

## WHO WAS THEN THE GENTLEMAN?: SAMUEL SORBIÈRE, THOMAS HOBBS, AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY

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In the Dedicatory Letter to his 1664 *A voyage to England*, Samuel Sorbière wrote to Louis XIV:

Your Majesty hath truly judged that in this Warfare of Letters, some Trumpeters are also necessary as well as Officers and Soldiers: And I may without any Vanity enumerate my self among those, who are useful no otherwise than to spur on those that are most capable to promote Learning, and to applaud their Noble Productions.<sup>1</sup>

Sorbière, the self-described trumpeter of letters, played a vital role in the development and propagation of philosophic and scientific knowledge. He was a broker and intermediary between writers and thinkers, their works and the public, their assemblies and academies. He is best known for his two 1647 Latin editions and 1649 translation of Thomas Hobbes's *De cive* and his Preface to Pierre Gassendi's *Opera omnia*. But he also wrote a notorious account of a trip to England in which his vivid descriptions of English society, the Royal Society, and the Lord Chancellor, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, resulted in disgrace and scandal.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Sorbière's entire career was filled with controversy, largely because he misjudged the parameters of the culture he tried to promote. Sorbière's rise and fall vividly depict the changing nature of determining worth within the community of natural philosophers; he demonstrated the complex interweaving of old and new patronage styles by his disastrous failure fully to grasp either.

Born in Languedoc in 1617 to a prominent Protestant family, he trained as a doctor, and became interested in philosophic scepticism and mechanistic physics. By 1641 he was in Paris, where he met both the Epicurean natural philosopher Pierre Gassendi and Marin Mersenne, the friar who was the focal point for all of French science. Through Mersenne, Sorbière met Descartes and Hobbes (in exile in Paris during the English Civil War) and the other members of the nascent scientific community.<sup>3</sup> Sorbière's search for a livelihood took him to Holland and then, in 1654, back to Paris, where he converted to Catholicism. The mathematician Gui Patin remarked that his conversion was "one of the miracles of our age which are rather more political and economic than metaphysical".<sup>4</sup>

While some contemporaries frowned on his expedient approach to religion, it won the favour of Mazarin, and ultimately Sorbière received several benefices and the title of Royal Historiographer. He was also a founding member of the Montmor Academy in the late 1650s, and later played a role in encouraging the creation of the

Académie des Sciences. His success dimmed after his 1664 *Voyage en Angleterre* caused a minor international scandal, which resulted in a brief internal exile in 1664 for this self-fashioned bricoleur.<sup>5</sup> He died in 1670.

Sorbière's role was defined by the social conventions of early modern Europe, which established the place of every person within an all-embracing hierarchy. This hierarchy itself was shaped by the informal institution of patronage, which defined ties of mutual obligation and dependency between people of different social status, but more basically between those who possessed some form of power and those who sought to benefit from it. With the recognition of their status, patrons gained even more power and their protection gave clients "access to tangible and intangible resources", including "land, office, position, status, and economic opportunity".<sup>6</sup>

At its heart, patronage reflected the honour society of the seventeenth century. Honour itself meant to be honoured by others, to be recognized as a gentleman and to be honourable, to possess virtue, honesty and civility.<sup>7</sup> Honour not only characterized great nobles and officers of state, but was also a commodity sought by natural philosophers seeking a place of renown within their own constellation of peers, the larger reading public, and polite society.

In the early seventeenth century, in both France and England, private patrons and the community of natural philosophers recognized and legitimized scientific worthiness. During the second half of the century, the nature of patronage in the community of letters began to reflect changing institutional imperatives. In France, after problems with the private support of natural philosophy became apparent in the middle of the century, and as Louis XIV and his minister, Colbert, sought to bring the entire cultural and learned world under their practical control, the Académie des Sciences was created. In the new public institution, the honour accorded to the scientist reflected his recognition by the King, and to some extent, was even absorbed by the King. In England, where the influence of the post-Restoration monarchy was less pervasive, the approbation of the community of natural philosophers, organized into the Royal Society, became increasingly important in distributing honour and legitimization to its members.<sup>8</sup>

As the scientific community changed, it was Sorbière's role to facilitate the recognition and reputation of his scientific patrons. He was the broker of their ideas and influence, a satellite who expected to shine in their reflected light.

Sorbière, however, did not serve his patrons merely to bask in another's glory. His contemporaries often attributed mercenary motives to his actions, most notably in his conversion to Catholicism. His own biographer remarked, "he was continuously stretching out his Hand to receive, and such Avarice should be beneath the spirit of a Philosopher". In his appeal to Louis XIV, Sorbière himself pleaded: "the love I have for the Sciences, and the Zeal wherewith I have endeavoured all my life-time to advance the Reputation, and sustain the Interests of them, should receive some compensation."<sup>9</sup>

Monetary reward had always been an implicit part of the patronage system, although usually disguised as a gift rather than a payment, to preserve the image of

both patron and client being free and their association voluntary.<sup>10</sup> Only gentlemen could enter into such pacts, in which each member was respected and — because of their shared civility — in some sense equal. But in the mid-seventeenth century, with the emergence of a more bureaucratic public state, the venality and corruption to which the system was liable became an increasing concern.<sup>11</sup> As position became available for purchase, money's role in constructing status became so obvious that it was increasingly disparaged.

But Sorbière still operated as if he inhabited a society with no conflict between material and non-material reward. Even when a relationship seems disinterested, according to Sorbière, “utility is its first principle”.<sup>12</sup> He seemed unconscious of the moral ambiguity increasingly associated with a too-explicit desire for material compensation; he did not realize how a too-eager pursuit of compensation might affect his claim to be a gentleman.

Sorbière also seemed equally unaware that there were changing expectations for the behaviour of those involved in intellectual activities. As natural philosophy became more institutionalized with the emergence of scientific academies in the mid-seventeenth century — and, as Steven Shapin has pointed out, scientists sought gentility — actions that had constituted a normal part of the patronage system became problematized.<sup>13</sup> Thus, when Sorbière's motives became suspect, his honour was also questioned.

Samuel Sorbière displayed the boundaries of mid-seventeenth patronage society by crashing into them. His complex relationship with Thomas Hobbes, whom he both supported and alienated by his actions, demonstrate his attempt to master the traditional patterns of patronage. Sorbière's role in the development of Paris's private and public scientific academies, and his efforts to promote French state support of experimental science, showed his perception that the old order was changing. But his calamitous visit to England and the Royal Society in 1663 demonstrated the danger of efforts to combine the old and new organizational structures of science, as he fell from grace in both intellectual and social circles. Sorbière's life was a test case in the dynamics of scientific ordering. As often happens in science itself, his miscalculations were as revealing as an unsuccessful experiment.

#### SORBIÈRE AND HOBBS

Sorbière's most important patronage relationship was with Thomas Hobbes. In 1645, after meeting him in Paris, the Frenchman wrote to Hobbes:

I was prevented from leaving behind, in gratitude for our undivided friendship, evidence of the worship with which I honour you and heroes like you. I think I too am blessed with the title of ‘hero’, since while I was considering the grovelling baseness of human life, while I was contemplating the stupidity of most mortals, after thinking that man differed by next to nothing from brute animals, you appeared.<sup>14</sup>

The unctuous sycophancy of this passage might make modern readers gag, but it

served an important function for Hobbes and Sorbière, clearly delineating the nature of their relationship. Sorbière was seeking to become Hobbes's client, and in filling this role, he was honouring Hobbes and bringing honour to himself. Sorbière would fulfil his function by arranging for the publication of two 1647 Latin editions of *De cive*, brought out by the Amsterdam printer, Louis Elsevier. Previously, *De cive* had been available only in a limited, anonymous 1642 edition.<sup>15</sup>

Sorbière was not only seeking to please his new patron by ensuring the widespread circulation of his works, he was also trying to meet his obligations to Mersenne, who functioned as the third member of a patronage triad. Mersenne, the great intermediary who stimulated the work of his intellectual confrères, had in 1645 commanded Sorbière to "See then that some outstanding printer brings to light that golden book [*De cive*], augmented and adorned with jewels, and do not let us longer be wanting it". Moreover, Mersenne instructed Sorbière to encourage Hobbes to publish his natural philosophy: "You should indeed further urge the author, as far as you can, that he ought not finally to lock up in a box (to us deadly) all the philosophy which he compresses in his mind."<sup>16</sup> Sorbière, then and later, urged the English philosopher to finish his scientific studies. In 1646, Hobbes responded to his pleas by exclaiming, "The expectation of my friends makes me a little bit more industrious; but you with your coaxing have powerfully forced and impelled me to write".<sup>17</sup>

Sorbière was fulfilling his role as Hobbes's client, and "the trumpeter of science", by massaging his patron to perform his role as a great natural philosopher — and in doing so was pleasing his original sponsor, Marin Mersenne. Patronage always involved a complex set of social negotiations, not just a simple binary relationship. Thus, Sorbière brokered the relationship between Mersenne and Hobbes, and worked for their mutual benefit as well as securing his own status.

All of Sorbière's hopes for his relationship with the Englishman seemed on the brink of fulfilment in 1646, when Hobbes was appointed mathematical tutor to the exiled Prince of Wales. "How worthy of you is that duty which has been laid upon you", the Frenchman proclaimed, and then he immediately asked Hobbes to use his "exalted position at Court" to find jobs for two of their friends.<sup>18</sup> Such a request was part of the normal negotiations of patronly influence, just as Mersenne's request of Sorbière to use his influence on Hobbes had been. Hobbes was willing to do his part, replying, "If I have any favour with him for my daily services, I shall use it all, I assure you, not so much for my own benefit — as for that of my friends — and of your friends too, if you recommend any to me". Nevertheless, he cautioned Sorbière, "I acknowledge your goodwill in congratulating me on my present employment; but beware of thinking it more important than it is".<sup>19</sup>

Hobbes suspected that his client, who was eager to benefit from his patron's success, might inadvertently transgress social borders with behaviour inappropriate to the dynamics of the patronage system. His fears were realized later that year when Sorbière inscribed what he thought was Hobbes's status under his portrait at the front of the Latin edition of *De cive*. It reads: "Thomas Hobbes, the famous Englishman/Tutor to his Supreme Highness the Prince of Wales."<sup>20</sup> Howard Warrender notes

that this inscription describes Hobbes as “nobilis”, here translated as famous, but it could also imply “noble” which “for Hobbes, a commoner and subordinate in a noble household ... might be an uncomfortable position”.<sup>21</sup>

Hobbes’s discomfort is evident from the moment he received the proofs of *De cive*. He wrote that the Prince’s

enemies will attack him in a haughty and hateful way, claiming he is now revealing what sort of sovereignty he expects and intends to demand. Then whatever ill consequences follow from that (or will be said to be capable of following from it, by those people at the Prince’s court who are ready to aggravate my every fault with their own interpretations and glosses), they will also be blamed on my carelessness and vanity, to my great dishonour... Nothing in the whole business can be blamed on me; I hardly knew what was going on.<sup>22</sup>

Whether this last protest is disingenuous is debatable. In an earlier letter, Hobbes had urged Sorbière to seek testimonials for his work in order to help it sell.<sup>23</sup> But now Hobbes disavowed Sorbière’s actions because they would bring dishonour upon him and, by extension, the Prince. Just as clients basked in the reflected glory of their patrons, patrons could be embarrassed by the reputations of their clients. Hobbes was only too conscious that his growing notoriety might compromise the Prince.<sup>24</sup> Thus, instead of the book’s bringing renown and honour to the author, it would result in social ostracism and embarrassment. In desperation, Hobbes offered to pay the printer to remove the offending phrases and he called on the authority of Mersenne to underline his concern: “Mersenne and all our friends say it is of the highest importance both to me and the Prince of Wales, that the inscription, or rather the whole portrait be taken out.”<sup>25</sup>

Sorbière quickly sought to explain himself to the powerful arbiter of natural philosophy, writing Mersenne that

I would willingly have paid a high price, Reverend Sir, that the printer should not have wanted to print Mr. Hobbes’s titles, yet it was done to honour him, nor did any of us suspect that the matter would be harmful to the Author.... May it never be that any slight mistake of ours should turn him aside from being willing to entrust anything to our care; I shall be more cautious in the future, and carefully abstain from works of supererogation.<sup>26</sup>

Sorbière’s distress seems clear, but his subsequent actions seem inconsistent with his protestations. His interest in promoting his edition of *De cive* led him to insert Mersenne’s original letter praising the work, with a similar letter from Gassendi, into the prefatory material to the second 1647 edition, as well as to his later translation. This was against Mersenne’s precise instructions, and a promise he made to him that “None of your letters have been put at the beginning, nor any of M. Gassendi’s”.<sup>27</sup> Sorbière seems to have substituted one form of testimonial for another: he removed the portrait and inscription, but called on the validating power of Mersenne and Gassendi instead. His role as promoter had superseded his role as client; he perhaps was

trying to fulfil his obligations to the printer, who was undoubtedly paying him, and who had informed him that the first edition had sold out.<sup>28</sup> Whether he realized the inconsistencies of his behaviour is difficult to know. Fortunately for him, Mersenne's death in 1648 removed any recriminations from that particular source.

Sorbière's relationship with Hobbes was not so expeditiously mended. He had refrained from writing to him for four months after he received Hobbes's condemnation, excusing his silence "because I have been afraid of bothering you with writing either too much, or at an inopportune moment". Sorbière then begged the English philosopher to send "some sign that your kindly regard for me has not diminished".<sup>29</sup> Two more letters followed, in which Sorbière's rhetorical flourishes seem to indicate the degree of anxiety he was suffering at his patron's displeasure. His letters conclude with the words, "Farewell, admirable Sir, and love me, who shall eternally worship you like some divine being" and "Farewell, admirable Sir, the leading ornament of our age, the new hope of true philosophy, and love me".<sup>30</sup> Hobbes finally replied in November, and told Sorbière of a serious illness that had caused the long silence, and delayed the completion of *De corpore* and *De homine*. Nevertheless, while the association between the patron and client was reestablished, it remained largely quiescent for the next several years, during which time Hobbes completed *Leviathan* and returned to England.

By the end of 1657, the relationship was once more prospering, when Hobbes acknowledged the great favours Sorbière had done him, particularly in translating *De cive* in 1647 and praising him "so greatly" in his dedication and conclusion.<sup>31</sup> The letters between the English philosopher and his French friend, which continue intermittently from this point on until Sorbière's death in 1670, were now clearly different in tone. Many of them concerned scientific and medical questions, including a particularly probing questioning by Sorbière of Hobbes's doctrine of the plenum, during which the Frenchman wrote to Hobbes, "Our disagreement should not be taken to imply any lack of deference I owe you".<sup>32</sup> In fact, Sorbière, rather than showing disrespect, was fulfilling his role as client once more by urging the development and defence of his patron's ideas.

Sorbière himself had begun to circulate some of his own medical ideas, including a treatise on phlebotomy, which a mutual friend sent to Hobbes in 1657. Hobbes wrote to congratulate him on this work, which included a radical denunciation of too much bleeding, and concluded

I have read it through carefully ten times, and I approve of it and agree with it entirely ... its publication will help many people, but it will not be without inconvenience to yourself. You will be a perpetual object of hatred to the doctors, just as I am (because of my political theory) to the theologians. The kingdom of truth is not of this world, but the next. For truth will win at last.<sup>33</sup>

Clearly, a more equal and mutually respectful relationship had evolved between the two friends, although Sorbière was always careful to acknowledge Hobbes's role as the "sovereign Dictator of Philosophy".<sup>34</sup> A vertical social tie was now replaced



by a more dyadic union. The evolution of this relationship was, no doubt, partially due to Sorbière's no longer being a young man, but someone whose own social status had risen. By 1657, he had found another patron in Mazarin, but the more likely reason for Hobbes's friendliness was Sorbière's growing importance within the community of French natural philosophers. Sorbière was now someone Hobbes could take more seriously, and even view as a peer. He was worthy of honour. Ultimately, Hobbes demonstrated his new respect by dedicating his 1661 treatise, the *Dialogus physica de natura aeris*, to Sorbière, who had recently praised him in his *Lettres et discours* (Paris, 1660). The English philosopher wrote: "So I am and always shall be immensely grateful to you for such outstanding kindness; and I shall try as hard as I can to persuade you that such kindness is well employed, and mutual."<sup>35</sup>

#### SORBIÈRE AND THE FRENCH ACADEMIES

In the late 1650s, Sorbière's credit had risen, and he could claim a place of honour within French society. In 1654, his return to Paris and conversion to Catholicism gained him a government pension of 400 livres and, after a trip to Rome, two small benefices.<sup>36</sup> He quickly renewed his friendship with Gassendi, who was living at the house of his patron, the Maître des Requêtes, Henri Louis Haber de Montmor. Between 1653 and 1655, a group of friends of Gassendi's, interested in natural philosophy and especially medicine, had begun to meet informally at Montmor's house.<sup>37</sup> By 1658, a more formal institution had evolved, with Sorbière serving as the Montmor Academy's Permanent Secretary. Sorbière was one of the authors of the Rules of the new academy, which he sent to Hobbes in February 1658. He described an assembly focused on "gentle and tranquil" discussion of matters relating to the physical sciences, which would "aim at the clearest knowledge of the works of God, and the advancement of practical benefits, in those arts and sciences which are best suited to achieve them".<sup>38</sup>

Sorbière's hopes for the Montmor Academy were destined not to be realized, as the assembly descended into acrimonious debate among Gassendists, Aristotelians, Cartesians, experimenters and those who thought philosophic conversation was sufficient in the search for knowledge. The scientist and intelligencer Ismaël Boulliau described the lack of servility he observed in the Academy: "The Montmorians are sharper and dispute with vehemence, since they quarrel about the pursuit of truth.... Each one considers that his own fame and glory has lost something if he grants even a blade of grass to the victor and acknowledge him the real discoverer."<sup>39</sup> Not even the efforts of the patron Montmor could calm the tempestuous assembly; Montmor's authority itself was challenged by the mathematician Gilles Personne de Roberval, who claimed to be smarter than Montmor "and that he was less only in worldly goods and the office of Maître des Requêtes, and that if he were Maître des Requêtes he would be worth a hundred times more". Roberval was clearly mistaken if he thought that any philosophic prowess could release him from the obligation of civility towards a patron. Boulliau reports, "The whole company found the boorishness and pedantry of M. de Roberval very strange".<sup>40</sup>

Ironically or not, Sorbière wrote to Hobbes in 1663, “I fear that what happens to our Montmor Academy ... will come to confirm your political theories, and that the less we achieve in natural sciences, the more we prove, by actual practice, the complete truth of your most subtle Elements of political philosophy”. Sorbière particularly mentions Pierre Petit, a mathematician and engineer, who destroys “orderly arrangement and philosophic moderation. We see several people of his sort in that very select gathering of Montmorian philosophers”.<sup>41</sup>

Petit would later write to Oldenburg, disavowing any commission the Royal Society might believe Sorbière had to represent the Montmor Academy, claiming that “the academy would not have been guilty of so great an incivility, as sending him without a letter of the society and the president”.<sup>42</sup> Apparently, some of the dissension Sorbière described came from personal animosity and the conviction that Sorbière was not to be trusted.

By 1663, the venue of the Academy had shifted to the house of Charles d’Escoubleau, Marquis de Sourdis et d’Alluyes, a great nobleman of the realm, whose interference in the French scientific community demonstrated to Sorbière the limitations of the patronage system he knew so well.<sup>43</sup>

Montmor had allowed the Academy to move to the house of Sourdis because “he wanted to please the nobleman”. He hoped, as did the members of the Academy, “that Sourdis would help and support those studies, since he lives not far from Court, has a decoration for gallantry, and is the Prefect of a Province and a man of very ample means”. In fact, the entire Academy membership was seeking the protection of someone who could support their activities and represent their interests at Court. His honour would validate their own position, and his riches would fund their experiments. But this was not to be the case. Instead, Sorbière complained, “we were so wrong about all this that we now feel as if Science has been carried off into some sort of Babylonian captivity by a sort of Nebuchadnezzar”.<sup>44</sup>

Sourdis was, according to Sorbière, only a pseudo-Peiresc, totally unlike that earlier noble patron of learning. Peiresc had possessed the true qualities of a perfect patron and a perfect gentleman: “friendliness, polished conversation, favour towards all, munificence or a desire to be helpful, generous expenditure, and other such virtues which make men such as Peiresc the equal of kings.”<sup>45</sup> Sourdis was not only an intellectual boor, he provided “vulgar hospitality in an unattractive part of his unattractive house. It is as if a group of grasping rural schoolmasters were entertained by an Irish professor, and to save fuel in the winter weather, met in a small room and tried to raise the air-temperature by shouting”.<sup>46</sup>

Here, then, is an elegant denunciation of an inelegant man, unworthy of honour for either his virtues or his generosity. Instead of being the Maecenas who would provide every non-material and material reward to his clients, he was a Nebuchadnezzar or an Irish professor (it is difficult to know which insult Sorbière thought was worse), who brought dishonour on both himself and his clients by his lack of civility. Sourdis even fails to feed his guests, and Sorbière does not hesitate to contrast him with Montmor, at whose house “each time I dine there I feel as if I am attending a philosophers’



banquet”.<sup>47</sup> Sorbière and his fellows are treated with “an easy intimacy” by Montmor, as if they are friends, not dependents. Such apparent equality often characterized patronage relationships, where the honour of both patron and client was affirmed by both being acknowledged as gentlemen. Sorbière had found a patron in Montmor, who was honourable because of both his virtues and his actions. But even the patronage of Montmor had its limits, as Sorbière soon realized. The Academy returned to his home in early 1663, where Montmor planned to set up a sixty-foot telescope and house a learned man to oversee it. Such plans were to come to naught.

At the newly refounded Academy, Sorbière gave a discourse, which he later sent to Colbert, discussing the limitations of private academies and his hope that Louis XIV would soon establish a public academy devoted to the pursuit of science. He argued that “only Kings and wealthy sovereigns, or a few wise and prosperous Republics, can undertake to set up a physical academy, where everything would pass in continual experiments”. In such an institution, the enforced harmony of the members would result in “very great advantage for the public”. The disruptive ambitions of both experimenters and conversationalists would be contained and directed towards the benefits of society. Science would no longer exist at the whim of a private patron or reflect the strength or weakness of his influence. A new rule would bring civility to the natural philosophical community, who, when they were not occupied with experimentation, would be “entertained by discourses, polite, learned, and well-argued on physical matters”. Sorbière believed that the Montmor Academy had also been crippled by flatterers who sought the approval of powerful nobles; it was implicit in his argument that such dependency and disruption would be avoided when the patron of the Academy was the King.<sup>48</sup>

Thus, the man who had profited by his relationships with both philosophers and noblemen recognized that the changing needs of science required a changed social condition. Sorbière would never abandon the system of patronage, and the promise of honour and gain it brought, but he knew that its informal and malleable structure had to be supplemented by the public power of the state. Colbert was very receptive to his plea and those of others, which concurred with his own plans for the control of French culture, and which led to the creation of the Académie des Sciences in 1666.<sup>49</sup>

In part, Sorbière’s disenchantment with the Montmor Academy — and his hopes for a new kind of assembly — were the result of his knowledge of England’s newly founded Royal Society, which he decided to visit in the summer of 1663.<sup>50</sup> By this time, the Montmor Academy had not met for several months because of illness in Montmor’s family. Despairing of private support for natural philosophy, Sorbière asked an English acquaintance,

If chance and zeal of a few private persons has advanced our arts and sciences to the point we have attained, what will not be achieved by the skilful guidance of so many able men, the outlay of numerous peers, public authority, and the magnificence of a powerful and wise monarch?<sup>51</sup>

In a physical and symbolic sense, the voyage to England represents Sorbière's attempt to integrate traditional patronage with the new model of the public support of scientific activity.

#### SORBIÈRE, HOBBS AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY

Sorbière's entrenchment in the old system of patronage was still very evident. The first person he visited on his journey was his old friend and patron, Thomas Hobbes. But Hobbes was no friend of the Royal Society, and Sorbière's support of his old patron would add to the hostile reaction his account of the trip provoked. It would increase the fury of those who felt he had insulted the Chancellor of England, Edward Hyde Lord Clarendon, the English people, and the Royal Society itself.

Sorbière was introduced to the members of the Royal Society by Sir Robert Moray and Henry Oldenburg, both of whom he had met in Paris.<sup>52</sup> The account Sorbière gave of the Royal Society in his *Voyage* was enthusiastic, at least from his point of view. He proclaimed, "There is nothing more civil, respectful, and better managed than this Meeting", and that while there was some division between the mathematicians, who tended to support Descartes, and the literati, who tended to be Gassendists, "the good Harmony of the Society" prevails, "seeing they all desire to have the same Phenomena's explained". In short, the French admirer wrote, if the Society continued to prosper,

we shall find a World of Peoples fall into an Admiration of so Excellent and Learned a Body, and England will afford vast and useful Inventions to the other Nations: For if the Arts and Sciences have been already so much improved by the Study and Hazards of some private Men, what will not the good conduct of so many capable Persons, the Purses of several great Lords, and the Munificence of so Potent a Monarch do?<sup>53</sup>

Sorbière's endorsement of the new ideal of public scientific institutions is clear, as is his respect for the English Society. In fact, he even exaggerated the public support that the Society received, whose hope for royal support was never to be realized.<sup>54</sup> In this initial period of contact, Sorbière's enthusiasm was repaid when he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

But the French intermediary could not resist trying to join his old loyalties to his new. He commented in the *Voyage*, in recounting a discussion with Charles II,

'tis agreed on all Hands, that if Mr. Hobbes were not so Dogmatical, he would be very Useful and Necessary to the Royal Society; for there are few people that can see farther into things than he, or have applied themselves so long to the Study of Natural Philosophy.<sup>55</sup>

Whether all Sorbière's new friends in the Royal Society agreed with this sentiment is much to be doubted, seeing that Hobbes and Boyle had been involved in the debate about the air-pump and the possibility of a vacuum for several years. At the same time, Hobbes was involved in a bitter dispute with the Oxford mathematician and

Fellow of the Royal Society, John Wallis, ostensibly about Hobbes's erroneous solution to the squaring of the circle, but more fundamentally about Hobbes's theological and ecclesiastical views.<sup>56</sup> Sorbière visited Wallis in Oxford, and his comments on the professor undermined his efforts at pleasing both Hobbes and some important members of the Royal Society.

Wallis had welcomed Sorbière warmly in Oxford, but this did not deter the Frenchman from attacking the mathematician later. In the *Voyage*, he announced, Hobbes "is in no good Terms with Doctor Wallis, and has no reason to love him". Sorbière defended his friend:

the Doctor [Wallis] has not used him well; seeing after he had, pursuant to the Way of Learned Men, who make themselves ridiculous to Courtiers, by their Controversies and Malignity, endeavoured to refute Mr. Hobbs's Mathematicks, he fell upon his Scheme of Politicks, and pushed the Matter so far, as to make him a bad Subject.<sup>57</sup>

This accusation "most provoked the good Old Man", who as Sorbière relates had suffered mightily for his king, and never "wrote anything ... but what might have favourable Interpretation". Consequently, Charles II himself had granted Hobbes a pension of a "Hundred Jacobins". But the defence of Hobbes was not merely based on a reinterpretation of the Hobbesian texts and motives, but also reflected Sorbière's notion of civility and gentlemanly behaviour. Wallis had made himself "ridiculous to Courtiers" by his actions. Indeed, remarked Sorbière,

The Doctor has less in him of the Gallant Man than Mr. Hobbes, and if you should see him with his University Cap on his Head ... you would be much inclined to laugh at this diverting Sight, as you would be ready to entertain the Excellency and Civility of my Friend with Esteem and Affection.<sup>58</sup>

Sorbière defended his patron by denigrating the gallantry and civility of his attacker. In short, this was an attack on Wallis's honour. While he might be a great mathematician, which Sorbière admitted, he also might cure his bad breath and "advance his Studies much farther, and become Polite, if purified by the Air of the Court in London".<sup>59</sup> Wallis was not a gentleman, and hence not a recognized and honourable member of society. In fact, he was a pedant, a social type that had been reviled and ridiculed in Europe for centuries. As Steven Shapin has argued, "The character of the pedant and the gentleman were set in radical opposition". Shapin concludes that the Royal Society was desperately, and largely unsuccessfully, trying to articulate a new ideal of the gentleman-scholar.<sup>60</sup> By extension, Sorbière might be interpreted as attacking the honour of the Society Wallis helped to found.

Hobbes, meanwhile, was protected by the King, and was worthy of all honours, as Sorbière wrote to Hobbes in 1664:

I admire your intellect in scientific theory of the most profound kind; but I admire even more your goodness, your courtesy, and all those fine qualities which make you a perfect gentleman as well as a great philosopher. You fulfill all the duties

of civil life, you are a good friend, a good courtier, and of the best temperament in the world.<sup>61</sup>

Certainly Sorbière admired Hobbes's intellectual prowess, but intellectual prowess was not enough to be considered a gentleman. Wallis was a brilliant mathematician, but not a gallant man. Validation of civility and honour came, therefore, not from within the scientific community, but from the recognition of worth by the Court. Wallis, like other learned men, makes himself "ridiculous to the court", but Hobbes is "a good courtier". Sorbière clearly thought Wallis resembled the new generation of French savants he had described to Hobbes in 1657, who were like university professors, possessing "all wildness, uncouth and unsuitable habits, long-winded terms, bombast, and that obstinacy which is rightly condemned in the universities".<sup>62</sup> What Sorbière did not understand, because of his experience with traditional French social categories, was that Wallis's status as a gentleman was not contingent on his academic position, or his courtly possibilities, but rather his membership in an emerging scientific community. Hobbes's identity as a gentleman and a scholar, on the other hand, while certainly related to his philosophic excellence, was the product of his relationship with noble patrons, whom he could enlist to legitimize his own position and to help his friends, or clients. Indeed, Sorbière was pressing Hobbes after his return to France to use his influence with his patron, the Earl of Devonshire:

Please also ensure that the Earl of Devonshire honours me with some portion of his esteem, and assure him of my humble service. I shall testify to my respect for him if I happen to write an account of my travels ... I speak frequently, and in high places about his virtue, which does indeed correspond well to his protection of you, the most virtuous man I know.<sup>63</sup>

The letter concludes by recommending a friend of Sorbière's to become the tutor to Devonshire's young son, "the hint I give you about this matter is sufficient". Ever practical, Sorbière's notions about virtue and reward were intertwined. Traditional patronage allowed honour and gain to be to be intermingled, but Sorbière's own pursuit of rewards was about to catch up with him.

Sorbière would need Hobbes's help a year later, when Sorbière's *Voyage*, with its criticisms of the English, the Royal Society, and particularly the Earl of Clarendon, had shipwrecked Sorbière's career. Sorbière felt he had to obtain Clarendon's pardon, and he, somewhat ironically, begged Hobbes to ask the Chancellor to be merciful and, "to use all your skill, and the patronage which you call on among important men and leaders of society, to come to my aid as soon as possible".<sup>64</sup>

Clarendon and Hobbes had been friends since they both belonged to the Great Tew Circle in the 1630s, but Clarendon had been dismayed by the publication of *Leviathan* in 1651. He later recounted that Hobbes had discussed his book with him in April, 1651, and had told him that "when I read his book I would not like it, and thereupon mentioned some of his conclusions; upon which I asked him, why he would publish such doctrine". Twelve years after Sorbière's troubles, Clarendon published a vituperative attack on Hobbes, *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious*

*errors to Church and State, in Mr. Hobbes Book Entitled Leviathan.*<sup>65</sup>

In 1664, the nature of the relationship between Hobbes and Clarendon may not have yet reached an open rupture, although it is fairly safe to assume that Sorbière was aware of some strain between them. Perhaps in an ill-conceived effort to please Hobbes, Sorbière had denigrated Clarendon's background and his intellectual abilities in the *Voyage*, describing him as "understanding the formalities of the legal system, but having little understanding of other things, and no knowledge of literature".<sup>66</sup> Sorbière seemed to view Clarendon as a private man who was antagonistic towards his patron, rather than as a public official who could give to the Society the public support they desired (and Sorbière thought they had) from the King. It may be that Sorbière was so accustomed to view patronage as an individual association between a great lord and a client, that he was unable to comprehend the new dimensions of institutional support, although in theory it was what he admired most about the English and desired most for the French. This gaffe may also reflect his experience with the great noble, Sourdis, who had proved to be such a disappointment to the Montmor Academy.

Sorbière's comments on the Chancellor brought the full fury of the French government down on him. Noel Malcolm gives a detailed account of Sorbière's disaster. The Danish ambassador in Paris was particularly offended by some remarks in the book, and through him the French minister for foreign affairs, the marquis de Lionne, became aware of Sorbière's treatment of Clarendon. This was a particularly bad moment to insult the English government, because the French were temporarily allied with the English against the Dutch. Sorbière was sacrificed on the pyre of public policy and exiled to Brittany. The French ambassador to England, Gaston de Commenge, showed the decree banishing Sorbière to Clarendon, who was apparently very pleased by the actions of the French Conseil d'État.<sup>67</sup> But some members of the Royal Society felt this punishment was insufficient to assuage their rage. Thomas Sprat, the future historian of the Royal Society, was urged by the virtuoso, John Evelyn, to write a response to Sorbière's *Voyage*.<sup>68</sup>

Sprat's *Observations on M. de Sorbière's voyage into England* (London, 1665) was a point-by-point refutation of Sorbière's account of his visit, which included the accusation that Sorbière had trivialized the Royal Society by emphasizing its ceremonial aspects, and slandered it by suggesting it was divided into sects and dependent on authority.<sup>69</sup> Sorbière, it seemed, had looked at the new association, which prided itself on its lack of contention, and seen only the chaos that had haunted the Montmor Academy.

Sprat claimed that Sorbière "has been utterly mistaken in the report of their main design". Neither Descartes nor Gassendi "bear any sway amongst them: they are never nam'd there as Dictators over Men's reasons". And there was no library of books the members consider authoritative, as Sorbière had claimed: "they never intended a Professorian Philosophy, but declare against it: with books they meddle not farther, then to see what Experiments have been try'd before."<sup>70</sup> One of the fundamental self-definitions of the Royal Society was the civility of its meetings, and the lack



of dogmatism of its members. Such politeness protected it from the potential chaos engendered by too much passion or enthusiasm, something which had corrupted both the universities and the state in the members' very recent memories. Thus, every compliment the traveller had paid the Society was made to seem an insult.

Even worse was the Frenchman's attack on Clarendon, whom Sprat felt he had to defend, "For I am to consider my self, as a Member of the Royal Society, and the University of Oxford, and the Earl of Clarendon, as Protector of one of them, and Chancellor of the Other".<sup>71</sup> Sprat was coming to the defence of a patron of the Royal Society. Sorbière had once again misunderstood the protocols of the patronage system, and in particular the way the patronage of the great continued to function as an important concern to the members of the Royal Society. More importantly, he failed to realize that the Royal Society was seeking Clarendon's support because of his public office in the kingdom. The institutional status of the Society was ambiguous, as were its finances.<sup>72</sup> It was a publicly chartered corporation, and the members thought of themselves as primarily serving a public function — the utility of the state — but it was a private institution largely supported by the subscriptions of its own members. Early founders of the Society hoped that this source of revenue might be increased through the donations of individual benefactors or even a sliding scale of membership fees according to social rank.<sup>73</sup> Sprat, in his *History of the Royal Society*, realized that private patronage alone would not suffice to support the new institution, "The publick Faith of Experimental Philosophy, was not then strong enough, to move Men and Women of all conditions, to bring in their Bracelets and Jewels, to the carrying of it on". But just as the King and Parliament had supported various schemes for the improvement of roads and rivers, and the increase of trade,

it cannot be imagin'd, that the nation will withdraw its assistance from the Royal Society alone; which does not intend to stop at some particular benefit, but goes to the root of all noble inventions, and proposes an infallible course to make England the glory of the Western world.<sup>74</sup>

The Royal Society was seeking a public role in the state, and the support of the Lord Chancellor was vital in this endeavour. In fact, Sprat viewed Clarendon as analogous to the patron saint of the Society:

I will declare, that of all the men of great worth, who have possess'd that High Office, since Learning and the Civil Arts came amongst us, there was never any man that had so much resembled Sir Thomas More, and the Lord Bacon, in their several excellencies, as the Earl of Clarendon.<sup>75</sup>

From its founding moments the Royal Society had attempted to gain Clarendon's favour. Leading a delegation of the Society's members in 1662, its president Lord Brouncker proclaimed the Society's

desires to contribute the best we can to the greatness of your name, which is already far more illustrious than that of learned predecessor of yours, a great and renowned chancellor of England, who is famous for having pointed at that

improvement of solid learning, which is now by your hand so vigorously and effectually carried on.<sup>76</sup>

Brouncker assured the Chancellor that his support would benefit “the good, not only of his majesty’s kingdoms, but of all mankind”. Clarendon was explicitly promised that this new foundation would make him more famous than Francis Bacon, who had served in the same office. This promise was redoubled in the dedicatory letter John Evelyn wrote to a translation he made of a French work in 1661, where he informed Clarendon that his patronage of the Royal Society would make him “the greatest and most accomplished Minister, that this Nation had ever celebrated”, who would join with Bacon in the glory of benefiting the public and the nation.<sup>77</sup>

Bacon’s shadow had also loomed over Sorbière’s account, but according to the Frenchman, it was not Clarendon who had inherited his mantle. Rather, he claimed, Thomas Hobbes is “the very remains of Bacon..., observe by his Stile he hath retained very much of him”.<sup>78</sup> The idea that the honour of incarnating Bacon should fall to a private man, and one whose philosophy was inimical to the very essence of the new institution, was intolerable. To this attempt to preempt the honour of being the true heir to Bacon, Sprat could only reply, “that the resemblance that he makes of him, to the Lord Verulam: Between whom there is no more likeness, then there was between St. George and the Waggoner”.<sup>79</sup>

Sprat was certainly willing to exploit Sorbière’s association with Hobbes to strengthen his attack. Evelyn had hinted that “those who know whose principles this Mushroom [Sorbière] is addicted to [*marginal note: r* Hobbes] must needs suspect his integrity”.<sup>80</sup> In fact, Sprat was concerned more with Sorbière’s integrity than his philosophy, whether it was the result of Hobbes’s principles or not. Sprat even suggested that Sorbière “understands not his Philosophy”, although he pretends to be one of Hobbes’s disciples.<sup>81</sup> He then condemned Sorbière for betraying his master by discussing Hobbes’s dogmatism with Charles II:

And is not Monsieur de Sorbiere a very fit man, to upbraid to Dr. Wallis, his want of good manieres: when he himself is at once rude to his antient Friend and insolent to the King himself, in betraying what he was pleas’d to Whisper to him in his Cabinet.<sup>82</sup>

Sprat charged that the same insolence was evident in Sorbière’s treatment of Wallis, who had received him kindly and was repaid with ridicule. “What kind of good breeding is this?” Sprat asked, “How can he, after this object to Dr. Wallis, that he has little in him of the Gallant Man? Whose behavior has the strongest scent, and want most to be purify’d by the air of the Court?”<sup>83</sup>

Sprat charged that in the contest of civility, where the prize was honour, Sorbière had failed. Instead of supporting his old patron, and pleasing his new friends, he had betrayed both and demonstrated his own incivility. Most importantly, however, Sorbière had betrayed the King himself by violating his confidence. Indeed, according to Sprat, Sorbière’s entire “rage” against the English was provoked because he felt he had not been sufficiently rewarded by Charles II.

Sorbière had mentioned in the *Voyage* that Charles II had not conferred a medal on him, but even so, he added, “I find my self as much obliged to his Majesty for the Gracious Reception he gave, as if he had laden me with presents”.<sup>84</sup> The giving of a gift was the traditional way of expressing favour by a patron, but here Sorbière protests that merely waiting on the monarch brought him sufficient honour. Sprat did not believe him. “This, Sir,” Sprat insisted, “was the Provocation, And this was the occasion, that made him lay about so terribly”. Should it have been necessary for Charles II to “buy off and pay tribute” to Sorbière and his ilk in order to avoid their wrath? Such behaviour was a sign of baseness, and even more was a sign that Sorbière, whatever his connections with the great, was not a true philosopher. Did Sorbière ever hear, asked Sprat,

of an Example of a Philosopher, that preferr’d a petty gift before the sweetness, and the obligation of so Great and so Magnanimous a Prince’s conversation? It has indeed been told us, that some Philosophers of old have transgress’d on the contrary, and have refused the Bounty of Monarchs, that they might preserve the liberty of their minds. But in all History there can be no such instance shewn, that a man should forfeit his Truth and Honesty for the want of a Medall.<sup>85</sup>

Sprat damns Sorbière for his mercenary and vindictive behaviour, showing that Sorbière was neither an honourable man nor indeed a true philosopher, who should prefer liberty of mind over material gain. Honour was not a quality conferred on philosophers by an external source but an intrinsic quality of the freethinking man. The new conception of the gentleman scientist was implicit in Sprat’s attack, as was his rejection of the older system of determining philosophic worth: should one think, he asks, “that his Masters liberality to him ought to make all mankind admire his Magnificence?” Status, honour, reputation, should not be a reflection of one’s success in gaining patronage — it is not created by gifts or rewards. In Sprat’s world, while the patronage of kings, chancellors, and noblemen is certainly commendable and desirable, it should neither be demanded nor determinative for the recognition of a true philosopher.<sup>86</sup>

In fact, Sprat believed that no civil society, including the Royal Society, should acknowledge the status of the French traitor: “how much reason have You real Philosophers, and Mathematicians, to have high thoughts of your selves, if it shall be allow’d to a man, who onely got some name by creeping into your company?” Sprat believed the association with Sorbière would tarnish the Royal Society itself, “if my Countrymen shall know that one who calls himself a member of that Assembly, has escap’d unanswer’d in the publique disgraces he has cast on our whole nation”.<sup>87</sup> Dishonour is catching, and for a newly formed Society, under attack by some members of the academic establishment and even ridiculed by certain nobles and Charles II himself, it could be disastrous.<sup>88</sup>

As events turned out, it appears that Charles II was not as offended by Sorbière as Sprat assumed he would be. Possibly, the mercenary twist Sprat gave to his actions reflected Sorbière’s prior reputation for avarice rather than any actual offensive behav-

your. It is possible that the King even attempted to stop the publication of the attack on the French traveller, and it is clear that his intervention with the French government resulted in Sorbière's release from internal exile.<sup>89</sup> This intervention came one month after Sorbière had written to Hobbes to urge him to use his influence with people of power to obtain him mercy. Sorbière also wrote to the Bishop of Laon to ask him to use Lord Aubigny to intercede for him. Interestingly, this letter was included in a letter sent by Oldenburg to Boyle, with the remark that, "As much as he depressed the Chancellor in his printed pamphlet, so much does he now extol him in the unprinted letter". Indeed, Sorbière's letter ended with this accurate self-appraisal:

Thus a nobleman [Clarendon] enjoying the highest honors, whose fame echoes round the whole world will be indulgent to a man with a gift for little essays, only equipped to attend to philosophical matters and both awkward and ignorant of the sublimer sciences, of the measure of men, and of politics especially.<sup>90</sup>

Whether Charles II was trying to please his old tutor, or whether he was responding to pleas for mercy coming from other avenues, is impossible to determine. Malcolm believes that an exiled French courtier, Philibert de Grammont, caught the ear of the King after Sorbière urged him to use his influence in the English court.<sup>91</sup> But not even the entire Royal Society was after his blood. As early as October 1663, in answer to a charge that Sorbière had misrepresented himself as being sent by the Montmor Academy, Henry Oldenburg responded that the Frenchman had behaved with "all possible civility, and in his private conversation with the members, only testified his zeal for the advancement of solid and useful science".<sup>92</sup> After the publication of the *Voyage*, the Society had considered omitting his name from the rolls, but on a vote of fourteen to eight, his membership was continued.<sup>93</sup> Perhaps the positive votes indicate that not all Fellows were as sensitive of their honour and the changing nature of patronage as were Thomas Sprat and John Evelyn.

Sorbière continued in his role of client and intermediary, husbanding Hobbes's Latin works through their publication in Holland, but he never regained the reputation or glory he had sought from his association with learned men. He was never made a member of the Académie des Sciences.<sup>94</sup>

Perhaps no other outcome was possible for a client who had failed to master the complex maze of societal rules governing both civil and intellectual society in the mid-seventeenth century. Sorbière was at the vanguard of the new philosophy; he had worked tirelessly to make it available to a larger reading public through his editions and translations. He had laboured to promote scientific organization in the academies of France, and understood the limitations of private patronage and the possibilities of public support. He had sought to integrate his loyalty to the last living natural philosopher of the early century and to the new community of professional scientists. Ultimately, Sorbière believed that the status of scientists should depend on their position in upper-class society rather than on their achievements. He failed to understand that the rules of social interaction were changing in both the scientific community and the world at large. Thus, Sorbière had angered Hobbes early in his

career, and later infuriated some members of the Royal Society. They exulted when the Frenchman lost his position due to the scandal caused by his book, and Sprat dismissed him by concluding,

But yet the Man's abilities are not wholly to be discourag'd; he may still prove a tolerable good flatterer of his Patrons: he may bring in his *Votre Tres Humble*, artificially enough in the end of an empty Letter of complements: he may serve to commend Philosophers when they are dead: or (to conclude with his own Epithete) he may make a sufficient *Trumpeter* in the Common-wealth of Learning.<sup>95</sup>

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3. Sorbière referred to Gassendi, Descartes and Hobbes as the three "Triumvirs" of philosophy, Sorbière to Hobbes, [2/] 12 May 1661, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 519.
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8. On the different attitudes of the crown towards science and scientific institutions, see Michael Hunter,



*Science and society in Restoration England* (Cambridge, 1988), 129–35; and Mario Biagioli, “Scientific Revolution, social bricolage, and etiquette”, in *The Scientific Revolution in national context*, in Roy Porter and Mikuláš Teich (eds) (Cambridge, 1992), 11–54, and “Etiquette, interdependence, and sociability in seventeenth-century France”, *Critical inquiry*, xxii (1996), 193–238. David Lux, *op. cit.* (ref. 6), 1–9, argues that it was not a crisis in private patronage that precipitated the founding of the Académie des Sciences. It is indeed true that the private patronage of science continued in both France and England in the later half of the seventeenth century. Many natural philosophers did not join the Royal Society and others did not share its experimentalist agenda; Fellows of the Royal Society continued to seek the support of private patrons (see Hunter, *Science and society*, 72–73, and *idem*, *Establishing the new science: The experience of the early Royal Society* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1898), 30–35, 167–71; and Lisa T. Sarasohn, “Thomas Hobbes and the Duke of Newcastle: A study in the mutuality of patronage before the establishment of the Royal Society”, *Isis*, xc (1999), 715–37). Nevertheless, the legitimization of scientific activity was increasingly a royal prerogative in France and a corporate concern in England.

9. Graveral, “Life”, in Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), p. viii; Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), n.p.
10. Feingold, *op. cit.* (ref. 6), 209–13, and Steven Shapin, *A social history of truth: Civility and science in seventeenth-century England* (Chicago, 1994), 45–52.
11. Robert Harding, “Corruption and the moral boundaries of patronage in the Renaissance”, in Lytle and Orgel (eds), *op. cit.* (ref. 6), 47–64, p. 47.
12. “Discours de l’Amitié”, in Sorbière, *Relations* (ref. 2), 422.
13. Shapin, *op. cit.* (ref. 10), 42–52. On the growing concern about corruption and venality and how it affected patronage, see Peck, *op. cit.* (ref. 6), 30–46, and Harding, *op. cit.* (ref. 11).
14. Sorbière to Hobbes, [1/] 11 July 1645, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 122–3.
15. Howard Warrender traces the history of the publishing of *De cive* in his introduction to Thomas Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin version* (Oxford, 1983), 1–16.
16. Mersenne to Sorbière, 28 April 1646, in Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin version* (ref. 15), 297–8.
17. Hobbes to Sorbière, [22 May/] 1 June 1646, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 133. Sorbière repeatedly requested Hobbes to finish his natural philosophy and to send it to him. See *ibid.*, i, 137, 164, 391. He also wanted Hobbes to get Gassendi to send his *Physics* to him (i, 137), once again showing how influence operated on many levels in the society of the learned.
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20. Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin version* (ref. 15), p. xiv.
21. Warrender in the introduction to *De cive: The Latin version* (ref. 15), 11, 11 n. 2. The Latin inscription reads: “Thom. Hobbes Nobilis Anglus Ser. Principi Walliae à studiis praep.”
22. Hobbes to Sorbière, [12/] 22 March 1647, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 157–8.
23. Hobbes to Sorbière, [6/] 16 May 1646, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 122–3. A. P. Martinich, *Hobbes: A biography* (Cambridge, 1999), 206, raises the issue of whether Hobbes’s claim of ignorance was merely self-serving.
24. I discuss this episode in detail in “Was *Leviathan* a patronage artifact?”, *History of political thought*, xxi (2000), 606–31.
25. Hobbes to Sorbière, 22 March 1647, in Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin version* (ref. 15), 312.
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27. Warrender discusses this affair in his introduction, in Hobbes, *De cive: The Latin version* (ref. 15), 11–12. The whole text of Mersenne’s original letter and Gassendi’s letter can be found on pp. 297–8.
28. Sorbière to Hobbes, [9/] 19 August 1647, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 161.

29. Sorbière to Hobbes, [17/] 27 November 1647, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 160.
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34. Sorbière to Hobbes, [2/] 12 May 1661, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 519.
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37. On the Montmor Academy, see Harcourt Brown, *Scientific organizations in seventeenth century France (1620–1680)* (New York, 1934), 64–134, and Roger Hahn, *The anatomy of a scientific organization: The Paris Academy of Sciences, 1666–1803* (Berkeley, 1971), 6–15.
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41. Sorbière to Hobbes, early 1663, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 551–3.
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50. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 26–27. Sorbière had declared his eagerness to see the Royal Society as early as 1661. See Brown, *op. cit.* (ref. 37), 116.
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52. The claim that the Royal Society was inspired by the Montmor Academy, which Oldenburg attended, has been definitively refuted by Brown, *op. cit.* (ref. 37), 117.
53. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 38, 47–48.
54. The ambivalent nature of the Royal Society’s private and public roles is discussed by Larry Stewart, *The rise of public science: Rhetoric, technology, and natural philosophy in Newtonian Britain, 1660–1750* (Cambridge, 1992). On the crown’s negligent support of the Royal Society, see Michael Hunter and Paul B. Wood, “Towards Solomon’s House: Rival strategies for reforming the early Royal Society”, *History of science*, xxiv (1986), 49–103.
55. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 39–40. Quentin Skinner, “Thomas Hobbes and the nature of the early Royal Society”, *Historical journal*, xii (1969), 213–19, p. 238, argues that it was Hobbes’s dogmatism that kept him out of the Royal Society.
56. On Hobbes’s dispute with Boyle, see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the air-pump: Hobbes, Boyle and the experimental life* (Princeton, 1985). For an account of the

dispute with Wallis, see Douglas M. Jesseph, *Squaring the circle: The war between Hobbes and Wallis* (Chicago, 1999); James R. Jacob, *Henry Stubbe, radical Protestantism and the early Enlightenment* (Cambridge, 1983), 17–24; and Arnold A. Rogow, *Thomas Hobbes: Radical in the service of reaction* (New York, 1986), 196–200. Skinner, *op. cit.* (ref. 55), 217–39, argues that the personal animosity between Hobbes and Boyle and between Hobbes and Wallis was one of the primary reasons for his exclusion from the Royal Society, and that this exclusion was not based on his heterodoxy or his attitude towards the new science and experimentation. Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan*, 131–9, on the other hand, argue that Hobbes was excluded from the Royal Society both for his personal arrogance and for his philosophical dogmatism, which offended the social and philosophic moderation of the Society.

57. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 39.
58. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 41.
59. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 41.
60. Steven Shapin, “‘A scholar and a gentleman’: The problematic identity of the scientific practitioner in early modern England”, *History of science*, xxix (1991), 279–327. John Evelyn, who as we will see later prompted Thomas Sprat’s refutation of Sorbière, was very sensitive to the charge of pedantry, and very scrupulous in defending the Royal Society’s honour. The Society, he had informed Clarendon in 1661, “does not consist of a Company of Pedants and superficial persons; but of Gentlemen, and Refined Spirits that are universally Learn’d, that are Read, Travell’d, Experienc’d and Stout” (in the dedication to Gabriel Naudé, *Instructions concerning erecting a library*, translated by John Evelyn (London, 1661), n.p.).
61. Sorbière to Hobbes, [21 June/] 1 July 1664, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 619.
62. Sorbière to Hobbes, [13] 23 December 1656, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), i, 390.
63. Sorbière to Hobbes, [24 November/] 4 December 1663, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 557.
64. Sorbière to Hobbes, [13/] 23 August 1664, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 630–1.
65. Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, *A brief view and survey of the dangerous and pernicious errors to Church and State, in Mr. Hobbes Book Entitled Leviathan* (London, 1676), 7–8.
66. Quoted in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), 631–2 n.4.
67. Malcolm, “Biographical Register”, in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), 898.
68. Vincent Guillotin, “Autour de la *Relation* du voyage de Samuel Sorbière en Angleterre 1663–1664”, in *Smith College studies in modern languages*, xi (1929–30), 3–29, argues that Sprat was urged to write his attack by Evelyn and others who felt that Sorbière had misrepresented himself and betrayed their institution at the very time it was being attacked on all sides.
69. Thomas Sprat, *Observations on Monsieur de Sorbiere’s Voyage in England, written to Dr. Wren, professor of astronomy in Oxford* (London, 1668), 202–7.
70. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 205–7. Since the Society was attempting to establish the priority of experiment over authority in science, the claim that they had a large library was particularly offensive (see Stewart, *op. cit.* (ref. 54), p. xxi).
71. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 166.
72. Hunter, *Science and society* (ref. 8), 34–38.
73. Hunter, “Toward Solomon’s house” (ref. 54), 51–55, 70–71.
74. Thomas Sprat, *History of the Royal Society of London*, ed. by Jackson I. Cope and Harold Whitmore Jones (St Louis, 1959), 77–79.
75. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 152–3.
76. Thomas Birch, *The history of the Royal Society for the improving on natural knowledge from its first rise*, ed. by A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (facs. of 1756–57 edn, 2 vols, New York and London, 1968), i, 107–8.
77. Naudé, *op. cit.* (ref. 60), n.p.

78. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 39. While Sorbière had only referred in this passage to Clarendon's rhetorical style, the implication is that Hobbes is Bacon's heir in other ways as well.
79. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 199.
80. Quoted in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), ii, 631 n.2.
81. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 113.
82. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 161.
83. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 198.
84. Sorbière, *Voyage* (ref. 1), 50.
85. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 60–61.
86. Shapin and Schaffer, *Leviathan* (ref. 56), 134, mention that "As several historians have suggested, the closeness of the King's association with the great dogmatist must have constituted a considerable threat to the experimentalists of the Royal Society. The King, on whom rested the Society's hopes of material support, was a patron of the new science, but there is little evidence that he discriminated markedly between the rationalist and the experimentalist programmes". If that was the case, it is possible that Sprat's attack on Sorbière was part of a patronage strategy to woo the King away from Hobbes and towards the Royal Society.
87. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 5, 10.
88. Guillotin, *op. cit.* (ref. 61), 19, emphasizes this point. On the early opponents to the Royal Society, see Dorothy Stimson, *Scientists and amateurs: A history of the Royal Society* (New York, 1948), 70–96. It may be significant that two of the most vehement critics of the Society were Margaret Cavendish, who attacked experimentalism in *Observations upon experimental philosophy* (London, 1666), and Thomas Shadwell, the dramatist who satirized the Royal Society in *The virtuoso* (London, 1676). Cavendish and Shadwell were respectively the wife and client of William Cavendish, the Duke of Newcastle, who was also Hobbes's patron. See my "Thomas Hobbes and the Duke of Newcastle" (ref. 8), 715–37, and "Margaret Cavendish and patronage", *Endeavour*, xxiii (1999), 130–2.
89. Guillotin, *op. cit.* (ref. 61), 8–9, and Malcolm, "Biographical Register", in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), 898. Malcolm gives a detailed account of Sorbière's disaster.
90. Henry Oldenburg to Robert Boyle, 20 October 1664, in A. Rupert Hall and Marie Boas Hall (eds), *The correspondence of Henry Oldenburg*, ii (Madison, 1966), 127–9.
91. Malcolm, "Biographical Register", in Malcolm (ed.), *op. cit.* (ref. 2), 898.
92. Henry Oldenburg to Pierre Petit, 30 October, in Hall and Hall (eds), *op. cit.* (ref. 90), 127–9. Oldenburg wrote to Sorbière to tell him that he had explained to Petit that Sorbière had not misrepresented himself (Oldenburg to Sorbière, 3 January 1663/4, ii, 141–3).
93. Brown, *op. cit.* (ref. 37), 131–2.
94. Only a handful of members of the Montmor Academy became members of the Académie des Sciences, including Roberval, Montmor's enemy. Perhaps local politics would have been enough to keep Sorbière out (see Brown, *op. cit.* (ref. 37), 117.) As we have seen above, Sorbière also disagreed with the medical establishment on blood-letting, which might have been enough to make his inclusion problematic.
95. Sprat, *Observations* (ref. 69), 240–1.