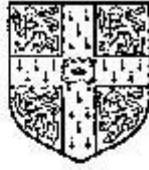


UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE  
FACULTY OF HISTORY



POLITICAL THOUGHT AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY  
RESEARCH SEMINAR 2013-14

Series 1

Monday 28 April 5.00 - 6.45  
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**Envy, Emulation, and the Theory of the State in Early Modern England**

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## The Author

Noah Dauber is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Colgate University. He has written on Reformation political thought and constitutionalism. He is currently working on a book on the theory of the state in early modern England. This talk is drawn from that work.

## The Paper

The absolutism of James VI & I is often seen as a step towards the unitary sovereignty of the modern state in its strengthening of the crown prerogatives as against those of the church and the courts of common law. At the same time it has been noticed that Francis Bacon, one of the great defenders of the king's prerogative, drew on the idioms of classical republicanism and active citizenship in recommending a way to attain "greatness" for England. How is it possible that the king and his counsellors were at once dedicated to the ideal of the commonwealth and absolutism? This paper will explore the theory of the state and the commonwealth developed by James VI & I, Francis Bacon, William Cavendish, and Hobbes, arguing that while there were significant continuities with the Elizabethan theory of the commonwealth, these men nevertheless developed a new conservative social theory better suited to a royal version of the commonwealth on the basis of Aristotle's ideas of envy and emulation from his *Rhetoric*.

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