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The Pacific King and the Militant Prince? Representation and Collaboration in the Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales

Catriona Murray

The relationship of King James VI and I with his elder son and heir, Prince Henry Frederick, has received much scholarly attention in recent years. While Roy Strong's study *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* did much to open up the field for further research, his depiction of the King as debauched, feeble and resentful, in contrast with the virtuous, athletic and gallant Prince, has been re-evaluated and revised by a number of historians.¹ Certainly, relations between father and son were strained, marked by grudging respect and awkward regard, but to characterize their rapport as one of jealousy, suspicion and discord is over-simplistic. The interests and policies of the *Rex Pacificus* and the warrior prince were not necessarily at odds. Nevertheless, those responsible for their cultural representation often had a fine line to tread in order to accommodate and satisfy their disparate ideologies and personalities. One of the few visual instances where this delicate balance is evident is in the *Letters Patent of James I, creating his son Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester* (1610, fig. 1).² Decorated with two superb and extremely detailed miniature portraits of James and Henry, it should be viewed as a carefully constructed statement, portraying father and son in diverse yet complementary roles.

The year 1610 marked the inauguration of Henry's public career. Masques, pageants and tournaments celebrated his coming of age and creation as Prince of Wales. The festivities centred on the creation itself, a parliamentary ceremony conducted on 4 June, meticulously stage-managed to pay tribute to the Stuart dynasty and, in turn, to loosen the purse strings of the House of Commons.³ The *Letters Patent* played a crucial role in this ceremony, both practically and symbolically. Its imagery reflected the prince's newly enhanced status and martial public image, preserving for posterity a visual representation of the moment of investiture itself. Like the ceremony and surrounding spectacles, the *Patent* was the result of collaboration. Several artistic hands were responsible for its decoration, while its Latin text had been drafted and re-drafted by a number of court officials. The mind (or minds) responsible for this sophisticated union of iconographic programme and legal form must have been a cultivated intellectual, as well as a shrewd politician, adept at placating both the King

¹ Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London, 1986), p. 15. For more recent appraisals of the relationship between James and Henry see Michael Ulliot, 'James's Reception and Henry's Receptivity: Reading *Basilicon Doron* after 1603', in Timothy Wilks (ed.), *Prince Henry Revived* (Southampton, 2007), pp. 65-84; Aysha Pollnitz, 'Humanism and the Education of Henry, Prince of Wales', *ibid.*, pp. 22-64.

² For another example, see an anonymous engraving, *The Most Highe and Mightie King James the First and Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales* (c. 1610), British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

³ Pauline Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', *Historical Research*, lxx:157, (1992), pp. 177-93 (p. 192).

The Pacific King and the Militant Prince? Representation and Collaboration in the Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales



Fig. 1. Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester (1610), Add. MS. 36932.

and his heir. Thus the *Patent* presents a relatively unusual subject for the seventeenth-century art historian – which may explain why it has tended to be overlooked. It is an official document of aesthetic value, an object with a ceremonial and legal function, as well as a multi-authored and complex work of art.

As early as 1603, amidst the celebrations for James's accession to the English throne, thoughts had turned to the formal creation of Henry as Prince of Wales. A short inventory dated that year and entitled *Things to be provided for the creation of the Prince of Wales for his Principallity, Dukedome and Earldome*, lists the ornaments required for his investiture:

First a Chaplett or Garland of Gould curiously wrought
Secondlye a Scepter of Goulde
Thirdly a Ringe of Goulde.⁴

It also advises that 'fit consideration' be made of the charter for his creation.⁵ Six years later little more progress had been made and the Prince was growing increasingly impatient to enter his estates.⁶ Crown finances were the principal barrier to his wishes. The loss of the revenues from Henry's estates and the establishment of a new, independent royal household would place a serious burden on the King's already depleted coffers.⁷ The Prince was persuaded to consent to a delay but his eagerness to attain majority status was not to be subdued for long. His most important ally in this undertaking was Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, James's foremost minister, Secretary of State and Lord Treasurer.⁸ Faced with an assertive and determined heir apparent, Cecil opted to appease the Prince, while also seeking to employ his popularity as a means of relieving the crown's financial situation. For him, Parliament posed the best hope of restitution and Henry was a powerful asset in encouraging the Commons' generosity.⁹ By December 1609 plans were afoot and enquiries were being made into the form such a ceremony should take.¹⁰ Precedents were remote. England had not witnessed the creation of a Prince of Wales since Henry VIII's installation in 1504 – some 106 years earlier,¹¹ and the equivalent title of the heir to the Scottish throne, namely Duke of Rothesay, was assumed at birth. A few days before Henry Frederick's creation, however, Dudley Carleton reported that:

The rest of the ceremonie that belongs to the prince shall be performed in a(s) privat manner as may be: and altogether after the fashion of Prince Arthur first son to Henry the 7th who you know was a goode husband.¹²

Again financial considerations had influenced this choice:

The K(ing) in this time of necessitie, w(hi)ch is so prest to the Parliament is not willing to undergoe any needless expence: w(hi)ch is the cause that makes this creation so privat; whereas otherwise there would have bin a solmne entrie and passage through the citie of London.¹³

⁴ Cotton MS. Vespasian C. XIV, f. 135. See also Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole MS 840, f. 233r.

⁵ Cotton MS. Vespasian C. XIV, f. 135.

⁶ *Calendar of State Papers (Venetian Series), 1607-10* (London, 1904), p. 227.

⁷ Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', p. 180.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 185.

¹¹ Although he used the title, Edward VI was not formally created Prince of Wales.

¹² Stowe MS. 171, f. 233r.

¹³ *Ibid.*, f. 233v.

Sir John Holles also remarked upon the strain suffered by the royal purse, with the King obliged to entertain the Dukes of Brunswick and of Wittenberg, who had arrived for the festivities.¹⁴

Nevertheless, despite these constraints, the pomp, solemnity and splendour associated with the investiture appear to have greatly impressed observers.¹⁵ A number of documentary and printed accounts of the ceremony survive, produced both to satisfy public interest in the occasion and to record it as a precedent for future creations.¹⁶ Following Prince Arthur's example, Henry was conveyed to his creation by a procession of barges.¹⁷ At about half past nine in the morning the Prince and his father passed by water from Whitehall to the Parliament House, accompanied by select members of the nobility.¹⁸ However, whereas Arthur had been invested in the parliament chambers,¹⁹ this ceremony was performed in the more accommodating Court of Requests, with seating for members of both houses – a gesture designed to express the respect with which they were esteemed.²⁰ With the spectators seated and the King enthroned, the heralds entered, followed by twenty-five newly installed Knights of the Bath.²¹ Then came the insignia of the office of the Prince of Wales. Garter King of Arms headed the procession carrying the *Letters Patent*, followed by six earls bearing the purple mantle and train of Henry's princely robes, the sword, ring, golden wand and cap of state.²² A memorandum on *The Creation of a Prince*, probably drawn up around this time, explains the special symbolism of these accoutrements. According to its directions the sword signified that as former princes had received the Duchy of Cornwall at birth, so Henry was a duke without creation.²³ The ring denoted his duty to deliver justice without bias, the gold wand that he should be victorious and subdue his enemies, while the coronet represented his responsibility to be steadfast and righteous.²⁴ The Prince kneeled by his father and Garter kissed the *Patent* which he passed to the Lord Chamberlain.²⁵ It was then presented to the King who, in turn, gave it to the Secretary, Robert Cecil, for its proclamation.²⁶ At the words, 'fecimus et creavimus' (we have made and created), the mantle was delivered to the King, who passed it to two assistants, who placed it upon the Prince.²⁷ Upon the words 'serti in capite et annuli aurei', James placed the coronet on his son's head and the gold ring on his finger, delivering the rod as the corresponding words were read.²⁸ Following the reading the King handed the *Letters Patent*

¹⁴ Add. MS. 32464, f. 40.

¹⁵ Stowe MS. 171, f. 247v. *Calendar of State Papers (Venetian)*, p. 507. Elizabeth Read Foster (ed.), *Proceedings in Parliament 1610* (New Haven, 1966), vol. ii, p. 126.

¹⁶ See for example, London, National Archives, SP 14/53/7; BL, Harl. MS. 5176, ff. 203r–203v; Lansdowne MS. 261, f. 136; London, College of Arms, Vincent MS. 151, f. 456r. Samuel Daniel, *The Order and Solemnitie of the Creation of the High and mightie Prince Henrie* (London, 1610).

¹⁷ Cotton MS. Julius B. XII. f. 59r.

¹⁸ Harley MS 5176. f. 203r. Daniel, op. cit., sig. B2r.

¹⁹ Cotton MS. Julius B. XII. f. 60v.

²⁰ Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', p. 189. Interestingly, when Henry's younger brother, the future Charles I, was installed as Prince of Wales in 1616 the ceremony was conducted privately at Court. See Croft, p. 193.

²¹ Harl. MS. 5176, f. 203r.

²² *Ibid.*, f. 203v. The account of Prince Arthur's creation similarly details the Prince's symbols of office: 'the cape and cornatt . . . golden rode and the ringe of gold'. No mention is made of a sword or, indeed, of Letters Patent. See Cotton MS. Julius B. XII, f. 61v.

²³ Add. MS. 4712, f. 43.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, f. 43.

²⁵ London, National Archives, SP 14/55/10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁷ Harl. MS. 5176, f. 203v.

²⁸ Harl. MS. 5176, f. 203v; Add. MS. 36932. The Latin in the account of the ceremony differs from that in the *Letters Patent*. I have used the Latin text of the *Patent*.

to Henry – the moment depicted in the initial letter portraits. Throughout James displayed great affection, assuring his son that he must not mind humbling himself to his father.²⁹ Henry then rose and sat on the left hand side of his father. With the rites over, the whole company proceeded solemnly from the Court, accompanied by the sound of trumpets.³⁰ Thus the *Patent* itself played a central part in the creation, both as a mark of the Prince's new status and as a ceremonial device. Several contemporary descriptions comment on its reading.³¹ Like the Prince's regalia, it was bestowed upon Henry and symbolic of his new office, while the reading of its text, in both Latin and English, directed the proceeding of the ceremony and legally proclaimed the creation.³² Its fate afterwards, however, is unclear. As an open document there is a possibility that it may have been displayed. It certainly was not published as some others were.³³ Its survival suggests that, despite its aesthetic value, it was first and foremost a legal deed and was eventually stored and treated as such.³⁴

Despite the predominance of the *Letters Patent* during the ceremonial of Prince Henry's creation, it would appear that its illuminated decorations failed to provoke any comment. Measuring approximately half a metre in height by seventy centimetres in length (just smaller than the size of an A0 poster print), it is a sizeable document and, while being read, its rich ornamentation would surely have been visible at least to those seated nearby. As Erna Auerbach's pioneering work into the miniature portraits on another set of legal documents, the plea rolls, has shown, richly illuminated official documents were being produced in England throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.³⁵ However, few of those still extant are comparable with this manuscript in terms of quality, brilliance, complexity and sheer abundance of decoration. At first glance, its imagery would appear to be a straightforward celebration of Henry's titles and martial public image. The heraldic coats of arms which decorate the golden border represent the dignities and estates of the Prince in ascending order: the badge of the Earl of Chester, with its sheaves or *Garb Or*; that of the Duke of Cornwall, with its fifteen gold coins; and the feathered badge of the Prince of Wales. The uppermost central arms with lion and unicorn supporters are those of King James, while to their right are Henry's royal arms. Below the initial portraits are the ancient arms of the Principality of Wales. Interlaced with these heraldic devices are illustrations of armour and weaponry – representative of Henry's interests but seemingly at odds with the general thrust of King James's peaceful policies. On closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that these martial emblems are

²⁹ *Calendar of State Papers (Venetian)*, p. 507.

³⁰ Harl. MS. 5176, f. 203v. Daniel, *op. cit.*, sig. B3r.

³¹ See for example, London, National Archives, SP 14/55/10; BL, Harl. MS 5176. f. 203v; Daniel, *op. cit.*, sig. B2v.

³² The importance of the charter of creation as a mark of the enhanced rank and status of a new Prince of Wales is revealed by a later etching from 1664 by Wenceslaus Hollar (Auckland, Auckland Art Gallery). Part of a series illustrating ceremonial robes of the English nobility, its depiction of Charles II as Prince of Wales shows him with all the accoutrements of his office: robes, coronet, ring, rod and sword, as well as prominently displaying Letters Patent. The engraving is of special interest since Charles II was never formally created Prince of Wales.

³³ See for example *His Maiesties commission to all the Lords, and others of the Priuie Counsell, touching the creation of baronets whereunto are annexed diuers instructions, and His Maiesties letters patents containing the forme of the said creation. Also the forme of an oath to be taken by the said baronets* (London, 1611) and *The copie of the Kings Maiesties letters patents for the making of allomes, in England, Scotland; and Ireland, or in any other his Maiesties dominions* (London, 1610).

³⁴ The whereabouts of the *Letters Patent* is uncertain for almost the next three hundred years. It re-emerged from obscurity in 1904 when the British Library bought it from a Francis P. Wheeler for £45. With thanks to Michael St John-McAlister, Curator of Manuscripts at the British Library, for this information.

³⁵ Erna Auerbach, *Tudor Artists: A Study of Painters in the Royal Service and of Portraiture on Illuminated Documents from the Accession of Henry VIII to the Death of Elizabeth I* (London, 1954), p. 1.

not necessarily synonymous with the battle-field but instead are redolent of the tournament. The plumed helmets and suits of armour with their coloured sashes, the pasteboard shields, banners and decorated pavilions, as well as the lances, pikes and pole-axes were all associated with the tilt-yard.³⁶ A cult of chivalry had grown around Henry in the preceding years. He both promoted and aspired to its values of gallantry and heroism.³⁷ The Prince's official entry into this romanticized and ritualized martial world came on 31 December 1609, when under the guise of Moeliades, Lord of the Isles, Henry issued a challenge to all the knights of 'greate Brittain'.³⁸ The terms of his challenge provide a valuable insight into his chivalric concerns:

First: That noe garment beseemeth a knight soe well, as that w(hi)ch is soyled with the rust of Armour.

Secondly: That a knight ought to be as readye, to mantayne a Ladyes honour as his owne words.

Thirdly: That it is more glorious to be overcome in the defence of an honourable cause, then to remayne victorious in an ill quarrel.³⁹

Half masque, half feat of arms, *Prince Henry's Barriers*, staged the following year, presented him as an Arthurian hero, the restorer of ancient virtue.⁴⁰ It is within this context, then, that the *Patent's* illustrations should be viewed. There has been a tendency among historians to interpret the Jacobean tournament as a nursery for real combat; yet as Alan Young has argued, its 'role was not solely or even principally that of preparation for war'.⁴¹ Rather, it had become increasingly detached from the realities of Renaissance warfare, focusing on courtly codes of behaviour, extravagant display and royal power.⁴² Even the *Patent's* depictions of firearms can be identified with gentlemanly pursuits rather than military activities.⁴³ Thus, while its iconographic programme at first appears incompatible with the King's pictorial presence, it actually represents a conciliation. It was after all James who presided over these events and to whom the participants paid service. Indeed, he had actively encouraged this persona during his son's early years, instructing him to follow the chivalric pursuits which would become so closely associated with his public image:

Use specially such games on horse-back as may teach you to handle your armes thereon, such as the Tilt, the Ring, and lowe riding for the handling of your sword.⁴⁴

Traces of the strong masculine, martial persona which would develop around the Prince are evident as early as the lavish celebrations surrounding his baptism at Stirling Castle and point to his father's complicity in its creation.⁴⁵ Care has to be taken, therefore, not to overstate

³⁶ Alan Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments* (London, 1987), pp. 143, 131, 95, 12-14.

³⁷ *Ibid.* p. 38.

³⁸ Add. MS. 12514, f. 135r.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, f. 135r. As well as referring to one of Henry's titles as the eldest son of the King of Scots, William Drummond of Hawthornden recorded that in anagram his pseudonym produced 'MILES A DEO', or soldier of God. See William Drummond, *Tears on the Death of Moeliades* (Edinburgh, 1614), sig. B4v.

⁴⁰ Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, p. 141.

⁴¹ Young, *Tudor and Jacobean Tournaments*, p. 23.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁴³ See for example, Henry Peacham's *The Compleat Gentleman* (London, 1622), p. 181: 'Shooting also is a very healthful and commendable recreation for a Gentleman; neither doe I know any other comparable unto it for stirring every part of the body.'

⁴⁴ James VI and I, *Basilicon Doron* (Edinburgh, 1599), p. 144.

⁴⁵ See William Fowler, *A True Reportarie of the Most Triumphant, and Royal Accomplishment of the Baptisme of the Most Excellent, right High and mightie Prince Frederick Henry* (Edinburgh, 1594), ff. 4v, 6v, 8r.

James's pacifism. He was principally a pragmatist and efforts to accentuate the differences between the attitudes of father and son are misguided.⁴⁶ Indeed, when necessary, James had counselled his son to wage war:

Sen the sword is given you by God, not onely to revenge upon your own subjects the wrongs committed upon others; but farther to revenge and free them of forraine injuries done unto them: & therefore warres upon just quarrelles are lawful.⁴⁷

The problem lay in Henry's rapid emergence as the champion of a vigorous war party, intent upon restoring England to the halcyon days of Elizabeth I.⁴⁸ The Prince's person and persona were increasingly becoming a focus for opposition. By representing Henry's interests under the veil of the chivalric tournament, potential ideological conflicts were diminished.

The initial portraits (fig. 2) provide further evidence of a carefully managed pictorial relationship. Miniature portraits of the sovereign had appeared on legal documents as early as the reign of Henry VI but did not commonly feature likenesses of other figures.⁴⁹ Near precedents for this type of composition can be found in the Plea Rolls of Queen Mary I. Between 1557 and 1558 representations of the monarch and her husband, Philip II of Spain, are accompanied by a kneeling figure, probably the principal clerk of the King's Bench, who also holds a legal deed.⁵⁰ At the time of Henry's investiture eight charters were extant from the creations of earlier Princes of Wales.⁵¹ While records of these documents survive, it would appear that the originals have since been lost. It is therefore uncertain whether these earlier charters provided models for the decoration of Henry Frederick's *Letters Patent*. Two early illuminated manuscripts depicting *The Creation of Edward II as Prince of Wales* (early fourteenth century, fig. 3) and *Edward, the Black Prince, receiving Aquitaine* (1386-99, fig. 4), however, may have been employed. Both belonged to the manuscript collections of Sir Robert Cotton, who had already played an important part in researching the history of the princes and principality of Wales.⁵² In particular, the prominence of the charter in the illustration of the Black Prince and his father, Edward III, would suggest that it was consulted.

The portrait of James I appears to be derived from his representation on the *Great Seal* (1603, fig. 5), where he also sits enthroned beneath a canopy of state – the Patent itself carries a dark bronze green impression, attached by gold and silver thread. Thus James is portrayed resplendent – an icon of kingship and of majesty. Above his head a little golden-haired putto holds a wreath of laurel and a palm frond, both traditional symbols of victory. Meanwhile, Henry is depicted in profile, in a gesture of deference and looking up at his father. The initial 'J' in which this scene is illustrated also serves to highlight James's achievements. Depicted among the golden knots and scrolls is a lion's head and the elongated lizard-body of a wyvern. The same two beasts are present in an engraving executed before his accession to the English throne (c. 1590, fig. 6). The supporters of the Scoto-Danish arms of James and his wife, Anne of Denmark, bear two royal banners – that of Scotland displays a lion rampant and that of Denmark a writhing wyvern. Thus in the *Letters Patent* these two creatures symbolize the royal union of the King and Queen, a match which had borne fruit and produced Henry. The cornucopia, foliage and budding blossoms which decorate its first line continue this theme of

⁴⁶ Ulllyot, 'James's Reception and Henry's Receptivity', p. 73.

⁴⁷ James VI and I, *Basilicon Doron*, p. 66.

⁴⁸ R. Badenhausen, 'Disarming the Infant Warrior: Prince Henry, King James, and the Chivalric Ideal', *Papers on Language and Literature*, xxxi (1995), pp. 20-37 (p. 22); Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603-1660* (New Haven and London, 2010), p. 110.

⁴⁹ Auerbach, *Tudor Artists*, p. 1.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 100.

⁵¹ Harl. MS. 5176, f. 204v.

⁵² Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', p. 182.



Fig. 2. Initial Portraits from the *Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester* (1610), Add. MS. 36932.

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Fig. 3. The Creation of Edward II as Prince of Wales (early fourteenth century). Miniature portraits from *Flores Historiarum*, Cotton MS. Nero D. II.



Fig. 4. Edward the Black Prince Receiving Aquitaine (1386-99), Cotton MS. Nero D. VI.



Fig. 5. Impression of the Great Seal from the *Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester* (1610), Add. MS. 36932.

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Fig. 6. Anonymous, *James VI of Scotland* (c. 1590), © Trustees of the British Museum, London.

fertility. James's foreign policy of diplomacy and international alliance through the marital bed is tacitly acknowledged, while his favoured imagery of fecundity surrounds father and son. These symbols of abundance also denote the benefits of peace and plenty under James. Thus the Prince's figure is contained within the iconography of his father's government and he is presented as yet another blessing of the King's rule.

Many of the themes depicted in the *Patent*'s decoration are echoed in its text. A heavily re-worked draft of the preamble provides further insight into the dynastic and political messages the King was eager to convey.⁵³ The importance of James's achievement in securing a royal succession and its role in protecting both state and church is underlined throughout, while his deep paternal affection is professed in grandiloquent terms:

That regard, which from the Springes of private men is distilled to their Issue, must never be compared with that ocean of Love, w(hi)ch flows from the hartes of royall kings.⁵⁴

One of the most telling additions to the draft is the introduction of the term 'olive branches' to describe the royal progeny.⁵⁵ With its dual connotations of fertility and peace it was an expression which would no doubt have appealed to the King. Another series of additions reinforces the unifying intentions of the *Patent*. The adage that children are created in the image of their forbears is repeatedly employed. Towards the end of the preamble Henry is proclaimed as literally the same person as his father:

We are perswaded that we cannot doe a worde of greater honour to ourselfes then by honouring him that is in reputation of law *Eadem Persona cum Patre*.⁵⁶

Thus both text and image were recruited to underline James's position as father and sovereign, and Henry's as son and heir. Viewed as a whole, the iconography of the *Letters Patent* represents a carefully constructed programme designed to honour Henry Frederick and to proclaim his interests within a strictly controlled framework. Although its imagery focuses on and celebrates the person of the militant Prince, it is the person of the Pacific King which dominates and it is his policies which are literally crowned with success.

So who was responsible for this rich and complex decorative programme? The clues would point to a senior court official and an astute politician, eager to satisfy both the King and his heir, as well as a cultivated connoisseur with a developed understanding of aesthetics and symbolism. The most likely candidate is a man already heavily associated with the Prince's creation – Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury. As previously noted, Cecil was principal minister to James but also an enthusiastic supporter of the young Prince. It was Cecil who had masterminded the form of Henry's creation and who had persuaded the King, against his judgment, to recall parliament for the occasion.⁵⁷ He directed Henry's training in diplomacy and politics, while encouraging his growing interest in paintings.⁵⁸ Cecil's own artistic collections were considerable and he was an important patron.⁵⁹ Among his manuscripts is a

⁵³ London, National Archives, SP 14/53/73.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', p. 182.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 181.

⁵⁹ Susan Bracken, 'Robert Cecil as Art Collector' in Pauline Croft (ed.), *Patronage, Culture and Power: The Early Cecils* (New Haven and London, 2002), p. 121.

letter from Sir David Murray, Henry's Groom of the Stool, requesting that the Earl bring some of his pictures for the Prince's perusal and appreciation.⁶⁰ Having masterminded Henry's creation, it is not unlikely that his attentions also turned towards the Patent – after all it was Cecil, as Secretary, who was responsible for reading out the text to the assembled houses.⁶¹ Indeed, although the legal wording was formulated by Sir Henry Hobart and Sir Francis Bacon, as Attorney and Solicitor General, his hand is surely detectable in the wording of the preamble and his corrections are present in the surviving drafts.⁶²

If Cecil was responsible for the visual programme of the *Letters Patent*, he did not work alone. Several artists were involved in its creation. Roy Strong's brief appraisal of this document attributed the faces of the King and his son to the miniaturist, Nicholas Hilliard, while ascribing the rest of the decoration to a second inferior hand who, he believed, was also responsible for the general design.⁶³ It is my belief that this manuscript displays evidence of at least three separate artistic hands. The first, responsible for the coats of arms and tournament paraphernalia, was most probably a heraldic painter of competent but not marked ability. The second, probably a lesser artist attached to a limner's workshop, was responsible for rendering the robes, figures, putto and setting of the initial portraits. It is tempting to identify the third expert hand – who executed the delicately modelled faces of James and Henry – as not Hilliard but his pupil and rival, Isaac Oliver. There may even have been a fourth hand, who supplied the golden calligraphy and marginalia. The attribution of the faces to Oliver rests principally on the depth, vibrancy and finesse of the portraits but is supported by other circumstantial evidence. It was Oliver, rather than Hilliard, who was particularly associated with Henry's court, producing two of the most iconic images of the Prince around 1610: one depicting him in armour with a military encampment in the distance (1610, London, Royal Collection), and the other showing him in profile dressed *alla romana* (1610, fig. 7). While they are not strictly speaking identical, the similarity of the second miniature to the profile portrait is striking. The Prince's accounts, drawn up after his death in 1612, record payments to Oliver for a number of pictures,⁶⁴ and he also participated in the funeral procession as his 'Paynter'.⁶⁵ James's face is derived from a pattern in use between c. 1609 and 1614.⁶⁶ It is closely associated, although in reverse, with the miniature portrait from the *Lyte Jewel* also from 1610 (fig. 8). Indeed, I would go so far as to say that, contrary to Strong's attribution, both of these miniatures are by the same hand and are by Oliver. Comparison with a Hilliard miniature of James, painted around the same time (c. 1609, fig. 9), reveals the difference in style, finish and modelling. Both the *Letters Patent* and the *Lyte Jewel* have a subtlety and depth which is largely absent from Hilliard's later work. Further comparison with another illuminated initial – more convincingly attributed to Hilliard – the *Charter authorizing Sir Walter Mildmay to found Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (1584, fig. 10), with its meticulously controlled and detailed pattern-work, also highlights the stylistic differences between Hilliard's hand and that of the *Letters Patent*. It is surely plausible that Oliver employed and adapted the official face pattern of the sovereign, as several artists had during Elizabeth's reign.⁶⁷ Although Robert Cecil had a long-standing working relationship with Hilliard this did not stop him from commissioning miniatures from Oliver.⁶⁸ It is unlikely that Henry, who

⁶⁰ *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury: The Cecil Manuscripts*, vol. xxi, 1609–12 (London, 1970), p. 39.

⁶¹ London, National Archives, SP 14/55/10.

⁶² Croft, 'The Parliamentary Installation of Henry, Prince of Wales', p. 191. See for example London, National Archives, SP 14/53/73.

⁶³ Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, p. 147.

⁶⁴ London, National Archives, E 351/2794.

⁶⁵ London, National Archives, LC 2/4/6, f. 43v.

⁶⁶ Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, p. 147.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* p. 143.

⁶⁸ Lawrence Stone, 'Notes on British Art from the Archives: I', *Burlington Magazine*, xcvi: 619 (October 1954), p. 323. The Cecil Papers at Hatfield House record a payment to Oliver in June 1611.



Fig. 7. Isaac Oliver, *Henry, Prince of Wales* (1610), Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Fig. 8. Isaac Oliver(?), *The Lyte Jewel* (1610), © Trustees of the British Museum, London.



Fig. 9. Nicholas Hilliard, *James VI and I* (c. 1609), The Buchanan Society.

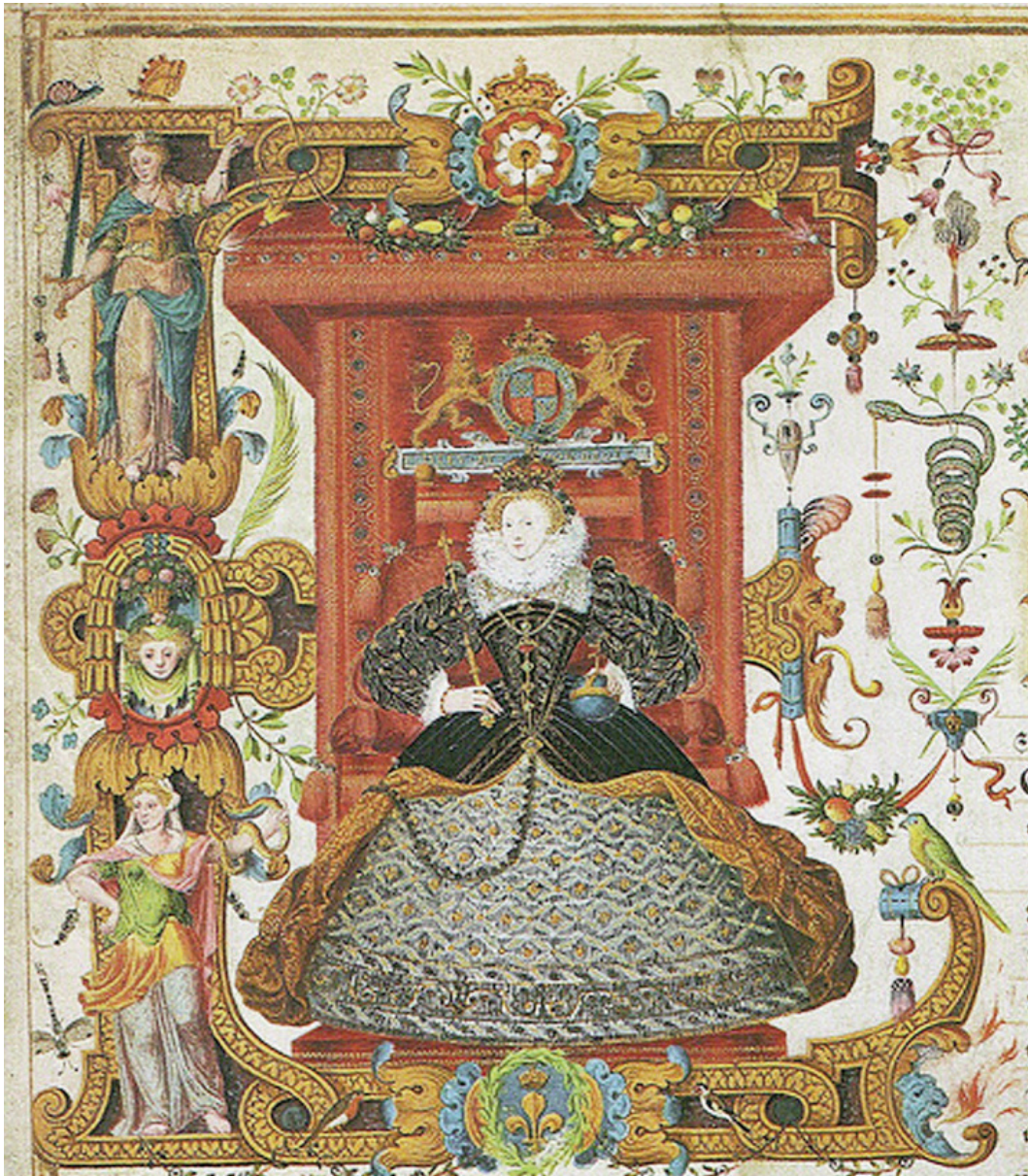


Fig. 10. Nicholas Hilliard, *Charter authorizing Sir Walter Mildmay to found Emmanuel College, Cambridge* (1584), by permission of The Master and Fellows of Emmanuel College, Cambridge.

considered himself a connoisseur, would have turned to Hilliard for the illumination of such an important document. Rather, a younger artist was chosen, a prolific draughtsman associated with continental influences, who would continue to rise in the Prince's esteem. Thus the *Letters Patent* was the product of a series of collaborations, as rich, layered and diverse as its iconographic programme.

In some ways, the *Letters Patent of James I, creating his son, Henry, Prince of Wales and Earl of Chester* is a document full of contradictions which raises as many questions as it answers. It played a crucial role in the creation of Henry as Prince of Wales and several commentators describe its reading; yet surprisingly, it would appear that its vibrant and finely executed decoration went unmarked, while its fate following the ceremony remains uncertain. At first glance, the Patent celebrates Prince Henry and his militant public image; yet on closer examination this aspect of his representation has been contained and balanced with the King's preferred imagery of majesty and fecundity. While the evidence points to Robert Cecil, politician, patron and architect of the creation ceremony, as the mind behind the decorative scheme, the identities of several of those responsible for its execution are more elusive. What is certain is that this is an important and unique document which provides further insight into how tensions between James and his son were negotiated within a cultural context. It represents a carefully controlled statement which creates a sense of harmony through conciliation. In Henry's case, the guise of the militant prince proved almost too effective. The martial principles for which he stood brought him popularity but also threatened to undermine his father's position. Yet, while their divergent images and policies admittedly provoked tensions, as Kevin Sharpe has observed, they also enabled the Stuart dynasty to represent a range of conflicting interests.⁶⁹ As the *Letters Patent* demonstrate, for all their differences, James and Henry were at their strongest when united.

⁶⁹ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars*, p. 100, p. 207.