigation of the monopolies in early 1621. This investigation can be considered an indirect attack on Buckingham, who was perhaps the strongest supporter of the grants of monopolies. It may also be noted that William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke, was an important champion of the attack on monopolies.<sup>21</sup>

The Commons' attack on monopolies in 1621 centered on Sir Giles Mompesson, a court favorite who had risen through the influence of Buckingham and who held the monopoly on the licensing of taverns. In 1612 Mompesson had made an advantageous marriage with Catherine St. John, whose sister was the wife of Edward Villiers, half-brother to George Villiers, and through whom he was to gain the patronage of the royal court. With the help of George Villiers, Mompesson was elected to Parliament in 1614 for Great Bedwin. Two years

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<sup>21</sup>Robert Hamilton Ball, The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach (Princeton, 1939), p. 12.

later Mompesson proposed to George Villiers the scheme of licensing taverns, and the plan was accepted. However, there was a question of its legality, and, at the suggestion of Attorney-General Bacon, three judges were appointed as referees. The judges all approved of the plan, and Mompesson was given the monopoly for the licensing of taverns. Afterwards, Mompesson added to his holdings:

In October of 1618, Mompesson's unflagging zeal in carrying out the Crown's designs was rewarded by his addition to an already existing commission whose duty it was to punish all those who without a license engaged in the manufacture of gold and silver thread. Moreover, Bacon and Montague suggested to James a new plan by which "goldsmiths and silkmen might be required to enter into bonds not to sell their wares to unlicensed persons." This was accepted and passed on to the commissioners.

In 1619 he acted as clerk of the council and surveyor of the profits of the New River Company; in 1620 he was licensed to convert coal and other fuel (except wood) into charcoal.<sup>22</sup>

Mompesson ruthlessly abused his privileges, and he was finally called to account for his actions in February, 1621, as a "committee of the whole House of Commons began an investigation into the patent for licensing inns." On March 3, 1621, Mompesson, fearing a conviction, "received permission to enter his wife's room, whence he escaped through the window and succeeded in reaching France though all ports were notified and a proclamation was issued for his arrest."<sup>23</sup> The Commons eventually found him at fault, and he was expelled from his

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

seat in the House, degraded from knighthood, and perpetually outlawed. The result of the attack on Mompesson was the passing of the Statute of Monopolies in 1624, an act which, with certain exceptions, made internal monopolies illegal. Mompesson and his confederate, Francis Michell,<sup>24</sup> may be readily identified in the characters of Sir Giles Overreach and Justice Greedy in A New Way to Pay Old Debts,<sup>25</sup> and the presentation of this play certainly must have reminded English audiences of the corruption which was prevalent in the royal courts in the 1620's.

Another figure of the inner court whom Massinger treats in his political allegories is Prince Charles. There are a few allusions in Massinger's The Great Duke of Florence<sup>26</sup> to Charles as a young man, such as Charles's virtuous nobility and his fine horsemanship; and Massinger makes definite and unmistakable allusions to his courtship of the Spanish Infanta and his subsequent return from Spain. A short description of the historical circumstances of this unsuccessful courtship is necessary, for not only will it further demonstrate the character of James and the power of Buckingham, but it will also show that Massinger was dealing with an incident of intense topical interest.

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<sup>24</sup>For Michell's part in the abuse of monopolies, see DNB, XII, 331-332.

<sup>25</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 60-62.

<sup>26</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 78-79.

After James had dismissed what became known as the Addled Parliament in 1614, he was left with a great need for money,<sup>27</sup> a need that resulted, in large part, from his own extravagance.<sup>28</sup> In an attempt to solve his financial problems, James became eager to marry his son Charles into a royal family on the continent. James's idea of obtaining a large dowry through a royal marriage was concurrent with his illusion that he was the peacemaker of Europe, for James had hopes of forming elaborate alliances with the Habsburgs through royal marriages. In 1613, James married his daughter, Elizabeth, to Frederick V, the Elector Palatine and the leader of the German Calvinists. He had also hoped to marry his son Henry to a Spanish princess. Henry, however, had died in 1612, and James's attention focused on his remaining son, Charles. Originally, there had been talk of marrying Charles to a French princess, but James figured that Spain would give a larger dowry. Sometime in 1614 James decided to accomplish a marriage between Charles and the Infanta Maria, daughter of Philip III of Spain; and in 1617 the negotiations for a Spanish marriage opened. Spain, apparently realizing James's need for money, insisted that no marriage could take place unless English Roman Catholics were given religious freedom. Despite the anti-Catholic feeling in England at the time, James did agree to write to the King of Spain a letter

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<sup>27</sup>Trevelyan, pp. 94-123.

<sup>28</sup>Akrigg, pp. 85-102.

promising tolerance for the Catholics as long as they stayed within the law. Philip insisted on a more binding agreement; and, upon James's refusal, Gondomar, the Spanish ambassador, was withdrawn from England in 1618, and the negotiations were allowed to drop for a time.

In 1623 Charles and Buckingham, both of whom were highly pro-Spanish, made a dramatic and clandestine trip to Spain to court the Infanta in person. They hoped not only to speed up the negotiations for a Spanish alliance and obtain the needed dowry, but also to impress the King of Spain to the point that he would aid the Protestant cause on the continent. The adventure, however, was a total failure. Charles was scarcely allowed to speak to the Infanta, and his suit was all but ignored because the Infanta swore that she would never marry a heretic. The King of Spain, however, was afraid that a refusal would lead to war between Spain and England, and he solved his problem by appointing a committee of theologians to rule on the question. After six months, the theologians ruled that the marriage could take place, but with the stipulation that it would not be consummated until Charles had returned to England and had given the English Catholics religious freedom. After Charles had proven his intention to relieve the English Catholics, then the Infanta would be sent to him. Charles was naturally insulted, and, since Spain refused to help Frederick regain the Palatinate, he returned to England with intentions of declaring war on Spain. The

English people, who had dreaded the possibility of a Spanish marriage, greeted Charles and Buckingham with wild enthusiasm when they landed at Portsmouth without the Infanta.

When it was known that the Prince had come back from Spain, a live man, a Protestant, and a bachelor, London broke out into rejoicings that could scarcely have been more hearty if he had been bringing the whole Spanish fleet up the Thames as prize of war. Debtors were released, thieves were set free from the Tyburn death-cart, each steeple vied with its neighbor in that city of bells, mobs roared around the Prince's coach, and at night the bonfires made one continuous line down the middle of the winding streets. The outburst was a monster demonstration against the Spanish policy . . . .<sup>29</sup>

Such were the emotions aroused by the issue of the Spanish marriage negotiations.

To further demonstrate the importance of the Spanish trip, it might be pointed out that, when they returned, "Charles and Buckingham--two proud and hot-headed young men--were violently disillusioned with Spain and swung strongly in the opposite direction, in favour of active intervention against her."<sup>30</sup> This fact is particularly important since Buckingham by this time probably had already become the most powerful man in England. The humiliating experience of Charles in Spain precipitated what most Englishmen considered an irreparable breach between England and Spain. Moreover, between the years 1622 and 1624, "the marriage project, to which James had sacrificed the fortunes of his kinsfolk and

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<sup>29</sup>Trevelyan, p. 122.

<sup>30</sup>Aylmer, p. 73.

the love of his subjects, was diplomatically demonstrated to be absurd."<sup>31</sup> In alluding to the Spanish marriage negotiations in The Great Duke of Florence,<sup>32</sup> Massinger was dealing with a topic that was of special importance to both the English public and the English government.

Finally, in discussing Massinger's allusions it is necessary to mention the intrigue in the court of Charles I. One person who deserves a few remarks under this topic is Richard Weston, the Earl of Portland, who was the Lord Treasurer under Charles from 1628 to 1635.<sup>33</sup> Weston became the most influential member of Charles's council, and criticism arose concerning the advice he was thought to have given Charles. This advice was thought to have prevented Charles from defying Spain and helping the Protestants on the continent, and it was assumed that Weston was controlled by Spain. G. E. Aylmer gives a short summary of Weston's career in these words:

He had himself made his way to the top as a client of the Duke of Buckingham. But soon after the death of his patron, Weston reversed Buckingham's foreign policy and became the leader of the pro-Spanish group; associated with him, though not a close friend, was the Earl of Arundel, head of the Howard family, which had a traditional pro-Spanish bias going back at least to the beginning of the century. In his early years as Lord Treasurer Weston did achieve

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<sup>31</sup>Trevelyan, p. 121.      <sup>32</sup>See Chapter IV, p. 79.

<sup>33</sup>DNB, XX, 1275-1278.



some limited success in raising the King's revenues, but more in reducing expenditure. He was of course helped here by the restoration of peace, first with France and then with Spain. Weston was vulnerable to attack firstly because he was personally corrupt . . . secondly because he was a secret Roman Catholic sympathiser--he declared himself a catholic openly only on his deathbed.<sup>34</sup>

In speaking of Weston, it is also appropriate to mention the court faction which opposed him and his pro-Spanish group: that is, the group which surrounded Charles's queen, Henrietta Maria. Aylmer describes the queen and her group in this manner:

She became much more influential politically after the death of Buckingham; this was because her personal relations with her husband were greatly improved. They came to be a very devoted married couple, but unfortunately Charles, again like his father, was not able to separate his private affections from his political judgements, and the group of courtiers round the Queen became one of the most influential elements in the Court and government. Both directly and through them the Queen on the whole exercised a baneful political influence on the King. She instinctively preferred absolutist to constitutional methods, and she caused many people to associate the Crown with the Catholic cause. The friends and favourites of Charles and Henrietta were for the most part a more respectable lot than under James. There was not the same disreputable moral tone to Charles' Court, but on the other hand many of their favourites were equally parasitical and unpopular in the country, and were associated with some of the most vicious and detested features of Charles' regime.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Aylmer, p. 86.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

Massinger seems to deal specifically with the English court of 1630 and 1631 in Believe As You List;<sup>36</sup> its condition in January of 1631 has been described in this manner:

It had been with the greatest reluctance that, after a prolonged negotiation, Charles had just consented to make peace with Spain, without obtaining from Philip IV. a direct promise that he would force the Emperor to surrender the Palatinate. But he had got a promise that Spain would do all in her power to recover the Palatinate by any means short of force. In accepting this promise Charles had put himself under the guidance of the Lord Treasurer Weston, who was always, in the long run, able to curb his master's occasional longing for more energetic action, by telling him that without a Parliament he could not maintain a war, and that a Parliament would only resume the attitude of the Parliament of 1629.

On the other side there was a considerable party at court, of which Pembroke and his brother formed a part, who disliked Weston and his policy and believed him to be merely actuated by a sordid love of gain. These men attempted to make use of the Queen, who cared nothing for politics, but who had quarrelled with Weston on account of his rude overbearing manners, and on account of a difference of opinion about the money needed for her rather extravagant housekeeping.<sup>37</sup>

Thus it can be seen that Charles's court was as vulnerable to political satire and criticism as was James's.

Since the similarity between the political opinions expressed in the allusions and the political views held by the Pembrokes is one of the important points of investigation

<sup>36</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 65-68.

<sup>37</sup> S. R. Gardiner, "The Political Element in Massinger," Contemporary Review, XXVII (August, 1876), 500.

in this study, it is appropriate to summarize here some of the views held by the Pembroke family. In the 1620's, the leader of the Pembroke family was William Herbert, the third Earl of Pembroke. Therefore, a word should be said concerning his attitude toward the governmental policies of James I and Charles I if there is to be made a connection between the political views of the Pembroke family and Massinger's political allusions.

A large section of the aristocracy, brought up in the Elizabethan tradition, disapproved of the King's pacifistic and unparliamentary policies. Prominent in this group was William Herbert, third Earl of Pembroke. His views were often diametrically opposed to those of James, but since he was wealthy and popular the King found it expedient to conciliate him, though he never loved him. Although Herbert opposed alliance with Spain, the King gave him in 1616 the office of Lord Chamberlain, for which his intelligence and amiability made him particularly fit. On the other hand, this preferment did not affect Pembroke's political views. He distrusted Buckingham and almost immediately clashed with him over patronage. In 1621, he supported the House of Commons in its demands for an inquiry into the monopolies, and disapproved of James's failure to defend the Palatinate. His protests against the dissolution of Parliament brought from Buckingham the charge that he wished to insult the King. In 1623 he courageously attacked the favorite's opinions with regard to Spain, and though a reconciliation was affected, he was soon at open variance with him in the French marriage negotiations and joined the parliamentary opposition. In short, Pembroke was in many respects anti-court, and in almost all respects anti-Buckingham.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>Ball, The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach, p. 12.

Pembroke was also associated with the Queen's group at court after Buckingham's assassination and was one of the most energetic opponents of Weston. Inasmuch as Philip Herbert, William's brother, patronized Massinger throughout most of the dramatist's career, it is necessary to take note of William's political position, for Philip, being somewhat of a cipher in English politics, relied upon William to provide the political position of the Herbert family.<sup>39</sup>

The other broad subject to which Massinger alludes in his plays is the Palatinate crisis. The issue of the Palatinate, as a part of the Thirty Years' War, lasted over a period of several years and aroused the deepest feelings in the English people. The problems of the Elector of the Palatinate and his English wife must have been of great interest to Massinger, for he alludes to them in no less than three plays: The Bondman (1623),<sup>40</sup> The Maid of Honour (1625),<sup>41</sup> and Believe As You List (1630).<sup>42</sup> Obviously, for at least seven years, the Palatinate war was considered by Massinger to be of sufficient importance to justify allegorizing its participants in his plays. The Palatinate crisis began in Bohemia in 1618 when the Protestant nobility rose in arms against their Catholic king, Matthias, who also happened to be the emperor of the Habsburg dynasty. Matthias died in

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<sup>39</sup>Lever, pp. 72-96.

<sup>40</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 72-77.

<sup>41</sup>See Chapter IV, pp. 69-72.

<sup>42</sup>See Chapter IV, p. 68.

1619, and his successor, Ferdinand of Styria, was deposed by the Protestants. The insurgents then chose Frederick, the Elector Palatine and James I's son-in-law, to replace Ferdinand as king. Ferdinand, in the meantime, was elected the Emperor Ferdinand II, thus assuring the aid of Catholic Europe, and preparations were soon under way to drive Frederick from the throne. Frederick's cause was popular in war-hungry England; but James, who felt that his son-in-law should not have accepted the crown of Bohemia, refused to intervene. It was only after rumors of a planned Spanish attack on Frederick that James allowed volunteers under the command of Sir Horace Vere to garrison certain fortresses of the Palatinate. In the summer of 1620, a Spanish army invaded and occupied the Western Palatinate, and James angrily summoned Parliament to obtain money for war. However, before Parliament could meet, Frederick was driven out of Bohemia by a crushing defeat of his forces in the Battle of White Mountain near Prague. In fact, so short was Frederick's reign that he has since been known derisively as the "Winter King."<sup>43</sup>

News of Frederick's defeat was bitterly received in England; and, when James's Third Parliament met in 1621, the nation was clamoring for war. The session opened under inauspicious circumstances because the return of Gondomar,

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<sup>43</sup>Akrigg, p. 336.

the Spanish ambassador, in 1620 to renew negotiations for a Spanish marriage had caused a certain distrust of James's intentions; and, when it was learned that James did not intend to go to war immediately, Parliament was deeply disappointed. James wanted money to defend the Palatinate until he could try to settle the conflict through diplomatic channels; but the House of Commons, when they learned of James's intentions, voted him only a small supply and waited until they were sure that he was going to war before voting war taxes. A discussion of James's attitude toward the Palatinate naturally includes a consideration of James's foreign policy, and "James's main fault in foreign relations was an exaggerated idea of what he could get by diplomatic bargaining in relation to England's actual strength."<sup>44</sup>

Concerning the Palatinate crisis and the Thirty Years' War,

James hoped that if England stayed out of it, he would be able to keep Spain out; if England did not come to the support of the protestant (especially the Calvinist) princes of Germany or of the independent northern Netherlands, then Spain would not come in on the catholic side in alliance with the other, Austrian Habsburgs.<sup>45</sup>

James sent Sir Kenelm Digby as his representative to persuade the Emperor Ferdinand to accept the recovery of Bohemia and leave the Palatinate to Frederick, and Parliament was temporarily dissolved to await the results of Digby's mission.

<sup>44</sup>Aylmer, p. 68.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

James was probably correct in not becoming involved in the Palatinate conflict, for ambition as well as religion prompted Frederick; and England had far more to lose than to gain in helping her German allies. James, however, inasmuch as he thought himself to be guided by God, did not see the necessity of explaining his actions to Parliament. One of the major issues between Parliament and the Crown was whether or not Parliament had the right to discuss and question public affairs of state, and this question came to the forefront when Digby returned in 1621 without success. Trevelyan describes the situation as it stood in 1621 in this manner:

the three years' struggle that ensued between nation and King on the Palatinate and marriage questions, came also to involve the power of Parliament in foreign affairs and thereby its freedom of debate.<sup>46</sup>

Indeed, the views of James were diametrically opposed to those of Parliament:

James wished, by alarming Philip with a display of the war-like ardour of Parliament, to obtain a marriage treaty, of which the restoration of the Palatinate was to be one condition. Parliament wished to break off all alliance with Spain and to recover the Palatinate by war, or by the severe threat of war.<sup>47</sup>

After Digby's return, the Imperialists invaded the Palatinate in the winter of 1621. James then reconvened Parliament to ask for additional money to defend the Palatinate until another diplomatic effort could be made.

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<sup>46</sup>Trevelyan, p. 119.

<sup>47</sup>Ibid., pp. 119-120.

The Commons were convinced that the alliance with Spain was the cause of James's hesitancy, and they demanded that, before any money would be voted, James should first marry Charles to a Protestant and then declare war on Spain. The demands of the Commons were not unreasonable, for

The King's continued pro-Spanish foreign policy had led to a deepening suspicion that he was following a pro-Catholic policy at home too. The Commons particularly disliked what they believed to be the over-lenient way in which recusants were being treated and the lax enforcement of the penal laws against Catholics. Against the continental background--the mounting challenge of the counter-reformation, backed by the armed might of Spain--this attitude was less unreasoning and intolerant than it may seem to us today.<sup>48</sup>

After making their demands, the Commons then compounded their defiance of the king by drawing up a protestation, in which they asserted their inherent right to discuss all public matters of state. This affront provoked James to tear the protestation out of the Commons' journal-book and dissolve Parliament, although he had not been voted any money. To raise money, James again asked for benevolences, as he had done in 1614. This money helped to support the garrisons in the Palatinate for a few months, but before the end of 1622 the Palatinate had been lost. It is important to remember that, during this period of English history, "the desire for war to rescue the Protestants of Europe from cruel oppression was the dominant passion both in Parliament and in the city."<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup>Aylmer, p. 72.

<sup>49</sup>Trevelyan, p. 120.



In a discussion of the attitudes of the English people toward the war, special attention should be given to the popularity in England of Elizabeth, the daughter of James, and Maurice, Prince of Orange, for both of these historical figures are alluded to by Massinger, particularly in The Bondman.<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth, the valiant wife of Frederick, suffered hardships and privation throughout Frederick's dilemma, and her travail won the admiration of the English people. She became even more popular after she had offered to give up her jewels to further her husband's cause in the Palatinate war.<sup>51</sup> Maurice of Nassau, the brilliant military leader of the Dutch, defended Protestantism on the continent against tremendous odds, and it was he who, after Frederick had been driven out of Bohemia, gave protection to Frederick and Elizabeth in the Hague. Maurice greatly admired Elizabeth's courage, and Frederick and Elizabeth thought so much of Maurice that they named a child after him. Inasmuch as Maurice and Frederick appeared to be the only people in authority who were defending Protestantism on the continent, their cause was extremely popular in England. Elizabeth's courage became legendary among the English people, and she enjoyed far more popularity than her father. A contemporary pamphlet entitled "Tom Tell-Truth," which was secretly passed

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<sup>50</sup> See Chapter IV, pp. 76-77.

<sup>51</sup> DNB, VI, 653.

from hand to hand, blatantly stated not only that James was defending the Catholics on the continent, but also that "for one health drunk to the King there were ten glasses emptied to the success of his daughter and her husband."<sup>52</sup> The Palatinate crisis, although it was only a small incident in the much larger struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants on the continent, aroused intense national feeling in England in Massinger's time, and it is not surprising that he should use the circumstances of Frederick's dilemma in his political allegories.

Indeed, Buckingham and the Palatinate crisis, because of the popular feeling they created, were logical choices for allegories which were to be presented in the public theatres. It must also be remembered that the Pembroke family, one of the most powerful political factions in England at the time, were closely involved with both Buckingham and the debates concerning the Palatinate.<sup>53</sup> This fact is highly significant since the political opinions expressed in Massinger's allusions are closely aligned with those of the Pembrokes, for it brings to light the possibility that Massinger was writing favorable political allusions in the hope of receiving patronage from the Pembrokes.

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<sup>52</sup>S. R. Gardiner, History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642 (London, 1896), IV, 296.

<sup>53</sup>DNB, IX, 677-682.

## CHAPTER IV

### MASSINGER'S POLITICAL ALLUSIONS

There is no doubt that Massinger wrote political allusions into his plays; in fact, there is documented evidence that several of Massinger's allusions were noticed by his contemporaries. For example, in early 1631, Believe As You List was refused a license by the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert, because "it did contain dangerous matter as the deposing of Sebastian, King of Portugal, by Philip the second, and there being a peace sworn twixte the Kings of England and Spayne."<sup>1</sup> Later, in 1638, Massinger had to change the title and certain portions of The King and the Subject (a play now lost) before Herbert would license it. King Charles himself ordered one passage deleted from The King and the Subject, saying that "this is too insolent and to be changed." The particular passage that Charles found offensive was recorded by Herbert, and it is of sufficient interest to be quoted here:

Monys? Wee'le rayse supplies what ways we please,  
And force you to subscribe to blanks, in which

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Quincy Adams, editor, The Dramatic Records of Sir Henry Herbert (New York, 1963), p. 19.

We'll mulct you as wee shall thinke fit. The Caesars  
 In Rome were wise, acknowledginge no lawes  
 But what their swords did ratifye, the wives  
 And daughters of the senators bowinge to  
 Their wills, as deities . . . .<sup>2</sup>

It should be noted that, aside from his political allusions, Massinger does make other topical allusions in his plays. Passages have been found which seem to satirize "the fashionable love of astrology" and the English aristocracy's liking for "expense, amusement, Greek wine, masques, new clothes, and foreign fashions."<sup>3</sup> It is interesting that Massinger has little to say about the domestic problems of the lower classes in Jacobean and Caroline England. The ridiculous portrayal of Lady Frugal and her daughters in The City Madam is, no doubt, a satire of the pretensions of the rising commercial class, but, on the whole, Massinger does not concern himself with the social, economic, and religious problems of the middle and lower classes. Massinger's allusions are primarily political, and they therefore deal almost exclusively with the Stuart court.

Massinger's political allusions deal with a wide diversity of topics, and his dramatic allegories reflect a thoughtful mind concerned with contemporary events. Despite the wide range of his political comment, most of Massinger's

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> A. H. Cruickshank, Philip Massinger (New York, 1920), pp. 10-11.

allusions can be traced back to two subjects of topical importance in the 1620's: the corrupt condition of the Stuart court and the government policy toward the Palatinate. An enumeration of the allusions which involve the court will show that Massinger was particularly concerned with the favoritism and corruption which were prevalent in the courts of both James and Charles.

Any discussion of favoritism in the royal court of Jacobean England must necessarily include a consideration of Buckingham, for he not only personified favoritism at the time, but he also instigated most of its evil results, such as the abuse of certain monopolies. Therefore, many of Massinger's allusions can be construed as direct attacks on Buckingham himself; and others, which deal with the practice of favoritism in general, must be interpreted as at least indirect attacks on Buckingham and his influence. Indeed, all of the allusions that Massinger made to favoritism would have reminded his audiences of Buckingham in particular.

Those plays which contain allusions to Buckingham's position in the royal court are The Bondman (1623), The Great Duke of Florence (1627), The Maid of Honour (1625), and The Duke of Milan (1621).

The allusions to Buckingham in The Bondman concern his powerful position as a war minister in the court, and the satire is unmistakable. For instance, the unflattering description of Gisco is undoubtedly a satire of Buckingham,

for, in answer to Leosthenes' question concerning the identity of the leader of the Carthaginian fleet, Timagoras speaks of Gisco in this manner:

Gisco's their Admirall,  
 And tis our happinesse: a rawe young fellow,  
 One never trained in Armes, but rather fashioned  
 To tilt with Ladyes lips, then cracke a Launce,  
 Ravish a Feather from a Mistrisse Fanne  
 And weare it as a Favour; a steele Helmet  
 Made horrid with a glorious Plume, will cracke  
 His womans necke.<sup>4</sup>

Also, Archidamus' speech bemoaning his country's lack of leadership can be construed as a criticism of Buckingham's leadership in the English government:

O shame! that we are a populous Nation,  
 Ingag'd to liberall nature, for all blessings  
 An Iland can bring forth; we that have limbs  
 And able bodies; Shipping, Armes, and Treasure,  
 The sinnewes of the Warre, now we are call'd  
 To stand upon our Guard, cannot produce  
 One fit to be our Generall.

(I, iii, 12-18)

Gisco's title of "Admirall" and the description of the lack of leadership for war recalls the fact that Buckingham had become Lord High Admiral of the English navy in 1619. This date suggests the possibility that Buckingham is being satirized since The Bondman was written in 1623. Again, Massinger probably had Buckingham's ineptitude as a war minister in mind when he had Timoleon criticize the ragged state of Sicily's army and navy:

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<sup>4</sup> Benjamin Townley Spencer, editor, The Bondman (Princeton, 1932), I, i, 49-56. All succeeding references to The Bondman are from this edition and are denoted by act, scene, and line numbers.

Yet in this plenty,  
 And fat of peace, your young men ne're were train'd  
 In Martiall discipline, and your ships unrig'd,  
 Rot in the harbour, noe defence preparte,  
 But thought unusefull, as if that the gods  
 Indulgent to your sloth, had granted you  
 A perpetuitie of pride and pleasure,  
 No change fear'd, or expected.

(I, iii, 203-213)

In addition to recalling Buckingham's ineptitude, this passage would certainly have reminded Massinger's audiences of the state to which the navy had come because James could not acquire the money necessary for refurbishment. Finally, in The Bondman, Timoleon's description of the corruption in the Senate of Sicily can be interpreted as a description and general criticism of the rise of Buckingham in James's court:

Your senate house, which used not to admit  
 A man, however popular, to stand  
 At the helm of government, whose youth was not  
 Made glorious with actions where experience,  
 Crown'd with grey hairs, gave warrant to his counsels  
 Heard and received with reverence, is now filled  
 With green heads, that determine of the state  
 Over their cups, or when their sated lusts  
 Afford them leisure; or supplied by those  
 Who rising from base arts and sordid thrift,  
 Are eminent for their wealth, not for their wisdom;  
 Which is the reason that to hold a place  
 In council, which was once esteem'd an honour,  
 And a reward for virtue, hath quite lost  
 Lustre and reputation, and is made  
 A mercenary purchase.

(I, iii, 178-193)

In the allusions to Buckingham in The Great Duke of Florence, Massinger reflects the public attitude toward James's blundering policies. Cosimo's speech in Act V is an obvious criticism of the rise of Buckingham:

The honours we have hourly heap'd upon him,  
 The titles, the rewards, to the envy of  
 The nobility, as the common people,  
 We now forbear to touch on.<sup>5</sup>

This allusion to Buckingham is strengthened by the fact that Sanazarro, about whom the passage is spoken, returns from a sea victory which he has just won for Cozimo (I, ii), thus recalling Buckingham's admiralty. This allusion is not as strong as others, although it has been suggested that Massinger was alluding to the expedition to Rhé.<sup>6</sup> The success of Sanazarro's sea venture can be reconciled to Buckingham's experience by the fact that, when this play was written in early 1627, the expedition to Rhé, on which Buckingham was preparing to embark, had not yet proven to be a colossal failure. In fact, this passage can be read as Massinger's way of anticipating a military victory for England.

Other allusions in this play are not so flattering to Buckingham. For example, the following speech by Charomante is certainly a criticism of James's poor choice of favorites:

. . . princes never more make known their wisdom  
 Than when they cherish goodness where they find it:  
 They being men, and not gods, Contarino,  
 They can give wealth and titles, but no virtues:  
 That is without their power. When they advance,

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<sup>5</sup>The Great Duke of Florence, V, ii. All references to The Great Duke of Florence, The Maid of Honour, The Duke of Milan, Believe As You List, and The Roman Actor are based on Arthur Symons, editor, Philip Massinger, 2 vols. (New York). References are to act and scene numbers.

<sup>6</sup>S. R. Gardiner, "The Political Element in Massinger," Contemporary Review, XXVIII (August, 1876), 498-499.



Not out of judgement, but deceiving fancy,  
 An undeserving man, howe'er set off  
 With all the trim of greatness, state, and power,  
 And of a creature even grown terrible  
 To him from whom he took his giant form,  
 This thing is still a comet, no true star;  
 And, when the bounties feeding his false fire  
 Begin to fail, will of itself go out,  
 And what was dreadful proves ridiculous.

(I, i)

The figure of James, who believed himself to rule with a Divine Right, is especially brought to mind when Massinger states that princes are "men, and not gods. . . ."

Also, there is an allusion to James's court, in which Calandrino explains to Contarino why it is impossible to be an honest man in the royal court:

I have been told the very place transforms men,  
 And that not one of a thousand, that before  
 Lived honestly in the country on plain salads,  
 But bring him thither, mark me that, and feed him  
 But a month or two with custards and court cakebread,  
 And he turns knave immediately.--I'd be honest;  
 But I must follow the fashion, or die a beggar.

(I, i)

This allusion more properly belongs in the discussion of court corruption, but, since it is an isolated instance in this play, it is convenient to mention it here. Furthermore, this allusion can be considered an indirect attack on Buckingham, since it was he who was largely responsible for the deplorable conditions in the court in the early 1620's.

Criticism of Buckingham specifically appears again in The Maid of Honour (1625), where the character of Fulgentio can be seen as a satire of Buckingham. In fact, the description of this selfish character might have been

intended as a satire of every level of seventeenth century English government, an administrative system in which scarcely anything was done without a fee or gift:<sup>7</sup>

A gentleman, yet no lord. He hath some drops  
Of the king's blood running in his veins, derived  
Some ten degrees off. His revenue lies  
In a narrow compass, the king's ear; and yields him  
Every hour a fruitful harvest. Men may talk  
Of three crops in a year in the Fortunate Islands,  
Or profit made by wool, but, while there are suitors,  
His sheepshearing, nay, shaving to the quick,  
Is in every quarter of the moon, and constant.  
In the time of trussing a point, he can undo  
Or make a man: his play or recreation  
Is to raise this up or pull down that; and though  
He never yet took orders, makes more bishops  
In Sicily than the pope himself.

(I, i)

Another passage from this play, in which Adorni asks Fulgentio whether Roberto, the King of Sicily, will see the ambassador from Ferdinand, the Duke of Urbibo, refers to the abuse Buckingham made of his power, and it shows Massinger at his satirical best:

Fulgentio.

If you've a suit, shew water, I am blind else.

Adorni.

A suit, yet of a nature not to prove  
the quarry that you hawk for; if your words  
Are not like Indian wares, and every scruple  
To be weighed and rated, one poor syllable,  
Vouchsafed in answer of a fair demand,  
Cannot deserve a fee.

Fulgentio.

It seems you are ignorant,  
I neither speak nor hold my peace for nothing;  
And yet, for once, I care not if I answer  
One single question, gratis.

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<sup>7</sup>G. M. Trevelyan, England Under the Stuarts (New York, 1965), p. 118.

Adorni.

I much thank you.

Hath the ambassador audience, sir, to-day?

Fulgentio.

Yes.

Adorni.

At what hour?

Fulgentio.

I promised not so much.

A syllable you begged, my charity gave it;  
move me no further.

(I, i)

The only allusion to Buckingham as the personification of favoritism in The Duke of Milan is in the fact that Francisco is Sforza's favorite. This fact is particularly noteworthy since Francisco is referred to in the Dramatis Personae as Sforza's "especial Favourite," and there is one passage which seems to have been intended as a comment on favoritism. Francisco, in a conversation with Graccho, is telling of his rise as the court favorite:

That day,  
In which it was first rumored, then confirmed,  
Great Sforza thought me worthy of his favour,  
I found myself to be another thing;  
Not what I was before. I passed then  
For a pretty fellow, and of pretty parts too,  
And was perhaps received so; but, once raised,  
The liberal courtiers made me master of  
Those virtues which I ne'er knew in myself:  
If I pretended to a jest, 'twas made one  
By their interpretation. If I offered  
To reason of philosophy, though absurdly,  
They had helps to save me, and without a blush  
Would swear that I, by nature, had more knowledge,  
Than others could acquire by any labour:  
Nay, all I did, indeed, which in another  
Was not remarkable, in me shewed rarely.

. . . . .

They gave me these good parts I was not born to,  
 And by me intercession, they got that  
 Which, had I crossed them, they darst not have hoped for.

(IV, i)

This entire passage can be read as an allusion to the power Buckingham commanded at court.

Another passage in this play, although it does not concern Buckingham directly, can be cited as an allusion to Buckingham's influence. This passage is the scene in which Medina, Hernando, and Alphonso lament the ill-treatment of the professional soldier. In this dialogue, they specifically blame the favorites at court for stealing the soldiers' share of the spoils:

. . . usually, some thing in grace, that ne'er heard  
 The cannon's roaring tongue, but at a triumph,  
 Puts in, and for his intercession shares  
 All that we fought for; the poor soldier left  
 To starve, or fill up hospitals.

(III, i)

A further description of these favorites by Medina shows Massinger's bitter contempt for the favorites in James's court, of whom Buckingham was the most representative:

I long to be at it;  
 To see these chuffs, that every day may spend  
 A soldier's entertainment for a year,  
 Yet make a third meal of a bunch of raisins;  
 These sponges, that suck up a kingdom's fat,  
 Battening like scarabs in the dung of peace,  
 To be squeezed out by the rough hand of war,  
 And all that their whole lives have heaped together,  
 By cozenage, perjury, or sordid thrift,  
 With one gripe to be ravished.

(III, i)

Overall, The Duke of Milan might be considered a strong condemnation of Buckingham, for the character of the

treacherous favorite, Francisco, is perhaps the strongest element in the play. By the time The Duke of Milan was written in 1621, the corruption of the court was well-known to every Englishman, and even the slightest reference to an "especial Favourite" would have recalled Buckingham's position in the Stuart court. Also, it is particularly worth noting that Sforza is at his best when he courageously confronts the Spanish emperor in III, i. Inasmuch as the Spanish marriage negotiations were occurring during the time this play was presented (1621-1623), this passage might be Massinger's way of exhorting James to be firm with the Spanish. Moreover, this passage further substantiates the fact that Massinger was alluding to Buckingham in the character of the unfaithful Francisco, for if Sforza stands for James, then Francisco would consequently be Buckingham.

All of these plays were written at a time which would have been appropriate for comment on the favoritism in the royal court. The Duke of Milan (1621), The Bondman (1623), The Great Duke of Florence (1624), and The Maid of Honour (1625) were all written in the years in which Buckingham and his courtiers were at the peak of their power. Massinger's use of the word "Duke" in two of these titles naturally reminds one of the Duke of Buckingham, but it seems unlikely that Massinger intended a connection. One of the titles, The Duke of Milan, could not possibly have any relation to Buckingham, for it was written before he became a duke in

1623. As for the other title, The Great Duke of Florence, it could possibly have been intended to satirize Buckingham since it was written in 1624, one year after he became duke; but this possibility is lessened by the fact that Buckingham, for one of the few times in his career, enjoyed an enormous popularity in the year 1624 because of his change to an anti-Spanish policy. Furthermore, neither the Duke of Florence in the play, Cozimo, nor his favorite, Sanazarro, is an unflattering portrayal. On the other hand, it is not at all unreasonable to speculate that, perhaps, for some reason, Massinger was trying to make allusions which would have flattered Buckingham. This possibility gains added significance when it is considered that the Pembrokes were temporarily reconciled to Buckingham for some time in 1627, the year this play was acted.<sup>8</sup> Conversely, the fact that Sanazarro proves unfaithful to his king, Cozimo, might have suggested to Massinger's audiences the playwright's opinion of Buckingham's relationship to James. As long as the dates of composition are accepted and until further evidence is uncovered, whatever reason Massinger might have had for entitling these plays The Duke of Milan and The Great Duke of Florence must remain unknown.

Although the insinuations are subtle, each of these passages can be seen as a criticism specifically of Buckingham

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<sup>8</sup>Gardiner, p. 498.

and more generally of the favoritism that was being practiced in the courts of James I and Charles I. Inasmuch as the allusions in The Great Duke of Florence, The Maid of Honour, and The Duke of Milan are isolated instances in these plays, it can be argued that they do not represent intentional allusions; but the appearance of three such allusions in The Bondman seems to indicate that Massinger was deliberately criticizing the power of the court favorites. Since Buckingham was such an influential figure in many top-level decisions, the possibility that these allusions were intentional must be considered to some degree in a discussion of Massinger's political comment.

In addition to the criticisms he made of Buckingham, Massinger seems to have referred to the corruption that resulted from the granting of monopolies in the court of James I. As has been said, Buckingham personified the corruption in the court, and, because of his topical significance, he has been treated separately; but it should be remembered that any criticism of court corruption Massinger might have made, including a criticism of the monopolies, would likely have been, because of Buckingham's pervasive power, an implicit criticism of Buckingham himself.

One of the greatest sources of corruption in the court of James I was the flagrant abuse of certain monopolies. It can be argued that A New Way to Pay Old Debts (c. 1625) is, in its entirety, a comment on monopolies and that the

activities of Sir Giles Overreach comprise a dramatic allegory of the unscrupulous practices of Sir Giles Mompesson, one of Buckingham's underlings. Although it has been suggested by T. W. Craik, a recent editor of the play, that there is insufficient proof to connect Overreach with Mompesson, the majority of critics do not share this view. Craik argues that:

Sir Giles Overreach has taken little from Sir Giles Mompesson besides his Christian name. Mompesson's prime offence was that he abused his monopoly of tavern-licences, mainly by charging exorbitant fees and by exacting bribes from the licensees. Overreach, however, is the traditional figure of the "cruel extortioner" or "cormorant," grasping at the lands of the needy and the improvident. Only in his power over Tapwell--a very minor aspect of the play--does he bear any topical resemblance to Mompesson. As for Greedy, his agent and catspaw, in whom Mompesson's confederate Sir Francis Michell has been seen, he is in the play as a figure of fun, not as an object of satire.<sup>9</sup>

However, at the time this play was presented, some time in the late 1620's, the similarity of the given names would have been enough for an audience to compare Overreach with Mompesson,<sup>10</sup> such was Mompesson's infamy. The ruthlessness of Overreach must have reminded English audiences of the

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<sup>9</sup>T. W. Craik, editor, A New Way to Pay Old Debts (London, 1964), p. xii. All citations from A New Way to Pay Old Debts are from this edition.

<sup>10</sup>Robert Hamilton Ball, The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach (Princeton, 1939), pp. 6-18.



cruel means by which Mompesson furthered his own ambitions. That Massinger wanted to depict Overreach as the epitome of evil is readily noted in the scene in which Overreach orders his daughter, Margaret, to give herself, and her honor, to Lord Lovell. Massinger went to great lengths to make Overreach as hated on the stage as Mompesson was despised in life. The fact that Massinger intended for Overreach to stand for Mompesson is pushed beyond doubt by the presence of Justice Greedy and by Overreach's involvement in Tapwell's tavern. Justice Greedy can easily be equated with Mompesson's confederate, Francis Michell, and Overreach's control over Tapwell's tavern is almost certainly an allusion to Mompesson's abuse of his monopoly on the licensing of English taverns. Although Mompesson was banished in 1621, his notoriety lasted well into the 1630's, and, with the similarity in names, the resemblance between Overreach and Mompesson would have been unmistakable to an English theatre audience of the late 1620's.

The fact that Massinger was attacking court corruption by satirizing Mompesson can be supported by pointing to other allusions that relate to the abuse of monopolies. For example, there is an obvious allusion to the monopoly on gold thread in The Bondman:

Observe but what a cozening look he has!--  
 Hold up thy head, man; if, for drawing gallants  
 Into mortgages for commodities, cheating heirs  
 With your new counterfeit gold thread, and gumm'd velvets,  
 He does not transcend all that went before him,  
 Call in his patent.

(II, iii)

Since The Bondman was written some time in 1623, the references to "drawing gallants / Into mortgages for commodities," to "cheating heirs," and to a "patent" might represent a foreshadowing of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, which was written in the late 1620's. This allusion is particularly appropriate since most of Mompesson's and Michell's "notoriety resulted from their patent for, and subsequent manufacturing of, gold thread, which they freely adulterated with copper, and sold at exorbitant prices."<sup>11</sup>

Another topic which deserves attention is the comment Massinger seems to make about the projectors in Charles's court. "In the industrial monopolies, business men were usually responsible for originating designs which could be turned into profits for themselves and the court."<sup>12</sup> These middle-men were called projectors, and Massinger attacks them in Pulcheria's speech in The Emperor of the East:

Projector, I treat first  
 Of you and your disciples; you roar out,  
 All is the king's, his will above his laws;  
 And that fit tributes are too gentle yokes  
 For his poor subjects: whispering in his ear,  
 If he would have their fear, no man should dare  
 To bring a salad from his country garden  
 Without the paying gabel; kill a hen,  
 Without excise; and that if he desire  
 To have his children or his servants wear  
 Their heads upon their shoulders, you affirm  
 In policy 'tis fit the owner should  
 Pay for them by the poll; or if a prince want  
 A present sum, he may command a city

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<sup>11</sup>Spencer, p. 213.

<sup>12</sup>Ball, The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach, pp. 14-15.

Impossibilities, and for non-performance,  
 Compel it to submit to any fine  
 His officers shall impose. Is this the way  
 To make our emperor happy? can the groans  
 Of his subjects yield him music? must his thresholds  
 Be wash'd with widows and wrong'd orphans tears,  
 Or his power grow contemptible?  
 (I, ii)<sup>13</sup>

The prologue of The Emperor of the East is addressed directly to Charles I, but the play itself should not be considered an attack on the king or the royal power. Instead of thinking of the play as a criticism, Charles might have found it complimentary, "for in its fundamental principles the play is undeniably royalist and devoted to the throne . . . ." <sup>14</sup> However, the passage concerning the projectors is undoubtedly a clear attack on the corruption that was prevalent in Charles I's court.

As a further connection between Mompesson and Overreach, it might be pointed out that there are several references to commissions in A New Way to Pay Old Debts.<sup>15</sup> From 1618 until their fall in 1621 Mompesson and Michell shared the commission for punishing offenders against the gold and silver thread monopoly, and the mention of commissions in the play could be interpreted as a means of reminding the theatre audience of Mompesson's connection with monopolies. In fact, the allusions to monopolies, projectors, and commissions indicate

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>14</sup> T. A. Dunn, Philip Massinger, The Man and the Playwright (London, 1957), p. 175.

<sup>15</sup> Ball, The Amazing Career of Sir Giles Overreach, p. 18.

that Massinger was at least aware of, and probably dealing with, the corruption of the court. Again the fact of the similarity of names between the dramatic Sir Giles and the historical Sir Giles indicates that Massinger was indeed attacking the corruption that Mompesson personified.

Massinger makes his most complete political comment in his allusions to the Palatinate issue. The plays which contain allusions to the Palatinate are Believe As You List (1630), The Maid of Honour (1625), and The Bondman (1623). In these plays Massinger seems to advocate, through his allusions, a complete reversal of England's foreign policy on the continent, a reversal which would include active support of the Protestant cause and armed intervention in the Palatinate.

Since Believe As You List was written in 1630, it is not surprising that most of its allusions concern the reign of Charles I. Reference has been made to Sir Henry Herbert's refusal to license the play on the grounds that it referred to the deposing of Sebastian. It has been suggested that the plot referred to a man who, calling himself the Don Sebastian who was thought to have been killed in the Battle of Alcazar in 1578, wandered through Europe, claiming to be the heir to the throne of Portugal.<sup>16</sup> Samuel Rawson Gardiner, however, contends that

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<sup>16</sup>Symonsy II, 382.

there was much in the proceedings of Antiochus which cannot by any possibility be fitted into the story of Sebastian. Antiochus, like the Sebastian of the popular story, is supposed to die in battle, and then reappears to claim his crown. But in the case of Sebastian, the defeat comes from the Moors, whilst his crown is taken by the King of Spain. In the case of Antiochus, the crown is taken by the victor who defeats him in battle. Sebastian again does not wander, as Antiochus does, from State to State, asking aid for the recovery of his dignity and his lands.<sup>17</sup>

Gardiner goes on to assert that, "if we want to find 'a late but sad example'" (the passage in the prologue which was assumed to refer to Sebastian) "who will suit the part of Antiochus' story, we must look, not to Sebastian of Portugal, but to Frederick, Elector Palatine and titular King of Bohemia."<sup>18</sup> Whether or not Massinger intended to portray the plight of Frederick allegorically on the stage is problematic, but the evidence in the dialogue seems to indicate that such an allegory does exist. For example, Frederick can be seen as speaking of the defeat of Bohemia in the words of Antiochus in the following passage:

all those innocent spirits  
 Borrowing again their bodies, gashed with wounds,  
 (Which strew'd Achaia's bloody plains, and made  
 Rivulets of gore), appear to me, exacting  
 A strict account of my ambitious folly,  
 For the exposing of twelve thousand souls,  
 Who fell that fatal day to certain ruin;  
 Neither the counsel of the Persian king  
 Prevailing with me; nor the grave advice  
 Of my wise enemy, Marcus Scaurus, hindering  
 My desperate enterprise . . . .  
 (I, i)

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<sup>17</sup> Gardiner, p. 499.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

This allusion is strengthened by the fact that Frederick was advised not to undertake his venture by both James I and the inimical Maximillian of Bavaria.<sup>19</sup> Also, Frederick's predicament was the indirect cause of the almost total annihilation of exactly twelve thousand men under the command of Mansfeld.<sup>20</sup> Massinger's use of the number twelve thousand suggests that he was indeed referring to circumstances surrounding the Palatinate.

After identifying Antiochus as Frederick, an elaborate allegorical interpretation can be made of Act III, scene iii. In this particular scene, Prusias, who had previously agreed to help Antiochus, is persuaded by Philoxenus and Flaminius that he should not offer any help to Antiochus. Frederick was forsaken by Charles in much the same way that Prusias forsakes Antiochus. To accomplish this analogy, one has only to substitute "King Charles for Prusias, Henrietta Maria for the Queen, Weston for Philoxenus, whose very name (a lover of strangers) is meant to suit him, and Coloma, the Spanish, for Flaminius the Roman Ambassador, only remembering that Frederick was not in person in England, as Antiochus was in Bithynia."<sup>21</sup> If this allegory is accepted, then there appears a somewhat unflattering picture of Charles and the English government. For example, Flaminius (Spain) is seen as manipulating the materialistic Philoxenus (Weston):

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 499-500.

<sup>20</sup> Trevelyan, p. 125.

<sup>21</sup> Gardiner, p. 501.

But to the point. With speed get me access  
 To the king your pupil. And 'tis well for him  
 That he hath such a tutor. Rich Bithynia  
 Was never so indebted to a patriot,  
 And vigilant watchman, for her peace and safety  
 As to yourself.

(III, iii)

Gardiner's primary purpose in his interpretation of Believe As You List is to show that Massinger was portraying the court of Charles I in the way in which Pembroke and his opposition party would have seen it. Therefore, according to the allegory, it was "the low, coarse-minded minister"<sup>22</sup> Weston, as seen in the character of Philoxenus, who actually was responsible for what Pembroke and his party thought to be England's ignominious policy toward the Protestant cause on the continent. Finally, Prusias chooses to deny aid to Antiochus rather than risk war with Rome just as it was thought that Charles refused to help Frederick for fear of antagonizing Spain. Gardiner feels that Massinger thought Charles to be a helpless, although honorable, ruler, and in the allegory, Prusias laments that he must forsake Antiochus in the interest of peace:

Prusias.

How can I  
 Dispense with my faith given?

Philoxenus.

I'll yield you reasons.

Prusias.

Let it be peace, then. Oh! pray you call in  
 The wretched man. In the meantime I'll consider  
 How to excuse myself.

(III, iii)

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 502.

Gardiner finds much the same situation in The Maid of Honour, except that in this play he feels that Massinger was criticizing James's handling of the Palatinate issue. With a general knowledge of James's relations with Frederick and of Frederick's involvement with the Palatinate and Bohemia, it can easily be seen how Gardiner equates King Roberto of Sicily with James, Duke Ferdinand of Urbino with Frederick, and Bertoldo with the court faction who wanted war. For example, in the first scene of the play, the ambassador from Ferdinand pleads for aid from Roberto in much the same manner as Frederick had approached James:

Your Majesty  
 Hath been long since familiar, I doubt not,  
 With the desperate fortunes of my lord; and pity  
 Of the much that your confederate hath suffered,  
 You being his last refuge, may persuade you  
 Not alone to compassionate, but to lend  
 Your royal aids to stay him in his fall  
 To certain ruin. He, too late, is conscious  
 That his ambition to encroach upon  
 His neighbor's territories, with the danger of  
 His liberty, nay, his life, hath brought in question  
 His own inheritance.

(I, i)

Furthermore, Roberto's answer is surprisingly similar to James's policy toward Frederick and the Palatinate:

Since injustice  
 In your duke meets this correction, can you press us  
 With any seeming argument of reason,  
 In foolish pity to decline his dangers,  
 To draw them on ourself? Shall we not be  
 Warn'd by his harms? The league proclaim'd between us  
 Bound neither of us further than to aid  
 Each other, if by foreign force invaded.

(I, i)



Gardiner notes that this passage is "the exact description of the interpretation put by James upon the treaty which bound him to the Princes of the Union."<sup>23</sup> Gardiner seems to have a good point, for Roberto's reasons for refusing aid to Ferdinand are similar to the policy of peace held by James:

Let other monarchs  
 Contend to be made glorious by proud war,  
 And with the blood of their poor subjects purchase  
 Increase of empire, and augment their cares  
 In keeping that which was by wrongs extorted,  
 Gilding unjust invasions with the trim  
 Of glorious conquests; we, that would be known  
 The father of our people, in our study  
 And vigilance for their safety, must not change  
 Their ploughshares into swords, and force them from  
 The secure shade of their own vines, to be  
 Scorched with the flames of war: or, for our sport  
 Expose their lives to ruin.

(I, i)

The allegory is further substantiated by the exchange between Bertoldo and Roberto, in which Bertoldo argues that an island (Sicily or, in the allegory, England), because of its isolation, must engage in imperialism if it is to survive. In what is obviously an appeal to English nationalism, Massinger has Bertoldo state that:

If examples  
 May move you more than arguments, look on England,  
 The empress of the European isles,  
 And unto whom alone ours yields precedence:  
 When sh'd she flourish so, as when she was  
 The mistress of the ocean, her navies  
 Putting a girdle round about the world?  
 When the Iberian quaked, her worthies named;  
 And the fair flower-de-luce grew pale, set by

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 504.

The red rose and the white! Let not our armour  
 Hung up, or our unrigg'd Armada make us  
 Ridiculous to the late poor snakes, our neighbors,  
 Warm'd in our bosoms, and to whom again  
 We may be terrible.

(I, i)

Bertoldo then receives permission from Roberto to carry volunteers to fight for Ferdinand, with the condition that they shall receive no royal aid from Sicily. In this passage, Roberto states:

yet to show

My rule is gentle, and that I have feelings  
 O' your master's sufferings, and these gallants, weary  
 Of the happiness of peace, desire to taste  
 The bitter sweets of war, we do consent  
 That, as adventurers and volunteers,  
 No way compell'd by us, they may make trial  
 Of their boasted valours.

(I, i)

This passage definitely has a parallel in James's policy toward the Palatinate, for James, and later Charles, allowed volunteers to go to war without government support.

The popularity of Frederick's wife, Elizabeth, at the time this play was written (1625) necessitates an investigation into the possibility of an allusion to Elizabeth in the character of Camiola. Certainly, the virtuous qualities of Camiola were those qualities every Englishman thought were embodied in the person of Elizabeth, but there are very few other parallels between Camiola and Elizabeth. One possible allusion that is worth mentioning is Camiola's exhortation for Bertoldo to fight "Bravely against the enemies of our faith" (V, ii), thus suggesting the Protestants'

struggle against Catholicism on the continent. Although there is not enough evidence to conclude whether Massinger was alluding to Elizabeth in the character of Camiola, the possibility of such an allusion certainly exists.

The allusions in The Bondman are closely related to those in Believe As You List and The Maid of Honour, although The Bondman appears to be Massinger's most concerted effort to influence opinion on the Palatinate issue. Much of The Bondman is analogous to the political situation in England in the period of 1620-1624. A recent editor of the play begins his explication of the allusions by stating that:

. . . there is certainly a general criticism, through Timoleon's harangues, of England's failure to provide sufficient funds for national enterprises and of the ebb of patriotic feeling and decay of military discipline. Especially does Massinger seem to set himself against James's policy of a shameful peace at the expense of England's international position.<sup>24</sup>

If indeed Timoleon's words represent Massinger's criticism of England's international position, then Massinger's attitude toward England's national leadership can be seen from a reading of lines 171-263 in Act I, scene iii. In this passage, "the chief criticism which Timoleon offers . . . relates to the luxurious selfishness of the noble class together with their failure to respond to their country's need for money with which to carry on war."<sup>25</sup> In addition to the excerpts

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<sup>24</sup> Spencer, p. 28.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

from this important passage which have already been quoted,<sup>26</sup>  
 one other will show that Massinger was directing his comment  
 toward the rich:

From whence it proceeds,  
 That the treasure of the City is ingros'd  
 By a few private men: the publique Coffers  
 Hollow with want; and they that will not spare  
 One Talent for the common good, to feed  
 The pride and bravery of their wives, consume  
 In Plate, in Jewels, and superfluous slaves,  
 What would maintain an Armie.

(I, iii, 194-201)

One passage which supports this argument, the lines which  
 refer to the "green heads" who were taking over the Senate,  
 has already been mentioned in connection with favoritism,<sup>27</sup>  
 and the profligate behavior of the favorites in the royal  
 court was certainly one of the causes of public dissent against  
 the power of such favorites as Buckingham. Timoleon's  
 suggestions to Syracuse are entirely analogous to James's  
 situation in the early 1620's, for after James had dissolved  
 the Third Parliament in 1621, "he again resorted to benevo-  
 lences. His method was that of Timoleon, a demand that  
 private fortunes be placed at the disposal of those who were  
 carrying on the war."<sup>28</sup> Timoleon asks for private contri-  
 butions in these words:

For the maintenance of the warre  
 It is decreed all moneys in the hand,

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter III, p. 52.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter III, p. 52.

<sup>28</sup> Spencer, p. 30.

Of private men, shall instantly be brought  
To the publike Treasurie.

(I, iii, 219-222)

Thus it would seem that Massinger was exhorting both James and the nobility to pursue a war on the continent. The allegory is much the same expression of opinion as is found in Believe As You List and The Maid of Honour. Furthermore, by the projection of other parts of the play into other historical circumstances, a much more detailed allegory of England's foreign policy can be seen in The Bondman.

The explanation of the political allegories in The Bondman is based on the many parallels between the characters and events in the play and the conditions that existed in England and on the continent in 1623. In these allegories, Sicily is equated with England, Corinth with Holland, Carthage with Spain, Timoleon with Maurice, and Cleora with Elizabeth. "The Bondman presents Sicily, a country weakened by luxury, carelessness, and selfishness, attacked by an overbearing enemy, Carthage. Sicily is aided by her neighbor, Corinth, a lover of liberty, who sends her renowned general, Timoleon, to lead the forces against Carthage."<sup>29</sup> England, of course, was not attacked directly by Spain, but the allegory might be accomplished by the fact that many, especially among Pembroke's opposition party, felt that Spain's imperialistic actions on the continent represented a serious threat to England's security and honor. England at this time was

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<sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 35.

considering an alliance with the Dutch in an effort to curb Spain's aggression, and Massinger deals with this situation in the play. For example, in Act I, scene i, "Leosthenes inquires the motives for Corinth's giving aid. He is told that the Corinthians recognize that ambitious Carthage is seeking to enlarge her empire and to seize all Greece, that they and the Sicilians share a common danger, and that if Sicily should perish, so would Corinth."<sup>30</sup> Timagoras's answer to Leosthenes supports the argument:

It being apparent that ambitious Carthage,  
That to enlarge her Empire, strives to fasten  
An unjust gripe on us (that live free Lords  
Of Syracuse) will not end, till Greece  
Acknowledge her their Sovereigne.  
(I, i, 59-63)

This passage is analogous to the Dutch attitude toward Spanish aggression in the early 1620's, and many of the allusions in The Bondman were probably created with the intention of pleasing the Pembrokes, who were much in favor of a Dutch alliance to combat Spain:

This Dutch expression of fear of Spanish imperialism offers indeed a close parallel to Corinth's fear in The Bondman (cf. I, i, 56-62; I, iii, 6-7). Thus it appears reasonable to conclude that, in these weeks when the question of Dutch alliance was being most ably supported by the pro-Palatine party in England and when The Bondman was almost certainly written, Massinger is not only alluding to an international situation, but also, through his presentation of liberty-loving Corinth as friendly to weakened Sicily in her necessary defense against Carthaginian imperialism, that he is suggesting the feasibility of

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

England's accepting the Provinces' overtures of combining forces in order to aid the Palatine in the defense of Protestantism and to offer a barrier to Spain's desire to control northern Europe. Such a topical position in The Bondman would have been pleasing to the Protestant Herberts, whose temporary defection from promoting a war against Spain resulted not from any growing friendliness toward that country, but from personal skepticism with regard to Buckingham, whom Massinger ably satirized in Visco (I, i, 49-56).<sup>31</sup>

One of the more interesting aspects of B. T. Spencer's explication of The Bondman is his comparison of Timoleon to Maurice, Prince of Orange. To show that Massinger had a favorable opinion of Maurice, Spencer points to one of Massinger's early collaborations with Fletcher, Sir John van Olden Barnavelt, a play in which the Dutch prince is portrayed as being the "saviour of his country."<sup>32</sup> Spencer seems convinced that Massinger was portraying Maurice in much the same manner in The Bondman, and he has found several connections besides Timoleon's speeches in the first act. For instance, Spencer says that Maurice "had protected Frederick who had established himself at The Hague in April 1621. The Princess Elizabeth, many times in severest difficulties, was aided by him;--he was, in fact, a lover of her mind and thought, as Timoleon felt Cleora to be, 'a brave masculine spirit' (I, iii, 306)."<sup>33</sup> Spencer establishes the parallel between Cleora and Elizabeth by asserting that

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 40.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

"Princess Elizabeth's willingness to sell her jewels to promote the war against Spain . . . suggested the dramatic sacrifice of Cleora's jewels (I, iii, 304). . . ."34 In this passage, Cleora states

For me  
 An ignorant Girle, beare witnessse heaven, so farre  
 I prize a Souldier, that to give him pay  
 With such Devotion as our Flamens Offer  
 Their Sacrifices at the holy Altar,  
 I doe lay downe these jewels, will make sale  
 Of my superfluous Wardrobe to supply  
 The meanest of their wants.

(I, iii, 300-306)

Such an allusion to Elizabeth would have had tremendous appeal to English audiences. As to Massinger's purpose in presenting Maurice favorably, Spencer feels that Massinger was saying that "the overtures of the Prince of Orange toward an alliance against Spain should be dallied with no longer, but that England should under his guidance repel the Spanish threat."<sup>35</sup>

The allegory in The Bondman does seem plausible, and it can be summarized in these words:

The Bondman, therefore, through its political allegory, seems to suggest, first of all, that a liberal contribution should be forthcoming from people or Parliament; secondly, that the money should be used for reconstruction of the military forces of the nation, and not for private luxuries; and finally, that England should unite with the States under the great general Maurice, on behalf of the Palatinate and Protestantism, to quell the menace of Spanish imperialism.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., pp. 41-42.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 43.



Other allusions in Massinger's drama include those which are intended to praise Charles. For example, there are in The Great Duke of Florence several passages which might be construed as complimentary references to the prince. It has been suggested that the praise of Giovanni, especially Charomante's speech in Act I, scene i, is actually praise of Charles:<sup>37</sup>

. . . my noble charge,  
 By his sharp wit and pregnant apprehension,  
 Instructing those that teach him; making use,  
 Not in a vulgar and pedantic form,  
 Of what's read to him, but 'tis straight digested,  
 And truly made his own. His grave discourse,  
 In one nor more indebted unto years,  
 Amazes such as hear him: horsemanship,  
 And skill to use his weapon, are by practice  
 Familiar to him: as for knowledge in  
 Music, he needs it not, it being born with him;  
 All that he speaks being with such grace delivered  
 That it makes perfect harmony.  
 (I, i)

The reference in this passage to Charles's horsemanship is reiterated in the third act when Cozimo, speaking to Giovanni, says that:

You are, nephew,  
 As I hear, an excellent horseman, and we like it:  
 'Tis a fair grace in a prince.  
 (III, i)<sup>38</sup>

Also, the description of Giovanni's arrival in Florence might have been inspired by the return of Charles, then still a

<sup>37</sup>Dunn, p. 174.

<sup>38</sup>This allusion was first mentioned in Gardiner, "Political Element," p. 498.

prince, from Spain in October, 1623.<sup>39</sup> Sanazarro, speaking to Giovanni, describes the triumphal arrival in these words:

Being, as you are, received for the heir apparent,  
 You are no sooner seen, but wondered at,  
 The signiors making it a business to  
 Enquire how you have slept, and, as you walk  
 The streets of Florence, the glad multitude  
 In throngs press but to see you, and, with joy,  
 The father, pointing with his finger, tells  
 His son, this is the prince, the hopeful prince,  
 That must hereafter rule, and you obey him:  
 Great ladies beg your picture, and make love  
 To that, despairing to enjoy the substance:  
 And, but last night, when 'twas only rumoured  
 That you were come to court, as if you had  
 By sea past hither from another world,  
 What general shout and acclamations followed:  
 The bells rang loud, the bonfires blazed, and such  
 As loved not wine, carousing to your health,  
 Were drunk and blushed not at it.

(III, i)

References to the "shouts and acclamations," the "bells," and "the bonfires" almost certainly allude to Charles's return; and this allusion is reinforced by the fact that it was as if Giovanni "had / By sea past hither from another world," thus referring to the sea voyage from what most Englishmen considered another world, Spain. In speaking of Charles's unfortunate trip to Spain, it is appropriate to mention also the courtship scene between Giovanni and Fiorinda in II, i of The Great Duke of Florence. Giovanni's perfunctory courtship of Fiorinda, brought about at the Duke's insistence, might be Massinger's conception of the situation in which Charles paid court to the Infanta.

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<sup>39</sup>Dunn, p. 174.

In addition to the comments on the figures of the court and on the Palatinate issue, there are several incidental allusions to be found in Massinger's drama. Although these allusions seem to have no coherent pattern, they can be used to embellish various discussions of other comments in Massinger's work, as well as to reinforce the contention that Massinger deliberately made political allusions in his work.

Among these incidental allusions is the allusion in The Duke of Milan to the imprisonment of George Wither over Wither's Motto in 1621. In this allusion, Graccho, while being taken to jail, asks the arresting officer if, aside from himself, there have been other men of quality arrested. The officer answers in this manner:

Both men and women of all sorts have bowed  
Under this sceptre. I have had a fellow  
That could indite, forsooth, and make fine metres  
To tinkle in the ears of ignorant madams,  
That, for defaming of great men, was sent me  
Threadbare and lousy, and in three days after,  
Discharged by another that set him on.

(III, ii)

Little is known of Wither's troubles over his poem, except that "some persons in high station deemed the poem a reflection on current politics and politicians . . . ." The poem itself has been described as a "fluent series of egotistical reflections on the conduct of life, intermingled with some spirited sarcasm at the expense of the mean and vicious,"<sup>40</sup> and it is

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<sup>40</sup> Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee, editors, The Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1921-1922), XXI, 731.

easy to see why it would have been objectionable to the corrupt English government of the 1620's.

In A New Way to Pay Old Debts, the allusion in Furnace's speech to the siege of Breda (I, ii, 25-28) has been valuable in arriving at an approximate date for the composition of this play. Lord Lovell's campaign in the Low Countries in this play has been interpreted as an allusion to the state of war that existed in England until peace was made with France in 1629 and Spain in 1630;<sup>41</sup> however, the argument that such an allusion exists is somewhat tenuous since the references to in the play are vague.<sup>42</sup>

Finally, in The Roman Actor, Paris's defense of the stage in I, iii might be Massinger's way of defending his own profession. This play was written in 1626, and Paris's defense gains new significance from the fact that in 1625 the Puritan party had sent a summons to Parliament asking for the suppression of stage plays. There is possibly another allusion to the stage in The Renegado, although this play was written in 1624 and does not have a connection with the Puritan summons in 1625. Dunn has noted that this passage, which concerns the sacrilege of mentioning God's name in a prison, might refer not only to the prison at Tunis in the play, but also to the Act of May 27, 1606,

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<sup>41</sup> Craik, p. xi.

<sup>42</sup> For example, one of the references states merely that Lord Lovell "has purchas'd a fair name in the wars . . . ." See III, i, 38.

which made it a crime to mention God, Jesus, or the Trinity on the stage. In this passage, Vitelli, who is in prison, speaks to Francisco:

That most inscrutable and infinite Essence,  
That made this All, and comprehends his work!--  
The place is too profane to mention Him  
Whose only name is sacred.

(IV, iii)<sup>43</sup>

Dunn goes on to point out that, considering the moral nature of his work, it is not unlikely that Massinger approved of this law.<sup>44</sup>

One other comment that should be made about Massinger's methods concerns the manner in which Massinger makes his allusions. Generally speaking, the allusions are created through references to situations and events rather than through characterizations. For example, general corruption in the court is referred to in the speeches of a character rather than being acted out by a character. The exception is the character of Fulgentio in The Maid of Honour, and Massinger had so little faith in his characterizations that he felt it necessary to explain, through the conversation of Adorni and Astutio, that Fulgentio is a corrupt court favorite. In fact, Massinger's characters are sometimes so shallow that only with a direct implication can a historical figure be identified in the allusions. Roberto and Ferdinand in The Maid of Honour

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<sup>43</sup>Quoted from Dunn, p. 179.

<sup>44</sup>Ibid.

can be equated with James and Frederick only by the situation in which Ferdinand appeals to Roberto for help and not by any personal characteristics. Timoleon is equated with Maurice only by the allegorical situation that exists in Syracuse and between Corinth and Carthage; except for the fact that he is a courageous leader, we know nothing of any personal traits and characteristics that would connect him with Maurice. Massinger's most well-developed character is perhaps Sir Giles Overreach in A New Way to Pay Old Debts, but it would be difficult to connect him to Sir Giles Mompesson without the similarity in their given names and the fact that Overreach controls taverns as did Mompesson.

The vagueness inherent in such a method must not be considered a fault. In an England ruled in large measure by George Villiers, The Duke of Buckingham, it behooved Massinger to write his satire with caution. Any vagueness in the allusions in the individual plays disappears when the canon is viewed as a whole. That Overreach does indeed represent the corrupt Mompesson, a lieutenant of Buckingham, is made fully plausible by the open references to Mompesson's monopolies and counterfeiting of gold thread in The Bondman and by the various criticisms of Buckingham which appear in at least four plays.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSION

In the prologue to Believe As You List, Massinger, with an affected ingenuousness, confesses that

He's but an English scholar at his best,  
A stranger to cosmography, and may err  
In the countries' names, the shape and character  
Of the persons he presents.<sup>1</sup>

Although this passage was probably only intended to make light of Massinger's troubles with the Master of the Revels in 1631, it is clear that Massinger could have made a similar comment in almost every year in which he wrote a play. Massinger was constantly "erring" in names, shapes, and characters as he disguised his pointed political allusions. The very frequency of historical allusions in Massinger's plays supports the contention that Massinger was consciously dramatizing his political opinions, and his allusions have an organization and coherency which cannot be coincidence. Most of Massinger's allusions are directed toward the governmental policies of the administrations of James I and Charles I, and the areas of English government to which Massinger specifically alludes

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<sup>1</sup>Arthur Symons, editor, Philip Massinger (London, n.d.), Vol. I.

are the royal court and the crown's policy toward the Palatinate issue. Moreover, the opinions expressed in these allusions are closely aligned with the political views held by the Pembroke family during this period. This last fact is significant since the Pembroke name appears often throughout Massinger's life and career. Taken collectively, the frequency of the allusions, the coherency of the opinions expressed in the allusions, and the similarities of these opinions and the political views of the Pembroke family are confluent streams of evidence which merge into a convincing proof of Massinger's deliberate use of political allusions.

Concerning the royal court, it has been shown that Massinger was commenting on the favoritism and the corruption which Buckingham and Mompesson personified during the 1620's. In his allusions to favoritism, Massinger is directing his satire toward the personal power of the Duke of Buckingham. The references to Buckingham are most obvious in The Bondman, and such passages as the description of Gisco and the criticisms of the unready state of the army and navy by Archidamus and Timoleon are unmistakable allusions to Buckingham's incompetence as a war minister. Other isolated allusions in The Great Duke of Florence, The Maid of Honour, and The Duke of Milan reinforce the fact that Massinger was satirizing the ineffective rule of Buckingham. All of these allusions can be interpreted as an attack on the favoritism which was practiced in the royal court.



Although his allusions to favoritism are not so much organized as they are pointed, Massinger's comment on the corruption of the royal monopolies in the Stuart administration reaches a fairly high level of coherency. The allusions are most significant in A New Way to Pay Old Debts. The character of Sir Giles Overreach in this play can easily be read as a satire of the notorious Sir Giles Mompesson, especially if the character of Justice Greedy is considered as Mompesson's confederate, Francis Michell. Moreover, such a reading can be further justified by relating Overreach's control over Tapwell's tavern to the fact that Mompesson received most of his notoriety through his abuse of the monopoly on the licensing of taverns. Also, the many references to commissions in this play seem to be Massinger's way of reminding his audience that the plot concerns the activities of Mompesson. In other plays, there are unmistakable allusions to the monopoly on gold thread (The Bondman) and the presence of the parasitic projectors in court (The Emperor of the East), and these allusions give additional weight to the fact that Massinger was making political comment on the corruption which was prevalent in the royal courts.

Massinger's most extended and coherent political comment is found in the allusions which concern England's foreign policy in the 1620's. In these allusions, Massinger is attacking the Stuart policies toward the Protestant cause on the continent, and he is especially criticizing James's

policy of non-intervention. As has been shown, the only criticism of Charles's handling of the Palatinate issue appears in Believe As You List. The allusions in this play to Charles's court in 1631, including the sympathetic portrayal of Frederick's dilemma in the character of Antiochus, are presented in such a manner as to leave no doubt that Massinger's sympathies rested with the Protestant cause on the continent.

The allusions to James's attitude toward the Palatinate are much more explicit than those which concern Charles. In fact, the allegories in The Maid of Honour and The Bondman not only express a disapproval of James's policy, but they also offer what Massinger thought to be constructive suggestions for the preservation of England's national honor and for the alleviation of Protestant distress on the continent. In The Maid of Honour, Massinger has created an allegory in which Roberto, King of Sicily, stands for James I (who, it should be noted, is also king of an island) and Ferdinand, Duke of Urbino, stands for Frederick. Massinger's comment on the situation of Roberto and Ferdinand, as expressed through the speeches of Bertoldo, is an exhortation for England to go to the aid of Frederick and to engage in imperialism for the sake of survival. In The Bondman the allegorical comment is much more elaborate and explicit. The first act of this play, in which Archidamus and Timoleon make scathing reproofs of Syracuse's lack of leadership, the unready state of its

army, and the corruption of the government, is a direct attack on the condition of the English government in the early 1620's. The additional allusions to Elizabeth and Maurice give substance to the overall allegory, and Massinger's purpose of political criticism must have been obvious to his English audiences. Taken comprehensively, the allusions in The Bondman are advising James to give military relief to the Protestant cause, particularly the troubles of Frederick and Elizabeth. To accomplish this relief, Massinger, in Timoleon's speeches, is asking the English nobility to give freely of their wealth, and he alludes to Elizabeth's offer to give her jewels to the Protestant cause as an example for them to follow. The opinions expressed in these allusions were highly popular opinions of the day, and the views expressed would have been the logical choices for dramatic allusions in the public theatre. Therefore, the fact that the coherent opinions expressed in these allusions were of a highly topical nature gives a reason for their existence.

Another, and perhaps more significant, explanation of why Massinger wrote political allusions is that the opinions expressed therein are strikingly similar to the views held by the Pembroke family. The contention that Massinger was writing political allusions which were intended to be flattering to the Pembrokes can be supported in several ways. First, by pointing to certain facets of Massinger's life and career, it can be established that Massinger probably had

frequent contact with various members of the Pembroke family. Beginning with his father's employment in the Pembroke household, the Pembroke name recurs with striking frequency throughout Massinger's life. The proximity of the Massinger and Pembroke families at Wilton certainly would have offered opportunities for Philip to associate with the Pembrokes, and this contact with the nobility would have exposed him to the social and political views of the English aristocracy.

Aside from his family and childhood connections with the Pembrokes, a more significant way of proving the Pembroke influence in Massinger's allusions is to point to his aristocratic patrons. All of Massinger's important patrons were related by blood to the Pembroke family, and the Earl of Montgomery, brother of the third Earl of Pembroke, patronized most of Massinger's dramatic career. Furthermore, a scrutiny of his dedications reveals that Massinger relied heavily upon patronage for sustentation. Therefore, it is logical that Massinger, when writing political allusions, would have made his comment flattering to his patrons. Since his patrons were related to and shared the political views of the Pembroke family, Massinger would have necessarily intended his political comment to please the Pembrokes.

The decisive factor in showing that Massinger's political comment was at least influenced, and perhaps predicated, by the views of the Pembrokes is the similarity between the opinions expressed in the allusions and the Pembrokes'

political views, the parallels of which have been described throughout this study. The situation in the royal court, which included the practice of favoritism and widespread political corruption, and the crisis in the Palatinate were two topics on which the Pembrokes felt very strongly, and if Massinger were trying to impress the Pembrokes, then allusions to these two topics would have achieved the most effective results. Therefore, the fact that the opinions expressed in the allusions are basically the same as the political views of the Pembrokes suggests that Massinger was greatly influenced by that large and notable family. Obversely, this similarity also reinforces the fact that Massinger was consciously writing political comment, for the presence of the Pembroke influence would give an additional reason for the existence of the allusions. There is no evidence to show that the Pembrokes, or even Massinger personally, were attempting to use the Jacobean stage as a propaganda tool, but the expression of the Pembrokes' political views in dramatic allegories would certainly have been flattering to the entire Pembroke family.

The question as to the extent to which political allusions are an essential part of Massinger's works requires a different answer for different plays. Although Massinger's drama as a whole<sup>2</sup> cannot be called political, some of the plays,

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<sup>2</sup>Massinger's drama is here, as before, meant to be those plays which Massinger alone wrote and not his collaborations.

particularly The Maid of Honour and The Bondman, have unmistakable political overtones. A New Way to Pay Old Debts contains strong political elements in its allusions to Mompesson and Michell, but it cannot be considered essentially political since it was written several years after Mompesson's fall in 1621. The political allusions in this play must be considered simply crowd-pleasers. Political allusions in other plays, however, have a more serious purpose. The allusions to Buckingham, for instance, were certainly intended for ridicule, and, although the satire of him in The Bondman, The Maid of Honour, The Duke of Milan, and The Great Duke of Florence is not enough to suggest that Massinger's only purpose in these plays was to debase Buckingham's name, the individual allusions themselves are certainly political in nature. The allusions to the Palatinate issue in The Maid of Honour and The Bondman can leave no doubt that Massinger was actively participating in the politics of his day. Not only are there many specific allusions to the Palatinate in these plays, but the overall plot of each play suggests the situation that existed between James and England on one side and Frederick and the Palatinate on the other. In fact, the allusions are so frequent in these two plays that they become allegories. In The Maid of Honour, the oppressed Ferdinand asks for and is refused help from Roberto in much the same way that James refused to help Frederick in the Palatinate. The allegory is strengthened by the fact that Sicily is an

island, as is England, and Massinger's argument that an island must engage in imperialism if it is to survive is made clear in the speeches of Bertoldo. And so, taken as a whole, the entire plot of The Maid of Honour can be equated with the English position in international affairs in the early 1620's. The fact that Massinger chose Sicily, an island, again in The Bondman is especially significant, and the allegory in this play is more detailed than in The Maid of Honour. Not only do the countries in The Bondman equate to the situation between the English, the Dutch, and the Spanish in the 1620's, but Timoleon's speeches provide a voice through which Massinger describes the situation as he sees it. In these speeches, Massinger laments that England has been weakened by the idle rich, he calls for contributions from these rich to pursue a war on the continent, and he advises James to help not only Frederick, but all Protestants who are oppressed by the Spanish. The Bondman, of all Massinger's plays, is perhaps the most political, for he goes to great lengths to portray not only England's situation in foreign affairs, but also the characters of Maurice and Elizabeth. It appears that the primary purpose of this play is to provide Massinger a vehicle for his political comment.

Concerning the various allusions to matters other than court corruption and the Palatinate war, it must be admitted that most seem merely incidental. Although the references to Charles in The Great Duke of Florence are frequent enough

to indicate that praise of the young Stuart might have been a part of Massinger's design for the play, the other minor allusions are either unrelated to the major themes of their plays or else had for the seventeenth century some additional topical significance which is now lost. Nevertheless, these allusions are of value in that, by their very presence, they reinforce the thesis that Massinger was consciously writing topical allusions into his works as a means of expressing didactic political opinions.

It is possible that other political allusions in Massinger's canon may be uncovered in the future. But as matters stand at the moment, important allusions have been proven to exist in no less than nine of his plays, a significant part of his total independent production. It should be obvious that scholarship on Massinger, which in the past has focused on such considerations as his morality, his talent for plot construction, and his collaboration with Fletcher, must also give attention to his political awareness and involvement.

To attempt to read Massinger without recognizing and interpreting his many political allusions is to miss a most important and most interesting part of his purposes, for Massinger makes his contemporary scene a major source of his dramas. One must be aware of the spirit of Renaissance man to understand Shakespeare's Hamlet or Marlowe's Faustus, but one must know the political events of Jacobean history



to grasp the full significance of Massinger's characters. This study provides a reference to the intricate historical events which are the keys to a full understanding of the plays of Philip Massinger.

## APPENDIX

The edition of Massinger's plays most often used in the research for this study is that of Arthur Symons, originally published in two volumes. This edition contains ten of Massinger's plays, including all that are of especial importance for this study except The Emperor of the East and The Bondman. Symons' work is valuable, for it corrects many of the corrupt readings in earlier editions of Massinger's plays.

Benjamin Townley Spencer's edition of The Bondman, published in 1932, fully compensated for the absence of that play from Symons' volumes. It is one of the best and most thorough editions of any of Massinger's works; it contains detailed discussions of such matters as the date of composition, the stage history, the sources, and the printers, publishers, and editors of The Bondman. In the absence of any more recent available edition of The Emperor of the East, a play of relatively minor importance in this investigation, the early nineteenth-century edition of William Gifford was employed.

For the very important play of A New Way to Pay Old Debts, T. W. Craik's recent and excellent edition was used.

Although he has few readings that differ from Symons, Craik provides a great deal more commentary on the play. All of the editions used for the major plays involved in this thesis are based upon the original manuscripts or the earliest known printed texts, all of which are presently located in the British Museum.

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