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Family Networks: The Sidneys, Dudleys, and Herberts

Michael G. Brennan

Pre-1580

Between 1500 and 1700 the Sidneys cultivated contacts with numerous influential English families, including the Brandons, Dudleys, Cecils, Herberts, Walsinghams, and Percys. Frequently, it was these close familial links, confirmed through marital unions, which supported the Sidneys' rise into important court and county positions. For example, the early court prominence of Sir William Sidney (c. 1482–1554), owed much to his family connections with the influential Brandons through his mother, Anne Brandon, the aunt of Charles Brandon (c. 1484–1545). Sidney and Brandon often jostled together in royal tournaments, and the latter's friendship with the king led to his creation in 1514 as Duke of Suffolk. In the following year he became the king's brother-in-law when he married Henry's sister Mary, the widow of King Louis XII of France (from whom the Sidneys derived their porcupine family crest). Sir William Sidney continued to prosper at the Henrician court, in 1538 becoming chamberlain to the household of the king's infant son and heir, Prince Edward, with his wife, Anne, serving as the prince's governess and his sister-in-law, Sybil Penne, as dry-nurse (Brennan, *Sidneys of Penshurst* 13–20).

From the mid-sixteenth century onwards no family was more important to the Sidneys, apart perhaps from the Dudleys, than the Welsh Herberts, Earls of Pembroke; their London mansion, Baynard's Castle, a late medieval castellated mansion on the north bank of the Thames near Blackfriars and St. Paul's, came to play a central role in the history of the Tudor and Stuart Sidneys (Illustrations 1 and 2). In 1546 William Herbert, the brother-in-law of Queen Catherine Parr, and from October 1551 first Earl of Pembroke, was appointed as its keeper. After Henry VIII's death, Baynard's Castle came permanently into his possession, and he built a large extension to the property during the 1550s. From then until the 1640s it served as the Herberts' main London residence. After the marriage on 21 April 1577 of his son Henry, second Earl of Pembroke, to Sir Henry Sidney's daughter Mary (Illustrations 5 and 9), the Sidneys also frequently used Baynard's Castle as their family base in London until the completion of their own mansion, Leicester House (Illustration 31), in the 1630s (Collins 1:82; TNA PROB 11/36).

On 29 March 1551 Henry Sidney married Mary Dudley, the daughter of John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and sister of Robert and Ambrose Dudley (later Earls of Leicester and Warwick). On 11 October 1552 Sidney was knighted, and this day also saw the creations of his father-in-law, John Dudley, as Duke of Northumberland and William Herbert as Earl of Pembroke (CSPD 1547–80 35). Through his family connection with Henry VIII's final marriage, William Herbert now outranked both Sir William Sidney and his son, Henry. But

the personal connections between the Sidneys and the Earl of Pembroke remained strong and friendly enough to ensure that a decade later the Earl of Pembroke was named as godfather to Sir Henry's and Lady Mary's eldest surviving daughter, Mary (Illustrations 9 and 10), after her birth on 27 October 1561 (Hannay, *Philip's Phoenix* 15). The consecutive presidencies of the Council of Wales held by the Herberts and Sidneys also contributed to the sustained bonding between these two families during Queen Elizabeth's reign since the first Earl of Pembroke served two terms as president (1550–53, 1555–58), followed by Sir Henry Sidney (1560–86) and then the second Earl of Pembroke (1586–1601). The marriage on 21 April 1577 of the fifteen-year-old Mary Sidney to the almost forty-year-old Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, provided public confirmation of the now well-established links between the two families which were to last until the 1650s and often revolved around convivial or political meetings at the Herbert residences, Baynard's Castle and Wilton House near Salisbury, and the Sidneys' at Penshurst (Illustrations 3, 4, 29, and 30).

In August 1577 Sir Henry Sidney's secretary, Edmund Waterhouse, visited Wilton and found Philip and Robert Sidney staying with their sister and her new husband (Collins 1:209). The Sidneys' closest family associates, Robert and Ambrose Dudley, Earls of Leicester and Warwick, were also regular guests at Wilton. In the previous June they had both stayed there with the Earl and Countess of Pembroke, prior to Leicester and Pembroke's heading off together to the spa at Buxton (Collins 1:191; HMC, *Salisbury* 2:154). In late 1578 various members of the Herbert, Sidney, and Dudley families again assembled at Wilton House for a protracted celebration of Mary's seventeenth birthday (Wright 2:95). During the same period Sir Henry Sidney stayed at Baynard's Castle and then visited Wilton in January 1579 after his wife Lady Mary and son Philip had accompanied the Earl and Countess of Pembroke to the court at Richmond to exchange New Year gifts with the queen (Nichols 2:265, 268–71). In the following February and March Sir Henry Sidney was back at Baynard's Castle, where his son Robert (Illustrations 13, 14, and 15) also came to stay on vacation from Oxford (HMC, *De L'Isle and Dudley* 1:267). In April the Earl and Countess of Pembroke traveled with Philip Sidney to Penshurst, and in June Philip went to stay at Wilton (*Philip's Phoenix* 42). Finally, as anxieties grew within Leicester's Protestant faction over the proposed marriage between Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Anjou, on 25 August 1579 the Spanish ambassador reported that Leicester, Sir Henry Sidney, and other associates had secretly assembled at the Earl of Pembroke's "London house" (that is, Baynard's Castle), when the genesis of Philip Sidney's "A Letter to Queen Elizabeth" may have been first discussed (CSPS 2:695). Court suspicions over Sir Henry Sidney's recurrent visits to the Herberts' residences were such that by June 1580 Sir Francis Walsingham was obliged to advise him that the queen "hath commanded me to recommend unto your Lordship the more earnestly, for that she is given to understand, that your Lordship doth sometime resort to Wilton; which ... she somewhat misliketh" (Collins 2:274).

1580–1603

Family christenings and marriages during the 1580s provided less controversial opportunities for the Sidneys, Herberts, and Dudleys to enjoy one another's company. The Pembroke's first son, William (Illustrations 20 and 21), was born on 8 April 1580, and so named after his grandfather, William Herbert, and great-grandfather, Sir William Sidney. At the christening, held at Wilton on 28 April, Queen Elizabeth and the Earls of Leicester and Warwick were named as godparents, with the Countess of Warwick standing as proxy for the queen and Philip Sidney (Illustration 7) for his uncle Leicester. When some eighteen

months later the Countess of Pembroke gave birth to a daughter, Katherine, Sir Henry Sidney stood as godparent, and after the birth of her second daughter, Anne, in spring 1583 the Countesses of Warwick and Talbot (Henry Herbert's widowed sister) were named as godparents (*Philip's Phoenix* 50–52). Similarly, the marriage of Robert Sidney (Illustrations 13, 14 and 15) to Barbara Gamage (Illustrations 17 and 18), a rich Welsh heiress, on 23 September 1584 was actively promoted not only by his father, but also by Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, who attended the wedding at St. Donat's. Without Pembroke's influence, this highly advantageous union would probably not have taken place. It proved a crucial factor in the fortunes of the Sidneys, since not only was Barbara a loving and supportive wife, but also her fortune provided "approximately half of the Sidneys' income throughout their lives" (CKS U1475 T327/8; DPFA 1–2; Hannay, *MSLW* 9–11). Soon after his marriage the twenty-one-year-old Robert Sidney was elected as a Member of Parliament (MP) for Glamorganshire, another clear indication of the influence of both his father, who was then Lord President of Wales, and his brother-in-law, the Earl of Pembroke (Hay 42–3). The Countess of Pembroke had not attended this wedding because she was then eight months pregnant. On 16 October 1584 she gave birth to her second son, Philip, later Earl of Montgomery and fourth Earl of Pembroke (Illustrations 20 and 22), whose godparents were his grandmother Lady Sidney and his uncles, Sir Philip and Robert Sidney. On the same day the Herberts and Sidneys would also have been united in their grief for the death of her little daughter Katherine (*Philip's Phoenix* 55).

The successive deaths in 1586 of Sir Henry Sidney (5 May), Lady Mary Sidney (9 August) and Sir Philip (17 October) drew the Countess of Pembroke, her husband, and her brother Robert even closer together. Pembroke succeeded Sir Henry Sidney as Lord President of Wales, and Robert soon came to regard his much older brother-in-law as a surrogate father-figure—a sentiment bolstered by the deaths of his Dudley uncles, Leicester and Warwick, in 1588 and 1590. The Herberts allowed Robert and Barbara Sidney to use Baynard's Castle as their regular London base, and from the late 1580s they and their growing family were often in residence there, especially during the autumn, winter, and early spring seasons. Their first child, Mary (so named after her aunt and godmother, the Countess of Pembroke, Illustration 17), was probably born there on 18 October 1587 and christened in the Great Hall of Baynard's Castle, as were Alice (b. 1598) and Barbara (b. 1599). The midwifery support at Baynard's Castle was clearly superior to anything available at Penshurst since Robert's most trusted family servant and friend, Rowland Whyte, noted in a letter of 13 October 1599 that he had just left the heavily pregnant Barbara at Penshurst, but that she was "now resolved to be brought to bed in Baynard's Castle" (352; *MSLW* 20). The very first surviving letter in a series of over three hundred from Robert to Barbara, dated 26 April 1588, was also sent from Baynard's Castle; and their son, Robert (later second Earl of Leicester), was born there c. 1 December 1595, when his mother Barbara was resident there with their three eldest children, Mary, William, and Katherine (102; *DPFA* 23, 79). In late May 1588 Barbara was staying with the Countess of Pembroke and her brother, Thomas Sidney, at her rural retreat of Ivychurch, Wiltshire, and as the Armada crisis escalated in the following July, Barbara and her household were evacuated from Penshurst to Wilton, where they stayed until mid-September, since it was assumed that a successful Spanish invasion would rapidly overrun most of Kent (*DPFA* 23–8).

During the 1590s Rowland Whyte (whose grandfather had been in the service of William Herbert, first Earl of Pembroke) was also often at Baynard's Castle, and provided another valuable link with the Herberts (Illustration 16). On 25 November 1595 Whyte reported to Robert that his wife Barbara had been staying with the Earl of Pembroke at Baynard's Castle and had been at court lobbying for her husband to be allowed some home leave from Flushing (94–5). On 19 March 1597 Whyte recorded how he had taken a boat from court

directly to Baynard's Castle (177), and his letters contain various references to the Countess of Pembroke's ordering rooms to be made available for Robert (274, 305–8). The huge size of Baynard's Castle meant that Robert could have his whole family staying with him there, as Whyte's comment of 10 March 1598 makes clear: "I do prepare Baynard's Castle for you, where you shall have all the rooms upon the waterside for my Lady and the children" (310).

Whyte also kept Robert Sidney fully briefed on the various marriage plans for the Countess of Pembroke's eldest son, William Herbert (Illustrations 20 and 21). On 15 October 1595 he reported plans to marry William to Elizabeth Carey, the daughter of Lord and Lady Hunsdon. There had apparently been some secret meetings at Wilton House, although by 22 November Whyte noted that these match-making plans had come to nothing, as did later plans for a match with Bridget de Vere and Elizabeth Cecil Hatton (Whyte 60–63, 87–9). In the same November letter he also advised Robert Sidney that William's father, Henry, second Earl of Pembroke, had reputedly fallen out with the Earl of Essex—a worrying state of affairs since both men were influential court allies for Sidney. By 1597 the Earl of Pembroke's health was steadily declining, and Robert Sidney began to hope for his (and his late father's) post as Lord President of Wales, not least as a means of extricating himself from his hated Flushing governorship.

Robert's relationship with his nephew, William Herbert, grew steadily more important as Pembroke's health continued to deteriorate. In April 1599 Sidney unsuccessfully requested permission from Robert Cecil to return from Flushing to be with his brother-in-law (HMC, *Salisbury* 9:141–2). Pembroke's eldest son and heir, William, was also beginning to prepare for his future role as his father's heir, following a formal invitation from the queen in July to attend her court, to which his mother, the Countess of Pembroke, sent a profusely grateful reply (*Philip's Phoenix* 163; MSH, *Collected Works* 1:290–92). At first, he focused on obtaining some military experience, and on 4 August 1599 Whyte reported that he has been asked by young William to see if Robert could loan him any armor or pistols, since he was resolved to "follow the camp." On 11 August he passed on another such request, this time for any spare armor or weapons which Robert had stored at Baynard's Castle (312–13, 315–17). Whyte was closely monitoring William's progress at court since it was now clear that he would soon inherit his father's title and could eventually prove a valuable personal ally for the Sidneys. Writing from Baynard's Castle on 8 September 1599, Whyte advised Robert that the Earl of Pembroke's health was still failing, and "My Lord Herbert is a continual courtier, but doth not follow his business with that care as is fit. He is too cold in a matter of such greatness." On 12 September Whyte gloomily commented: "he is much blamed for his cold and weak manner of pursuing her Majesty's favour, having had so good steps, to lead him unto it. There is want of spirit and courage laid to his charge, that he is a melancholy young man" (327–33). Happily, by 24 November 1599 Whyte was able to report to Sidney that William Herbert was now "exceedingly beloved at court of all men" (379–80). Despite these public vicissitudes, a friendly intimacy between Robert Sidney and William continued to develop, and on 30 October 1600 Whyte advised Robert that his nephew "means to be exceeding merry with you this winter in Baynard's Castle, where you must take physic" (550–52).

Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, died on 19 January 1601, when Robert Sidney had already left Baynard's Castle to stay with his sister at Wilton. He wrote to Robert Cecil about his grief for the man "to whom of all men (my father and mine elder brother excepted) I have been most bound unto" (HMC, *Salisbury* 9:13). Family problems mounted when in February William Herbert, now third Earl of Pembroke, admitted that he had made pregnant a court lady, Mary Fitton, whom he had met in June 1600 at the wedding of his cousin Henry Somerset, Lord Herbert. Her father, Sir Edward Fitton, was a former Vice-Treasurer in Ireland under the command of Sir Henry Sidney, who had knighted him in 1566. William flatly refused to marry her, and in late March the outraged queen ordered his

incarceration in the Fleet Prison, where he lingered until his release on 26 April, followed by his banishment from the court, first to Baynard's Castle and then to Wilton House (*Philip's Phoenix* 160–61; *MSLW* 79–83).

The new Earl of Pembroke's personal disgrace with the queen did not seem to inhibit his ongoing intimacy with his Sidney relatives. From the late 1590s the Sidney family was ever more frequently based at Baynard's Castle, especially when Robert was away at Flushing (August 1599–October 1600; August–September 1601, and August–October 1602). From at least 1599 Rowland Whyte also had accommodation there, from where his letters to Robert were often sent at this period. Even when he was away attending court, as on 1 March 1599, Whyte took care to reassure his master: "My Lady and all your sweet creatures are in good health at Baynard's Castle" (433–5). While still barred from court in December 1602, Pembroke joined Robert Sidney for Christmas revels on the estate of Sir John Harington at Exton (552–3). Robert Sidney's last known letter to his wife during Queen Elizabeth's reign, dated 12 January 1603, refers to him traveling back with William Herbert to Baynard's Castle so that they can meet up again with her and the children (*DPEA* 114). The queen's death on 24 March 1603 effectively marked the end of William Herbert's banishment from the royal court. At the state funeral, also attended by his mother, the dowager countess, his brother Philip carried the standard of the Greyhound and, with Thomas Lord Howard, William carried the great banner of England (Nichols 3:620–26; *Philip's Phoenix* 171–2).

1603–1625

Both the Sidneys and the Herberts, now firmly associated through close bonds of personal friendship and shared political interest, assiduously cultivated the personal favor of King James and Queen Anne during the early years of the new regime. Robert had personally known King James VI since 1588, and both the Earl of Pembroke (now aged twenty-three) and his brother Philip (aged nineteen), as well as their sister Anne, joined the huge entourage of courtiers heading northwards to escort the new king and queen to London (*Philip's Phoenix* 180). The Sidneys and the Herberts were rapidly rewarded with personal honors. In May 1603 Robert Sidney was appointed as Queen Anne's Lord Chamberlain (and in November, Surveyor of the Queen's Revenues), while the Earl of Pembroke and his brother Philip became Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber. In July Philip was created a Knight of the Bath and William Herbert was invested, along with Prince Henry as a Knight of the Garter. This last honor, also attended by the dowager countess and her daughter Anne, marked a signal favor from the new Stuart monarchy for the Earl of Pembroke, and it would be another thirteen years before his uncle, Robert Sidney, achieved the same court status (Nichols 1:193–5). London was hit by an outbreak of the plague in late summer 1603, and a western progress was hastily arranged for the royal family, taking in the Herberts' Wiltshire residence at Wilton House. The royal entourage stayed there on 29–30 August, 6 and 20–24 October, and again in early December, when the King's Men (formerly Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's) reputedly traveled from Surrey to Wiltshire to perform before the court for a fee of £50 (*Philip's Phoenix* 187; *Sidneys of Penshurst* 114–15). By the Christmas and New Year season of 1603–04 both the Sidneys and the Herberts had secured for themselves a genuinely friendly and trusting intimacy with King James and Queen Anne.

Participation in court entertainments provided the Sidneys and Herberts with a congenial (if expensive) means of consolidating their personal contacts with the royal family. A masque "brought in by a magician of China" was staged at court on 1 January 1604, with the Earl of Pembroke as a masquer. He also played a prominent role in the ceremonial presentation to

James of a jewel reputedly worth £40,000 as an expression of England's loyal allegiance to the new king. His handsome younger brother Philip (Illustration 22) made an even stronger impression on James, bearing the device of "a fair colt in a fair green field" like Bucephalus, who could be mounted only by "one as great" as Alexander. The Sidneys' eldest daughter, Mary (Illustrations 18 and 19), had pleased the aged Queen Elizabeth with her dancing in December 1602, and it was now the turn of both Robert (Queen Anne's Lord Chamberlain) and his nephew Pembroke to perform as invited dancers in Samuel Daniel's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*.

In the latter part of 1604 the first of three key marriages was celebrated, which also served to draw the Sidneys and Herberts ever more closely into the royal circle. From July until October the dowager countess and her daughter Anne were frequently at Penshurst with Barbara Sidney while her husband Robert and his nephew Pembroke were on progress with the court (CKS C81/108, 115). On 27 September Robert's daughter Mary married Sir Robert Wroth, one of the king's favored hunting companions, who had been knighted following the accession. On 4 November 1604, at Wilton, the Earl of Pembroke married Mary (d. 1650), daughter of Gilbert Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury. In subsequent years she enjoyed autumn visits to Penshurst to stay with Barbara Sidney and her children, and was recorded there in September 1606 and 1607 (Lambeth Palace MS 3202/101 and 3205/110; *Philip's Phoenix* 271; *MSLW* 96–7). Pembroke's younger brother, Philip, completed the family's marital unions by his marriage on 27 December to Susan, daughter of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and his wife Anne Cecil (Burghley's daughter, who had once been considered as a spouse for Philip Sidney). The Sidneys, including Lady Wroth, stayed at Baynard's Castle for the wedding, and James I gave the bride £500 in land and the bridegroom £1,000. Susan de Vere had danced in the *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, and the wedding celebrations, including a three-hour masque in which the Earl of Pembroke took the role of principal masquer, culminated with the arrival on the following morning of the king himself in the marital bedroom to offer his congratulations to the couple. He was now so informally at ease with the Herbert brothers that Dudley Carleton reported James's wry comment that if he had not already been married he would have kept the bride for himself. It also seems (with Robert Sidney's active connivance) that just as Philip Herbert had rapidly caught the eye of King James I, so his elder brother Pembroke had successfully endeared himself in Queen Anne's affections (Carleton 66–9; *Sidneys of Penshurst* 116; *MSLW* 103).

The still rising pre-eminence of the Sidneys and Herberts at the Jacobean court was confirmed when on the same day, 4 May 1605, Robert Sidney was raised to the title of Viscount Lisle (Illustration 15) and Philip Herbert was created Baron of Shurland and Earl of Montgomery. Their good fortune during the next decade continued to be given public expression through the medium of court entertainments. The cast-list of the *Masque of Blackness* by Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones, staged at the Whitehall Banqueting House on 6 January 1605, illustrates the Sidneys' and Herberts' diligent participation in these lavish events in which the queen took such delight. Staying again at Baynard's Castle and with her father in the audience as Lord Chamberlain, Mary Sidney Wroth danced the role of Baryte, along with Susan, the wife of Philip Herbert, her cousin Lady Anne Herbert (William's and Philip's sister), and Lucy Harington Russell, Countess of Bedford, who was to become a close friend of Philip's elder brother, the Earl of Pembroke. Similarly, 1606 began with the Earl of Montgomery dancing in Jonson's *Hymenaei*, staged to celebrate the marriage of Robert Devereux (now restored to his Essex earldom) to Lady Frances Howard, the daughter of the Earl of Suffolk. In late June Queen Anne's brother, Christian IV of Denmark, visited England and was entertained by a wide array of often riotous festivities, most of which Robert Sidney was obliged to attend in an official capacity. In early July military tilts were held in Christian's honor at Greenwich Park, with the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery taking

two of the four lead roles in an elaborate chivalric event, “Four Knights Errant Dominated by the Fortunate Islands” (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 118–19; *MSLW* 124–9).

In stark contrast to the joyful festivities of court entertainments, King James and Queen Anne were also drawn closer to Robert and Barbara Sidney at this period by their shared bereavements over the deaths of their respective children. By 1607 the Sidneys had lost as infants Henry, Elizabeth, Bridget, Alice and Vere and the royal couple had lost Margaret, Robert, Mary and Sophia. James and Anne found these losses so traumatic that they could not bring themselves to attend their children’s funerals—a duty shouldered instead by the queen’s Lord Chamberlain, Robert Sidney. In 1607 he was obliged to attend the autopsy of Princess Mary and to supervise her funeral arrangements, and Robert described these mournful duties to his wife Barbara in a letter of 19 September written from Baynard’s Castle (*DPFA* 126–7). Several of his other letters at this period confirm just how closely the Sidneys and Herberts were still continuing to interact. In the same letter Robert mentioned that his sister, the Dowager Countess of Pembroke, was hoping to come and stay with Barbara at Penshurst, and on 27 September, this time from Hampton Court, he let Barbara know that she should expect some additional guests, including the Countess of Montgomery and the Earl of Pembroke. On the following day he sent another letter to Barbara, suggesting that she should arrange for their eldest daughter, Mary Wroth, to join this planned Penshurst party. On 5 October Robert notified Barbara that he was about to visit Loughton Hall to see Lady Wroth and he was also expecting to meet there his nephew the Earl of Pembroke. On 20 October he provided Barbara with yet another update on his meetings with Lady Wroth and the Countess of Montgomery. As their fortunes continued to rise at the Jacobean court, the Sidneys and Herberts remained assiduous courtiers (except for Pembroke’s wife, Mary, who, as Rowland Whyte pointedly commented, was “a most worthy lady but no good courtier”) and depended heavily upon one another’s personal support in both their public and private lives (*DPFA* 127–30; Lambeth Palace Library MS 3202/15; *Sidneys of Penshurst* 119–20). The powerful familial bonds that existed between the Sidneys and the Dudleys during the Tudor period had now been constructively replaced by those between the Sidneys and the Herberts.

In January 1608 the Sidneys and Herberts were once more prominent in court festivities. On 6 January Robert Sidney, Mary Wroth, and the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery were among the elite audience which attended Jonson’s *The Masque of Beauty* staged at the newly rebuilt Whitehall Banqueting House (*MSLW* 129–30). On 9 February Philip Herbert danced in Jonson’s *The Haddington Masque*, staged to celebrate the wedding of Viscount Haddington and Lady Elizabeth Radcliffe, the daughter of the Earl of Sussex. On the following 23 April he was elevated, as his brother William had been in 1603, to the rank of a Knight of the Garter. On 18 September Robert Sidney wrote to his wife Barbara from Baynard’s Castle, where he was staying with his nephew, the Earl of Pembroke. Another letter to Barbara of 3 October vividly illustrates the happy intimacy that then existed between the Sidneys and the Herberts. That day he was planning with the Countess of Montgomery a visit to Durham House where they hoped to meet up with the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery. As usual, the Sidneys and Herberts, drawn together by long-established bonds of genuine friendship and loyalty, seem to have been operating as a unified family and political grouping, both at court and in London metropolitan life.

Rowland Whyte, although in 1598 appointed to the time-consuming role of postmaster to the royal court, still provided a key link between the Sidneys and Herberts. This position (which Whyte held until 1615) required him to supervise the distribution of all official Privy Council letters and documents. As a direct appointee of the council, he was allowed lodgings at court and a daily allowance. He was also required, along with Robert Sidney and the Herbert brothers, to accompany the royal family on their various provincial progresses.

Whyte frequently liaised on Robert's behalf with William Herbert (for whose marriage negotiations he had been actively involved in 1604), and with the Earl's rich and powerful in-laws, the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury. In return, Whyte continued to stay with Sidneys and Herberts at Baynard's Castle, from where he sent to the Earl of Shrewsbury in January 1608 a vivid account of that year's especially harsh winter, describing how the "frost continues here in a very strange manner, the Thames so hardly frozen, that it is made a beaten highway to all places of the city, but all bridges are in great danger upon a thaw" (Lambeth Palace Library MS 3202/131).

Although Robert Sidney's nephews, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, now outranked him in terms of aristocratic precedent, he was still regarded as the head of the Sidney–Herbert grouping at court. This family status was very much in evidence during 1609 and 1610, with Robert always heavily preoccupied by his court duties and liaising whenever possible with William and Philip Herbert, the latter's wife, Susan, and his eldest daughter, Mary Wroth. Courtly entertainments continued to provide recurrent elements of their most intimate interaction with the royal family. On 2 February 1609 the Countess of Montgomery performed in Jonson's *The Masque of Queens*, which was dedicated to a now major presence at the English court, Prince Henry (who was fifteen on 19 February). In the following year Prince Henry's barriers—echoing the old chivalric tenets of the Tudor tiltyards on which Sir William (c. 1482–1554), Sir Henry (1529–86) and Sir Philip Sidney (1554–86) had all once excelled—were held on 6 January, with Jonson penning the speeches and Jones designing the sets. The prince issued a ceremonial challenge and, with his own supporters, held the barriers against fifty-eight challengers, including the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery, both of whom were awarded prizes for their performances (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 122).

The most important court event of 1610 was the creation in early June at the Parliament House of Henry as Prince of Wales, following his coming of age. Robert Sidney and the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery were in prominent attendance, with Pembroke acting as the Prince's server at the feast held in the Great Hall. Tilts were staged, with Pembroke again chosen to offer a gift to the prince, and the Countess of Montgomery performed in Samuel Daniel's queen's masque *Tethys' Festival*, presented at Whitehall in collaboration with Inigo Jones. In January 1611 the Earl of Pembroke was involved in Jonson's *Oberon, the Faery Prince*, in which Henry himself took the role of Oberon. On 29 September Robert reported to Barbara that his nephew, the Earl of Pembroke, had just been sworn in as a member of the Privy Council. The importance of this appointment to the Sidneys was eloquently conveyed in Robert's final remark to Barbara: "so as now I have one friend more among them, who will be both willing and able to do me good" (*DPFA* 169; *Sidneys of Penshurst* 122–3).

The links of amity between the Sidneys and Herberts continued to develop down the generations. In about 1612 Philip Herbert was appointed Keeper of Elsing, a former royal palace, situated close to the Wroth's home at Durrance in Enfield. The Earl and Countess of Montgomery therefore became Lady Mary Wroth's near neighbors, and both families regularly attended the local parish church of St. Andrew's, Enfield. Hence, as Margaret Hannay observes: "When Wroth named her prose romance *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, it was not the usual effort to enlist patronage, but rather an acknowledgement that the two friends had spent many happy hours talking about that fictional world" (*MSLW* 138). The Sidneys and Herberts were also closely bonded from spring 1613 onwards in their support for James I's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, who married Frederick V, Elector Palatine, on 14 February at Whitehall Palace. This marriage was intended as part of a wider alliance between England and the German Protestant union, and on 26 April Robert Sidney set out for the Continent as one of the four royal commissioners accompanying her to Germany. Although their marriage was a happy one, the couple's political problems escalated after Frederick's acceptance of the crown of Bohemia at Prague on 4 November 1619. The Sidneys

and Herberts keenly sought news of their vicissitudes when in autumn 1620 the Spanish occupied large areas of the Lower Palatinate, culminating in the devastating defeat on 8 November of Frederick's troops at the Battle of the White Mountain. Elizabeth and Frederick were forced to flee their territories, and in 1621 established an exiled palatine court at The Hague (*DPFA* 230). On 9 May 1621, Robert Sidney advised his wife Barbara: "The King and Queen of Bohemia are still at The Hague, in very good health and much respected: and the war is like to grow on there very hotly" (*DPFA* 232). Poignantly, this was the last item of political news which Robert was to pass on to his wife, since Barbara unexpectedly died later in the same month.

In November 1613 Robert Sidney was at court for the creation of King James's now most influential favorite, Robert Carr, as Earl of Somerset. As usual, the Sidneys and Herberts were prominent in such an important ceremonial event, with the Earl of Pembroke carrying the sword of honor. On 26 December Carr married Frances Howard, formerly the wife of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, the son of Philip Sidney's widow, Frances. This first marriage had been annulled, supposedly on the grounds of its non-consummation, a circumstance which must have been difficult for the Sidneys, who knew the Devereuxs so well. Nevertheless, the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery dutifully performed in Campion's *Squire's Masque* at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, and also joined the tilts in celebration of this royally approved wedding (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 126).

In February 1614 Mary Wroth gave birth to her only legitimate offspring, James. At the christening, attended by both Sidney grandparents, her cousin, the Earl of Pembroke, stood proxy for King James (*MSLW* 169). The indifferent health of Sir Robert Wroth had been a source of concern for some years, and on 2 March 1614, the day before the christening of his son, he drew up his will with Robert Sidney and Pembroke as its overseers, dying only twelve days later, on 14 March. According to John Chamberlain, he left his widow in severe financial difficulties, with some £23,000 of debts charged to his estate. Mary Wroth soon slipped out of the inner circle of the royal family, but she retained her home, Loughton Hall, and continued to stay with her parents at Penshurst and at Baynard's Castle and frequently drew upon their financial support, as well as that of her cousin, the Earl of Pembroke (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 126–7; *MSLW* 170–71). Wroth's aunt, Mary Sidney Herbert, Dowager Countess of Pembroke, however, was absent from these various family gatherings from summer 1614 until late autumn 1616 since she was traveling on the Continent.

On 14 June 1614 the pro-Spanish and pro-Catholic Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, died. Since the early 1600s he and Robert Sidney had been diametrically opposed in almost all of their political perspectives and, in a calculated act of personal disservice, Northampton had vigorously sought to block the transfer of the Kenilworth estates to the Sidneys. In a deathbed letter to the Earl of Somerset he described Robert Sidney and the Earl of Pembroke as his worst enemies and begged that none of his court offices should be transferred to them. Northampton's passing does seem to have had a beneficial effect on the Sidney–Herbert families' fortunes, most notably with the appointment of their long-term friend and ally, Fulke Greville, as Chancellor of the Exchequer in the following October (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 127). Additional honors also continued to come the way of Robert's two nephews, with the Earl of Montgomery appointed as High Steward of Oxford University on 10 June 1615 and the Earl of Pembroke as Lord Chamberlain on 23 December 1615. This latter post gave William Herbert authority over the above-stairs royal household and the arrangement of court entertainments, including masques, plays, and musical performances, as well as the office of works and licensed theatres.

Robert Sidney was preoccupied in late August 1616 with arrangements for the christening at Wilton of the Earl of Montgomery's son, planned for 18 September. King James and the Earl of Pembroke were to act as godfathers, and the Dowager Countess of Pembroke was

hoping to return to England to stand as godmother. Ultimately, Pembroke's close friend, the Countess of Bedford, proved a willing reserve since his mother did not arrive back in time (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 128). At the end of August 1616 Robert Sidney also attended the creation of King James's new favorite, George Villiers, as Baron Whaddon and Viscount Villiers. His rise into royal favor hints at yet more strategic court links between the Sidneys and the Herberts. In July 1614 Somerset had been appointed as Lord Chamberlain, a post to which Robert's nephew, the Earl of Pembroke, had also aspired. In response, in April 1615 Pembroke hosted a meeting at Baynard's Castle where he and several of Somerset's opponents, including Archbishop George Abbot, agreed to sponsor the career of George Villiers, whose looks and personality had recently attracted King James. Pembroke lent Villiers clothing and worked with Abbot to gain the queen's approval for the young man. On 23 April 1615 Villiers was knighted in the queen's chamber and, given that Robert Sidney was her Lord Chamberlain, it seems very probable that he was fully complicit with this promotion of Villiers as a means of displacing the Earl of Somerset in King James's affections.

Both Robert and his nephew the Earl of Pembroke remained meticulous in their cultivation of the goodwill of the still ever-rising George Villiers, who was created Earl (5 January 1617) and Marquis (1 January 1618) of Buckingham by his infatuated monarch. The Earl of Pembroke was also honored on 29 January/February 1617 by being appointed in a lavish ceremony at Baynard's Castle as Chancellor of Oxford University, a position of considerable pride to both Pembroke and Robert Sidney (and once held by the latter's uncle, the Earl of Leicester). William Herbert contributed £100 towards the construction of the Bodleian Library, and in 1629 donated 250 Greek manuscripts which he had purchased for £700. The rest of Pembroke's Greek manuscripts arrived at the Bodleian in 1654.

Early in 1617 Robert and Barbara Sidney gained a new daughter-in-law when their son Robert (Illustration 23) secretly married Dorothy (Illustration 26), the daughter of Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland. This new family link, which became public knowledge in March (*CSPD 1611–18* 425) would prove to be a crucially powerful one from the 1620s onwards, with Dorothy's sister, Lucy Percy Hay, Countess of Carlisle (Illustration 26), and her increasingly influential brother, Algernon (Illustration 25), often willing to offer their personal support in a variety of important ways to the Sidneys. The Sidney–Herbert network also continued to meet up amicably outside the court, with the Earl of Montgomery visiting his mother at her new residence at Houghton House before moving on to stay at Penshurst in late July (*CKS C81/278*; *Philip's Phoenix* 203). Robert Sidney was himself often obliged to be in London or at Oatlands Palace or Windsor Castle as the Queen's Chamberlain, but with his nephew Pembroke now also in place as the King's Chamberlain, he could take pleasure in the fact that the Sidneys and Herberts were at the zenith of their power and influence at court.

During summer 1617 the Sidneys, including Lady Mary Wroth and her new sister-in-law, Dorothy Percy Sidney, assembled at Penshurst for a family gathering, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, joined them in late July after visiting his mother, the dowager countess (*DPFA* 202). On 4 August 1617, probably while Montgomery was still there, Barbara Sidney also welcomed to Penshurst Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset, whose then wife, Anne Clifford Sackville (later to become Montgomery's second wife), joined the Penshurst party on 19 August and recorded their visit in her famous diary (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 129; *MSLW* 198). At the end of August the Montgomerys' infant son, James, died and Robert Sidney went immediately to visit them to offer his personal condolences (*DPFA* 210).

On 22 July 1618 Robert Sidney wrote from London to Barbara with the joyful news that he had just been created Earl of Leicester by the king in a private ceremony (*DPFA* 216). The public ceremony was held on 2 August in the hall of the Bishop's Palace at Salisbury just before King James was due to take up residence at Wilton House with the Earl of Pembroke.

Robert was also invited to stay there afterwards so that he could attend the king. Clearly, the Sidneys and Herberts now stood proudly together in their joint intimacy with the king and queen, just as the Sidneys and Dudleys had once occupied a similar position during the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth. Robert Sidney's earldom, coupled with his nephew Pembroke's potency at court, had triumphantly reasserted their influence with the monarchs of England (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 129).

The Sidneys and Herberts continued to regard themselves as an extended family and political unit, and this was very much in evidence at the next grand state occasion which they attended. The granting of the Leicester earldom to Sidney had owed much to Queen Anne's personal support for him and this honor came just in time, since she died on 2 March 1619. Sidney, as her long-serving Lord Chamberlain, was in charge of the arrangements for her funeral, held on 13 May at Westminster Abbey, and he and Prince Charles walked before the coffin as it was processed into Henry VII's chapel. The Earl of Pembroke, as Lord Chamberlain to James's court, was one of the six lords who processed alongside the coffin, and his brother Montgomery carried the Great Banner. The Countess of Arundel (the sister of Pembroke's wife, Mary Talbot Herbert) was Principal Mourner, and her assistants included Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester, and the Dowager Countess of Pembroke. Twenty-one other court ladies also processed, including Lady Mary Wroth, her sister Philippa Hobart, and Dorothy Percy Sidney, Lady Lisle (*MSLW* 203).

In March 1620 the Sidneys shared the delight occasioned by the safe birth, with the Dowager Countess of Pembroke assisting at the delivery, of the Earl of Pembroke's only legitimate son, Henry—so named in honor of both his father Henry Herbert and Sir Henry Sidney, and born after sixteen years of marriage. The dowager countess and her son Montgomery stood as godparents, and inevitably, they also shared the sadness of the Earl and Countess of Pembroke when the infant Henry died some three months later at Baynard's Castle (*Philip's Phoenix* 204; *MSLW* 222–3). In 1620 King James I paid another summer visit to Wilton House, and when in November Robert Sidney was preoccupied with official duties at the royal palace of Theobalds, his main consolation seemed to lie in brief but friendly meetings with the Countess of Montgomery, who, as usual, enquired solicitously about the welfare of Barbara Sidney (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 130).

The death on 25 September 1621 of the Dowager Countess of Pembroke from smallpox at her London house in Aldergate Street came as a great loss to the Earl of Leicester, who wrote to his son Robert: "My sister is to be buried privately by her husband at Salisbury, and a funeral made according to her quality in Paul's," where in 1587 her brother, Sir Philip, had been interred (CKS U1475 Z53/81; *Philip's Phoenix* 205). The service at St. Paul's, next to Baynard's Castle, would have been one of the last duties of its Dean, Valentine Cary, who had just been confirmed at Bishop of Exeter. But he may have been assisted by his appointed successor, John Donne, who formally took over the Dean's duties in November and knew well several members of the Herbert family. He had personally presented the Countess of Montgomery with one of his sermons delivered on 18 April 1619, commemorated (probably posthumously) the dowager countess's versification of the Psalms of David in his "Upon the Translation of the Psalms by Sir Philip Sidney, and the Countess of Pembroke His Sister," and was intimate with his son, the Earl of Pembroke, who ended a letter of 20 May 1619 by lamenting the death of the actor Richard Burbage, with the postscript: "commend my best love to Mr. Doctor Donne" (BL Egerton MS 2592 fol. 81).

For the remainder of King James I's reign, the Earl of Leicester played a less prominent role at court. In 1621 *The Countess of Montgomery's Urania* by his daughter, Lady Mary Wroth (Illustrations 18 and 19), was published, although his personal response to it is unknown. It was so titled in honor of Wroth's erstwhile masquing partner, Susan Vere Herbert, Countess of Montgomery. A central problem with this romance lay in the fact that, although Wroth

was an impressively skilled imitator of her uncle's literary forms, her prose style seemed to informed readers far more directly allusive to contemporary events. Her first cousin, the Earl of Pembroke, was clearly the model for Amphilanthus. Wroth had long enjoyed a close personal relationship with her cousin, probably pre-dating her marriage to Robert Wroth, and c. 1624 she gave birth to illegitimate twins, William and Katherine, by the Earl of Pembroke. It is unknown for how long their sexual relationship lasted after these births, but William (and then, after his death in 1630, his brother Philip) assisted Wroth in protecting her from creditors when burdened with debts. The Herbert family, including Philip and their cousin Sir Henry Herbert, later assisted young Will with royal bestowment of Irish property and then military placement during the civil wars; Philip probably also assisted with Katherine's excellent marriage to John Lovet (*MSLW* 250–52, 282–97). Again, Robert Sidney's personal response to these births is unknown.

Nor is there any evidence to suggest how he responded to his nephew's increasingly anti-Spanish stance at court. Pembroke consistently sought ways of challenging Spanish interests at home and abroad. He sponsored the Virginia and Guiana Companies and other colonial ventures which threatened the potency of Spain in the New World, and he also opposed a Spanish match for Prince Charles which was vigorously supported by Buckingham. But whether Robert Sidney was ever personally committed to anti-Spanish policies or, with failing health, he simply sought to keep out of factional court struggles cannot be ascertained. Similarly, little is known about how he viewed the personal lives of the Herbert brothers. Both had a reputation as philanderers, in contrast to Sidney himself, whose correspondence reveals him to have enjoyed a loving and mutually supportive relationship with his wife Barbara. Edward Clarendon sternly remarked that William Herbert was "immoderately given up to women," and during the second decade of King James I's reign Philip Herbert openly formed a relationship with his wife's niece, Elizabeth Norris, who had been living in their London home for several years, until she secretly married another man in March 1622 (*MSLW* 200).

1625–1650

Following the death of King James on 27 March 1625, Pembroke as Lord Chamberlain held ultimate responsibility for the funeral and processed immediately before the coffin. Prince Charles's assistants included both Leicester and Montgomery, and the former's son, Robert Sidney, was also a member of the cortege. Pembroke is likely to have sought out his uncle Leicester's advice on the administrative arrangements, since he had been in charge of Queen Anne's funeral in 1619 (*MSLW* 257). Both men were also involved in the May marriage by proxy at Notre Dame of the new king to Henrietta Maria, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, joined the embassy which escorted Charles I's queen from France to England. However, as plague hit London in early July 1625, Parliament was forced to adjourn to Oxford from Westminster and Leicester withdrew to his Penshurst estates. Partly to avoid the unhealthy metropolitan environment, in October 1625 Charles and Henrietta Maria honored the Herberts with a visit to Wilton House, a source of much satisfaction to Leicester, who remained close to his nephew Pembroke. But plague conditions still prevailed at London, and even the coronation procession scheduled for mid-January had to be cancelled. Finally, Charles I was crowned at Westminster Abbey on 2 February 1626, with Leicester (as one of his parents' most trusted and long-serving courtiers) in expected attendance, the Earl of Pembroke carrying the crown, and the Earl of Montgomery carrying the spurs (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 138; *MSLW* 257).

Leicester's wife Barbara had died in the latter half of May 1621, and in May 1623 he transferred the entire Penshurst estate to his son Robert, presumably because of his own declining health and to avoid any inheritance complications if he remarried (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 138; *MSLW* 258). To the surprise of most observers, and perhaps even his own children, on 25 April 1626 Leicester married Sarah Blount Smythe, the widow of Sir Thomas Smythe, former Ambassador to Russia and Governor of the East India Company. Little is known of this late second marriage, although some of Leicester's outgoing correspondence written from Baynard's Castle, coupled with a warm letter of 13 June 1626 from the Earl of Pembroke to his eldest son Robert (Illustration 23), indicate that his long-standing friendship with the Herberts continued unabated until the end of his life (Collins 2:369). On 13 July 1626 Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, died at the age of sixty-two after returning by water from court to his lodgings at Baynard's Castle. He was buried three days later at Penshurst, with the Earl of Montgomery in attendance and Rowland Whyte supervising the embalming of the body and other funeral arrangements. On 27 July Whyte wrote his last known letter from Baynard's Castle to the younger Robert Sidney, now second Earl of Leicester, communicating news about the activities of the Earls of Pembroke and Montgomery (Collins 2:369–70).

In August 1626 Pembroke was appointed Lord Steward (below stairs) of the royal household, and his brother Montgomery assumed his former role as Lord Chamberlain. King Charles I made another visit to Wilton in October 1626 and was keen to see amicable relations established between the Herberts and his now most influential courtier, the Duke of Buckingham. A marriage alliance was duly brokered between Buckingham's four-year-old daughter, Mary, and Montgomery's eldest son and heir, Charles (aged seven), who was also Buckingham's godson. The wedding did eventually take place in January 1635, but Charles died in the following year while touring the Continent (*MSLW* 259). Philip Herbert's first wife, Susan, died in January 1629 of smallpox, and in June 1630 he married Anne Clifford, widow of Richard Sackville, Earl of Dorset, and daughter of George Clifford, Earl of Cumberland. On 9 April 1630 the Earl of Pembroke dined with the Countess Devonshire, and he died the following morning at Baynard's Castle. The response of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester, to his cousin's death is unknown, although he maintained contact with his younger brother, Philip Herbert, now Earl of Montgomery and the fourth Earl of Pembroke (Illustrations 20 and 22).

Little evidence has survived relating to the personal and court involvements of the Sidneys and Herberts during the 1630s and early 1640s, probably due to the second Earl of Leicester being largely away from England on his French embassy (1636–41) and Lord Deputyship of Ireland (1641–43). Although Philip Herbert was appointed in 1641 at Baynard's Castle as Chancellor of Oxford University, after his second marriage in 1630 to Anne Clifford (a union which effectively broke down in 1634), he tended not to live at either Wilton or Baynard's Castle (where his brother's widow, Mary Talbot Herbert, stayed), and instead resided mainly at London in rooms at the Cockpit near the court. Later, during the Civil War, he sent his wife Anne to live with his brother's widow at Baynard's Castle to protect the family's property there (*MSLW* 262). After the Restoration, Baynard's Castle (Illustrations 1 and 2) was occupied by Francis Talbot (1623–68), eleventh Earl of Shrewsbury, and was largely destroyed in 1666 during the Great Fire of London. There is no reason to suspect, however, that Leicester did not maintain some form of contact with his cousin Philip Herbert whenever their respective commitments allowed. The fourth Earl of Pembroke's sons, Charles and Philip, traveled on the Continent during 1635–37, and the latter may have stayed briefly at his uncle's embassy at Paris.

It also seems likely that Philip Herbert assisted the early military career of Lady Mary Wroth's illegitimate son, William, by his late brother, the third Earl of Pembroke. Young William may even have been resident at some point in Philip Herbert's house at Elsings

(near Wroth's own home), and if so, would have gotten to know well there his cousin, Philip Herbert, later fifth Earl of Pembroke. After William's first military command during the First Bishop's War (1639), Philip Herbert lobbied the king on his behalf in late 1640 for a Munster estate in Ireland. Sadly, the Munster Rising (1641–42) swept away this property, and instead William enlisted under Prince Maurice's elite regiment in the royalist army. The fourth Earl of Pembroke may also have supported at the same period the marriage of William's twin sister, Katherine, first to a wealthy John Lovet (d. 1643) of Oxfordshire, and then to a Welshman, James Parry, whose family lived near the Pembroke estates in Wales (*MSLW* 284–9, 294–5).

When Philip Herbert was forced to resign his Lord Chamberlain's post in July 1641—a major breach with the king, and the beginning of his allegiance to Parliament—it is unlikely that he would have remained in regular court or political communication with Leicester. Also, Queen Henrietta Maria, with whom Leicester's wife, Dorothy Percy Sidney, and her sister, Lucy Percy Hay, Countess of Carlisle, maintained a long intimacy (Illustration 26), actively disliked Philip Herbert for his brusque and often choleric behavior and had personally lobbied for his dismissal as Lord Chamberlain. Nevertheless, it is possible that the Sidney and Herbert families, at least on a private level, remained on amicable terms. Pembroke worked closely during the early 1640s with the royalist Earl of Holland (who later became the lover of Lucy Percy Hay and well known to the Sidney family at Penshurst), and he always sought to retain a moderate reputation as a parliamentarian, often acting as an intermediary with the king and his supporters. On 9 March 1642 he and Holland met Charles I at Royston, where they presented him with a declaration from both the Commons and Lords alleging his misgovernment; and in January 1643 Pembroke was one of the commissioners sent to Charles at Oxford to offer peace propositions. It may be suspected that Pembroke's affiliation to Parliament was largely motivated by his desire to retain Wilton and to be on the winning side, just as the Earl of Leicester's studied neutrality and his withdrawal to his Penshurst estates in 1644 implicitly confirmed the primacy of his commitment to the preservation of his ancestral home.

During the mid-1640s Pembroke loosely allied himself in the House of Lords with the associates of the Earl of Northumberland, who was the Earl of Leicester's brother-in-law and one of his most reliable and trusted supporters. In 1645 Pembroke supported Northumberland in advocating the Self-denying Ordinance and the creation of the New Model Army. In March 1645 Leicester's son, Algernon, was appointed as colonel of one of the eleven cavalry regiments of the New Model Army, commanded by Sir Thomas Fairfax and answerable directly to Cromwell as its Lieutenant-General. A Colonel William Herbert, then also serving under Fairfax, may have been the illegitimate son of Mary Wroth and the third Earl of Pembroke (*MSLW* 284–9). After August 1646 Pembroke began to distance himself from Northumberland and became an outspoken critic of the army, although after it entered London in August 1647 he immediately renounced such views and once again attempted to identify himself with Northumberland and his supporters. Always a self-interested moderate, in December 1648 he joined Northumberland in a delegation which sought an eleventh-hour compromise with the king. When this mission failed, the Commons appointed Pembroke as Constable of Windsor Castle, thereby making him in effect the king's gaoler. On 14 February 1649, two weeks after Charles I's execution, he was one of only five peers appointed to the newly established Council of State, and was also elected in the following April as MP for Berkshire.

The private diary of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester (Illustration 24), sheds fascinating light on the behavior of Philip Herbert, fourth Earl of Pembroke, during the king's trial and execution. Probably based on conversations with his son Algernon (Illustration 25) and Pembroke, Leicester notes on 1 January 1649 the selection of judges from the Upper and Lower Houses for Charles I's trial. A court of 136 commissioners was established,

including Leicester's sons Algernon and Philip (Illustration 28), which met on 15 and 19 January to consider the charges. At the opening of the trial on 19/20 January, Leicester noted that the "King was brought from Windsor to St James's, where he lay that night strongly guarded [and then] from St James' in the Earl of Pembroke's chair ... into Westminster Hall." On 25 January Leicester pointedly emphasized in his diary that his two sons, Philip and Algernon, were at Penshurst during 22–29 January, "so as neither of them was at the condemnation of the King." The defensive tone of these words underlines Leicester's determination to ensure that his two sons were not implicated in the actual judgment process over the king's fate.

The execution of the king on 30 January 1649 was watched incognito from a nearby window by Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, and it seems likely that soon afterwards he provided Leicester with his diary's first-hand account. Both Algernon and Philip were probably at the House of Commons at the moment when the axe fell, attending the sitting at which a resolution was passed to abolish both the monarchy and the House of Lords. The "Rump" of the Commons then assumed supreme power over the nation by parliamentary resolution (*Sidneys of Penshurst* 153–4). The Earl of Leicester's privately held views over the execution of Charles I are brought into sharp focus by his diary's record of the death of Philip Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, on 23 January 1650 at his lodgings at the Cockpit "of a fever and gangrene." On 30 January Sidney wrote that on this very day "the late King was beheaded at Whitehall gate," and observed that Pembroke had not lived for even one year beyond this event. He deplored how Pembroke had told him that he watched from "his chamber window" the king's progress to the "place of his death," sharply noting that he "should not have done," and instead should have "retired himself to pray for him, and to lament his misfortune, to whom he had so great obligations" (*Sydney Papers* 54, 96; *Sidneys of Penshurst* 156).

1651–1702

Philip Herbert's heir, his son Philip, now second Earl of Montgomery and fifth Earl of Pembroke, was elected on 1 December 1651 as a member of the Council of State, and served briefly in summer 1652 as its president. His amenable personality ensured that he made a smooth transition into the court of King Charles II after the Restoration. He was appointed as a councillor for trade and navigation on 7 November 1660, and at the coronation on 23 April 1661 he carried the spurs (symbolically reasserting the Herberts' allegiance to the monarchy, since his father had performed the same role at Charles I's coronation). Although Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester, was able to resume his seat in the House of Lords in April 1660 and was named as a Privy Councillor on 31 May, as soon as Charles II's first Parliament adjourned in October he took the opportunity to plead ill health and withdrew permanently to Penshurst. He did not attend the coronation, and there is no evidence to suggest that he sustained any significant level of personal contact with the fifth Earl of Pembroke. During the 1650s his parliamentarian son, Philip (later the third Earl of Leicester), had loyally served the Commonwealth, and in 1653 was President of the Council of State (Illustration 28). He remained close to Cromwell, and played a prominent role in June 1656 at the ceremonials marking Cromwell's second installation as Protector. In 1658 he had readily signed the proclamation asserting the succession of Richard Cromwell to his father's political roles, but was granted a pardon under the Great Seal on 30 October 1660. From then until his death in 1698 he took little part in public affairs. After his father's death in 1677 he was

largely preoccupied with his Penshurst estate and his London mansion, Leicester House, and acrimonious inheritance squabbles with his surviving brothers, Algernon and Henry.

Philip Herbert, fifth Earl of Pembroke, died in December 1669 and was succeeded by his only son by his first wife, William Herbert (1640–74), sixth Earl of Pembroke. He died unmarried, and was succeeded by his half-brother and eldest son of his father's second marriage, Philip Herbert (1653–83), seventh Earl of Pembroke, a violent and ill-disciplined individual who was imprisoned in the Tower for blasphemy and who killed at least two men. He died, largely unlamented by either the Herberts or the Sidneys, on 29 August 1683. His dissolute life afforded a stark contrast to that of his high-principled republican cousin Algernon Sidney (Illustration 25), who was beheaded on Tower Hill on 7 December 1683 following the ill-fated Rye House Plot to assassinate Charles II and his brother, James, Duke of York. The seventh earl's younger brother, Thomas (1656/57–1733), who had probably been born at Baynard's Castle, succeeded him as the eighth Earl of Pembroke. He later enjoyed the trust of King William III, whose accession to the English throne had been actively supported by Henry Sidney, later Earl of Romney (the youngest brother of Philip Sidney, third Earl of Leicester, who held this title until 1698), who had personally known William as Prince of Orange since the late 1670s. The eighth Earl of Pembroke enjoyed an illustrious administrative and diplomatic career under William III, serving as an ambassador to the Dutch states, a Privy Councillor, first Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Privy Seal, and Lord President of the Council. Similarly, Henry Sidney remained a key military and strategic figure following William III's accession. Once again, from 1688 until the king's death in 1702, the Sidneys and Herberts were drawn together through their respective royal and court service.

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