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# **James I and the Performance and Representation of Royalty**

**by**

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A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in  
Renaissance Studies

University of Warwick, Centre for the Study of the Renaissance

December 2002

For James (Mardock not Stuart) with thanks.

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## **Acknowledgements**

I wish to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Board for their financial support.

I would like to thank Bernard Capp and Carol Rutter for generously reading drafts of my work and offering suggestions and guidance, and Kevin Sharpe for general advice and support.

My thanks also to all of my friends, especially those who are fellow PhD students – Chris Campbell, Jane Poyner, Juliette Taylor, Lucy Frank, *et al* – for providing encouragement, sympathy, and distraction, and particular thanks to Chris for last minute checking of my bibliography and for making me laugh during the final formatting and printing.

I would like to thank my family, specifically for looking after me so well, and with such understanding, in the final weeks before submission, and more generally for the love, support and joy they have given me for my whole life.

Finally my thanks to James Mardock, for unfailing enthusiasm and encouragement, for being a thoughtful and intelligent listener and reader, and a sensitive critic, for devoting so much time to reading drafts of my work, and, most of all, for helping me to believe in myself.

## **Declaration**

This thesis is my own work. It has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

## Abstract

This thesis explores how James I performed and represented his royalty in two key areas. The first is his engagement with the European tradition of magnificence, which was a central aspect of Renaissance court culture, in such areas as public appearance and liberality. The second is his self-representation in his writings. James prioritised verbal over visual forms of self-representation and portrayed himself as a Writer-King, and these are amongst the most distinctive aspects of his kingship. The thesis examines a range of primary sources, principally James's writings but also contemporary responses to the king's self-representation, such as letters and ambassadorial reports, and engages with other critical and historical studies.

The gaps and misapprehensions in accounts of James that this thesis contributes towards rectifying derive from several general tendencies. There has been an over-reliance on the early historiography of James, a lack of work on the Scottish and European contexts for his self-representation in England, and little attention paid to his writings. This thesis combines the close reading of the 'literary' approach with the attention to context of the 'historical' approach, placing the discussion of James's self-representation within the cultural and political contexts of Scotland and England, and considering his cultural and political engagement with continental Europe. It has four main chapters, one on James's background in Scotland, one on his performance of the role of magnificent king in England, and two on the writings he wrote or republished in England. The discussion reveals that in Scotland James developed tendencies, strategies, and anxieties that would continue into his English reign, and argues that negative perceptions of him in England derived largely from a clash between the style he had developed and the expectations of his new subjects. It examines James's attempts to combine authorship and authority and reveals their problematic relationship. The discussion suggests that James was aware of the importance of effective self-representation, but his style, the clash of expectations, and problems inherent in the representation of royalty, meant that his attempts to reinforce his image risked undermining and demystifying the king.

## A note on texts

- All references to James's prose works, including speeches, refer to James I, *The Workes* (1616), facsimile reprint (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, 1971) unless otherwise specified. Page numbers will follow in parentheses. This reprint includes at the end two meditations, *A Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer* and *A Meditation vpon Saint Matthew or a Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration*, which were both written in 1619 and first included in the 1620 edition of James's *Workes*. This reprint is continuously paginated.



## Introduction

At a banquet on 4 August 1621 James I, King of England, engaged in an idiosyncratic and controversial act of royal self-representation, an incident which raises many of the issues that this thesis will illuminate. In August 1621 James was being entertained by his favourite, George Villiers, Lord High Admiral, Earl of Buckingham (and later Duke), during a visit to Buckingham's newly acquired home, Burley-on-the-Hill. This visit took place during the summer recess of the parliament of 1621, a parliament in which the king was seeking backing for his unpopular foreign policy of negotiating for marriage between his heir Prince Charles and the Catholic Spanish princess and of non-intervention in the war in Europe.<sup>1</sup> The first session of the 1621 parliament had dealt with the matter of monopolies. This constituted an indirect attack on Buckingham, but he had emerged triumphant. He then provided for James at Burley-on-the-Hill entertainment that included Ben Jonson's masque, *The Gipsies Metamorphosed*, on 3 August.<sup>2</sup> Buckingham played the leading gypsy and was given lines in which he praised the king.<sup>3</sup> At the banquet on the next day James praised Buckingham in return by reading out the following 'Vow or Wish for the felicity & fertility of the owners of this house' to Buckingham and his wife:

If euer in the Aprill of my dayes

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<sup>1</sup> James's foreign policy in this period will be discussed in more detail in subsequent chapters.

<sup>2</sup> Buckingham, who was newly married, had moved into Burley-on-the Hill, a great estate in Rutland, during the early summer of 1621 (Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham* [London; New York: Longman, 1981], p. 63). This masque was also performed at Belvoir on 5 August and at Windsor, probably early in September, in a revised version (*Ben Jonson*, ed. by C. H. Herford, and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925-52], VII, 541). For a discussion of the masque in the context of the 1621 parliament, see Martin Butler, "'We are one mans all': Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*", *Yearbook of English Studies*, 21 (1991), 253-73. For an account of the 1621 parliament, see Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>3</sup> See chapter two.

I satt vpon Parnassus forked hill:  
 And there inflam'd with sacred fury still  
 By pen proclaim'd our great Apollo's praise:  
 Grant glistringe Phoebus with thy golden rayes  
 My earnest wish which I present thee heere:  
 Beholdinge of this blessed couple deere,  
 Whose vertues pure no pen can duly blaze.  
 Thow by whose heat the trees in fruit abound  
 Blesse them with fruit delicious sweet & fayre,  
 That may succeed them in theyr vertues rare.  
 ffirmе plant them in theyr natiue soyle & ground.  
 Thow Joue, that art the onely God indeed,  
 My prayer heare: sweet Jesu interceed.<sup>4</sup>

In 1621 it was thirty-seven years since he had published his first collection of poetry as an eighteen year old King of Scotland.<sup>5</sup> The sonnet makes not only the explicit claim that the service James did the gods in his earlier poetry enables him to make a wish to them now, but also the implicit claim that his earlier poetry forms the basis for his continuing ability to write sonnets such as this. He is presenting himself in the poem as a poet, through both reference and demonstration, and significantly, despite the context of the parliamentary recess, he is not explicitly portraying himself in the poem as a king and makes no mention of the current political situation.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh; London: Blackwood, 1955-1958), II, 177.

<sup>5</sup> See chapter one.

The sonnet praises Buckingham and his wife through the convention of claiming the impossibility of praising them adequately: their 'vertues pure no pen can duly blaze' (8). This line sits uncomfortably, however, with the fourth line with which it is connected by the idea of writing praise and by rhyme: in the past James 'By pen proclaim'd our great Apollo's praise'. The poem suggests that James was able to praise Apollo, but no-one can write about this couple adequately, as though their virtues exceed the divine in coming beyond human poetic expression.

News of the incident quickly spread. In a letter of 18 August 1621 John Chamberlain gives Sir Dudley Carleton a paraphrase of the verses and offers the opinion that James 'was so pleased and taken' with the entertainment provided for him during his stay, 'that he could not forbear to expresse his contentment in certain verses'.<sup>6</sup> The Venetian ambassador, Girolamo Lando, reported on the reading on two occasions. His despatch to the Doge and Senate, sent on the 27 August 1621, begins

the king showed the favourite as much honour at Burli as he received from his Excellency, as at a state banquet [...] his Majesty rose from the table where he was sitting apart with the prince [Charles], and went to the head of another at which were the leading lords and ladies, and drank standing and uncovered to the health of the Lord High Admiral, spoke in the highest terms of his merits and qualities [...], and finally read some verses which he had composed in honour of this splendid host and ordered that they should be written on the walls, and carved in the marble of the doors, for a perpetual memorial.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1939), II, 397.

Over a year later, on the 21 September 1622, in an extended ‘relation of England’, Girolamo Lando describes Buckingham’s unpopularity with other people and dominance of the king’s affections and in this context recalls James reading out his verses. Lando observes that James’s reading ‘caused more comment than if he had done some great wrong to his kingdom’.<sup>7</sup>

These contemporary accounts reflect the public nature of the occasion, attended by ‘the leading lords and ladies’, and the fact that James’s acts of self-representation were likely to be re-presented by others, at home and abroad. They also indicate several possible bases for objections to this particular act of royal self-representation. Firstly, there is the question of appropriateness and decorum. Chamberlain suggests that James showed a lack of self-restraint – ‘he could not forbear’. Lando implies that the stance James adopted for the reading – no longer sitting apart and covered – was inappropriate, thereby implying that the reading itself was also inappropriate. The first line of his 1621 despatch – ‘the king showed the favourite as much honour at Burli as he received from his Excellency’ – may be intended to imply the inappropriateness of a king showing a mere favourite so much honour. Secondly, there is the content of the poem: it heaps lavish praise on a favourite of the king who was very unpopular. Lando relates the furore caused by the reading to widespread resentment of Buckingham. Thirdly, there is the context of European political instability. Having described the reading at the beginning of his despatch, Lando goes on to discuss the latest news regarding European political affairs and notes that ‘in the variety and uncertainty of the news one fears the ill rather than expects the good’.<sup>8</sup> This implies the impropriety of James praying to God about the fertility of Buckingham and his wife at a time of major international political difficulty.

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<sup>7</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, XVII (1621-3), pp. 117, 439.

<sup>8</sup> *C.S.P. Ven.*, XVII (1621-3), pp. 117-18.

My thesis will explore a number of questions that illuminate such acts and such responses. What intentions might have underlain such acts of royal self-representation? How did James develop his style of self-representation? What was the relationship between his self-representation as King of Scotland and as King of England? What forms of self-representation other than writing did he have at his disposal and how did he engage with them? What expectations as to appropriate monarchical performance might his subjects have held and how did they relate to James's particular style? What was the relationship between the self-representation of the king and of individuals such as Buckingham? Was poetry only a distraction from political affairs or did James ever try to use it as a political tool? How might the relationship between writing and political action have been perceived? How did the threat and actuality of public discussion and re-presentation of the king impact on his self-representation? What does all of this tell us about the relationship between authorship and authority?

These questions can only be addressed by considering performance and textual representation, text (both content and form) and context, royal intention and public response. My study is not a biography of James, nor is it a political history, but it thus combines the close reading of the 'literary' approach with the attention to context of the 'historical' approach, placing my exploration within the cultural and political contexts of Scotland and England, and considering James's cultural and political engagement with continental Europe.

James ruled in an era when monarchs lacked standing armies and police forces and royal authority therefore depended upon the public perception of authority, meaning that it had to be effectively represented and projected.<sup>9</sup> Effective royal representation required a degree of cultural accord between the monarch and the various audiences for

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<sup>9</sup> For a general discussion of the importance of public display and performance in the age of personal monarchy, see *The Princely Courts of Europe, 1500-1750*, ed. by John Adamson (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1999).

his representation. In other words, royal representation was likely to be more successful the more the monarch either met existing expectations as to what constituted appropriate and impressive representation, or shaped such expectations to accord with the nature of his representation.

My discussion focuses on how James performed and represented his royalty in two key areas. The first is his engagement with the European tradition of magnificence, which was a central aspect of Renaissance court culture, in such areas as public appearance and liberality (which I am terming 'performance'). This tradition was largely derived from the ideas of Aristotle. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, which was to be reiterated 'in countless treatises *De regimine principum*',<sup>10</sup> Aristotle categorises magnificence, along with liberality, as a 'virtue concerned with money'.<sup>11</sup> In his *Politics* he suggests that magnificent acts can be politically useful in that public magnificence makes people 'glad to see the regime endure'.<sup>12</sup> This made the Aristotelian concept of magnificence attractive to those in authority.

Rulers had always tried to impress with display and ceremonial, but Renaissance courts saw a leap forward in both theory and practice with the Aristotelian concept of magnificence being more widely adopted,<sup>13</sup> and monarchs exhibiting 'an increased consciousness of their image as a vital source of their authority'. Kevin Sharpe suggests that in England this consciousness is evident from Henry VIII onwards.<sup>14</sup> This was a political culture of magnificent display, and that display took a variety of forms,

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<sup>10</sup> Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London: Seaby, 1992), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup> Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. by David Ross (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), pp. 86-8.

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. by Carnes Lord (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 192.

<sup>13</sup> For discussion of when the Aristotelian theory of magnificence may first have been consciously used by rulers to serve political purposes, see A. D. Fraser Jenkins, 'Cosimo de' Medici's Patronage and Architecture and the Theory of Magnificence', *Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 33 (1970), 162-70, and Louis Green, 'Galvano Fiamma, Azzone Visconti and the Revival of the Classical Theory of Magnificence', *Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 53 (1990), 98-113.

<sup>14</sup> *Remapping Early Modern England: the Culture of Seventeenth Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 25.

including dress, portraiture, architecture, collections of works of art and cultural objects, and transient spectacles, such as royal entries and court entertainments, as during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries 'the most profound alliance developed between the new art forms of the Renaissance and the concept of the prince'.<sup>15</sup> Roy Strong suggests that as these traditions developed, a 'Renaissance ruler image cult' emerged.<sup>16</sup>

At the same time, however, magnificent display met with increasing opposition: it was in conflict with the iconoclasm of the Reformation, and with humanist values as expressed, for example, in a wave of utopianist writing from the early sixteenth century, which emphasised distrust of personal possessions and extreme wealth, banned luxury goods and advocated uniform, simple housing, furnishings and clothing.<sup>17</sup> By the early seventeenth century, as we will see, this questioning of the concept of magnificence had become still more widespread and in England was evident even within the royal court itself.

This clash of values and attitudes formed the context in which James engaged with the tradition of magnificence. He faced a continued public expectation that the king should display himself to his subjects and be bountiful to his subjects. He also faced widespread criticism of his expenditure and liberality, and of certain aspects of his style of magnificence. Moreover, in Scotland and England his ability to project an image of magnificence was limited by his financial situation.

The second key area on which my discussion focuses is how James represented himself in his writings (which I am terming 'representation').<sup>18</sup> The royal word had always been a source of authority, but the advent of print meant that the word was

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<sup>15</sup> Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984), p.21. *Art and Power* is a revised version of *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973).

<sup>16</sup> *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 37.

<sup>17</sup> John Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe in Renaissance* (London: Fontana, 1994), pp. 414-19.

<sup>18</sup> The terms 'performance' and 'representation' provide a useful short-hand, but, of course, to perform is also to represent and verbal representations are also performative.

increasingly used as a means of conveying the power of a monarch throughout his realm. In Scotland, for example, ‘the royal license for the setting up of the first Scottish printing press by Chepman and Myllar in 1507 [...] made it clear it was a means of promoting both the King’s government and the image of kingship’.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the reformation made religious culture more word-centred; ‘in place of what they saw as the excessively sensuous and superstitious religious culture of late medieval Christianity, the humanists and reformers put the spoken and written word’. This logocentrism ‘stretches back at least as far as Plato, but was given a new urgency by the advent of print and by the accompanying Protestant scripturalism’.<sup>20</sup> As the rise of Protestantism and religious division diversified interpretation of the bible, fracturing ‘a common discourse of state into rival languages of power’, monarchs had to attempt ‘to reclaim, appropriate and re-authorise the discourses and metaphors that had validated royal authority’.<sup>21</sup> Thus James reigned in an age in which ‘language represented power’ and in which ‘rhetoric and governance could not be dissociated’.<sup>22</sup> Print also, however, had the potential for subversive voices to disseminate their views widely and in the Tudor period and subsequently, monarchs and state authorities struggled to maintain control over what was printed.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. 258. The relationship between print and manuscript was complex. Summarising recent work in this area, Sharpe observes that ‘early seventeenth-century England and Scotland were literary and political cultures in which the relative authorities of manuscript and printed forms were unstable, shifting and dependent upon all the circumstances of production and reception’ (Foreword, *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier [Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002], p. 20). For further discussion of the implications of the advent of print on royal self-representation, see Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), pp. 27-8.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Helgerson, ‘Milton Reads the King’s Book: Print, Performance, and the Making of a Bourgeois Idol’, *Criticism* 29 (1987), 1-26, (pp. 4-5).

<sup>21</sup> Sharpe, ‘The King’s Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England’, in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 117-138 (pp. 118-19).

<sup>22</sup> *Politics of Discourse: The Literature and History of Seventeenth Century England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Steven N. Zwicker, (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, University of California Press, 1987), pp. 7-8.

<sup>23</sup> The extent and effectiveness of censorship in early modern England is a much debated subject. While the threat and actuality of censorship had a major impact on what was published, authority could not exercise total control and there were a number of ways in which writers might escape the censor, from pirate presses to the use of coded language. For a summary of recent work on this subject, see Sharpe,



While James's use of language to represent his authority was therefore not unusual, the extent of his preference for verbal over visual forms of self-representation, and his conscious portrayal of himself as a Writer-King, are amongst the most distinctive aspects of his kingship. His use of his own writings also means that he is distinctive for the extent to which he represented himself, producing his own propaganda rather than relying on other writers and image-makers. I will be arguing that he not only used language to represent his political authority, but also represented his control over language as an analogy for his political authority. This means that all of his writing is political and that it must be understood in its broader political context. This necessitates the interdisciplinary approach my thesis adopts. His writings, as we will see, are significant, complex, and illuminating, yet have received insufficient critical attention. For these reasons it is to James's writings that I devote most space, but by also considering his performance of the role of magnificent king my thesis both explores a number of important historiographical issues and contextualises the writings. For exploring other aspects of James's self-representation reveals the difficulties of his position and illuminates why and how he tried to use his writings. By drawing out the similar aims, anxieties, and difficulties that underlie all the forms of self-representation James employed, my study highlights the fundamental problems of royal representation.

One of the areas of enquiry that my study draws on and develops is the recent reconsideration of the view of James that was created by Commonwealth historians and has continued to shape perception of the king. These historians were writing in the aftermath of the civil war when the monarchy had been discredited and there was a felt need to justify its abolition, and some had personal grievances against the king. The impact of their accounts on perception of James exemplifies the power of representation, in this case, its potential to discredit a monarch – the opposite of what

James attempted through his self-representation. Jenny Wormald's seminal article of 1983, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?' explores the history and historiography. She explains the circumstances by which the embittered Anthony Weldon – whose invective was originally turned against the Scots in general, not James himself – came to write *The Court and Character of King James* (1650). The traditional picture of James can be traced to this 'brilliant and deeply biased character sketch [which] has never quite failed to influence later attitudes to James I, even for those who have never even heard of Weldon'.<sup>24</sup>

The title-page of *The Court and Character of King James* authorises Weldon as a commentator on the king, stating that he was an eye and ear witness of what the account describes and that this account is 'published by authority'. Within this framework, Weldon attacks James on a number of grounds. He condemns James for being excessively fond of his favourites.<sup>25</sup> He states that 'a very wise man was wont to say he beleevd [James] the wisest foole in Christendome'. The 'very wise man' may be Weldon's creation, but he thereby lends authority to a comment that has been much reiterated. He suggests James was liberal with the money of others; he 'had much use of his subjects purses'. He claims that James was inclined to peace 'more out of feare then conscience'. He also makes personal and vindictive comments that create vivid and lasting images. The king's tongue was 'too large for his mouth, which ever made him speak full in the mouth, and made him drink very uncomely' and 'his walke was ever circular, his fingers ever in that walke fidling about his cod-piece'. He 'would never change his cloathes untill worn out to very ragges' and could never be brought to sit for

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<sup>24</sup> *History*, 68 (1983), 187-209 (pp. 191-2).

<sup>25</sup> Wormald suggests that historians have continued to overstate James's weakness for favourites: 'it almost seems as if only James I ever had favourites, and the fact that there were only two major favourites, Somerset and Buckingham, is obscured' ('Two Kings or One?', p. 199). In 'Writing King James's Sexuality' David M. Bergeron traces the ways in which historians have responded to James's sexuality. This illuminates both the influence of Commonwealth historians on later historians, and the ways in which negative moral judgements of homosexuality have distorted perception and representation of James (in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 344-68 [pp. 344-60]).

the taking of his picture.<sup>26</sup> Thus Weldon's personal attacks create an impression of James as inept, corrupt, cowardly, grotesque, and unconcerned with personal appearance or visual display. This picture of James has been frequently reproduced. For example, Graham Parry, in *The Golden Age Restor'd* (1981) asserts that 'James was a dirty, ill-favoured man whose personal habits verged on the disgusting [...]. He ate and drank in an uncouth way [...]. He paid little attention to his dress, which was frequently soiled, and his whole bearing was graceless and undignified'.<sup>27</sup>

The picture Weldon created is reinforced by other commonwealth historians, such as Arthur Wilson, who wrote *The History of Great Britain, Being the Life and Reign of King James the First* (London, 1653) and Francis Osborne, author of *Historical Memoirs on the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James* (London, 1658). Wilson's account is less scurrilous than that of Weldon, but his views may have been influenced by his dismissal from a government post. Wilson acknowledges James's wisdom and intelligence, but questions whether they exceeded his choler and fear. He suggests that he had 'pure Notions in Conception, but could bring few of them into Action'. He maintained peace, but 'Peace begot Plenty, and Plenty begot Ease and Wantonness, and Ease and Wantonness begot Poetry, and Poetry swelled to that Bulk in his time, that it begot strange Monstrous Satyrs against the King's own Person'.<sup>28</sup> Thus, according to Wilson, James was responsible, if at a remove, for the corruption that led to satirical poems being written against him.

Wilson's account gained credibility through the fact that he was often an eye-witness of the events he describes. These events include James's Royal Entry into London of 1604 and Wilson's report has been taken as firm evidence of the king's

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<sup>26</sup> Extract included in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 12-16.

<sup>27</sup> *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 58.

<sup>28</sup> Extract included in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 17-18.

aversion to making public appearances. He asserts that the King ‘did not love to be looked on; and those Formalities of State, which set a lustre upon Princes in the Peoples Eyes, were but so many Burthens to him’. He ‘endured this Day’s Brunt with Patience, being assured he should never have such another’.<sup>29</sup> Wilson is not, however, a reliable witness of this occasion, having been only nine years old at the time.

Each of these accounts, however inaccurate and biased it may be, is presented as a ‘history’. The writers claim to be revealing truth for public benefit, Wilson’s preface to his account, for example, stating that it was written for the ‘Publick health’. At the same time, these accounts offer highly marketable descriptions of the scandal and corruption they condemn. Those of Weldon and Osborne were republished in 1811 as part of the *Secret History of the Court of James the First*, edited by Sir Walter Scott. By calling this a ‘secret history’, Scott extends the attempt of these writers to combine the claim of authenticity with the appeal of revelation and exposure. Republishing these texts in this form lent them more authority as well as making them more easily available.

Thus James I has traditionally been viewed as incompetent and weak, extravagant and corrupt, with a firm dislike of making public appearances. In ‘Two Kings or One?’, Wormald explores the Scottish background to James’s English reign and emphasises that in contrast to the traditional picture of James I, James VI was a successful and popular king.<sup>30</sup> This is not only the evaluation of modern historians – James VI’s contemporaries also viewed him with admiration. Wormald emphasises that even Elizabethan visitors to Scotland found him a wily politician and popular king (p. 189). Weldon’s account of James I thus has ‘virtually nothing in common with descriptions of James VI’ (p. 191). Wormald reconsiders the successful King of

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<sup>29</sup> Extract included in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Ashton, p. 64.

<sup>30</sup> This is also emphasised by Michael Lynch, who writes that James VI has ‘a formidable reputation as an immensely successful King of Scots’ (*Scotland: A New History* [London: Pimlico, 1991], p. 235).

Scotland and feeble King of England to reveal a less divided, more consistent James, who was more successful as King of England than his reputation suggests. The perspective and expectations of the English tended to make their perception of James more negative, as 'James simply failed to live up to the role expected of him in England' (p. 204). Wormald draws out the importance of perspective by citing several examples of comments about James I by foreign ambassadors which demonstrate that such accounts do not portray 'the lamentable creature of the domestic history of the reign' (p. 189). Throughout her discussion she emphasises the difference between the reality of James's English kingship and its perception and representation by the English.

The reassessment of James I in 'Two Kings or One?' largely concerns his relationship with parliament. Building on the revisionist challenge to the old Whig assumption that the early seventeenth century could be seen largely in terms of constitutional and ideological conflict,<sup>31</sup> Wormald rethinks James's relationship with his English parliament through the perspective of his relationship with his Scottish one (pp. 192-206). She argues that while the weaknesses of James VI – being a spendthrift, being bad at refusing suitors, having favourites – were also the weaknesses of James I (pp. 198-9), he succeeded in defusing 'problems within the church and the state, and thereby presided over a kingdom probably more stable than his predecessor had left, and certainly than his successor was to rule'. Wormald attributes this success in part to James's attempt to transmit his Scottish style of kingship to England, suggesting that in some ways it was not such a disadvantage as has been supposed (pp. 208-9).

The process of re-evaluating traditional views of James is still underway. For example, one of the main concerns of Leeds Barroll in an article of 2001 is to revise the still prevalent view of James as a self-indulgent and politically inept king. Barroll

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<sup>31</sup> For an outline of the Whig historical tradition, and of the revisionist challenge of the 1970s to that tradition, see Sharpe, *Remapping*, p. 4-10.

concentrates on events surrounding the accession to demonstrate 'James's political acumen and decisiveness'.<sup>32</sup> Despite these important advances, some assumptions about James, such as that he disliked public appearance, require further interrogation. My study aims to contribute to such interrogation.

My consideration of James's writings and performances also builds on broader theoretical developments in a number of areas of historical, literary and cultural studies. Some of these developments are outlined in Kevin Sharpe's essay 'Remapping early modern England: from revisionism to the culture of politics'. Sharpe describes the way in which the work of the historians John Pocock and Quentin Skinner in the 1970s 'redirected the history of political thought to the history of discourse', and focused on the performance and reception of texts. He points out that little of this new perspective has, however, informed political history. No historian of parliament, for example, studies speeches as rhetorical performances. In the same period Clifford Geertz's anthropological work argued that 'culture is always also politics' and that 'power exists as "really" in display and representation as in the institutions and mechanics of society'. Sharpe suggests that Geertz's work has had only a limited influence within the discipline of history. Geertz was, however, one of the major influences on the New Historicist movement in literary studies from the early 1980s.<sup>33</sup>

New Historicism emphasised the importance of reading texts in their cultural context. Since the rise of this movement, recognition of writers as culturally determinate rather than autonomous subjects has been widespread. New Historicism placed an important emphasis on the self-consciousness of self-representation in the Renaissance, encapsulated in Stephen Greenblatt's much quoted phrase, 'self-fashioning'. This movement has focused on the representation of power, reacting against the rigid

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<sup>32</sup> 'Assessing "Cultural Influence": James I as Patron of the Arts', *Shakespeare Studies*, 29 (2001), 132-62 (133).

<sup>33</sup> This essay is included in *Remapping*, pp. 3-37 (pp. 16, 17, 15, 17-8).

distinction between reality and representation maintained in revisionist history,<sup>34</sup> and emphasising that literature does political work. Jonathan Goldberg, for example, introduces his influential *James I and the Politics of Literature* (1983) as ‘a study of the relationships between authority and its representations in the Jacobean period’. His underlying thesis is that language and politics are mutually constitutive: ‘writing represents authority’ and representation ‘realizes power’ (p. xi).

Sharpe suggests that few historians have taken up the challenge presented by New Historicism of reading literary texts in their historical moment.<sup>35</sup> In the work of New Historicist literary critics, conversely, the emphasis on reading texts in context has not always resulted in adequate consideration of historical context. This is exemplified by Goldberg’s *James I and the Politics of Literature*. As Wormald emphasises in her review, this study does not give enough consideration to historical context and is occasionally historically inaccurate.<sup>36</sup> For example, Goldberg does not acknowledge that James’s treatises on kingship, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron* (1599), were written in Scotland. This is indicative of his failure adequately to consider texts in the context of their production, as well as of a broader tendency of commentators on James’s English reign to fail to explore his Scottish background. Goldberg makes such statements as ‘James ruled by the word’ (p. 56) without considering broader contexts such as the status of the spoken and written word in the period, and the ways in which monarchs before James – notably both Mary Queen of Scots and Elizabeth I – had also used language. Moreover, he uses terms such as ‘Jacobean absolutism’ without justifying or explaining his usage. Published in the same year as Wormald’s ‘Two Kings or One?’, Goldberg’s study demonstrates the kind of reliance on sources such as Weldon that Wormald’s article discusses. This reliance

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<sup>34</sup> Sharpe, Foreword, *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 15-36 (p. 16).

<sup>35</sup> *Remapping*, pp. 15-6. Sharpe himself is of course one of the exceptions.

<sup>36</sup> *History*, 70 (1985), 128-30.

leads Goldberg to reproduce inaccurate views of James. For example, he refers in passing, without providing evidence, to James's 'general disinclination to take seriously the business of state or to appear in public' (p. 82). Works such as *James I and the Politics of Literature* have themselves been instrumental in upholding the traditional picture of James.

New Historicism has met a range of other criticisms. While the emphasis this movement placed on representation has been very valuable, New Historicist critics have gone too far in blurring the boundaries between real and represented, for example, in treating all actions and expressions of king and court as works of art.<sup>37</sup> New Historicist studies tend to identify analogies between texts without exploring material transmissions and causalities.<sup>38</sup> Despite the fact that the concerns of this movement are relevant to a wide range of Renaissance writings, in practice New Historicist critics have focused almost exclusively on canonical literary works.<sup>39</sup>

More recently there has been what Curtis Perry described in 1997 as

an ongoing movement in Renaissance studies towards the reconsolidation of the considerable advances of new historicism with old historical narratives of individual agency [...] and cause and effect. [...] There has been a renewed emphasis in a great many recent studies on the material circulation of texts, on the specific strategies used by different writers, and on the causal significance of the social work done by literature.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, Introduction, *Culture and Politics*, ed. by Sharpe and Lake, pp. 1-20 (p. 4).

<sup>38</sup> Curtis Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 6.

<sup>39</sup> James Holstun, 'Ranting at the New Historicism', *English Literary Renaissance* 19 (1989), 189-225. Holstun argues that this narrow focus leads New Historicists to 'claim a premature totalization of early modern culture' (p. 192). This article also analyses the problems created by the reliance of these critics on Michel Foucault's concept of power.

<sup>40</sup> *The Making of Jacobean Culture*, p. 6.



Critical theory has increasingly turned its attention to the role of the reader in determining textual meanings. Kevin Sharpe's *Reading Revolutions* (2000) develops this recent interest through close and contextualised consideration of specific acts of reading in the early modern period.<sup>41</sup> In this study Sharpe also qualifies the view, explored by Goldberg and others, that writing represents authority, to assert that in this period 'language is *politics*, not the means of articulating *Politics*' (p. 15).

My study is participating in these recent developments. I explore authorial intention while maintaining an awareness that we have no access to James's 'private self', that all of his writings and appearances were performances, and that they had meanings which he could not fix. I place a particular emphasis on how the contexts in which James's texts were published, republished, circulated, read, affected their meaning.<sup>42</sup> I seek to qualify views of writing as representing, or enacting and embodying, authority by considering that language can only represent the notion that language is authority.

The developments I have traced underlie research in the two main areas of royal representation on which I am focusing. In exploring James's performance of the role of magnificent king I am building on research into the court culture of Renaissance Europe. This has been an area of much interest for scholars from a range of disciplines. In the 1970s and 1980s Roy Strong explored the court culture of Renaissance Europe and was a leading figure in arguing that art was deliberately and systematically used as an effective instrument of rule.<sup>43</sup> Subsequent critics have looked beyond the

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<sup>41</sup> *Reading Revolutions*. See pp. 34-6, for a brief summary of reader response criticism.

<sup>42</sup> By 'contexts' I mean not only political circumstances, but also the ways in which texts were presented. My emphasis on context is influenced by Sharpe's illuminating discussion of how context affects how we read in *Reading Revolutions*.

<sup>43</sup> *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1973), republished in a revised version as *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984). The same period saw the publication of *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage and Royalty 1400-1800*, ed. by A. G. Dickens (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977).

propagandist role of art used to represent or celebrate monarchy to its potential for subversion.<sup>44</sup> Study of the Jacobean court was for a long time eclipsed by the Elizabethan and Caroline courts, but the recent developments in James's historiography have enabled a reassessment of the Jacobean court. Linda Levy Peck's *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (1991) has made a key contribution to this reassessment, illuminating in particular the heterogeneous nature of the Jacobean court. Studies of individual members of James's family and court have also been produced.<sup>45</sup>

Despite these advances, we still lack adequate research into James's engagement with European court culture and into the Scottish background to his style of performance. R. Malcolm Smuts points out in *The Stuart Courts and Europe* (1996) that revisionism did not entirely overcome the traditional insularity of Stuart historiography.<sup>46</sup> Smuts's study makes an important contribution towards placing the Stuart courts in their European context, but its broad chronological focus means that it does not address James's engagement with Europe in full detail. There has also been little consideration of the relation between the magnificence of other members of the royal family and court, which recent study has illuminated, and that of the king himself. As a writer and as a ruler, James himself was very conscious of his European audience, and interested in European culture. His experience in Scotland shaped his style of

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<sup>44</sup> See, for example, Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), Martin Butler 'Ben Jonson and the Limits of Courtly Panegyric', in *Culture and Politics*, ed. by Sharpe and Lake, pp. 91-116, and *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially Martin Butler, 'Courtly Negotiations', pp. 20-40. Other recent studies of court culture include *Italian Renaissance Festivals and Their European Influence*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1992) and Alison Cole, *Art of the Italian Renaissance Courts: Virtue and Magnificence* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995).

<sup>45</sup> These include Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Leeds Barroll, 'The court of the first Stuart Queen', in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 191-208, and *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001); Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), and Lockyer, *Buckingham*.

<sup>46</sup> 'Introduction', *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. by Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 1-19 (p. 13).

performance. He was aware of the important role of his family and court in his self-representation. My study takes the European context and the Scottish background into account, and considers the potential for the magnificence of other figures in the court both to reinforce and to challenge the royal image.

In focusing on James's writings I am engaging with the limited number of studies that are beginning to recognise the importance of the genre of monarchical writing. While James's writings and literary performances attracted comment from his contemporaries, as we saw in the case of his reading at Burley-on-the-Hill, until recently they have received little attention in the work of historians and critics. The reading at Burley-on-the-Hill, for example, has been entirely neglected, not even appearing in John Nichols's four volume collection of primary sources, *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First* (London, 1828). Sharpe suggests that the New Criticism was determined to focus study on those writers that were not for an age but for all time and James did not fit into that category. Revisionist historians have rehabilitated James but have shown little interest in his writings, maintaining, as we have noted, a rigid distinction between reality and representation. Interest has thus largely been confined to searching those writings widely recognised to be political, such as *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), for evidence as to James's political beliefs.

The standard text of James's writings, *The Political Works of James I* (1918), edited by Charles Howard McIlwain, defines 'political' narrowly.<sup>47</sup> Though the texts in this edition are reprinted from James's *Workes* (1616), McIlwain does not include all of the texts that James himself defined as his 'works', omitting, for example, the scriptural exegeses with which James's *Workes* begins. We will see that even scriptural exegeses are politically engaged writings. The texts omitted from McIlwain's edition are the texts

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<sup>47</sup> (1918, reprinted, New York: Russell and Russell, 1965).

that have received least critical attention, partly as a consequence of being less easily accessible, partly as a consequence of the same preconceptions that dictated McIlwain's choice.

James's poetry has also been particularly neglected, despite the fact that he wrote and disseminated widely a considerable body of poetry and published two collections. In an essay of 1993, Sharpe argued for the political importance of all forms of monarchical writing and pointed out that 'James VI and I's poetry has received no historical and little critical evaluation'.<sup>48</sup> Again a sense that poetry is not 'political' and a lack of editorial work – the only complete edition of James's poems was published in the 1950s<sup>49</sup> – have resulted in a lack of critical analysis. The poems that James did not choose to publish continue to receive even less attention than those he did publish.

Even the New Historicist movement paid little attention to monarchical writing. The exception was Jonathan Goldberg, whose *James I and the Politics of Literature* was one of the first literary studies to consider James's writings, including his poetry (and continues to be one of the few to consider James's writings in relation to work of other contemporary writers). As we have seen, however, Goldberg fails adequately to consider historical context. He also quotes from James's writings very selectively and does not consider what contemporary responses they met. This prevents him from reading far enough beyond James's intention that his writings should be read as forceful expressions of royal power. Goldberg thereby overlooks many of the problems and limitations in James's verbal self-representation. For example, Goldberg asserts that 'in writing, authority is established' (p. 56) without fully considering the potential for writing to subvert or undermine royal authority. Yet, as I aim to demonstrate, even

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<sup>48</sup> 'The King's Writ', p. 127.

<sup>49</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by Craigie. Craigie's title hides the fact that James wrote some of his poetry as James I of England and means his edition is less likely to be consulted by those whose interest is in James I.

James's own writing could undermine rather than establish authority. *James I and the Politics of Literature* remained the only critical study to address James's poetry until the late 1990s.<sup>50</sup>

The first full study of the range of James's writings has just been published – *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, edited by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (2002). This substantial collection of essays from a range of contributors points to the literary and historical importance of James's writings. It emphasises just how unusual and in some ways unique James's use of his own writings was. 'Monarchs had published books before (Henry VIII in particular), and they clearly wrote poetry from time to time. But no monarch before James had their verses printed in a book for circulation as a commodity in the marketplace'. 'To a degree unprecedented for a Scottish monarch (even given the literary reputations of James I, IV and V, as well as Mary), James had a literary identity'.<sup>51</sup> While providing detailed and instructive analyses of various aspects of James's writings, particularly the more neglected texts, this volume presents itself as an introduction to study of James's writings. That such an extensive and varied volume only begins to explore the many aspects of James's writings highlights their significance and complexity. In the preface Sharpe stresses the need for further study, pointing out that this 'will refine and revise even recent scholarship on the king' (p. 24), and continue to illuminate many areas of critical and historical concern. He also emphasises that royal writings 'were only one form of royal representation, and they need to be studied in the context of those other representations

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<sup>50</sup> Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture*, which devotes a chapter to James's poetry, was published in 1997.

<sup>51</sup> *Royal Subjects*, pp. 83, 105. James's remarkable use of his own writings has also been acknowledged by Jenny Wormald: 'not only was it highly unusual for a king to write books. It was remarkable in the extreme for a Scottish king to do so [...] because before the sixteenth century there had been, in sharp distinction to England, virtually no tradition of political theorizing' ('James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: The Scottish Context and the English Translation*', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 36-54 [p. 38]).

– whether visual images, ceremonies or performances’ (pp. 26-7). Few studies, not even the volume which includes this preface, have adopted the approach Sharpe advocates.

My thesis begins with an introductory chapter that outlines the backgrounds to James’s accession to the English throne. Drawing on recent studies of Scottish history and of James VI, I consider the nature of James VI’s performance and representation of royalty and possible influences on the particular approaches and anxieties that extended into his English reign. In accordance with the balance of the thesis as a whole, I devote more space to James VI’s writings than to his performances, but begin to draw out the fact that James was more conscious of the need for visual display than has been supposed and used it to serve specific political purposes. In examining the range of his Scottish writings, I identify the literary strategies that James would continue to employ in England. Finally I summarise key issues in Elizabeth’s very different style of performance and representation. Though comparing James with Elizabeth is not a central concern, it is a thread that runs through my study as it was such an important factor in determining how the English responded to James. I suggest that Elizabeth’s style of performance and representation both met and shaped the expectations of her subjects. This prepares for my subsequent exploration of clashes of expectation between James and his English subjects, which contributed to negative perceptions of the king.<sup>52</sup> While my study builds on Wormald’s argument that James’s approach to kingship in England can largely be explained in terms of his experience in Scotland, I also maintain a sense of his capacity to negotiate some of the expectations he met in England, and of the possibility of his concerns and attitudes developing.

The issues that I consider with regard to James VI, then with regard to Elizabeth in this first chapter, I explore in more depth with regard to James I in one chapter on his

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<sup>52</sup> Obviously all of James’s subjects did not share exactly the same expectations, but certain expectations recur in contemporary accounts of the king, for example that a king should display himself to his subjects and respond to their devotions with courtesy and affability (see chapter two).

performance of the role of magnificent king and two chapters on his self-representation in his writings. These three chapters all span James's English reign, but more of the examples of performance considered in chapter two come from the period around James's arrival in England and the first half of his reign, more of the examples of verbal representation explored in chapters three and four come from the second half of his reign. This underlies the thematic organisation with a degree of chronological structure.

My thesis is more concerned with James's anxieties, the strategies he employed, and the ways in which his self-representation risked undermining him, than with gathering evidence as to contemporary responses to his self-representation. Space does not allow such detailed consideration of reception. Nevertheless, exploring James's anxieties and strategies requires a sense of the range of audiences to which he had to perform and of their conflicting and changing expectations. My discussion of James I considers four main 'audiences': the parliamentary audience, the court audience,<sup>53</sup> the popular audience, and the European audience. While to categorise James's subjects is to generalise, and while there is obviously overlap between, and variation within, these groups, in broad terms each group can be seen to have some different priorities and expectations. For example, the popular audience was likely to be more concerned with James making civic appearances than the court who had other means of access to the king; parliament was likely to be more concerned with royal expenditure than the popular audience, and so on. These divisions provide a useful way of thinking about the range of expectations James faced.

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<sup>53</sup> James kept and added to the Elizabethan court that existed in England when he arrived. For an outline of the increased size and importance of the royal court in the seventeenth century, see Sharpe, *Remapping*, pp. 201-5. For a more detailed discussion of the structure and function of the Stuart court, see Neil Cuddy, 'Reinventing a Monarchy: the Changing Structure and Political Function of the Stuart Court, 1603-88', in *The Stuart Courts*, ed. by Eveline Cruickshanks (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2000), pp. 59-85. Queen Anne, Prince Henry, and later Prince Charles, also had independent courts. In chapter two we will touch upon possible tensions between these centres with particular reference to Prince Henry's circle. For a study of Prince Henry's court, see Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales*, and for Queen Anne's court, see Barroll, 'The court of the first Stuart Queen', and *Anna of Denmark*.

My second chapter considers James I's attempts to perform the role of magnificent king to his popular, courtly, and European audiences. It also examines his use of architecture as an example of his conscious use of the concept of magnificence. I focus on the dual perception that he both failed to be adequately magnificent in terms of his public performances, but was magnificent to the point of extravagance in terms of his liberality and the life of the court. This perception may have reflected James's priorities, but it also reflects conflicting attitudes towards what constituted appropriate royal magnificence. I examine James's style of performance, the potential for the magnificence of others not only to reinforce but also to outshine royal magnificence, and the expectations and financial limitations he faced. Each of these factors contributed to undermining his attempts to perform the role of magnificent king. In conclusion, I examine his negotiations with parliament, which illuminate the difficulties of his position and the ways he responded to those difficulties through verbal re-presentation of his performances.

The third and fourth chapters explore James's self-representation in a range of the writings he produced, published or republished in England.<sup>54</sup> I consider the range of his writings, but focus on those texts that have received least critical attention, such as poems that were only circulated in manuscript. The third chapter examines in detail James's literary strategies and his aims for his writings, showing the continuation and development of the strategies he had developed in Scotland. I focus on his attempts to

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<sup>54</sup> I note that some of 'James's writings' were written in part or entirely by others. With regard to royal proclamations, James told parliament in 1621 'most of them myself doth dictate every word. Never any proclamation of state and weight which I did not direct; others I leave to ordinary means. And those which accompany patents and projects I meddle not with' (quoted in *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, 2 vols [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973], I, v-vi). For a discussion of the collaborative nature of one James's most important speeches see R. C. Mundane, in *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978). For a discussion of the possibility that some of James's poems were written collaboratively, see Curtis Perry, 'Royal Authorship and Problems of Manuscript Attribution in the Poems of James VI and I', *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 46 (1999), 243-46. If he did not author all of these texts, James did authorise them. Throughout this discussion I treat all of these texts as James's writings, and in chapter four I briefly consider some of the implications of collaborative production for the notion of royal authorship.



self-authorise through his interpretations of the bible, suggesting that the claims of royal access to divine truth he makes through publishing his own scriptural exegeses and authorising a new translation of the bible, also underlie his secular writings. I explore royal authority and authorship in two very different secular texts that represent two ends of the spectrum of James's writings: his prestigious *Workes* (1616) and a late manuscript poem. I then consider James's anxieties about representation, interpretation, and authority.

The fourth chapter explores in detail James's writings as responses to these anxieties and the ways in which those responses expose and add to the problems about which he was anxious. I address the range of his writings, but focus particularly on his poetry and the ways it heightened some of the problems of royal authorship. Drawing on some contemporary responses to James's writings, I then consider the problems for the king of both print and manuscript circulation. I argue that while James tried to use his textual authority to express and support his political authority, the limitations of his textual authority reflect and expose the limitations of his political authority.

My study reveals a king who was more politically astute, more concerned to try to meet and shape expectations, and more willing to play the roles that he felt were required, than traditional accounts have allowed. In some ways, however, James failed to adapt to the English context. Discussing Renaissance kingship in general, Jimmy H. Burns points out that on a political level, 'the stage on which the king played his part was set with structures which he had not designed and which he could rarely alter in any radical way'.<sup>55</sup> The same is true on the cultural level. James could not radically alter English expectations as to what kinds of performance and representation were appropriate in a monarch. The fact that in some ways he did not meet certain English

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<sup>55</sup> Jimmy H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 2.

expectations was a major factor in negative perceptions of the King. His efforts to perform the role of magnificent king and to represent his authority actually risked undermining themselves.

In some ways the self-representation of James VI was more successful than that of James I. I do not, however, wish to suggest that many of the problems of self-representation he faced in his English reign were not also potential or actual in his Scottish reign. On the contrary, my exploration of James I's performance and representation of royalty highlights not only the problems and limitations of James's style in the English context, but also the contradictions and irreconcilable problems inherent in the representation of royalty in the early modern period.

My study also illuminates central issues of historiographical and critical debate: authority, authorship, representation, interpretation, the meanings texts and performances acquire according to perspective and the context in which they are produced and received. In my conclusion I suggest some of the possible further implications of my work for our understanding of both the representation of royalty and authorship in the early modern period.

## Chapter 1

# The Performance and Representation of Royalty of James VI

There are two important strands in the background to James's arrival in England as King in 1603. The first is his experience in Scotland, which had shaped his view of kingship, his political style, and his style of self-representation. As King of Scotland he engaged politically and intellectually with continental Europe, which meant that his view of kingship was shaped by influences from abroad, as well as by his immediate context. I consider both Scottish domestic politics and the work of continental political theorists to which James had access, in terms of the development of his political style and views. His political style fed into his self-representation – his style of public performance, his prioritisation of the verbal over the visual, his anxieties about how he would be interpreted, and his writing strategies. I examine his use of display and performance and his use of his writings in terms of the development of styles and approaches that he would continue to employ in England. Preparing for my focus in later chapters on the writings by James that were written or published during his English reign, I explore in detail the literary strategies he developed in a range of his publications up to 1603.

Finally, turning to England, I consider the second important strand in the background to James's English reign: Elizabeth's very different performance and representation of royalty, which, I will be arguing, shaped some of the expectations of royal representation that James would meet when he acceded to the English throne. This prepares for my exploration in subsequent chapters of clashes of expectation between James I and his English subjects.

## The Scottish Political Context

James came to power in a context of political instability, in which the power of the church over the monarchy had been demonstrated, royal mystique had been undermined, and theories that limited royal authority had been developed. In Scotland, the Reformation 'led to a demystification of state as well as church'.<sup>1</sup> From the Reformation parliament of 1560, the new kirk assumed a power that was in conflict with royal power; in theory, it claimed only spiritual power over kings, but in practice, it used its power to depose James's mother, the Catholic Mary Queen of Scots.<sup>2</sup> She was forced to abdicate in 1567 and her thirteen month old son was crowned James VI. Civil War between the followers of the 'godly' prince and the supporters of the Catholic queen ensued, from 1568 to 1573.<sup>3</sup> To many, the deposition of a monarch was wholly unacceptable and James was not legitimately king. Thus the minority government was 'less clearly a government than a party'.<sup>4</sup> This meant that from the beginning of James's reign the grounds on which he had acceded to the throne were in question. The kirk had put him on the throne but it had also disposed his mother; it formed both a source of support for James and a potential threat.

The political situation was made still less stable during James's minority by a series of short-lived regencies, and James experienced actual threats not only to his authority, but to his safety. When the last of James's regents, the Earl of Morton, fell from power in 1578, the twelve-year-old king asserted his ability to rule and in October 1579 made his Royal Entry into Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup> Political turbulence continued, however,

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<sup>1</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England: the Culture of Seventeenth Century Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> For a discussion of the Reformation in Scotland, see Jenny Wormald, *Court, Kirk and Community: Scotland 1470-1625* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981), pp. 75-139.

<sup>3</sup> Michael Lynch, *Scotland: A New History* (London: Pimlico, 1991), p. 219.

<sup>4</sup> Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 145.

<sup>5</sup> See Douglas Gray, 'The Royal Entry in Sixteenth Century Scotland', in *The Rose and the Thistle: Essays on the Culture of Late Medieval and Renaissance Scotland*, ed. by Sally Mapstone and Juliette Wood (East Linton, East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 1998), pp. 10-37 (pp. 28-9), and David Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 66-7. See also my discussion below of James's use of ceremony once he began to establish his authority.

and in the Ruthven Raid of August 1582 James was kidnapped. The Ruthven Raiders, who were leading Presbyterian nobles, ruled for ten months against his will, before he escaped from their custody. The kirk subsequently upheld the Raiders for their actions, indicating its continuing opposition to the crown.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout Europe the Reformation had 'forced a radical re-assessment of royal authority by those who were threatened by it'.<sup>7</sup> This re-assessment led to the development of theories of resistance. In the course of the civil wars in France, in which James's close relatives, the Guise family, played a major part, both Huguenots and Catholics of the League argued that it was legitimate for a subject to take up arms against a tyrannical or heretical ruler.<sup>8</sup> George Buchanan's *De Iure Regni apud Scotos* (published in Edinburgh in 1579 but written around twelve years earlier, just after Mary's deposition) was written with the European context in mind and designed to appeal to a European audience. Buchanan was one of the most influential scholars and theorists of his day,<sup>9</sup> and *De Iure Regni* was the most important Scottish contribution to a Europe-wide ideological debate.<sup>10</sup> In this dialogue Buchanan justified the deposition of Mary and supported the contractual theories advanced by Huguenot writers of the 1570s.<sup>11</sup> While the Huguenots were advocating these theories from a position of

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<sup>6</sup> Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 128; Julian Goodare, 'Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI', in *The Reign of James VI*, ed. by Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch (East Linton, East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000), pp. 32-54 (pp. 35-6).

<sup>7</sup> Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> J. P. Sommerville, 'James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory', in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 55-70 (p. 58). For the development of theories of resistance, see Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), II, part 3. James was related to the Guise family through his mother, who was the daughter of Mary of Guise.

<sup>9</sup> See Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> Jimmy H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 196, 185. *De iure regni* is thus the focus of my discussion of Buchanan, but he did publish other notable works, such as *Rerum Scotticarum Historia* in 1582. For biographical information and discussion of the range of his writings, see I. D. McFarlane, *Buchanan* (London: Duckworth, 1981).

<sup>11</sup> Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and the English Translation', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 36-54 (p. 41).

weakness, Buchanan was giving intellectual justification to resistance that had already been put into practice successfully.<sup>12</sup>

Buchanan based his resistance theory on the idea of an ancient constitution, under which the ultimate authority was not royal. His dialogue asserts that ‘Kings were appointed not for themselves but for the people’. Royal authority is derived from the people so the people have authority over the king, who should act only as the voice of the law which they have determined. It follows that ‘it is for the people to call the king to account if he breaks the law’ and the law is established as ‘a restraint upon his desires’. Buchanan’s key concern is to distinguish legitimate kingship from tyranny, and contract theory and tyrannicide meet at the climax of his argument. He claims that there is ‘a mutual pact between the king and the citizens’. The king that breaks this pact is a tyrant and ‘a public enemy’, and ‘anyone is entitled to kill a tyrant’.<sup>13</sup> As well as being a leading resistance theorist, Buchanan was a writer for the royal court and a tutor, first to Mary and then to James.<sup>14</sup> As tutor to the young king, he dedicated his works on kingship to James. In a letter to James prefaced to *De iure regni* Buchanan explicitly presents his book as a guide for the king. He suggests, without subtlety, that it ‘may remind you of your duties towards your people’.<sup>15</sup> Being tutor to the king had given Buchanan the opportunity to bring his own writings to royal attention, but James was to react vehemently against Buchanan’s theories and took from his tutor the expertise that he would use in writing about his own views of kingship.

In sixteenth century France, writers such as Jean Bodin, in *Six livres de la republique* (Paris, 1576), were reacting against resistance theory by advocating ‘absolutist’ theories of kingship and this too formed an important part of the context in

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<sup>12</sup> Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 147.

<sup>13</sup> Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, pp. 198, 205, 199, 196, 208. The direct quotations are Burns’s translations from the original Latin edition, which he also quotes.

<sup>14</sup> His appointment as tutor to James may have been as early as 1569 (McFarlane, *Buchanan*, p.445).

<sup>15</sup> *The Powers of the Crown in Scotland*, trans. by Charles Flinn Arrowood (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1949), pp. 38, 37.

which James developed his style and views of kingship.<sup>16</sup> Bodin was not only reacting against Huguenot theories of resistance, but also developing ideas that had earlier been advocated by Guillaume Budé in *L'Institution du Prince* (Paris, 1547). Budé emphasises that royal authority comes from God not man: 'DIEU est seul conducteur des Roys & Princes'. He asserts that the king is above the law but should choose to conform to it 'pour donner reuerence & autorité à ses edicts, constitutions, & ordonnances'.<sup>17</sup> Bodin, who was writing having experienced civil war, takes these ideas further. *Six livres de la republique* asserts that a sovereign king – and Bodin lists the kings of England and Scotland as sovereign – is 'answerable only to God', 'of whom he holds his scepter and power', and 'of whom he is the earthly image'. Bodin proposes that 'the greatest security for a prince is that he be regarded as sacred and inviolable'. A king's subjects cannot enforce limitations on his authority; 'this power is absolute and sovereign, for it has no other condition than what is commanded by the law of God and of nature'. Bodin responds directly to the assertions of the right of resistance by the Huguenots, stating categorically that 'it is never permissible for a subject to attempt anything against a sovereign prince, no matter how wicked and cruel a tyrant he may be'. A subject is guilty of treason not only for killing a king 'but also for attempting it, advising it, wishing it, or even thinking it'.<sup>18</sup> Inventories of James's library compiled between 1579 and 1583 indicate that he owned both Budé's *L'Institution du Prince* and Bodin's *Six*

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<sup>16</sup> Although throughout the sixteenth century Scotland had negotiated between Protestant England and continental Catholic powers, Scotland had particularly close ties to France through James's mother, who was the daughter of Mary of Guise, and married the Dauphin, Francis, in 1558. This made her Queen Consort of France and she was adopted into the French court (see Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 213).

<sup>17</sup> *Tesmoignage de temps, ou enseignemnts et enhortemens pour l'institution du prince* (Paris, 1547), pp. 82, 20. Subsequent page references in parentheses in the text. This text draws on Aristotle, classical precedents and biblical precedents, especially Solomon, and is shaped by its attempt to praise and seek favour with the French king to whom it is dedicated.

<sup>18</sup> Bodin, *On Sovereignty*, ed. by Julian H. Franklin (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 4, 25, 46, 125, 8, 120, 115. Subsequent page references in parentheses in the text. Bodin's background was in the Church and in the study of law at Toulouse University and his *Republique* makes detailed reference to classical texts. He entered into the service of royalty in around 1570. His *Republique* was directed towards securing the throne for Henry of Navarre (Henry IV). For further biographical detail see the introduction to this edition.

*livres de la republique*,<sup>19</sup> and the king was to adopt and re-present the theories advocated in these books.

In 1583-4 James, who was eighteen in 1584, genuinely began to establish his authority,<sup>20</sup> but theories and events, at home and abroad, continued to demonstrate the vulnerability of his position. 'The threat posed by Buchanan and the Huguenots in the 1570s was overtaken in the 1580s by the claims of the counter-Reformation papacy [...]; the right of popes to depose rulers, advocated most influentially by Cardinal Bellarmine, might be put into practice by assassins'.<sup>21</sup> In 1584 parliament passed the 'Black Acts' asserting royal power over the kirk, but the kirk continued to pose the greatest threat to the king. In the late 1590s James came into political conflict with the extreme Presbyterians, led by Andrew Melville. Taking over the old papal claims for the separation of spiritual and temporal powers, the Melvillians were in practice denying 'to the king in ecclesiastical control what they did not deny to themselves in political influence'.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, while James was trying to establish his authority in Scotland, in England, his mother was in captivity. She was held prisoner for nineteen years, having fled there after being deposed in 1567. In February 1587 Elizabeth had her executed on a charge of involvement in the treasonous Babington plot, an act which simultaneously demonstrated the power and the vulnerability of monarchs.<sup>23</sup>

James's position in Scotland was made still more difficult by the fact that he faced a powerful nobility. He would later complain in *Basilikon Doron* (1599) that they had an 'arrogant conceit of their greatnes and power' (p. 161).<sup>24</sup> He would also claim in

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<sup>19</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh; London: Blackwood, 1955-1958), I, introduction, xvi-xvii.

<sup>20</sup> Even between 1583 and 1585, however, the ascendancy of James Stewart, earl of Arran, precludes our regarding the king as being in full control of the government (Burns, *True Law of Kingship*, p. 223).

<sup>21</sup> Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 148.

<sup>22</sup> Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?', *History*, 68 (1983), 187-209 (p. 196).

<sup>23</sup> Michael Lynch, 'Introduction', in *Mary Stewart, Queen in Three Kingdoms*, ed. by Lynch (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), pp. 1-29 (p. 1); Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, second edn (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 53, 72, et passim.

<sup>24</sup> For a discussion of the political role of noble factions during James's reign, see Goodare, 'Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI'.



this treatise that there was a general culture of criticism and irreverence towards the king: ‘vnto one fault is all the common people of this Kingdome subiect, as well burgh as land; which is, to iudge and speake rashly of their Prince’ (p. 164).

These contexts helped to shape the style of kingship of James VI, and consequently of James I. The king responded to the various threats to royal authority he faced by adopting the theory of kingship by divine right, as articulated by Budé and Bodin, and by explaining and justifying this theory. As we will see below, in the late 1590s James would write his own treatises on kingship, in which he both asserts and justifies his political views. This tendency to assert but also to justify is evident as early as 1589, however, in a letter ‘To the People of Scotland’ in which James explains why he is sailing in person to fetch Queen Anne. In the letter he states that ‘I took this resolution only of myself, as I am a true prince’, but the fact that he is even writing the letter indicates that he feels a need to win support for his decisions.<sup>25</sup>

James also responded to the challenges he faced by personally participating in political debate. Wormald argues that he was successful in both state and church because he believed in personal contact – with the Crown’s servants and with its opponents – joined in the debates in person, and was exceptionally skilled in personal debate.<sup>26</sup> Sharpe supports this view, in terms that point towards the contrasting English expectations that, as we will see below, Elizabeth met so effectively: in Scotland ‘successful royal rule depended more on agility at the cut and thrust of personal exchange [...] than skilful acting on the stage of majesty’.<sup>27</sup> James’s approach was appropriate to the Scottish parliamentary system, which had a long tradition of addressing the king in person with advice and criticism. The king was very much a

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<sup>25</sup> *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. by G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley, Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 97-100.

<sup>26</sup> ‘Two Kings or One?’, pp. 197, 188.

<sup>27</sup> *Remapping*, p. 208.

king-in-parliament, with the right to attend the committee of the articles and to vote, a right that James would exercise even when he returned to Scotland in 1617.<sup>28</sup> He was thus accustomed to being his own spokesman. This is a key aspect of his performance and representation of his role in Scotland and England. We will see, in particular, how it is played out in his writings and in the speeches which were his only opportunity to speak for himself in the English parliament.

James responded to the opposing demands of different groups, giving himself a means to pressurise each side as required, by creating a balance in church and state, by controlling faction, and by playing off Catholics against Protestants.<sup>29</sup> He used the same strategy of playing one side against another in foreign affairs. Having a continual eye on the English throne to which he hoped to accede,<sup>30</sup> he ostensibly remained the Protestant ally of England, even after the execution of his mother. At the same time, in the shifting political world of sixteenth century Europe, he tried not to alienate the Catholic powers of Spain and France and even sought aid from them. Thus in the period 1584-5 Philip, King of Spain, believed that James was ready to convert to Catholicism while Elizabeth was opening up negotiations for a Protestant league between England and Scotland. This political balancing act risked creating opposition by being perceived as dissembling. In 1581, for example, Elizabeth angrily exclaimed against 'the double dealing' of 'that false Scots urchin'.<sup>31</sup> James, however, continued to use this tactic while asserting the integrity and sincerity of his word and actions.

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<sup>28</sup> Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', pp. 194-5.

<sup>29</sup> Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', pp. 196, 197-8. See also Goodare, 'Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI'.

<sup>30</sup> That James believed he had a strong claim to the English throne long before he actually acceded to it is evident, for example, in a declaration he made in 1589 regarding his journey to Denmark, in which he refers to himself as 'air appeirand of England' (in J. T. Gibson Craig, *Papers Relative to the Marriage of King James the VI of Scotland with the Princess Anna of Denmark* [Edinburgh: Bannatyne Club, 1828], p. 12).

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', p. 189.

In the later 1580s he moved further towards England and Protestantism, signing a treaty with England and accepting a regular subsidy from Elizabeth in 1586.<sup>32</sup> He also strengthened his political connections with Protestant Europe through his marriage to Anne of Denmark in 1589. Nevertheless, he still refused to repress completely the Catholic lords within Scotland or to sever unequivocally his ties with Spain, as this continued to give him bargaining power with Elizabeth and with the kirk.<sup>33</sup>

As James's experiences in Scotland thus shaped his political style, so they shaped his style of self-representation. In particular, he had direct experience of writing as a major forum in which the nature of his authority could be disputed and if, as seems likely, he read Budé and Bodin, he also had direct experience of writing as a source of validation for his view of kingship.<sup>34</sup> Indeed, both Budé and Bodin not only demonstrate, but also explicitly emphasise the importance of the word. Budé asserts that 'les paroles d'un Roy son comme loix & Oracles' (p. 83). Bodin suggests, similarly but more tentatively, that 'the word of a prince should be like an oracle' (p. 14). Budé emphasises 'combien grande gloire vient par les lettres [...] aux grands Roys & Princes' (p. 112), pointing out that poets and orators were 'fort honorés & estimés au temps passé' (p. 48). He thereby reveals his self-interest as a writer seeking royal favour, whereas Bodin, writing in a time of open ideological and political conflict, is more concerned with defending the king from written attack. He advocates punishment for those who have 'published books which hold that subjects may justly take up arms against a tyrannical prince' (p. 118).

As soon as James began to establish his political authority he also, as Budé and Bodin had advocated, began to assert his royal authority over the forum of written

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<sup>32</sup> Goodare, 'Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI', p. 38.

<sup>33</sup> Peter C. Herman, "'Best of Poets, Best of Kings": King James and the Scene of Monarchic Verse', in *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), pp. 61-103 (pp. 80-1).

<sup>34</sup> Not only were the treatises of Budé and Bodin in James's library, but also his own two treatises on kingship appear to be influenced by them, as we will see below.

representation. 1584 was the year not only of the 'Black Acts', but also of the first act against slanderous writings of James's reign. This act points out that slanderous and untrue calumnies against the king, his counsel and proceedings, are politically dangerous. For such discourse stirs up the king's subjects to 'vnquietnes' and leads them to 'cast off thair dew obedience to the king'. In particular, this act shows James beginning to use his authority to reject the resistance theory advocated by Buchanan. The act attempted to censor Buchanan's *De iure regni*, five years after it had been published, and two years after Buchanan's death,<sup>35</sup> on the basis that it contains 'syndrie offensiue materis worthie to be delete'. It instructs that anyone with a copy must hand it in to government officials so that it may be 'purgit of offensiue and extraordinaire materis'. Punishments for those who fail to comply are described and it is stated that this order will be published wherever necessary 'that nane pretend ignorancie thairof'.<sup>36</sup> This attempt at censorship five years after publication points to the perceived power of the written word. Even though the act could not change the fact that the offensive matters had already been read, it was still important to the government to remove those matters in their material form. This act was the first in a series of attempts to censor subversive discussion and representation during James's Scottish reign. In 1599, by which time James's authority was more firmly established, an act was issued ordaining that no book should be published without royal license.<sup>37</sup>

1584 was also, as discussions of James's establishment of authority have not tended to note, the year of his first publication. While Budé had emphasised the role of writers for the king, he had also asserted the authority of the royal word and it was the latter that was more important to James. For the king took upon himself the role of

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<sup>35</sup> McFarlane, *Buchanan*, p. 414.

<sup>36</sup> *The Acts of the Parliaments of Scotland*, ed. by T. Thomson, 12 vols (Edinburgh, 1844), III, 296.

<sup>37</sup> *Acts*, ed. by Thomson, IV, 187. Other acts against slanderous speech and writings were issued in 1585 (see III, 375) and 1594 (see IV, 65).

writer for the king and, as we will see below, his writings played a major part in his attempt to reinforce his royal authority.

Thus in Scotland James experienced a struggle to establish and maintain his political authority and his view of kingship. His approach was to act as his own spokesman, to engage with opposition, to try to control representation, to explain and justify his political views. To a large degree, his style of self-representation continued this political style, and was, like his political style, largely a response to the political instability of his Scottish reign.

### **The Performance of Royalty in Scotland**

The Scottish court may not have been as wealthy or as grand as the Elizabethan court, but the financial support Mary received as dowager queen of France, after her return to Scotland in 1561, enabled her to extend its size and impressiveness. It became a ‘glittering Renaissance court’, inhabited by painters, musicians and poets.<sup>38</sup> This display was, however, open to criticism. In *De iure regni* Buchanan, presumably with Mary’s court in particular in mind, argued against ‘the erroneous conception of kingship as an office that should be marked by magnificence and splendid ceremony’.<sup>39</sup>

As James rejected Buchanan’s resistance theory, however, so he rejected Buchanan’s attitude towards magnificence. James not only used ceremony and other forms of visual representation to project his royal image, but also to assert his view of kingship and his independence from Buchanan and the kirk. For example, while the first coinage of his reign reflected Buchanan’s view of kingship, with the phrase ‘pro me si mereor in me’ meaning ‘for me; against me if I deserve it’, referring to the sword on the coins, in 1578 with the end of the regencies ‘the coins for the first time used the motto

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<sup>38</sup> Lynch, ‘Introduction’, in *Mary Stewart*, pp. 1, 5, 15.

<sup>39</sup> Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, p. 200.

“Nemo me impune lacessit” (no one may meddle with me with impunity)’. Subsequent coinages, in 1588 and 1591, further emphasised that the king is answerable only to God. James sought to enhance the visual dignity of the Scottish parliament, taking it upon himself in 1587 to ‘design clothes fitting for MPs, and the opening and closing public ceremony of the Riding of Parliament through Edinburgh undoubtedly became in his reign a splendid affair’.<sup>40</sup> In 1590 he ‘shaped the coronation of Anne of Denmark as Queen of Scotland including the rite of anointing of which the kirk disapproved’.<sup>41</sup> These acts all appear to be deliberate attempts to reaffirm the power and mystique of the monarchy and the government.

The arrival in Scotland of Queen Anne formed one of the most important ceremonial occasions of James’s Scottish reign. While the city of Edinburgh provided elaborate and traditional pageantry for her Royal Entry of May 1590,<sup>42</sup> James himself was careful not only to shape her coronation, but also to direct the surrounding public display. On his journey back to Scotland with his new queen he sent ahead an order as to how they should be met upon arrival. This order lists sixteen detailed instructions on such points as who should meet the king, the volley that should be given as the royal couple approach, and the two saddles adorned with black velvet, one decorated with gold and the other with silver, that should be provided for the queen’s use.<sup>43</sup> There is little evidence as to how James conducted himself on such occasions of public ceremonial (which would enable a comparison with accounts of James I failing to meet certain expectations on such occasions). These instances suggest, however, that he was

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<sup>40</sup> Wormald, ‘James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*’, pp. 43-4, 45.

<sup>41</sup> Peck, ‘Introduction’, *Mental World*, pp. 1-17 (p. 6). For a contemporary description of Anne’s coronation, see Craig, *Papers Relative to the Marriage of King James*, pp. 49-56.

<sup>42</sup> See Craig, *Papers Relative to the Marriage of King James*, pp. 39-42; Gray, ‘The Royal Entry in Sixteenth Century Scotland’, pp. 28-31, and David Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 67-9. For a study of all the events surrounding the marriage, in Denmark as well as in Scotland, see David Stevenson, *Scotland’s Last Royal Wedding* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997).

<sup>43</sup> Craig, *Papers Relative to the Marriage of King James*, pp. 29-34.

more conscious of the importance of public performance than has commonly been supposed, and that the element of public performance with which he was primarily concerned was visual display.

Moreover, Anne's Royal Entry and another major occasion of public ceremonial, the baptism of Prince Henry in 1594, further suggest that James was not only concerned to shape public ceremonial himself, but also willing to go against convention. He did not accompany Anne during her Royal Entry, although precedent dictated that he should. During the three-day festival for Henry's baptism, on the other hand, he did participate in a tilting tournament as a Knight of Malta, even though some of the spectators viewed this role as inappropriate for the king.<sup>44</sup> James was following his own ideas as to how he would perform his role and may have been deliberately using departure from convention to emphasise his independent authority.

Another form of magnificence that James used to enhance his position was royal liberality. There was a long-established view that liberality was an essential aspect of kingship, so by employing liberality the king was again reaffirming his royal status. Moreover, the period of Norton's regency had shown 'that the crown neglected patronage at its peril', for liberality was a way of manipulating the nobility. James gave pensions to an increasing number of nobles,<sup>45</sup> and in *Basilikon Doron* he advised his son to 'use trew Liberality in rewarding the good, and bestowing frankly for your honour and weale: but with that proportional discretion, that euery man man be serued according to his measure' (p. 178).<sup>46</sup>

The crown's financial resources were, however, very limited. For example, money was so short that work on preparing Holyrood House for the coming of Queen

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<sup>44</sup> Michael Lynch, 'Court Ceremony and Ritual during the Personal Reign of James VI', in *The Reign of James VI*, ed. by Goodare and Lynch, pp. 71-92 (pp. 84, 88-90).

<sup>45</sup> Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 227.

<sup>46</sup> This reflects the advice of Budé, who praises royal liberality as a virtue while also advising 'garder mesure & mediocrité en toutes choses' (*L'Institution du Prince*, pp. 68, 198). James may have been directly influenced by Budé in this regard.

Anne was still in progress when she arrived.<sup>47</sup> Royal magnificence was expensive: while the largest taxation under Morton had been £12,000, by 1588 the scale of tax demands had risen to £100,000, for the king's marriage. The baptism of Prince Henry cost a further £100,000 in 1594. Moreover, James's liberality put immense strain on the resources of the Scottish crown.<sup>48</sup> Thus as early as 1581 parliament passed an act against importunate suitors, ordering that requests to the king should be made in writing.<sup>49</sup> In 1596, with the crown facing near-bankruptcy, an eight-man commission – the Octavians – was appointed to take control of the royal finances. The impact of the Octavians was wide-ranging since they had control over the spending of the king and his administration. By the end of 1597, however, the commission was discredited and James 'depended even more than ever before on unprecedented, regular taxation and massive credit'.<sup>50</sup> The extent of James's dependence on credit is indicated by the fact that in 1600 he wrote to various Scottish Lords requesting the loan of money to be used in preparing for the hoped-for accession.<sup>51</sup> James thus had to negotiate between the magnificence that he seems to have felt was part of being king and financial limitations.

Thus James VI engaged with traditional forms of magnificent display and used liberality to reward the nobility, as would be expected of him in England. He used liberality to an extent that it caused financial problems, however, and this would extend into his English reign. Moreover, in Scotland he developed a style of performance within the court context that would clash with English expectations. This is highlighted by considering his involvement with the court masque. In 1588 James VI wrote a masque for the wedding in 1588 of his current favourite, George Gordon, Earl of Huntly, and Lady Henrietta Stuart.<sup>52</sup> Only a fragment of this masque survives, but it is

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<sup>47</sup> Stevenson, *Last Royal Wedding*, p. 58.

<sup>48</sup> Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 226.

<sup>49</sup> *Acts*, ed. by Thomson, II, 229.

<sup>50</sup> Lynch, *Scotland*, pp. 234-5.

<sup>51</sup> *Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, pp. 165-6.

<sup>52</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 245-6, 134-44. Line numbers in parentheses in the text.



evident that it is a dramatic piece, with a range of characters including Mercury, nymphs and a scholar. It includes conventional praise of the royal court, as having a 'worthie fame' that 'hath blowen abroad through euerie whair' and as being compared by some to Arthur's court (61-5), suggesting the importance to James of the image his court projected. The masque was not published, suggesting it was written primarily for performance. The king may even have delivered the first thirty-four lines of his masque himself.<sup>53</sup> He cast himself in a role he wanted to play, which was, as we will explore below, the role of poet. Without any surviving contemporary comment on the occasion we cannot be certain that the manner of James's participation was not perceived as a breach of decorum. The fact that, as we will see below, the poetry James wrote and the group of poets he patronised were a central feature of the Scottish court, suggests, however, that this may have been a context in which his 1588 masque was not viewed as exceptional or inappropriate.

In England, conversely, royal participation in court masques meant dancing or singing. It was considered indecorous for members of the court, let alone the monarch, to speak, so speaking parts were performed by professional actors. The masques were commissioned from professional court writers. James I would not participate in masques in the English court, as Elizabeth had and Charles I later would. Despite the attitudes towards monarchical performance that the English court masque reflects, however, he would continue to perform the role of poet, on occasions such as the 1621 banquet at Burley-on-the-Hill when he read out his verses to Buckingham.<sup>54</sup> James was not a king who refused to perform. He was, as we will increasingly see, a king whose

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<sup>53</sup> Rhodes Dunlap states that no contemporary comment on the masque survives, but claims that the opening speech 'is unmistakably intended for James himself to recite' ('King James's own Masque', *Philological Quarterly*, 41 (1962), 249-56 (250-1)). The only other critic to comment on this text that I have found, Craigie, reaches the same conclusion (*Poems*, II, 245-6). I agree that the nature of the opening speech seems written for James to deliver, particularly given line 9, which refers to the king in the first person: 'Then graunte to me who patrone am of Hymens triumphe here'.

<sup>54</sup> See introduction and below.

definition of monarchical performance was simply unlike that held by many of his English subjects.

While James thus tried to project his image through a range of media, he prioritised verbal over visual self-representation in Scotland, as he would in England. The political instability, the nature of the Scottish parliamentary system, the treatises on kingship he seems to have read, and the economic limitations that we have noted, may all have been factors in that prioritisation.

### **James's Representation of Royalty: Poetry and Scriptural Exegeses<sup>55</sup>**

The king wrote extensively and his Scottish publications include poetry, scriptural exegeses and treatises on kingship. He used different forms of writing to serve a range of purposes, and aimed at national and international as well as local audiences, contributing to European as well as domestic debates, and trying to control through direct participation the main spheres of discourse in which royalty was represented. As in the Scottish parliament, the king was thus his own spokesman, joining in debates in person. It is his treatises on kingship that respond most explicitly to the political and cultural contexts of his reign, to his immediate circumstances and to his reading. Before turning to these later publications, however, we will consider the ways in which James's poetry and scriptural exegeses responded to, and functioned within, the contexts of his Scottish reign. We will see that this involved James developing writing strategies that he would continue to employ in England.

James's first publication was a collection of his poetry, *The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (1584). In the late 1580s he published a number of interpretations of scripture: *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle St. John*, *Revelation 18:2-4* (1588?), *A Fruitful Meditation, Containing a Plaine and Easie*

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<sup>55</sup> I am using the term 'scriptural exegeses' to include paraphrases, meditations and commentaries.

*Exposition*, a commentary on Revelation 20:8-10 (1588), and *A Meditation* on the first book of the chronicles of kings, chs. 25-9 (1589).<sup>56</sup> He published a second collection of poetry in 1591; *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Hours*. He was concerned to disseminate his writings at home and abroad. His epic poem, the *Lepanto*, for example, was written in 1585, published in Edinburgh in 1591 in his second collection of poetry and as a separate edition, and republished in London in 1603. It was also translated into French in 1591, into Dutch in 1593, and into Latin in 1604. *A Fruitful Meditation* was published in French at La Rochelle in 1589, in Latin in 1596, and republished in London in 1603.

In several ways, James used these literary forms of writing to represent and reinforce his royal image and authority at a time when he was struggling to impose his political authority in church and state, and was concerned to maintain diplomatic relations abroad. Firstly, James tried to use writing to project an image of royal cultural sophistication, largely by encouraging a Scottish poetic Renaissance in European style through the poetry he patronised and wrote. From the early 1580s he patronised a group of court poets, the ‘Castalian Band’ and wrote coterie poetry with them.<sup>57</sup> He tried to guide this poetic Renaissance by writing *Ane Schort Treatise conteining some Reulis and Cautelis to be obseruit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie*, included in his first volume

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<sup>56</sup> Virtually no critical attention has been paid to James’s scriptural exegesis, probably at least partly because of their omission from the standard text of James’s writings, *The Political Works of James I*, reprinted from the 1616 edition, ed. by Charles Howard McIlwain (1918, reprinted, New York: Russell and Russell, 1965). Daniel Fischlin has recently produced the first study of James’s *Paraphrase upon the Revelation* and *Fruitful Meditation* as ‘part of a literary strategy of self-empowerment’ (‘“To Eate the Flesh of Kings”: James VI and I, Apocalypse, Nation and Sovereignty’, in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 388-420). See also below and chapter three of the current study. All references to James’s prose works, including speeches, refer to James I, *The Workes* (1616), facsimile reprint (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, 1971), unless otherwise specified. Page numbers will follow in parentheses. I have silently normalised printing conventions in the early texts.

<sup>57</sup> The name ‘Castalian Band’ comes from the spring in Mount Parnassus dedicated to the Muses (Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community*, p. 186). R. D. S. Jack gives an assessment of the poetry of each of the main Castalians in ‘Poetry Under James VI’, in *The History of Scottish Literature*, ed. by Jack, 4 vols, (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988), I, 125-40.

of poetry.<sup>58</sup> In this treatise he self-consciously moves away from the style of older Scots poetry towards that of contemporary French poetry.<sup>59</sup>

In this regard James was following in the footsteps of his mother and may have been influenced by her interests, for under Mary the royal court was an acknowledged centre of learning, with specific interests in French and Italian literature.<sup>60</sup> Mary wrote some poetry herself, and was a literary patron and a book collector. She patronised French poetry above all and passed her collection on to her son.<sup>61</sup> In maintaining a royal court that, like his mother's, was a centre of poetry and that was engaging with French cultural forms, James may have been trying to assert continuity between her reign and his as a means of legitimising his accession.

James's patronage and writing not only reflected his cultural sophistication, but also gave him some control over what poetry was written in Scotland. Within Scotland there were competing traditions of poetic representations of royalty. As Sandra Bell observes, 'poetical satire had long questioned the role of the monarch, and the flood of Reformation satires from 1560 to 1584 – verse which directly questioned the monarchy – further politicised poetry'. Many of the satires are directed at James's mother, but a number question Scotland's need for a monarchy at all.<sup>62</sup> Countering these satires, there was a wave of royalist literature by the mid-1560s and a tradition of court poetry, which, Michael Lynch proposes, 'had tangible political effects'.<sup>63</sup> Presumably aware of

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<sup>58</sup> Hereafter referred to as *Reulis and Cautelis*.

<sup>59</sup> See *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, introduction, pp. xiii-xv. Craigie gives a survey of French influences on James's poetry and a list of French works in his library (pp. xiii-xxiv).

<sup>60</sup> Lynch, 'Introduction', in *Mary Stewart*, pp. 1, 15.

<sup>61</sup> John Durkan, 'The Library of Mary, Queen of Scots', in *Mary Stewart*, ed. by Lynch, pp. 71-104 (pp. 78, 93).

<sup>62</sup> 'Writing the Monarch: King James VI and *Lepanto*', in *Other Voices, Other Views: Expanding the Canon in English Renaissance Studies*, ed. by Mary Silcox, Helen Ostovich, and Graham Roebuck (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1999), pp. 198-9, 205. The main collection of Scottish Reformation satires is *Satirical Poems of the Time of the Reformation*, ed. by James Cranstoun (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1891/93; reprint, New York: AMS, 1974). Jack suggests that there was a distinct poetic tradition devoted to discrediting Mary, gives several examples and briefly analyses one ('Introduction', in *History of Scottish Literature*, p. 6).

<sup>63</sup> Lynch, *Scotland*, p. 213.

these competing traditions, James was concerned to encourage certain forms of poetry, and under his patronage, the Castalians created a body of Scottish poetry that sought to uphold monarchy and mythologised James in the Scottish cultural consciousness.<sup>64</sup> He was also concerned to curtail other forms of poetry: in his treatise on poetic form and style, he took the opportunity to reject poetic representations of state affairs: ‘materis of commoun weill [...] are to graue materis for a Poet to mell [meddle] in’.<sup>65</sup> Particularly since James published this treatise in the same year as he issued the first act of his reign against slanderous speech, the act and the treatise can be seen as mutually reinforcing.

A further way in which James used his own writings was to reinforce his claims of proximity to God and to reflect his political authority. By publishing poetry and scriptural exegeses he was claiming to have access to ‘the Divine Art of Poesie’, as the title of his first collection of poetry emphasises, and to the truth of scripture. This supports the claims he makes explicitly in later polemical works that his authority comes solely from God and he is God’s representative on earth. As king and interpreter of scripture, as king and poet, he has a double claim to be speaking God’s truth. Claiming to derive both his political and textual authority from God, James uses his textual authority as an analogy for, and an expression of, his royal authority, throughout his Scottish and English writings. Poetry was a particularly useful vehicle for expressing this analogy because it more obviously displays textual authority as control and containment of both language and form. Thus *Basilikon Doron* begins with a sonnet into which James distills his view of kingship. The sonnet is itself about representation, beginning ‘God giues not Kings the stile of *Gods* in vaine’. It is designed to represent monarchical power in both its content and in James’s mastery of the sonnet form. In paralleling content and form, it merges political and textual authority. This exemplifies

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<sup>64</sup> Bell, ‘Writing the Monarch’, p. 199.

<sup>65</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 79.

James's use of the authority of the King to support that of the Poet, and the authority of the Poet to reflect that of the King, literary strategies that will be discussed in more depth in chapter three.

Recent commentators have suggested that this strategy of using poetry to reinforce the royal image met with some success. As R. D. S. Jack points out, 'the many eulogies on the monarch which characterise this period are in part due to the self-interest of the Castalians', but it all helped to bolster the royal image. James was not attacked by staunchly Presbyterian poets as his mother had been and Jack suggests that this was due not only to his religious policies but also to his literary role.<sup>66</sup> Moreover, James developed a widespread reputation as a poet. Craigie suggests that the *Lepanto*, along with James's translation of Du Bartas's *Les Furies* (1591), 'set the seal on the reputation of King James as a poet within Great Britain', while the printing of Du Bartas's translation into French of the *Lepanto* 'established James's fame on the continent'.<sup>67</sup> English panegyrics of 1603 suggest that James's new subjects recognised him to be a poet and this was a source of pride: *Aue Caesar. God Saue the King*, for example, refers to 'our famous Kingly Poet'; John Savile suggests the king

... doth excell,  
As his *Lepantho* and his *Furies* tell,  
In Poesie all Kings in Christendome.<sup>68</sup>

Sandra Bell argues that James's verse 'helped to establish him – within and without

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<sup>66</sup> 'Poetry Under James VI', pp. 125, 136.

<sup>67</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, p. xlvii. Craigie includes in this volume a list of contemporary references to James as a poet, further indicating how widely his poetry was known. See Appendix A, pp. 274-80.

<sup>68</sup> *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First, His Royal Consort, Family and Court*, ed. by John Nichols, 4 vols (London: 1828), I, 144. Such panegyrics may also, of course, have been motivated by self-interest. See below.

Scotland – as a powerful Scottish king ruling over a civilised nation’.<sup>69</sup>

As James tried to control the writing of poetry through direct participation, so he tried to impose his authority on scriptural interpretation. By publishing his own interpretations, especially by choosing to comment on Revelation, a particularly contested area of interpretation, he was engaging in long-standing international debates. In the Renaissance numerous commentaries on Revelation ‘entered the public domain, often attaining political and spiritual significance that extended far beyond the implications of the original text’.<sup>70</sup> Martin Luther’s interpretation of Revelation, central for Protestant interpreters for decades, identified the papacy with the Antichrist, and Catholic writers, such as Cardinal Bellarmine, sought to counter this view. Bellarmine published his three-volume *Controversies* attacking Protestant theology and exegesis from 1581 to 1593.<sup>71</sup> As we have seen, in this period the counter-Reformation papacy and its supporters were claiming the right of popes to depose rulers, raising fear of assassins amongst Protestant monarchs. Bellarmine was the most influential advocate of this claim and his *Controversies* therefore had troubling political implications. In his four scriptural exegeses of the 1580s James continued the established Protestant interpretation of scripture. His ‘Epistle to the Church Militant’, which precedes his paraphrase on Revelation, for example, is explicit about his allegiances, referring to ‘*this Booke, which I esteeme a speciall cannon against the Hereticall wall of our*

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Writing the Monarch’, p. 204. While the impact of the poetry of the Castilians upon English perception of the Scottish is beyond the scope of the current discussion, Bell’s suggestion must be qualified by remembering that even after James’s accession to the English throne, many English continued to view the Scots as greedy, lawless and uncivilised. See Wormald, ‘Two Kings or One?’, pp. 190-1, 193. Towards the end of James’s English reign, in 1622, the Venetian ambassador in England, Girolamo Lando, described the Scottish as follows: ‘they are very wild, many scarcely know of God, are rarely visited and resemble beasts more than men. They do not know the meaning of obedience to the king’ (*Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, XVII (1621-3)*, 426).

<sup>70</sup> Esther Gilman Richey, *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), p. 3.

<sup>71</sup> Bernard McGinn, ‘Revelation’, in *The Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. by Robert Alter and Frank Kermode (London: Collins, 1987), pp. 523-44 (p. 537). McGinn gives a select history of interpretations of Revelation, p. 528ff. James would later engage explicitly with Bellarmine in the Oath of Allegiance controversy.

*common aduersaries the Papists*' (p. 2). James was thus trying to undermine papal authority and to stamp his authority on a crucial area of discourse.

In addition to reinforcing James's authority, scriptural exegeses could serve more specific political purposes by functioning as tools of diplomacy. We noted above that in the mid-1580s James played the Catholic and Protestant sides against each other, but in the later 1580s moved closer to England and Protestantism. James's interpretations of scripture have the specific political motivation of making a clear statement about his allegiances in the face of the Spanish attack upon England of 1588, thereby supporting his diplomatic efforts. In *A Meditation* on kings James explicitly – and somewhat anxiously – states that these meditations demonstrate his integrity in the face of this event: 'these meditations of mine, may after my death remaine to the posteritie, as a certaine testimony of my vpright and honest meaning in this so great and weightie a cause' (p. 81). Here we also see the explicit concern with writing as a means of preserving his beliefs for posterity that recurs in the epistle to *Basilikon Doron* (see below). In this *Meditation*, James goes on to draw an analogy between the Philistines attacking Israel and the Catholic attack. Referring to 'our enemies' and 'our miraculous deliuerance', he suggests that we, like the Israelites, are ruled by the pure word of God and have been given victory by God. Having thus stressed his Protestant allegiances, he becomes more specific, posing the rhetorical question 'is there not now a sincere profession of the trewth amongst vs in this Isle, oppugned by the nations about, haters of the holy word?' (pp. 87-8). He is careful to combine England and Scotland as 'this Isle', to stress the shared religion of the two nations, to imply that the two nations must stand together in the face of external threat, and to assume the position of speaking on behalf of the English as well as the Scottish. He is thereby distancing himself from England's Catholic enemies, asserting his kinship with England, and suggesting the necessity of closer relations between the two nations.



Thus James was concerned with both local and international audiences, and used literature to represent himself as poet and as king, to reinforce his cultural image and to engage with political matters. Examining two poetic texts he wrote in 1585 and 1588 will show that these twin concerns resulted in James developing two distinct and opposing strategies. The first strategy involves implying a separation between poetry and politics by emphasising James's poetic, rather than his royal, identity. This strategy is exemplified in the masque he wrote for the 1588 wedding of the Earl of Huntly to Lady Henrietta Stuart. The first section of the masque, which, as we have noted, James may have spoken himself, appeals to the Gods to bless the wedding in return for the poetic praise he has rendered them. The speaker then asks the gods for a sign of their blessing. Mercury enters and announces 'I messenger of Gods aboue am here vnto yow sent/ To showe by prooffe your tyme into there seruice well is spent' (35-6). Thus the masque suggests that the king has pleased the gods with his poetry and is itself a demonstration of his poetry. It does not engage directly with current royal affairs.

This text clearly parallels a much later text to which we have already been introduced: the sonnet to Buckingham James read out at Burley-on-the-Hill in 1621. This sonnet also presents the king as a poet, beginning with a reflection on James's earlier poetry, asking God to grant his wish for the married couple in return for the service he has rendered God through his poetry, and not engaging directly with current royal affairs. Moreover, the two pieces use the same terms and structure. In 1588 James wrote

If euer I ô mightie Gods haue done yow seruice true  
 In setting furth by painefull pen your glorious praises due  
 If one the forked hill I tredd, if euer I did preasse  
 To drinke of the Pegasian spring, that flowes without release

If euer I on Pindus dwell'd, and from that sacred hill  
 The eares of euerie liuing thing did with your fame fullfill  
 Which by the trumpett of my verse I made for to resounde  
 From pole to pole through euerie where of this immoveable rounde  
 Then graunte to me who patrone am of Hymens triumphe here  
 That all your graces may vpon this Hymens band appeare. (lines 1-10)

In 1621 he would write

If euer in the Aprill of my dayes  
 I satt vpon Parnassus forked hill:  
 And there inflam'd with sacred fury still  
 By pen proclaim'd our great Apollo's praise:  
 Grant glistringe Phoebus with thy golden rayes  
 My earnest wish which I present thee heere:  
 Beholdinge of this blessed couple deere, (lines 1-7)

Masque and sonnet begin with the same two words and follow the structure 'If ever I... then grant me this', asking a favour in return for poetic services rendered. Both present James's claimed poetic achievement in mythological terms and make similar references to the 'forked hill' of Parnassus. Both present poetry as sacred, James claiming in the first to have written 'from that sacred hill' and in the second while 'inflam'd with sacred fury'. The main difference between the two is that in the sonnet James, now fifty-five years old, is more retrospective, beginning by referring to the 'Aprill of my dayes' and putting all verbs in the first quatrain in the past simple tense. The 1588 masque, conversely, written between James's first and last publications of collections of his

verse, begins in the perfect tense – ‘If euer I [...] haue done’ – emphasising the continuity between the poetic past and the poetic present. Nevertheless, by referring to his poetic past in a new poem in 1621, James is still asserting continuity between that past and the present.

There are further parallels between the circumstances in which James wrote these two texts, which help to explain his strategy of emphasising his poetic, rather than his royal, identity. 1588 was the year of the Spanish attack upon England and, as we saw in his scriptural paraphrases, James was concerned at this time to assert his firm Protestantism and his kinship with England, and to appear to be distancing himself from Catholicism. Huntly, the royal favourite for whom the king wrote this masque in 1588, was a Catholic.<sup>72</sup> Demonstrating favouritism to Huntly in 1588 thus had the potential to disrupt the diplomatic relations with England that were obviously important to James. Similarly, in 1621 James was writing in praise of his favourite Buckingham, who was unpopular and had just been attacked in parliament, in the midst of the political controversy that surrounded royal foreign policy.

In both cases then, we may see James’s strategy as a deliberate attempt to defuse the potentially insensitive implications of what he is writing by distancing his poetry from his kingship. By presenting his poetry in mythological terms, James is further disengaging his poetry from immediate political concerns. In both cases, he employed this strategy in a court context and he did not publish the verses. This may have been a further attempt by James to keep them separate from the wider political context and thereby to reduce the risk he was taking in writing them. We can now see the full extent to which the role James played at Burley-on-the-Hill in 1621 was a role he had developed in Scotland.

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<sup>72</sup> Dunlap, ‘King James’s own Masque’, p. 250.

The second strategy James developed in Scotland, and would employ more frequently than the first, is to emphasise that he is writing as a king. The published version of his epic poem the *Lepanto* (1591) exemplifies this strategy. Moreover, the differences between the original and published versions of this text reflect James's movement towards placing greater emphasis on his royal identity in his writing, and indicate why this second strategy became the more dominant one. The published version also reveals James's anxious desire to control how he was read, and describes an experience that may have been a major factor in the development of that anxiety.

The original version of the *Lepanto*, written in the mid-1580s, is an open and ambiguous text. It praises the Catholic victory against the Turks in 1571, while in its references to election and the certainty of salvation it is protestantised throughout. It carefully avoids denominational tags.<sup>73</sup> The conclusion of the poem argues that if God has given 'such victorie' to those 'That not aright him feare', then 'What will he more to them that in/ His mercies onelie trust?'.<sup>74</sup> As we have seen, in the mid-1580s James was in communication with England and with Catholic allies and avoiding choosing unequivocally between them. The *Lepanto* may have been written with deliberate ambiguity in order to enable readings that placated the opposed sides with whom James was trying to maintain favour.

By the time that the *Lepanto* was published in 1591 political circumstances in Europe had changed and James had moved more decisively towards England and Protestantism. In the published version he added a preface that strengthens the Protestantism of the poem. While in the original poem he emphasises that the hero of his epic is Spanish, perhaps as a deliberate attempt to compliment the Spanish,<sup>75</sup> in the

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<sup>73</sup> Kevin Sharpe, 'The King's Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 117-138 (p. 129). Sharpe further suggests that 'the poem gestures to an ecumenical hope for a unified *respublica Christiana* which James cherished throughout his life'.

<sup>74</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 254.

<sup>75</sup> Herman, "'Best of Poets, Best of Kings'", p. 78.

added preface he refers to his hero as a '*forraine papist bastard*'. The preface states that James had been moved to write by '*the stirring uppe of the league and cruell persecution of the Protestants in all countries*', probably referring to recent events in France.<sup>76</sup> He claims that copies of the *Lepanto* have been '*set out to the publike view of many*', without his '*knowledge and consent*', and '*misconstrued by sundry*' (p. 198). As Peter C. Herman argues, however, the preface may be a response not to misinterpretation, but to the changed political circumstances which made it desirable for James to prevent the more pro-Catholic reading the original text allowed, and to assert, especially to the English, his firm Protestantism (pp. 81-2).

Whether the misinterpretation James describes had actually occurred, or whether this was simply a strategy to legitimise changing and publishing the poem, he had evidently realised the danger of leaving his writing open to different interpretations. In the preface he explains his original approach to the text and the approach he is now taking:

*it hath for lack of a Praeface, bene in some things misconstrued by sundry, which I of verie purpose thinking to haue omitted, for that the writing thereof, might haue tended in my opinion, to some reproach of the skilfull learnedness of the Reader, as if his brains could not haue conceaued so vncurious a worke, without some maner of Commentarie, and so haue made the worke more displeasent vnto him: it hath by the contrary falen out.*

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<sup>76</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 198. The Catholic League was formed in France in 1584. In 1585, the year that the *Lepanto* was written, a treaty was concluded between the Catholic League and Henry III, by which the French King bound himself to abandon the principle of religious toleration which had been accepted in France since 1577 (p. xlvi).

This explanation shifts the responsibility for the claimed misreading of the text away from James and onto the reader. It maintains the king's authorial integrity, claiming that the original lack of a commentary was a deliberate choice, which was partly motivated by aesthetic considerations (a desire not to make the text '*displeasant*'). Whether or not we believe that aesthetic considerations were ever central for James in writing the *Lepanto*, this preface reflects a tension between aesthetic considerations and political efficacy. The lack of a commentary being the claimed cause of misinterpretation, James goes on in this preface to explain '*the nature [...] of this Poeme*' (p. 198).

What we see in the preface then, is James attempting to close the text, to shift the responsibility for interpretation from the reader back to the writer. This attempt involves emphasising his royal authority: he claims that without the preface he is now adding, the poem has been read as James '*far contrary to my degree and Religion, like a Mercenary Poet*' writing '*in praise of a forraine Papist bastard*' (p. 198). The terms in which he presents this accusation reflect his desire for his poetry to be seen not as the output of an ordinary poet, but as poetry appropriate to, and invested with the authority of, a king. He is also thereby revealing his anxiety that this may not be the case. The preface makes further references to '*the honour of my estate*' and '*the highnes of my rancke and calling*' (p. 200). James is thus trying to use his royal authority to authorise his poem – to justify how he has written it and to control how it should be read.

While explaining the meaning of his poem, James is also concerned to defend his writing. He therefore presents the poem itself as being self-evidently Protestant: he claims he was moved to write in response to the persecution of protestants, '*as the exhortation to the persecuted in the hinmost eight lines therof doth plainly testifie*' (p. 198). He follows this with an explanation of his text, then reiterates that the last eight-line section '*declares so fully my intention in the whole, and explaines so fullye my comparison and Argument, [...] as I cannot without shamefull repetition speake anie*

*more therof*. Yet even this is not the end of the preface, James continuing immediately with an eight-line explanation and justification of the praise the poem offers its Spanish hero, that begins '*And in a word...*' (p. 200). James is in the contradictory position of trying anxiously to explain what he claims is self-evident.

Underlying the strategy of writing explicitly as a king then, is anxiety about interpretation and an attempt to use political authority to control textual interpretation. Attempting to explain the meaning of his texts while also trying to defend their integrity as writing puts James in a contradictory position. The case of the *Lepanto* may have been a major factor in leading James to believe it was important to impose his royal authority on his texts in an explicit manner, and to provide guides as to how his texts should be read, particularly when he was engaging with sensitive political matters and would be read by a wide audience. These would all be dominant features of many of his later writings.

### **James's Representation of Royalty: *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies***

Towards the end of James's Scottish reign, once his political authority was more firmly established and he had more experience of kingship, he set out his views of kingship in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies: or The Reciproock and Mutuall Duetie Betwixt A Free King, and his Naturall Subjects* (1598) and *Basilikon Doron, or His Majesties Instructions to his Dearest Sonne, Henry the Prince* (1599). As he was a poet who wrote poetic theory (*Reulis and Cautelis*), so he was a politician who wrote political theory.

As we have seen, James had faced challenges to his authority throughout his reign: he had acceded to the throne in the shadow of the deposition of his mother, and Buchanan and others had continued to advocate resistance theory. This domestic threat

was overtaken in the 1580s by the claims of the counter-Reformation papacy of the right of popes to depose rulers. Moreover, in the 1590s James was contending with the religious theories and claims of the Melvillians, experiencing direct conflict with Andrew Melville just before writing his treatises on kingship.<sup>77</sup> In *The Trew Law* in particular, James attacks the theoretic basis of these challenges and presents his own view of kingship. His use of his writings was thus consistent with the political style he adopted in person: he joined in debates and dealt with opposition by responding to it directly himself. It was also consistent with his use of public ceremonial: he was trying to impose his control over representation in order to reaffirm his authority.

In *The Trew Law* James seems particularly concerned to refute Buchanan's arguments, even though Buchanan was long dead and his *De iure regni* had been censored in 1584. The challenge presented by Buchanan had been in the form of books and James was now responding in kind, asserting that he had not only political authority, but also textual authority. In responding to the challenges James faced, these treatises seem to draw on the continental political theorists, Budé and Bodin. Much work has been done on the political views represented in James's two treatises.<sup>78</sup> Here I am concerned only to outline some of the views of kingship represented in *The Trew Law*, in terms of the ways in which it responds to Buchanan's views and reflects the views of Budé and Bodin, and the rhetorical strategy this involves. I will then turn to *Basilikon Doron* and explore the way the 1603 version develops strategies James had adopted in the *Lepanto* and the role of this treatise in representing the king to the English in 1603.

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<sup>77</sup> See Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, pp. 233-4; Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*', p. 50, and *The True Law of Free Monarchies and Basilikon Doron*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1996), 'Introduction', pp. 22, 26. For a contemporary account of the 1596 encounter between James and Andrew Melville, in which the latter called James 'God's silly vassal', see the extract from *James Melville's Diary* included in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 174-5.

<sup>78</sup> For a discussion which locates the views represented in these two texts in the context of a wide range of contemporary writings on royal authority, see Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, especially pp. 185-255.



James, adopting the theory of divine right articulated by Budé and Bodin, directly opposed the view, maintained by Buchanan as we saw above, that royal authority is derived from the people.<sup>79</sup> The king asserted that royal authority is only derived from God, in whose image the king rules, emphasised that there is a hierarchy in which a king must obey God in the same way that the king's subjects obey him, and claimed that kings are answerable only to God. This view runs through both James's treatises on kingship. For example, in *The Trew Law* he states that the people's obedience ought to be to the king 'as to Gods Lieutenant in earth, obeying his commands in all things [...] acknowledging him a Iudge set by GOD ouer them, having power to iudge them, but to be iudged only by GOD' (p. 200).

In *The Trew Law* James, who had experienced his personal vulnerability in the Ruthven Raid, and the execution of his mother, reacts vehemently against Buchanan's assertion that anyone is entitled to kill a tyrant. The king labours to demonstrate that, as Bodin had so categorically asserted, regicide is always wrong. James emphasises that a tyrannous king is still a king sent by God 'for a curse to his people, and a plague for their sinnes' (p. 206) and that wicked kings will receive their due punishment from God, 'the sorest and sharpest schoolemaster that can be deuised for them'. As kings are raised above other men, so their obligation to God is greater and so their punishment will be more severe (p. 209). Buchanan wrote that there is 'a mutual pact between the king and the citizens'.<sup>80</sup> James adapts this notion, reproducing and rejecting the argument that subjects are freed from their allegiance if a king breaks this pact (p. 208), and asserting instead, in the very subtitle of his treatise, 'the reciprock and mvtuall dvtie betwixt a

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<sup>79</sup> James's assertion that he ruled by divine right may also have been motivated by the fact that his claim to the English throne rested upon descent alone, as he had been barred from the succession by two acts of parliament. In asserting that he ruled by divine right, he was primarily asserting the inalienable right of hereditary succession (Conrad Russell, 'Divine Rights in the Early Seventeenth Century', in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth Century England*, ed. by John Morrill, Paul Slack and Daniel Woolf, [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993], pp. 104-117).

<sup>80</sup> Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, p. 196.

free king and his naturall subiects'. This is in fact a one-sided contract in which the king has right and power and his subjects owe him allegiance and obedience.

One of the most controversial aspects of *The Trew Law* was its representation of the absolutist view that the king is not obliged to obey human laws. Buchanan had maintained that the king should act only as the voice of the law that the people have determined. James counters in *The Trew Law* that historically kings have been 'the authors and makers of the Lawes, and not the Lawes of the Kings' (p. 201). He maintains, in accordance with Budé and Bodin, that 'the King is aboue the law, as both the author and giuer of strength thereto; yet a good king will not onely delight to rule his subiects by the lawe, but euen will conforme himselfe in his owne actions thereuneto' (p. 203). Commentators have disagreed as to whether James continued to hold the absolutist view presented in this treatise, which he would republish in London in 1603 and in his *Workes* of 1616,<sup>81</sup> throughout his English reign.<sup>82</sup> I would concur with Johann Sommerville that there is a continuity in how James represents his views throughout his reign, and that he would not have included *The Trew Law* in his *Workes* without additions or alterations if the views it presents had changed radically or if he perceived they were no longer relevant or appropriate.

Differences between James's various representations of his views of kingship are largely explicable in terms of his employment of a dual rhetorical strategy. The first aspect of this strategy is to emphasise what he, or any king, is not obliged to do, an

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<sup>81</sup> The *Workes* was actually published in early 1617, but throughout this discussion I will be citing the publication date that it gives on its title page, which is 1616, according to the old dating system.

<sup>82</sup> Revisionist historians have asserted that James did not continue to believe in absolutist divine right monarchy. Paul Christianson, for example, argues that James modified his views on governance to incorporate the discourse of the common law of England after his accession ('Royal and Parliamentary Voices on the Ancient Constitution, c. 1604-1621', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 71-98 [p. 94]). Johann Sommerville contends the revisionist view, arguing that James was and remained a divine right absolutist, meaning that he believed kings should rule according to law and become tyrants if they do not, but are not obliged to do so, while their subjects are obliged to obey them regardless ('King James VI and I and John Selden: Two Voices on History and the Constitution', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 290-322, especially p. 304; see also his earlier essay 'James I and the Divine Right of Kings', which appears alongside Christianson's in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck).

emphasis that is potentially inflammatory and usually a response to opposition. The second is to emphasise what he, or any good king, will choose to do, which is more conciliatory but may be a way of sidelining the question of obligation. Thus in neither case does he acknowledge that he is under obligation to his subjects; the differences are of tone and emphasis, as determined by his sense of his audience.

James employs both aspects of this strategy in *The Trew Law*, for he is concerned in this treatise not only to refute views opposed to his, but also to convince his audience of the rightness of his views and his fitness to rule. Therefore while emphasising that the king is not obliged to obey the law, he also states that a good king will choose to conform to it (p. 203). He seeks to convince that a king who is answerable only to God will, if he is a good king, as James portrays himself to be, choose to serve and care for his people. He is thereby trying to demonstrate that he will meet many of the expectations of kingship represented by Buchanan and others without being obliged by law. For example, Buchanan asserts that ‘Kings were appointed not for themselves but for the people’,<sup>83</sup> and James writes of the king ‘knowing himselfe to be ordained for them, and they not for him’ (p. 195). The difference is that James represents this awareness as coming from the king, not as being imposed on him, and emphasises that kings are ordained not merely appointed. He maintains that he is concerned to take care of his subjects and offers his treatise to his ‘deare countrey men’ for their ‘weale’ (p. 191). He goes on to argue that a king ought to care for his people as a father ought to care for his children, concluding that ‘as the Fathers chiefe ioy ought to be in procuring his childrens welfare [...] so ought a good Prince thinke of his people’ (p. 195). Again he is emphasising what a king should do, and what a good king will want to do, not what he must do.

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<sup>83</sup> Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, p. 198.

The balance between the two aspects of this rhetorical strategy would differ in different contexts. For example, in a speech to the English parliament of March 1610, James was to state that ‘all Kings that are not tyrants [...] wil be glad to bound themselves within the limits of their Lawes’ (p. 531). In tone and emphasis, in its sidelining of the question of obligation, this is more conciliatory than his assertion in *The Trew Law* that the king is above the law but a good king will choose to conform to it (p. 203). The difference is that in addressing parliament in 1610 he was more concerned to emphasise his willingness to conform to the law as he was trying to persuade parliament to grant him more in supplies.<sup>84</sup> In 1598, while wishing to maintain support by representing himself as caring and just, he was more concerned to refute opposition to his authority by emphasising the extent of his prerogative.

There is of course a contradiction between James’s use of rhetorical strategies and the views he is using them to represent: he is trying to convince his subjects that he is not answerable to his subjects. In *The Trew Law* he uses various strategies of persuasion and manipulation. He adopts a pedagogic, authoritative stance and implies that his views are self-evidently correct, stating for example in the preface to the reader that he will ‘*onely lay downe herein the trew grounds, to teach you the right-way, without wasting time vpon refuting the aduersaries*’ (p. 191). Despite this claim, James remains eager to dismiss opposing arguments, making occasional references throughout the text to ‘the malice of some writers’ (p. 203) or ‘such writers as maintaine the contrary proposition’ (p. 205). He begins his argument as to the obedience the people owe to their king by explaining that he ‘will set downe the trew grounds, whereupon I am to build, out of the Scriptures’ (p. 194). He goes on to quote and discuss at length 1 Samuel 8: 9-20 (pp. 196-200). Throughout *The Trew Law* all of James’s direct references and almost all his quotations are biblical and around one third of the text is

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<sup>84</sup> See chapter two.

given over to scriptural exegesis. He is thereby supporting his claims for the truth of his position and exploiting a weakness in *De iure regni*: while Buchanan was concerned to establish that his position is consistent with scripture, he had to concede that he could not cite a scriptural instance of a king's punishment by his subjects.<sup>85</sup> While James begins by claiming he is only going to set down the '*trew grounds*', his treatise thus presents an argument, dismissing opposing views, drawing on biblical authority, explaining and justifying his views. This parallels the preface to the *Lepanto*, where he suggests that what he writes is self-evidently truth, but is concerned to explain and justify his writing.

In James's attempts to maintain political authority and his attempts to maintain textual authority there is thus the same contradiction between assertion and explanation or justification. The contradiction as regards James's political authority reflects the tension between the view of kingship he maintained and his awareness of the challenges to that view he faced in Scotland, which meant that he actually had to work to maintain the support and obedience of his subjects. While the English political context was in some ways different from the Scottish, with different expectations of royal representation, in England, as we will see, James would remain concerned to explain and justify his authority while claiming he did not need to. Similarly, the contradiction between assertions and explanations or justifications with regard to his textual authority reflects the tension between the desire and the impossibility of controlling textual interpretation and, again, as we will explore in more detail later, this tension would run through his later writings.

While *The Trew Law* is shaped by James's desire to refute views opposed to his and to convince his audience of his views, the question of how he geared his writing

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<sup>85</sup> Burns, *The True Law of Kingship*, pp. 231, 205. Burns suggests that the weight of scriptural exegesis in James's argument also indicates his desire to refute the Melvillian position (p. 233).

towards particular audiences is more complex with regard to *Basilikon Doron*, for his original intentions for this second treatise are not entirely clear. Written in the tradition of the handbook for kings, this treatise was dedicated to, and presented as a guide for, his heir, Prince Henry. James tells his son in the epistle that ‘*because the houre of death is vncertaine to mee [...] I leaue it as my Testament and latter will vnto you*’ (p. 139). In 1599 the first printing only extended to a run of seven and was done secretly, further indicating *Basilikon Doron*, was not intended for public consumption. Then, however, Andrew Melville gained access to a manuscript copy. James published an official, public version with an added preface in Edinburgh in 1603. The treatise was also hurried into press in England the very day James was declared King – a copy of Waldegrave’s 1603 Edinburgh edition having been sent to London before Elizabeth’s death – and published on a mass scale.<sup>86</sup>

James gives his version of why he brought *Basilikon Doron* into the public sphere in the preface he added in 1603. He states that ‘*since contrary to my intention and expectation, [...] this Booke is now vented, and set foorth to the publike view of the world,*’ he is ‘*now forced [...] to publish and spread the true copies thereof, for defacing of the false copies that are alreadie spread*’ (p. 141). He claims that an unofficial and incomplete copy has circulated as the ‘King’s Testament’. No pirated versions are known ever to have existed, but the ‘King’s Testament’ may have been notes taken by Melville.<sup>87</sup> James suggests that criticisms that have been made on the basis of this copy, which he explains concern ‘*doubt of my sinceritie in that Religion, which I haue constantly professed*’ and suspicion that he is harbouring ‘*a vindictiue resolution against England*’, derive from misreadings (p. 142).

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<sup>86</sup> For further detail, see *The Basilikon Doron of King James VI*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh and London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1950), II.

<sup>87</sup> See *Basilikon Doron*, ed. by Craigie, II.

There are clear parallels between this case and the case of the *Lepanto*. As the preface James added to the *Lepanto* emphasises his protestantism while the poem itself balances Catholic and Protestant interests, so, as James Doelman suggests, the preface James added to *Basilikon Doron* brought about inconsistencies with the existing text, especially over the issue of the Puritans.<sup>88</sup> Again, it may be that rather than James having been misinterpreted, reception or changed circumstances made it desirable for him to encourage his readers to read his text differently. The claim that an unofficial version was in circulation may have been merely a strategy to legitimise changing and publishing the original text.

Whether *Basilikon Doron* had actually been misinterpreted or not, the preface gave James an opportunity to attempt to control how his text would be read in the future. This preface adopts the strategies he had used eight years earlier in the preface he added to the *Lepanto*. He refutes the accusations that he claims have been made and explains his text, concluding firmly '*and that is the onely meaning of my Booke*' (pp. 142-4). He also suggests that this meaning is already self-evident: '*if there were no more to be looked into, but the very methode and order of the booke, it will sufficiently cleare me of that first and grieuousest imputation, in the point of Religion: since in the first part, where Religion is onely treated of, I speake so plainely*' (p. 143). Again he is in the contradictory position of explaining what he claims is already clear. A further parallel with the preface to the *Lepanto* is his attempt to use royal authority to control how his text is read: he asks the readers of *Basilikon Doron* '*to interprete fauourably this birth of mine, according to the integritie of the author, and not looking for perfection in the worke itselfe*' (p. 147). The difference is that while in the preface to the earlier text he reflected the tension between aesthetic and political considerations, but

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<sup>88</sup> See "'A King of thine own heart": The English Reception of King James VI and I's *Basilikon Doron*', *Seventeenth Century*, 9 (1994), 1-9 (5).

maintained the integrity of his original writing, here he suggests the imperfection of his writing. This reflects a further shift towards relying on royal authority rather than on writing ability as a means of controlling interpretation.

Given the publication history, commentators have disagreed as to James's original intentions for his treatise.<sup>89</sup> I would suggest that even if he intended it to remain secret, he must have been aware of the possibility that it would come to public attention and when this did happen he was quick not only to respond to claimed misreadings, but to try to turn the situation to his advantage. The tone of *Basilikon Doron* meant that this was easily done. Wormald has emphasised the differences between *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*, suggesting that the former demonstrated a moderate and realistic style of kingship, while the latter was theoretic and potentially controversial.<sup>90</sup> I would qualify this to argue that the differences are not in underlying principles, or in a gap between theory and practice, but in the tone and emphases James uses in expressing them. In *Basilikon Doron* he was not as concerned to refute opposing views of kingship as he had been in *The Trew Law*. He was writing either exclusively for a familiar and non-oppositional private audience, or with a view to presenting himself in ways that would be well-received by his subjects in Scotland, and potentially in England. Thus, while in *Basilikon Doron* James does not contradict the claims made in the earlier treatise, he draws more on the second aspect of his dual rhetorical strategy, emphasising what a good king will choose to do. For example, he writes in *Basilikon Doron* that a good king subjects 'his owne priuate affections and appetites to the weale and standing of his Subiects, euer thinking the common interesse his chiefest particular' (p. 155). Such comments portray James as believing in an exemplary style of rule.

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<sup>89</sup> Wormald, for example, takes an extreme view by arguing that James wrote primarily for himself and neither *Basilikon Doron* nor *The Trew Law* 'was written with an English readership particularly in mind' ('James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*', pp. 49-50).

<sup>90</sup> 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*', p. 52.



The circumstances of publication, whether merely claimed or actual, helped to create the impression that the style of rule *Basilikon Doron* describes was indeed a reflection of the king's beliefs. James took full advantage of this in writing at the end of the preface '*since it was first written in secret, and is now published, not of ambition, but of a kinde of necessitie; it must be taken of all men, for the trew image of my very minde, and forme of the rule, which I haue prescribed to my selfe and mine*' (p. 147).

The situation could also be exploited to increase interest in the text. As Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier point out, James 'understood the need for personal myth-making' and the secrecy surrounding *Basilikon Doron* gave it the added allure 'of representing, however fictively, the immensely attractive spectacle of the king's private self'.<sup>91</sup> As early as October 1602 John Chamberlain wrote to Dudley Carleton that he has heard that the Scottish king 'is printing a little peece of worke christened with a Greeke name in nature of his last will or remembrance to his sonne, when himself was sicke: and because yt hath gon abrode subject to many constructions and much depraved by many copies, he will now set yt out under his owne hand'.<sup>92</sup> Even before the publication of any official version, even from London, Chamberlain was aware of the circumstances in which *Basilikon Doron* was written, and of the reasons James was to give in the official version as to why he was publishing an official version. This may simply reflect the difficulty for the king in keeping his writing private. There may, however, have been a deliberate policy of letting this information spread, in order to increase interest in the text. By the time the 1603 version was published James felt able to write with confidence of his Scottish and English audiences: '*I know the greatest part of the people of this whole Isle, haue beene very curious for a sight thereof*' (p. 145).

This claim in itself attempts to increase the curiosity of the reader.

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<sup>91</sup> *Basilikon Doron and The True Law*, p. 28.

<sup>92</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1939), I, 167.

*Basilikon Doron* played an important and positive role in feeding expectation of the new king. Though he acceded to the English throne in March 1603, James did not arrive in London until the middle of May and soon after the plague forced him to retreat from the city. He would not make his Royal Entry into London until March 1604.

Doelman suggests that at this time ‘rumours about the King were rife, [and] *Basilikon Doron* was perceived as a hard core of indisputable evidence about the personality and policy of the new King’.<sup>93</sup> The extent of public interest in *Basilikon Doron* is indicated by the volume and speed of publication: Wormald refers to ‘the frenzied printings of the first two and a half weeks of the reign’ and gives the estimate that there were between 13,000 and 16,000 copies printed.<sup>94</sup>

There are numerous allusions to *Basilikon Doron* in the panegyrics greeting James and these are ‘without exception complimentary’. Some express the way in which this book ‘calmed the fears of the expectant English’.<sup>95</sup> William Camden declared that ‘it was the pattern of a most excellent and every way accomplished King’ and that it was ‘incredible what an expectation of himself [James] raised among all men even to admiration’. Francis Bacon suggested that ‘falling into every man’s hand, [it] filled the whole realm, as with a good perfume or incense, before the King’s coming in’.<sup>96</sup> In his preface to James’s *Workes* (1616), Bishop Montague would recall how *Basilikon Doron* was received: ‘*how did it inflame mens minds to a loue and admiration of his Maiestie beyond measure; [...] it made the hearts of all his people as one Man, as much to Honour him for Religion and Learning, as to obey him for Title and Authoritie*’.<sup>97</sup> Whatever allowances we make for the need of these commentators to support and seek favour with their king, it seems that *Basilikon Doron* was well

<sup>93</sup> “‘A King of Thine Own Heart’”, pp. 1-2.

<sup>94</sup> Wormald, ‘James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*’, pp. 51-2.

<sup>95</sup> Doelman, “‘A King of Thine Own Heart’”, pp. 1-2.

<sup>96</sup> Both Bacon and Camden are quoted in David Riggs, *Ben Jonson* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1989), p. 109.

<sup>97</sup> Sig. D1v.

received in 1603. It also went through numerous subsequent publications and translations; ‘some thirty translations into Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, German and Swedish – as well as one in Welsh – were produced in James’s lifetime’.<sup>98</sup> Craigie suggests that ‘no earlier work written *in English* had ever aroused such curiosity abroad or had enjoyed so wide a circulation outside the bounds of Great Britain’.<sup>99</sup> As James was influenced by continental theorists of kingship, so too were his views on kingship of interest in continental Europe. It seems that as James VI had some success as a king, so did he have some success as a writer.

The republication of not only *Basilikon Doron* but also the *Lepanto, A Fruitful Meditation*, and *The Trew Law*, in London in 1603 suggests that James was carefully using his literary production as part of his strategy for representing himself to his new English subjects, not only politically and diplomatically, but also culturally. He was representing himself as poet and theologian as well as king, demonstrating his political and textual authority, and the relation between the two forms of authority. *Basilikon Doron* was the text that generated most interest as a guide to the new king and Samuel Daniel’s *Panegyric Congratulatorie* (1603) expresses the hope that James’s actions will confirm what he has written in this treatise:

We have an earnest that doth even tie  
 Thy Scepter to thy word, and binds thy Crowne  
 (That else no band can binde) to ratifie  
 What thy religious hand hath there set downe,  
 Wherein thy all-commanding Sov’raintie  
 Stands subject to thy Pen and thy Renowne.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> Wormald, ‘James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*’, pp. 51-2.

<sup>99</sup> *Basilikon Doron*, II, 2.

<sup>100</sup> Sig. A3v, quoted in Doelman, “‘A King of Thine Own Heart’”, p. 6.

There is a note of warning in these lines: what James had written in this treatise may have been well-received, but he would now be expected to live up to it; he might be ‘all commanding’, but he was subject to what he had written and the reputation he had thereby created. As we will consider in chapter four, later in James’s reign it would be problematic for him to be tied to his early writings.

### **Elizabeth I: A Contrasting Style of Representation**

Despite the important role of *Basilikon Doron*, the main factor in determining the expectations of James’s new English subjects was the way in which Elizabeth had been represented. This is indicated by the fact that much of the writing produced in 1603 that is ostensibly about James, is in many ways actually about Elizabeth. Thus ‘An Excellent New Ballad, shewing the Pedigree of our Royall King James’ (London, 1603), for example, focuses on Elizabeth and the sadness felt at her death. Even the title of the ballad places the emphasis on the past. It refers to James as ‘hee by whose sweete breath / We still possesse Queen Elizabeth’ and expresses the hope ‘In noble James her vertues liue’, suggesting people expected and wanted a monarch who was like Elizabeth. The notion of the Phoenix is a convention for any succession, but there is a particular sense here that, Elizabeth having reigned for so long and James being a foreigner, the English lacked other frames of reference. Not knowing what to expect of James, they represented him in terms of that with which they were familiar.

The contrast between Elizabeth and James has long been a critical commonplace, with the comparison being used to highlight James’s supposed personal and political failings. With some historians salvaging the reputation of the Stuart King and others, such as Christopher Haigh, producing less laudatory assessments of Elizabeth, more continuities between the two monarchs emerge in terms of their

political beliefs and the political problems they faced.<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, the Elizabethan style of representation was very different from the style of representation James had developed in Scotland. Both monarchs were self-conscious about the need for effective self-representation and aware of the importance and the difficulty of controlling representations by others.<sup>102</sup> They had, however, different approaches to the representation of their own roles and political beliefs, the use of writing, visual representation, and public performance.<sup>103</sup> Elizabeth both met traditional expectations of monarchical performance, and shaped specific expectations through her particular style. Thus where James I would differ from Elizabeth's style of self-representation, he would also be differing from English expectations.

While, as Wormald points out, 'Elizabeth believed, as much as James did, in kingship by divine right, [...] she never offended English susceptibilities by making the claims'.<sup>104</sup> The notion of divine right kingship was not necessarily controversial in sixteenth and early seventeenth century England,<sup>105</sup> and Elizabeth made it more palatable by the way she represented it. This is exemplified in her famous 'Golden Speech' to her last parliament in 1601. She refers to divine right but passes over it,

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<sup>101</sup> For a discussion of the historiography of James, see the introduction to the current study. For a discussion of the historiography of Elizabeth, see Haigh, *Elizabeth*, p. 175 and bibliographical essay, pp. 182-90.

<sup>102</sup> In 1581, three years before James's act against seditious speech in Scotland, Elizabeth tightened longstanding laws of sedition and censorship to make 'the authorship of any seditious writing, and a second conviction for uttering seditious words, capital offences without benefit of clergy' (Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], p. 337). Elizabeth's legislation of 1581 could not entirely prevent subversive publications. For example, in 1589 the Marprelate controversy involved the production of numerous illegal pamphlets (see M. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: the Printed Page in Early Modern England* [Charlottesville, 1993], pp. 101-16). This legislation was maintained by James I; indeed, it 'remained the basis for the restriction of speech throughout the seventeenth century' (Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, p. 337).

<sup>103</sup> There is a vast literature on Elizabeth and her style of self-representation. Here I am concerned only to summarise the issues that are key to a sense of the expectations James would face in England, and I am drawing largely on Haigh's recent and comprehensive synthesis, *Elizabeth I*.

<sup>104</sup> Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*', p. 48.

<sup>105</sup> According to John N. Figgis in his key study of the origins and development of the doctrine of the divine right of kings, the doctrine of divine right had been present in English politics 'in its essential idea' from the time of Henry VIII (*The Divine Right of Kings* [(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1914), p. 160.] Russell argues that the belief in divine right that James shared with Elizabeth was not controversial in England. On the contrary, belief in divine right was widely held and applied to many different forms of authority. That a king ruled by divine right not only exalted his power, but limited it by implying an answerability to God ('Divine Rights', pp. 104-117.)

placing the emphasis instead on the support of her subjects: 'though God hath raised me high, yet this I account the Glory of my Crown, that I have reigned with your loves'. She emphasises that her role is to protect and serve her people, and uses emotionally appealing rhetoric. For example, in the same speech, she states that 'though you have had, and may have, many *mightier* and *wiser* Princes sitting in this Seat, yet you *never* had, nor shall have any, *that will love you better*'.<sup>106</sup> As Haigh points out, the loving relationship between queen and people was a regular theme not only in her speeches, but also in the work of her image-makers. Throughout her reign Elizabeth had created the perception amongst her subjects that they loved their Queen by repeatedly telling them that they did: 'the images of Elizabeth which were projected to the popular level appear to have generated a real devotion to her – though it is not easy to distinguish the spontaneous from the stage-managed'.<sup>107</sup>

She was to be replaced by a monarch who advertised his intellect rather than his emotions and whose rhetoric was more likely to emphasise authority and obedience than love.<sup>108</sup> While James's view of kingship was not entirely different from that of Elizabeth, and not necessarily controversial in the English context, he represented it in the very different style, which he had developed in response to the opposition he had faced in Scotland. This style was evident in one of the first proclamations of the new reign, in October 1604. He unflinchingly represented his 'absolute power' with regard to his unpopular plan for full union between England and Scotland. He suggested, rather ambiguously, that while he would leave the parliaments of both realms to discuss many of the details of the union, he would 'doe by Our selfe that, which justly and safely Wee

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<sup>106</sup> *Harleian Miscellany*, 6 vols (London: T. Osborne, 1744), I, 367, 368.

<sup>107</sup> *Elizabeth*, pp. 158-160, 162. The 'Golden Speech' was continually reprinted after Elizabeth's death (Curtis Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], p. 174).

<sup>108</sup> The difference would be noted by contemporary observers. For example, Lord Thomas Howard remarked in a letter to Sir John Harington of 1611 that the 'Queen did talk of her subjects love and good affections, and in good truth she aimed well; our King talketh of his subjects fear and subjection, and herein I think he dothe well too, as long as it holdeth good' (in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 235-6).

may by Our absolute power doe'. He was thus maintaining control over defining the extent of royal power. He then boldly and controversially asserted that 'We [...] by force of our Kingly Power and Prerogative, assume to Our selfe by the cleerenesse of our Right, The Name and Stile of KING OF GREAT BRITTAINE'.<sup>109</sup> James was to create resentment by such expressions of his views of kingship. For example, in a speech of 21 May 1610 he told parliament 'I will not have you to call my prerogative in question' and asserted that 'Kings elective as well as successive have ever had power to lay impositions'.<sup>110</sup> According to Chamberlain, 'yt bred generally much discomfort; to see our monarchicall powre and regall prerogative strained so high and made so transcendent every way'.<sup>111</sup> While, as argued above, James was concerned to shape his discourse according to his sense of his audience, he may at times have misjudged, or have been willing to risk antagonising, his audience.

In England there was perhaps less need for James to assert and justify his authority than there had been in Scotland. The English political context was very different – there was not a powerful church asserting its authority over secular matters, there was no recent deposition of a monarch, and there were no figures as powerful and influential as Buchanan and Melville had been arguing for limitations on royal authority. In the English context James's continuing tendency to give defensive justifications of his authority risked being read as attempts to extend that authority (which is one possible way of reading his speech of May 1610 and the reaction to it Chamberlain reports). As we will see, such representations also risked giving the impression that royal authority was not assured but a matter for debate.

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<sup>109</sup> *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), I, 96, 97. James's desire for a full union between England and Scotland remained unpopular and unrealised throughout his reign and beyond.

<sup>110</sup> As reported in records of House of Lords, in *Proceedings in Parliament, 1610*, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, vol I, House of Lords, vol II, House of Commons (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), I, 88.

<sup>111</sup> *Letters*, ed. by McClure, I, 301.

Lawrence Stone suggests that ‘when James uttered his rhodomontades about the divinity of kingship, he was doing no more than saying for himself what Elizabeth had preferred to encourage others to say about her’.<sup>112</sup> This crucial difference obtains beyond the representation of divine right. Elizabeth, like James, claimed that she did not need to justify or explain her authority or her actions. This is explicit in a declaration of 1598: ‘we are no way bound to yield account to any person on earth of any our actions more than in love and kindness’.<sup>113</sup> Unlike James, she did not undermine this claim through her self-representation. Where she did need her authority or wisdom or virtue to be represented or reinforced, she tended to rely on the words of others. This tendency was played out in various spheres. She responded to the Marprelate controversy of 1589, for example, by authorising published responses to the illegal publications,<sup>114</sup> not by engaging in the debate herself. She supported the production of a new official version of the bible, the *Bishops’ Bible* (1568), but did not attach her own name to it.<sup>115</sup> She did not publish widely in any area, even though, as Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose point out in the preface to their recent collection of her letters, poems, prayers and speeches, she was ‘an immensely productive writer’. Moreover, she actively tried to prevent some of her writings being disseminated: ‘there is recurrent evidence that Elizabeth made efforts to keep most of her verses out of general circulation’.<sup>116</sup> Instead, she had a ‘propaganda machine’ of court poets around her, writing to her and about her. For as long as it was people other than the Queen herself who were representing her kingship, it was easier for Elizabeth to remain aloof, to

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<sup>112</sup> *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 478.

<sup>113</sup> Quoted in *Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, p. 163.

<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth also issued proclamations against the illegal publications (Tribble, *Margins*, pp. 101-16).

<sup>115</sup> *King James Bible: A Selection*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson (London; New York: Longman, 1994), p. 29.

<sup>116</sup> Elizabeth I, *Collected Works* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), pp. xi, xx. The preface to this important volume also points out that Elizabeth’s production as a writer has received only piecemeal consideration and requires further study (p. xi). Sharpe has also suggested that Elizabeth’s writings ‘invite analysis as texts of power’. See his brief discussion in ‘The King’s Writ’, pp. 119-23.



imply that she did not need to win support, and to maintain that she had the love and support of her subjects.

In sharp contrast, James, as we have seen, wanted to be his own spokesman. In a 1598 letter to Elizabeth James responded to her declaration of that year, quoted above, by agreeing that ‘it becomes none that enjoys such places as we both do either to give account [or] be judged by any’.<sup>117</sup> In practice, however, he was concerned to explain and justify his authority and even specific decisions he had made. He also disseminated his own writings and engaged personally in controversial published debates, in Scotland and in England. In England he would authorise the *King James Bible*. Even in Scotland where he was surrounded by a group of court poets, he was not the aloof subject of poetry, but wrote with his court poets. In England too, he would write and disseminate his own poetry.

Elizabeth shared her father Henry VIII’s ability to exploit visual display for political purposes and this was an important factor in the development of a ‘cult of Elizabeth I’. Understanding the political power of the royal image, Elizabeth sought to control its reproduction: ‘in 1563 a draft proclamation promoted an “approved” portrait to which all were to subscribe’ and in 1596 ‘the Privy Council ordered that assistance should be given to the Sergeant Painter that all offensive images were to be destroyed’.<sup>118</sup> Elizabethan portraiture was an important ‘instrument of rule’, as Roy Strong and others have explored in depth. For example, portraits of Elizabeth were sent to the continent as diplomatic gifts or in connection with marriage negotiations.<sup>119</sup> To exhibit a portrait of Elizabeth in one’s house became a pledge of loyalty, whilst by the 1580s there was a fashion among courtiers for carrying portrait miniatures of the Queen

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<sup>117</sup> *Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, p. 161.

<sup>118</sup> David Howarth, *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Hampshire and London, 1997), p. 102. These measures did not prevent the manufacture of debased images of the Queen or the misappropriation of her image. See Howarth, pp. 111, 113-4 and Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 6.

<sup>119</sup> *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, pp. 8, 27, 24.

about the person. Poorer subjects could wear base-metal medallions of Elizabeth, while woodcuts and engravings also became more common.<sup>120</sup> Strong suggests that ‘the demand for the royal likeness by the nineties had far outstripped the number of official types that could be produced’.<sup>121</sup>

As Sharpe has argued, the nature of royal representation was determined not only by the intentions of the monarch, but also by the desires of the subject,<sup>122</sup> and such negotiation is evident here: Elizabeth’s deliberate use of her image seems to have fed an eager market and to have extended that market. We noted in the introduction that effective royal representation required a degree of cultural accord between the monarch and the various audiences for his or her representation, and here we see such accord. James, conversely, being reluctant even to sit for portraits, did not exploit the political potential of this kind of visual display and did less to satisfy public desire for the royal image.

Elizabeth also effectively manipulated her image through public performance, especially during the ‘Golden Age’ of her reign, the 1570s-1590. During her regular summer progresses, for example, she exploited the opportunity to project her image to a wide ‘readership,’ increasing her popularity amongst her subjects and strengthening their loyalty.<sup>123</sup> She exploited the dramatic opportunities presented by public ceremonial. For example, the authorised description of her Royal Entry of 1559 states that ‘by holding up her handes, and merie countenance to such as stode nigh to her Grace, [she] did declare herselfe no lesse thankefullye to receive her Peoples good wyll,

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<sup>120</sup> Haigh, *Elizabeth*, p. 153.

<sup>121</sup> *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I*, p. 6.

<sup>122</sup> *Remapping*, p. 25.

<sup>123</sup> Much has been written on Elizabeth’s public appearances. See, for example, Jean Wilson, *Entertainments for Elizabeth I* (Woodbridge: Brewer, 1980) and, more recently, Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

than they lovingly offered it unto her'.<sup>124</sup> During the procession she 'engaged in a type of continuous dialogue with actors and audience'.<sup>125</sup> Elizabeth's ability to project a public image of herself as a queen who loved her subjects, through the way she performed her role, interacting and engaging with them, may actually have enabled her to keep a distance from them. Her 'common touch was in fact a dazzling display of the majesty and mystique of monarchy, and in that sense evidence of the remoteness of the late-sixteenth-century English monarchy'.<sup>126</sup> Nevertheless, the successes of her public performances indicate that her style of performance, like her use of visual images, accorded with public desire and, as we will see in the following chapter, shaped expectations of monarchical public performance.

James, however, as we will increasingly see in turning to his English reign, was less keen than Elizabeth had been to engage in certain kinds of public performance and when he did appear in public, did not engage with his subjects, but merely displayed an image of himself. At the same time, he was accustomed to a more personal kind of kingship. His style was familiar and informal on the level of personal interaction.<sup>127</sup> This was noted by the English scholar and diplomat Sir Henry Wotton, who visited Scotland shortly before James's accession to the English throne. Wotton observed that 'anyone can enter while the king is eating...; he speaks to those who stand around while he is at table,... and they to him. [...] He is very familiar with his domestics and gentlemen of the Chamber'. Wotton defines this as James's court being 'ruled more in the French than in the English fashion', which reflects not only the French influences on

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<sup>124</sup> *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, ed. by John Nichols, 3 vols [London: John Nichols, 1823], I, 38.

<sup>125</sup> Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry*, pp. 74-5.

<sup>126</sup> Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', p. 204.

<sup>127</sup> 'Two Kings or One?', p. 189. Wormald suggests that this was not just specific to James, but that Scottish kingship had a 'peculiarly personal quality'.

the Scottish court, but also how far removed James's style seemed to the English who were accustomed to Elizabeth.<sup>128</sup>

Official representations of Elizabeth, increasingly towards the end of her reign, belied the reality. It was, as Haigh neatly puts it, 'government by illusion' (p. 155). For Elizabeth ended her reign in a climate of widespread dissatisfaction. In her last decade, the war with Spain 'dragged on, taxes grew more burdensome, food prices soared, and living standards fell'. This created economic and social crisis. In 1595-6 there were widespread riots against high food prices. At Court there was bitter factionalism. There were widespread anxieties about the succession. Elizabeth was increasingly seen as mean: she created so few new peers that their number actually decreased in her reign from fifty-seven to fifty-five.<sup>129</sup> There was 'growing disenchantment with the court in the country. There emerged – not least from within the circles of the court itself – a body of acerbic critics and satirists who lambasted the corruption and debauchery of the court and courtiers'.<sup>130</sup> Disenchantment was expressed in satires, newsletters and topical plays.<sup>131</sup> This criticism and disenchantment increased the need for positive representation and Strong suggests that it was indeed in the 1590s that the cult of Elizabeth, now an old woman, reached its peak.<sup>132</sup>

Whatever the successes of Elizabeth's self-representation, the potency of the Elizabethan myth owes much to the ways in which it was re-presented after her death, through James's reign and well beyond. For as the disillusionment of the last years of Elizabeth's reign was selectively forgotten, the 'mystique of the virgin queen, Protestant saviour and paragon of princely virtues, served as a gloss and a counterpoint to the

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<sup>128</sup> Letter extracted in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 4-5. Wotton visited Scotland in 1601/2.

<sup>129</sup> Haigh, *Elizabeth*, pp. 155, 165-6, 170, 54-5

<sup>130</sup> Sharpe, *Remapping*, p. 205.

<sup>131</sup> Sharpe, 'The King's Writ', p. 122.

<sup>132</sup> Roy Strong, *Art and Power: Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1984), p. 70. *Art and Power* is a revised version of *Splendour at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and Illusion* (London: Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1973).

anxious politics of the seventeenth century'.<sup>133</sup> The greater the disillusionment with the present, the greater the mythologisation of the past.

Only a few years into James's English reign, Fulke Greville, William Camden and others were representing Elizabeth as 'a model of constitutional propriety, financial probity, and Protestant energy'. The qualities that had seemed defects in her lifetime – her frugality, her reluctance to create peers – were now praised.<sup>134</sup> Bishop Goodman observed that because of the aged Elizabeth's covetousness and neglect of the court,

the people were very generally weary of an old woman's government.

[...] But after a few years, when we had experience of the Scottish government, then in disparagement of the Scots, and in hate and detestation of them, the Queen did seem to revive; then was her memory much magnified.<sup>135</sup>

The Elizabethan legend would become even more 'loudly amplified with the renewed Spanish threat' towards the end of the Jacobean period.<sup>136</sup> The Tudor Queen would be celebrated as a militant Protestant heroine in order to question James's development of closer relations with Spain. In 1603, however, Elizabeth was praised for keeping England in peace. *Aue Caesar* refers to 'our peace-preserving Queene'; *Englands Welcome to Iames* (London, 1603) expresses the hope that James will reproduce Elizabeth's preservation of peace: 'What though in peace, she did thee long maintain,/ peace-giuing God can giue an other Prince'. Thus the myth of Gloriana could be

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<sup>133</sup> David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), p. 131.

<sup>134</sup> Greville was praising Elizabeth in these terms by about 1610; Camden wrote his history of her reign between 1608 and 1617. Camden's account continued to dominate interpretations of Elizabeth through the twentieth century (Haigh, *Elizabeth*, pp. 173, 182).

<sup>135</sup> In *James I*, ed. by Ashton, p. 77.

<sup>136</sup> Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, p. 134.

manipulated to suit present circumstances and the 'attractive and influential' picture created was shaped by experience of James: it was his 'mirror reflection [...] rather than a portrait of Elizabeth'.<sup>137</sup>

By contrast, as we saw in the introduction, the legacy of James VI was eclipsed by accounts of James I, which tended to be biased and incomplete. Wormald quotes White Kennet, a bishop writing in the eighteenth century: 'Qu. Elizabeth had a Camden [...] but poor King James I has had I think none but paltry scribblers'.<sup>138</sup> As it has been difficult for critics to see beyond historiographical traditions in which James is disparaged and Elizabeth is lauded,<sup>139</sup> so must it have been difficult for Elizabethans and Jacobean to see beyond the representations that fed into the historiographical traditions.

Thus, while the myth of Gloriana would grow as dissatisfaction with James increased, even in 1603 the representation of Elizabeth mattered more than the reality. For it was primarily the *image* of the Tudor Queen that created a frame of reference from which expectations of kingship could be derived, and by which James could be judged.

### Conclusion: English Expectations

In 1603 then, English expectations for the new king derived from broad cultural traditions of kingship; what information they had of James, which largely came from his writings, particularly *Basilikon Doron*, and the Elizabethan style of monarchy. There was widespread relief that the succession had been settled peacefully and that James

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<sup>137</sup> Haigh, *Elizabeth*, pp. 175, 173. For a discussion of literary representations of Elizabeth produced in the Jacobean period and their impact on the perception of Elizabeth and James, see Perry, *Jacobean Culture*, pp. 153-187.

<sup>138</sup> 'Two Kings or One?', p. 192.

<sup>139</sup> Haigh argues that Elizabethan propaganda has misled historians for four centuries and acknowledges that 'it is almost impossible to write a balanced study of Elizabeth I [because] the historiographical tradition is so laudatory' (*Elizabeth*, pp. 10, 182).

was a male monarch – the limitations that had been perceived in Elizabeth’s rule were often blamed on her gender.<sup>140</sup> Better still, James brought hope for the longer term future – he had heirs. This was all the more of an advantage for James because England had lacked an adult male monarch with heirs since Henry VIII. In his first speech to the English parliament in 1603 he would exploit this advantage, drawing attention to the ‘healthful and hopefull Issue of my body, whereof some are here present’ (pp. 489-90).

It is useful to think of the people awaiting James’s arrival in England in terms of what we identified in the introduction: different – though obviously overlapping – audiences, each with particular interests or concerns determined by their relationship to the monarch. Parliament must have been particularly concerned with the current financial problems. Members of the court, which, as we have seen, was characterised by bitter factionalism and discontent in the last years of Elizabeth’s reign, had personal interests as to how factions would function and how their positions might be affected. Robert Cecil had already secured his position, having secretly communicated with James and helped him to accede to the English throne.<sup>141</sup> Others must have been anxious to win royal favour quickly.

Writers waited to see how they might win favour and patronage from a king they knew to be a poet.<sup>142</sup> For example, Thomas Greene’s *A Poet’s Vision, and a Princes Glorie* of 1603 is dedicated to James and flatters James’s verse. Greene suggests that James’s accession is making virtue and poetry flourish anew. In offering this praise Greene is of course also trying to demonstrate and elevate his own poetry. Savile’s 1603 poem to James claims that the king’s ‘coming forceth my Muse to sing’.

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<sup>140</sup> See Haigh, *Elizabeth*, especially, pp. 166-7, 172.

<sup>141</sup> In a letter of 1601-2, for example, James offers Cecil his gratitude for his ‘so honourable, judicious, and painful labours for the furtherance of my greatest hopes’ and states that these letters ‘are but witnesses of that treasure of gratitude which by your good deserts is daily nourished in my heart’ (*Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, p. 184). For James’s secret letters to Cecil, see this collection, pp. 178-206.

<sup>142</sup> Elizabeth had not been ‘a major patron of the arts’ (Haigh, *Elizabeth*, p. 176).

He prefaces his praise of James as a poet, quoted above, by suggesting that ‘‘Mongst all estates Poets haue cause to sing/ King James’s welcome’.<sup>143</sup> In a letter of 30 March 1603 Chamberlain lists a number of individuals racing to meet James in the hope of preferment. These include not only Lords and Sirs but also ‘John Davies the poet’ (I, 189).

Many of James’s new subjects must have been particularly keen to see how he would engage in public performance, as this was their one form of direct access to him in person. ‘An Excellent New Ballad, shewing the Pedigree of our Royall King Iames’ is representative of a sense that, though people had already had the opportunity to read James’s words, they now wanted to see his image. The ballad pleads ‘O noble King to England haste’ and states simply ‘we want our Prince his sight’.

As we have seen, however, in Scotland James had developed a distinctive style of rule and of representation, very unlike that of Elizabeth. In Scotland he was liberal to his nobility, but he tended to give away more than he could afford; he engaged with traditional expectations of royal public display, but he did not always follow convention; he employed a range of visual and verbal media for self-representation, but he prioritised written representation. For James, representation was a means of self-defence, of reaffirming royal authority and mystique, and he had developed a tendency to assert and to explain and justify his authority. In politics and in representation he was keen to take personal control, acting as his own spokesman, joining in parliamentary debates in person, writing about his own views himself. He self-consciously represented himself as a writer. We will see in the coming chapters various clashes and negotiations between the expectations of the English and the approaches and strategies of James himself, as they continued and developed through his English reign.

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<sup>143</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 144, 145.



## Chapter 2

### James I's Performance of the Role of King: Magnificence and Extravagance

In England, as in Scotland, James was aware of the need to engage with the expectation that there should be royal public display, of the importance of winning and maintaining the support of the nobility, of the role of the court in his public image, and of the importance of the royal image in the context of European diplomacy. For these reasons, although, as we will consider later, he would continue to prioritise writing as a means of self-representation, he also tried to perform the role of magnificent king. As we saw in discussing Elizabeth, however, effective royal representation required a degree of cultural accord between monarch and audience. In Scotland James had developed a distinctive style of performance and one aspect of that style was a tendency to follow his own ideas, even if that meant departing from convention. His style was to be more problematic in the very different English context, where he faced the expectations that Elizabeth had both met and shaped over the course of a very long reign. From the beginning of James's English reign, it quickly emerged that he did not always meet these expectations, and contemporary accounts began to record criticisms of his style. Moreover, he continued to face extreme financial problems, expectations of royal performance and magnificence were changing in the early seventeenth century, and he had to perform to multiple audiences with different and even conflicting views of royal magnificence and expenditure. In performing the role of magnificent king James was thus in a difficult and contradictory position.

This chapter focuses on the dual perception that James both failed to be adequately magnificent in terms of public display, while being magnificent to the point of extravagance in terms of liberality and the life of the court. I argue that the criticisms

he met derived largely from a clash of expectations – between James and his English subjects and amongst the different audiences for whom he had to perform – not from a complete lack of awareness of the political importance of performance and display on James's behalf. The chapter thereby aims to contribute to recent reassessments of the traditional view of James I, outlined in the introduction, as being reluctant to engage in any kind of public appearance and unconcerned with visual display, while also thoughtlessly liberal and wasteful. This also provides further context for my discussion of James's writings in the following chapters, for he used writing both to respond to some of the political and economic problems that, as we will see in the course of this chapter, worsened his public image, and to provide an alternative to public appearance.

The chapter begins by exploring some of James's attempts to perform his role and project his image in the contexts of civic ceremony, the royal court, and the European stage. It examines the problems that limited and arose from these attempts, focusing on various clashes of expectation, relations between James and those figures he tried to use to reinforce his image, and the perception of magnificence as extravagance. Each section takes several illuminating incidents or examples that span the reign. Finally I consider James's negotiations with parliament over his expenditure, suggesting that while it was difficult for him to meet all of the conflicting expectations he faced, he tried to *appear* to meet them through his verbal re-presentation of his performance to parliament.

### **Civic Performance**

James's progress from Edinburgh to London in 1603 and his Royal Entry into London in 1604 gave him the opportunity to present himself to his new subjects. The extent of public interest in the king's performances in 1603 and subsequently is reflected, as we will see, in contemporary comments, in the vast crowds that

contemporary descriptions claim attended his appearances, and in the numbers of tracts and pamphlets describing the events that were produced. The expectation he faced that a monarch should display himself to his subjects through such public ceremonial was traditional, but Elizabeth's style of performance had also shaped more specific expectations as to how a monarch should perform on these occasions. This was an important factor in determining how James's performances were received.

Elizabeth's entry took place in 1559, almost half a century before James's arrival in England, so few people would have had first-hand memories of it. This occasion was only one aspect, however, of the cultural memory of Elizabeth which was fed by her subsequent performances and by re-presentations of her performances in written accounts. The importance of this cultural memory of Elizabeth in shaping the expectations that James faced is indicated by Arthur Wilson's highly influential 1653 account of the king. Wilson criticises James for a lack of enthusiasm for making public appearances and for impatience and a lack of affection towards his subjects. He writes that the King 'did not love to be looked on; and those Formalities of State, which set a lustre upon Princes in the Peoples Eyes, were but so many Burthens to him'. The speeches performed during his Royal Entry were 'nauseous to his stomach'. He

was not like his Predecessor, the late Queen of famous Memory, that with a well-pleased Affection met her People's Acclamations [...]. He endured this Day's Brunt with Patience, being assured he should never have such another [...] But afterwards in his publick Appearances [...] the Accesses of the People made him so impatient, that he often dispersed them with Frowns, that we may not say with Curses.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Extract in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 63-4.

Wilson cannot be judged a reliable eye-witness: not only was he writing retrospectively from a position of bias against James, he was only nine years old in 1604. Though he makes a comparison with Elizabeth, he could have had little if any first-hand experience of her style of public performance. Despite the bias and inaccuracy of this account, however, it reveals the expectation Elizabeth had shaped that a monarch should respond to his or her subjects with evident pleasure and affection.

A more reliable source, the 1607 report on England by the Venetian ambassador, Nicolo Molin, also reveals this expectation. He observes that James

does not caress the people nor make them that good cheer the late Queen did, whereby she won their loves: for the English adore their Sovereigns, [...]; they like their King to show pleasure at their devotion, as the late Queen knew well how to do; but this King manifests no taste for them but rather contempt and dislike. The result is he is despised and almost hated. In fact his Majesty is more inclined to live retired with eight or ten of his favourites than openly, as is the custom of the country and the desire of the people.<sup>2</sup>

While Molin suggests that the expectation that a monarch should treat his or her subjects with good cheer and pleasure is a consequence of English attitudes towards their monarchs in general, he also, like Wilson, presents James's perceived failings in terms of Elizabeth's style of self-representation. Molin points to the clash between James's inclination and the custom of the country, a custom which Elizabeth respected and may indeed have furthered. Four years into the new reign he is suggesting that James is not only failing to show pleasure and affection at his subjects' devotions, but

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<sup>2</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, X (1603-7), p. 513.

actually manifesting contempt and dislike for them, with the result that he is despised by those who typically adore their sovereigns.

Contemporary accounts of James's progress from Edinburgh to London in 1603 and his letters and proclamations of this period suggest that, as we saw in considering his use of public ceremonial in Scotland, James was more conscious than historians and critics have tended to suppose of the need to meet the traditional expectation that he should put himself on display. This evidence also indicates, however, that he did not meet the more specific expectation that Elizabeth had shaped that a monarch should also engage with his or her subjects, showing them affection and good cheer. As in the Scottish instances of public ceremonial considered in the previous chapter, the element of public performance with which James seems primarily concerned is visual display, rather than interaction.

*A True Narration of the Entertainment of his Royal Majestie, from the time of his Departure from Edenbrough, till his Receiving at London (1603)* gives a sense of James self-consciously putting himself on show. In Berwick, for example, he 'was very pleasant and gracious, so to shew instance how much he loved and respected the art militarie, he made a shot himselfe out of a canon, so faire, and with such sign of experience'.<sup>3</sup> Berwick was of course a crucial location for James. It was the first English city he reached and a fortified border town. His accession rendered its traditional function obsolete, and he may have been emphasising this by making a show of using its artillery himself. This *True Narration* goes on to describe James more explicitly volunteering to put himself on display in York. On his way to York Minster to hear a sermon he was offered a coach, 'but he graciously answered, "I will have no coach; for the people are desirous to see a King, and so they shall, for they shall as well

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<sup>3</sup> *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First, His Royal Consort, Family and Court*, ed. by John Nichols, 4 vols (London: 1828), I, 66.

see his body as his face.” So to the great comfort of the people, he went on foote to Church’. James was acknowledging the desire of his subjects to see him, but not that there might be any desire for him to engage with them. John Savile’s 1603 account also gives an example of James’s awareness of public desire to see him. After having been welcomed into Theobalds by Sir Robert Cecil, he ‘had not staid aboue an houre in his chamber, but hearing the multitude throng so fast into the vppermost court to see his Highnesse, as his grace was informed, hee showed himselfe openly, out if his chamber window, by the space of halfe an houre together’.<sup>4</sup> James seems to have felt that putting himself on display out of his window would satisfy the ‘multitude’, even though he was at a distance and there was little opportunity for interaction.

James’s awareness of the importance of display, ceremony, and the maintenance of an appropriate image is also evident in the letters and proclamations he wrote in 1603. In a letter of 6 April to his new Privy Council, he justifies diverging from his Council’s advice that he should come to Burghley ‘as it were in private manner’ and explains the importance of visiting York: ‘we do think it fitt for our honor, and for the ostentation of our subjects in those quarters, to make our Entry there in some such solempne maner as appertaynith to our dignitie’. He also asks that jewels belonging to the late queen be sent for Queen Anne, in addition to coaches, horses and litters, for her progress through the realm.<sup>5</sup>

Upon arriving in London he issued proclamations asking people not to come to court and explaining the delay of his Royal Entry into London until the plague had subsided, but even in these proclamations he seems to be engaging with a role that he felt was expected of him. In a proclamation of May 1603 he states that he takes ‘no small contentment’ in his subjects coming to visit him and acknowledges their ‘desire to

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<sup>4</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 80,137.

<sup>5</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, \*121-2.

see our Person', but explains that there is such concourse of people that hospitality is decayed in the country and the plague is spreading. Thus 'wee have bene mooved rather to want for a time the contentment wee have in the sight and resort of our Subjects to us'. In a proclamation of July explaining the delay of his Royal Entry he claims that 'there could be no greater joy to us then the presence and confluence of all sorts of good Subjects at such a time, when the more there should be partakers of that publique rejoycing, the more should bee our Particular comfort'.<sup>6</sup> Whatever James's actual feelings about such public appearances, this proclamation demonstrates his awareness that it was important to appear to value and to engage with public rejoicing. In these proclamations, however, he was trying to satisfy desire for access to the king through verbal representation. This reflects his broader tendency to use verbal representation more than public performance. Moreover, his emphasis is again on his subjects seeing him, even in that he represents his subjects as 'partakers' of his Royal Entry, not as participants.

These instances suggest that James thought public desire would be satisfied simply by *seeing* his image. As early as 1603, however, commentators were noting James's failure to engage with his subjects as Elizabeth had. A letter from Mr. Thomas Wilson to Sir Thomas Parry of June 1603 states that 'the people, according to their honest English nature, approve all their Princes' actions and words, savinge that they desyre some more of that generous affabilitye which ther good old Queen did afford them'.<sup>7</sup> Sir Roger Wibraham, 'having been master of Requests in ordinarie 3 yeres to the Queen, & 3 monthes to the Kinge' offers what he claims is an objective description of the two monarchs: Elizabeth was

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<sup>6</sup> *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), I, 21-2, 37-8.

<sup>7</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 188.

solemne and ceremonious [...] & tho she bare a greater maiestie, yet wold she labour to entertayne strangers, sutors and her people, with more courtlie courtesie & favorable speches then the King useth: who altho he be indeede of a more true benignitie & ingenuous nature, yet the neglect of those ordinarie ceremonies, which his variable & quick witt cannot attend, makes common people iudge otherwise of him.<sup>8</sup>

Wilbraham's comparison suggests that the difference between the two monarchs lies in the relationships between their natures and their self-representation. Though Elizabeth is more ceremonious and majestic, she engages with her people, whereas by failing to engage in ceremony, James fails to convey his true benignity. Thus the Queen's self-presentation belies her nature; the king's does not do his nature justice. As in the accounts of Wilson and Molin, James's perceived failings are understood in terms of the comparison with Elizabeth.

The culmination of the ceremonial surrounding James's accession was his Royal Entry into London, which, having been delayed because of the plague, finally took place on 15 March 1604. The entertainment provided was magnificent, as Ben Jonson and Thomas Dekker termed it in their printed accounts. Seven triumphal arches were stationed throughout the city. Jonson devised the drama that took place at the first and last arches and a brief scene in the Strand, and Dekker was responsible for the rest of the entertainment, except the two arches erected by Italian and Dutch merchants and one speech by Thomas Middleton.<sup>9</sup> For many of the people who gathered to watch, however, the pageantry was secondary to the magnificent procession of King, royal

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<sup>8</sup> *The Journal of Sir Roger Wilbraham*, in *The Camden Miscellany*, ed. by Harold Spencer Scott (Offices of the Royal Historical Society: London, 1902), X, 58-9.

<sup>9</sup> For a discussion of the pageantry, see David Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558-1642* (London: Edward Arnold, 1971), pp. 71-89. For a conflated text of Dekker and Jonson's contributions, see Richard Dutton's edition of the *Magnificent Entertainment in Jacobean Civic Pageants* (Keele: Keele University Press, 1995).



family and court. Elizabeth's precedent dictated that James should not only behold the pageantry and put himself on display, but that this was a key occasion for him to perform and interact.

In his printed account of the *Magnificent Entertainment*, Dekker comments that 'too short a time (in their opinions that were glewed there together so many houres, to behold him) did his Maiestie dwell vpon this first place: yet too long it seemed to other happy Spirits, that higher vp in these *Elizian* fields awaited for his presence'.<sup>10</sup> While we might expect Dekker to have been primarily concerned that his work should be appreciated, he implies here that it was more important for James to be beheld than to behold. Dekker is distancing himself from the criticism he reproduces, and suggesting the time James stayed was too short only from the perspective of those who had waited for hours to see him. He also qualifies the criticism by implying that it was impossible for James to satisfy the crowds; passing by one group of spectators too quickly for their liking still meant keeping another group further on waiting for longer than they wanted to wait. Nevertheless, Dekker points to the contrast between the king's subjects waiting for 'so many houres' and the king dwelling 'too short a time', and his claim to be reproducing 'their opinions' implies that their dissatisfaction was evident.

Gilbert Dugdale's description of the day, *The Time Triumphant* (1604), gives a sympathetic portrayal of James. He recounts that both Queen Anne and Prince Henry saluted the crowds as they passed. He does not say whether the king did or not, which makes it seem likely that he did not. He describes an old man delivering a poem as James passed and the lack of attention the king paid him: 'the narrow way and the preasing multitude so overshadowd him, and the noyse of the showe, that oppertunitie was not favorable to him, so that the King past by'. Dugdale excuses the king in terms of the conditions, but the fact that he reproduces the poem in his account suggests he

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<sup>10</sup> *The Magnificent Entertainment* (London, 1604), C1v.

felt it was worthy of attention. He reproduces some lines delivered at the Great Conduit which he had not been able to hear and which the king did not hear. He is quick to excuse the king, but he also expresses regret: 'I would the King had hard them; but the sight of the Trophie at Soper-lane made him the more forward'. Again, Dugdale excuses the king not staying long in the Strand at the end of the procession: the day was 'far spent, and the King and States I am sure wearied with the shows, as the stomack may glutton'.<sup>11</sup> Dugdale seems concerned not to criticise the king, but his account creates a sense not only of the noisy crowds and of how long and tiring the day was,<sup>12</sup> which made it difficult for anyone fully to appreciate all of the pageantry and speeches, but also of regret and disappointment.

The impression created from these accounts is that James passed by the pageantry more quickly than the crowds wanted and did not interact with the presenters or with members of the crowds. As Bergeron points out, 'there are no references to any impromptu speeches which he might have given along the way' and this suggests 'he did not exploit the dramatic possibilities as Elizabeth had done'.<sup>13</sup> Again, James was on display to his subjects but he was not engaging with them. This confirms what the commentators quoted above had suggested the previous year – he was still not showing 'generous affabilitye' or 'courtlye courtesie & favorable speches'.

James thus made some effort to meet the traditional expectation that a monarch should display himself to his people, but he was criticised because he did not meet the specific expectation Elizabeth had created that a monarch should interact with subjects in certain ways. Those accounts written from a perspective of enthusiasm for the new king tend to emphasise the ways in which he did meet expectations and to excuse the

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<sup>11</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 416-9.

<sup>12</sup> Indeed – even with James apparently not dwelling on the pageantry the whole procession took more than six hours (G. P. V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant, or the Court of King James I* [London: Hamilton, 1962], p. 33).

<sup>13</sup> Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry*, pp. 74-5.

ways in which he did not. As enthusiasm declined, so representations of James disappointing his public increased.

In addition to the perceived failings of James's style of performance, there was a decline in the number of public entries and progresses in the Jacobean period, in comparison to the Elizabethan.<sup>14</sup> Even for an occasion as exceptional as the 1606 visit of Christian IV, Protestant King of Denmark and brother of Queen Anne, the first visit to England of a foreign ruler for eighty-four years (Emperor Charles V visited Henry VIII in 1522),<sup>15</sup> many of the entertainments were private. The two kings did make joint public appearances, including a ceremonious trip by barge to the Tower of London and a progress through the city, but much of the visit was spent in 'hunting, feasting, and other priuate delights'.<sup>16</sup> Both Dudley Carleton and the Venetian ambassador, Zorzi Giustinian, suggest that there was in fact so much hunting that even the Danish king and his retinue grew bored of it.<sup>17</sup>

When James went on progresses again it was often for private hunting. In the summer of 1619, for example, he went on what John Chamberlain refers to as a 'hunting progres which hath brought foorth litle newes or none at all'.<sup>18</sup> Chamberlain's comment indicates both that such trips were common, and that they provided nothing of interest or pleasure for his subjects. In the summer of 1617 James travelled back to Scotland for the first and only time during his English reign. Travelling through the

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<sup>14</sup> Linda Levy Peck, 'Introduction', *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1-17 (p. 7).

<sup>15</sup> H. Neville Davies, 'The Limitations of Festival: Christian IV's State Visit to England in 1606', in *Italian Renaissance Festivals and their European Influence*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and M. Shewring (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen, 1992), pp. 311-335 (p. 311).

<sup>16</sup> *The King of Denmarkes Welcome* (London: Edward Allde, 1606), p. 16. This anonymous account consists of a day by day account of the visit. See also Davies, 'The Limitations of Festival'. Davies lists the available sources for the visit, which leave it difficult to reconstruct what happened and how it was perceived (pp. 319-20), but see below for some contemporary comments on Christian in relation to James.

<sup>17</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1603-10*, p. 329; *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian, X (1603-7)*, p. 391.

<sup>18</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1939), II, 262.

country might have provided the opportunity for the kinds of civic performance, disseminating the royal image throughout the realm, in which James had engaged in 1603. The *Calendar of State Papers* for the period of James's journey through England, however, gives no descriptions of any civic ceremonies.<sup>19</sup> Chamberlain's letters only describe the difficulty experienced in raising enough money for the trip, and the uncertainty as to who would accompany the king, and mention briefly where James stayed during the journey (II, 59-100). This lack of contemporary comment suggests the opportunity to display the royal image to the country was not exploited.

James's lack of enthusiasm for public appearances does not seem to have diminished – and may indeed have increased – popular demand for visual images of kingship. This continuing demand is evident late in his reign in such publications as *Braziliologia, a booke of Kings* (1618), a collection of engravings of all the English kings from the Conquest to the present. Elizabeth is the most eulogised monarch in the volume, while the description of James is one of the shortest and least detailed or specific. On the frontispiece and on the page devoted to him, James is depicted wearing not a crown but a hunting hat. This may reflect a degree of disillusionment with James, his personal style and his devotion of so much of his time to hunting.

The decline in public appearances after James's progress through England and arrival in London may have resulted in part from a change in his attitude to public performance. Firstly, James may have felt that putting himself on display to his subjects was important during his arrival and of little importance once he felt that he was established. Secondly, his initial experiences in London may have made him less willing to engage in public performance than he had been as he progressed through the country. John Savile's 1603 account of James arriving in Theobalds highlights the

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<sup>19</sup> *C. S. P. Dom*, 1611-1618, pp. 453-64 (the outward journey of March to May) and pp. 481-85 (the return journey of August to September). James did make an entry into Edinburgh, but this is mentioned only briefly (p. 469).

vastness of the crowds he faced: 'the concourse of people was so frequent, euery one more desiring a sight of him, that it were incredible to tell of'. Savile claims that many older people said they had never seen crowds like those that lined the way as the king proceeded into London. Dugdale describes an occasion before the Royal Entry when the king and queen tried to visit the exchange privately, 'thinkeing to pass unknowne'. The multitude perceived them and 'began with such hurly-burly to run up and downe with such unreuerent rashnes'. Dugdale exhorts people to desist from such behaviour and instructs 'when hereafter he comes by you, doe as they doe in Scotland, stand still, see all, and use silence'.<sup>20</sup> This incident reveals a misapprehension on James's part that he would be able to pass unknown in London and an early experience of the large and unruly crowds found there. However inaccurate Dugdale's representation of Scottish crowds might be, his comment points to a perception, perhaps created by the manner of James himself, that the behaviour of crowds in London was not as James had expected.

While these factors may have contributed to the decline in public appearances, that decline also reflects James's priorities. As we shall see in the following chapters, he was less concerned with public performance and visual representation than with writing. Indeed, even visual images of James often identify him with the written word. For example, the Bodleian library statue, finished in 1619, depicts him holding a book, and the frontispiece of his 1616 *Workes* depicts him not only within a book but also next to an image of a book. Moreover, it seems that as performance was less important to James than writing, so the people whose only access to him was through his public appearances were less of a priority than the audiences composed of the court and his European peers.

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<sup>20</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 136, 139, 414.

## Royal Magnificence in the Court

In England, as in Scotland, James wanted a court that would project an image of royal magnificence to his subjects and to the rest of Europe. As he advised Prince Henry in *Basilikon Doron*, ensure ‘that when strangers shall visite your Court, they may with the Queene of *Sheba*, admire your wisdom in the glorie of your house’ (p. 170). In acceding to the English throne, however, James was in a difficult position: he was ‘a foreign king, with little first-hand knowledge of the personalities, coming peacefully into a kingdom in which there was already a firmly entrenched monopoly of power’.<sup>21</sup> There was an established English nobility so powerful that even Elizabeth had feared it.<sup>22</sup> As we noted in the previous chapter, the last years of Elizabeth’s reign were marked by bitter factionalism at court. The new king had to try to establish himself with this established, powerful and divided nobility.

James had been in a similar position in Scotland in the 1580s and was able to use that experience in England. In dealing with the English nobility he employed the same tactics that he had used in dealing with the Scottish, manipulating and controlling through liberality and patronage. He maintained and adapted the existing power structures in England,<sup>23</sup> and he balanced court factions, for example, favouring the Howards and thereby weakening the personal predominance of Sir Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.<sup>24</sup> He extended the nobility, notoriously bestowing 906 knighthoods in the

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<sup>21</sup> Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I: Two Kings or One?’, *History*, 68 (1983), 187-209, p. 202.

<sup>22</sup> Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, second edn (London: Longman, 1998), p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> In April 1603 James issued a proclamation stating that ‘all men being in Office of Government at the death of the late Queene Elizabeth, should so continue till his Majesties further direction’ (*Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 4-6). For further discussion of how James adapted existing power structures, see Leeds Barroll, who suggests that James’s ‘preferments seem to have been intelligent, systematic and clearly defined’ and points out that he even-handedly added to the Privy Council five Englishmen and five Scots (‘Assessing “Cultural Influence”: James I as Patron of the Arts’, *Shakespeare Studies*, 29 [2001], 132-62 [pp. 139-40]). James did, however, cause resentment by appointing only Scots to serve in his bedchamber. See Mark A. Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain, 1603-1714* (London: Allen Lane, 1996; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1997), p. 70.

<sup>24</sup> Wormald, ‘Two Kings or One?’, p. 202. Cecil would be James’s Secretary of State and Lord Treasurer from 1608.

early months of his reign, even 432 in one day,<sup>25</sup> and distributed gifts and favours widely. Lawrence Stone emphasises 'the degree to which the nobility became dependent on royal favour during the Jacobean era'.<sup>26</sup> This dependence gave the king some control over the nobility. As Linda Levy Peck points out in her study of Stuart court patronage, 'the king's rewarding of the political elite, especially the nobility, was essential because he thereby reinforced the reciprocal bonds established between the crown and its most important subjects'.<sup>27</sup> The accounts of contemporary observers suggest that James sometimes made such rewarding of the political elite into a public performance. For example, Chamberlain recounts that at a banquet celebrating a court wedding in February 1608, 'the king dranck a carouse in a cup of gold, which he sent to the bride' along with other magnificent gifts and a patent for a yearly pension (I, 255). This suggests that James self-consciously performed the role of magnificent and bountiful king.

James's rapid expansion of the court was of course expensive. The Household's pension list grew to over £100,000, nearly a third of the crown's revenues. In expanding the court James was observing the medieval principle that power and prestige must be expressed through a large and impressive entourage,<sup>28</sup> but this expenditure brought him into conflict with his Council. Magnificent hospitality was the largest single item of peacetime royal expenditure. While in the later sixteenth century noble households shrank to become cheaper and more efficient, the tradition of the Household supplying lavish feasting for the King's officers at his expense continued under Elizabeth and under James. Neil Cuddy suggests that 'by the 1600s the Household was something of a

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<sup>25</sup> Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982), p. 28.

<sup>26</sup> *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 475.

<sup>27</sup> "For a King not to be bountiful were a fault": Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England', *Journal of British Studies*, 25.1 (1986), 31-61 (36).

<sup>28</sup> R. Malcolm Smuts, 'Art and the Material Culture of Majesty in Early Stuart England', in *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture*, ed. by Smuts (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 86-112 (p. 89).

dinosaur, and its “magnificence” was widely seen as anachronistic’. The accession of a new king seemed to present an opportunity to rationalise the situation and plans for change were made in 1603 and subsequently. Cecil led the initiative for change. James, however, opposed these plans and sought to maintain what he presented as an honourable royal tradition. In 1610, for example, ‘a paper by James to his Council discouraged any measures that might reduce the “ancient orders and magnificence” of his Household below the levels of his predecessors’.<sup>29</sup> In his speech to parliament of March that year, James also justified ‘maintaining those ancient honourable formes of liuing that the former Kings of *England* my Predecessours haue done’.<sup>30</sup> With regard to his Household then, James sought to maintain the standards of his predecessors even in the face of a desire for change.

He did not always respect other court traditions, however. Malcolm Smuts suggests that the English court of 1603 was one of the most elaborate and ceremonious in Europe.<sup>31</sup> It had its own systems, traditions and expectations on the cultural level. In a letter of January 1608 Chamberlain relays an illuminating exchange. James was very keen to have a play on Christmas night. ‘The Lordes told him yt was not the fashion, which aunswer pleased him not a whit, but said what do you tell me of the fashion? I will yt make a fashion’ (I, 250). Here we see perfectly the clash between an established court with a set way of doing things, and an outsider who claims the authority to refashion established court fashions. Chamberlain’s letter also suggests that this clash was a topic of interest beyond the court.

In some ways James’s style of self-presentation did not meet the expectations in

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<sup>29</sup> Neil Cuddy, ‘Reinventing a Monarchy: the Changing Structure and Political Function of the Stuart Court, 1603-88’, in *The Stuart Courts*, ed. by Eveline Cruickshanks (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 2000), pp. 59-85 (pp. 63-6).

<sup>30</sup> James I, *The Workes* (1616), facsimile reprint (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, 1971), pp. 542-3. All references to James’s prose works, including speeches, refer to this edition unless otherwise specified. Page numbers will follow in parentheses.

<sup>31</sup> ‘Art and the Material Culture of Majesty’, p. 89.



the English court that had been shaped by his predecessor. Elizabeth, while able to display a 'common touch', remained more remote.<sup>32</sup> When she participated in the entertainments that celebrated her greatness, interacting with the presenters, dancing in masques, she was self-consciously performing her role. Scottish kingship, on the other hand, had a 'peculiarly personal quality' and James was accustomed to being familiar in his relationships with members of his court. His style of performance at times risked appearing less dignified than that of Elizabeth. For example, a manuscript account of his 1617 journey to Scotland describes him dismounting at the border, lying on the ground, and proclaiming to his astonished courtiers that here was a union of England and Scotland – in his own person.<sup>33</sup> He did not dance in the court masques, which were elaborate and costly spectacles, commissioned to celebrate the royal family and court.<sup>34</sup> Moreover, he did not always play the role that was required of him as principal spectator, as in 1618 when he grew bored and bluntly and indecorously interrupted a performance of Jonson's masque, *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*.<sup>35</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, the style of self-presentation James developed in Scotland was primarily literary. In England James remained concerned to be perceived as learned and wise and sought to project such an image within the court and beyond. This is of course evident in his writings, which we will be discussing later, but a 1607 letter from Sir John Harington, describing a private audience with the king, suggests it was also evident at the level of personal interaction in the court. The letter

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<sup>32</sup> Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', pp. 189, 204.

<sup>33</sup> Cited in Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> Since Stephen Orgel drew attention to the cultural and political significance of the court masque in *The Jonsonian Masque* (Cambridge [Mass.]: Harvard University Press, 1965), and *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1975), the court masque has attracted much critical attention and critics have increasingly recognised the potential for masques to include subtle criticism or even satire. Important recent studies include *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>35</sup> This is described in the account of Orazio Busino, chaplain to the Venetian Embassy, quoted in Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 133-137 (136).

states that James asked Harington ‘if this lande did not entertayne good opinion of his lernynge and good wisdome’, and, after their conversation, instructed him ‘you have seen my wisdome in some sorte [...]. I praye you, do me justice in your reporte’.

Harington remarks that James ‘enquyrede much of my lernynge, and showede me his owne in suche sorte, as made me remember my examiner at Cambridge’.<sup>36</sup> The fact that Harington’s point of comparison was not another monarch but a person far removed from the world of the court reflects the degree to which James’s literary and intellectual style of self-presentation was unusual in a monarch.

Thus again we see that James was concerned with his image and reputation but clashed with some expectations. He showed some sensitivity to the need to establish himself politically, to respect existing power structures and accommodate himself within them, but he was not as careful to do the same on the cultural level – to respect existing traditions and to establish his style and approaches sensitively. On the contrary, he seems to have had some fixed ideas about what constituted appropriate royal magnificence and to have tried to maintain them whether that meant resisting desired change or imposing something new.

We will consider the court further below in terms of how certain individuals had the potential both to reinforce and to undermine the royal image, and the ways in which courtly magnificence was increasingly perceived as extravagance. First, we will turn to James’s performance in the European context.

### **Royal Magnificence on the European Stage**

In the first chapter we considered some of the ways in which James VI engaged politically, intellectually and culturally with continental Europe. When he acceded to

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<sup>36</sup> Letter extracted in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 159-60.

the English throne he was concerned to continue this engagement. England had, however, been more insular under Elizabeth than Scotland had been under James.<sup>37</sup> James's accession thus brought a new level of engagement between English monarch and continental Europe. The extent to which he subscribed to continental theories of kingship, identified himself with, and wanted to engage with, continental monarchs quickly became apparent. One of his first acts as King of England, in 1604, was to end the war with Spain, thereby re-establishing ties to Europe and its culture. He represented himself as a peacemaker in a European context. During his English reign one of his main concerns was to marry his children into powerful continental families, balancing Catholic and Protestant connections. He sought a Catholic match for Prince Henry, married his daughter Princess Elizabeth to a leading Protestant, Frederick V, the Elector Palatine, in 1613, and then tried to secure a Catholic match for Prince Charles. Negotiations for a marriage between Charles and the Spanish Habsburg Princess were underway in the late 1610s and early 1620s. This match would link the Catholic and Protestant powers of Europe through the Stuart dynasty. James may have hoped that this would be a move towards European peace and unity and bring him prestige and influence. He may also have been motivated by the possibility of the Spanish Princess bringing with her a large dowry, which would ameliorate his financial problems.<sup>38</sup>

In England, as in Scotland, James tried to support his political engagement with Europe by projecting an image of the cultural sophistication of king and court. His concern from the beginning of his English reign to project such an image to visiting foreign dignitaries, whose first hand impressions were likely to be reported back to their home countries, is evident in his creation of the office of Master of Ceremonies in 1603.

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<sup>37</sup> Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), p. 224.

<sup>38</sup> For further detail, see Thomas Cogswell, 'England and the Spanish Match', in *Conflict in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London and New York: Longman, 1989), and *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

The role of this office was 'to receive and entertain Ambassadors and Princes during their abode in England, in all honourable manner, as is used in France and other places'.<sup>39</sup> This suggests James wanted to impress continental visitors by observing conventions he believed were maintained on the continent, drawing particularly on French models as he had in Scotland.

A key part of James's strategy for projecting magnificence abroad was his use of architecture. He took a strong interest in architecture from early in his English reign and his expenditure on palaces soared above that of his predecessor.<sup>40</sup> Architecture was a major form of self-representation throughout Renaissance Europe. In the early seventeenth century, 'rulers across Europe were choosing to re-frame their capitals'. These included the Bourbons in Paris, Philip III in Madrid, Rudolph in Prague, Alexander VII in Rome and the House of Savoy in Turin.<sup>41</sup> James too wanted a magnificent capital city to reinforce his image.

James's proclamations limiting new building in and around London and his plans for the development of Whitehall demonstrate his deliberate and self-conscious use of the concept of magnificence. His proclamations invoke the magnificence of imperial Rome. For example, one issued in 1615 explains that 'as it was said by the first Emperour of Rome, that he had found the City of Rome of Bricke, and left it of Marble,' so James wanted to be able to say that he 'had found Our Citie and Suburbs of London of stickes and left them of Bricke, being a Materiall farre more durable, safe from fire, beautifull and magnificent'.<sup>42</sup> James also, like other Renaissance monarchs, invoked imperial Rome through his iconography. For example, he was the first English

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<sup>39</sup> Howes Chronicle, in *James*, ed. by Nichols, I, 158.

<sup>40</sup> J. Newman, 'Inigo Jones and the Politics of Architecture', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 229-256 (p. 231).

<sup>41</sup> James Robertson, 'Stuart London and the idea of a royal capital city', *Renaissance Studies*, 15 (2001), 37-58 (38).

<sup>42</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 346.

monarch to be represented on a coin as a Roman Emperor. His accession medal of 1603 presents him wearing armour and a laurel wreath, and its inscription gives him the title of Emperor.<sup>43</sup> This reflects his hope for union between Scotland and England, which led him to call himself Emperor of Great Britain in the first year of his reign. His attempt to emulate imperial Rome through the architecture of his capital city was thus an extension and a reinforcement of these other aspects of his self-representation.

We may read in James's proclamations a desire to emulate and to compete with other European states. A proclamation of 1608 indicates his familiarity with building trends elsewhere in Europe and his expectation that his subjects will follow his lead in taking other European cities as a model. In this proclamation James suggests that people will realise they should build in brick, which, he suggests, is more magnificent than wood, 'if they look abroad, & see what is done in other well policed Cities of Europe'. The competitiveness of the culture of magnificence is evident in a proclamation of 1615, in which James tries to persuade people to adhere to his stipulations on building by appealing to civic pride. The proclamation begins 'we doe well perceive in Our Princely wisdome and providence, now, that Our Citie of London is become the greatest, or next the greatest Citie of the Christian world'.<sup>44</sup>

James's proclamations on building in London also suggest that it was European visitors whom he was most concerned to impress. In a proclamation issued in August and September 1611, he states that uniformity in building and the use of brick and stone for the fronts of houses, would grace and beautify the cities of London and Westminster 'for the resort and intertainment of forreine Princes, which from time to time doe come into this Realme'. This proclamation came in a period dominated by negotiations for the

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<sup>43</sup> Peck, 'Introduction', *Mental World*, p. 5.

<sup>44</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 193, 345. Although James was clearly more concerned with building in London than Elizabeth had been, this series of royal proclamations limiting new building in and around London was in fact restating Elizabethan prohibitions (Robertson, 'Stuart London', p. 46).

marriages of Prince Henry and Princess Elizabeth, which culminated in the betrothal of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine in the autumn of 1612. In a proclamation of 1622, again encouraging his subjects to build with brick, James celebrates the approval he claims this is winning with foreign visitors: 'for this small time of proceeding with Bricke [London] is greatly applauded and approved, aswell by Ambassadors of forren Nations, as others'.<sup>45</sup> This may have related to a desire to impress the Spanish ambassadors whose reports might influence the negotiations for the match between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta.

James's concern to reinforce his image through architectural magnificence is also evident in the fact that he planned to redevelop Whitehall. The only part of the project to be completed was the rebuilding of the Banqueting House, between 1619 and 1622. The rebuilding was undertaken by Inigo Jones, whom James had employed since 1615 as Surveyor of the Royal Works. Jones did more than anyone else to introduce classical and contemporary continental theories on architecture to England. He was influenced by the work of early modern Italians, such as Palladio, and as he not only read widely but also travelled extensively in Europe, he was familiar with the latest developments and fashions in architecture and design in continental Europe.<sup>46</sup> This is evident in his rebuilding of the Banqueting House, which was 'uncompromisingly classical'.<sup>47</sup>

The period of the rebuilding of the Banqueting House coincides with the negotiations for the Spanish match for Prince Charles. In July 1623, when negotiations were at their height, the Spanish ambassadors were entertained at the Banqueting House in which various treasures were on display. One manuscript account claims that this

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<sup>45</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 267 and 270, 558.

<sup>46</sup> See Newman, 'Inigo Jones and the Politics of Architecture'.

<sup>47</sup> Colin Platt, *The Great Rebuildings of Tudor and Stuart England* (University College London: UCL Press, 1994), p. 65. Classical and contemporary continental influences are also evident in the staging Jones designed for court masques. See John Peacock, *The Stage Designs of Inigo Jones: the European Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

involved 'the most richest Crowne plate the King hath, which amounted to eighte carteloades, brought from the Towre, the most whereof hath not been used in many yeares past'.<sup>48</sup> A portrait painted around 1620 depicts James standing in front of the Banqueting House, which in reality was not yet completed.<sup>49</sup> These instances suggest that James felt this building was an appropriate and important support for his self-representation.

The engagement with continental Europe that underlay these aspects of James's self-representation led to a clash of views and approaches between the king and his subjects on the political level, as several commentators have noted. For example, in making his controversial assertion in his speech to parliament of May 1610 that 'Kings elective as well as successive have ever had power to lay impositions', he demanded 'should you deny that unto a king of England that all other princes have, as France, Denmark, etc?'.<sup>50</sup> This was not popular with his English parliament, not only because James appeared to be extending his prerogative, but also because he was drawing on European examples, making some members of parliament think he did not understand the laws of England. Nicholas Fuller, for example, commented that 'the King speaks of France and Spain what they may do, I pray let us be true to the King and true to ourselves and let him know what by the laws of England he may do'.<sup>51</sup> This reflects the gulf between the traditional English approach and the approach of James, grounded in continental and Scottish theories of kingship and Scottish practice.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, IV, pp. 882-3.

<sup>49</sup> John Harris, Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *The King's Arcadia: Inigo Jones and the Stuart Court* (London; Bradford: Lund Humphries, 1973), p. 121.

<sup>50</sup> As reported in records of House of Lords, in *Proceedings in Parliament, 1610*, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, vol I, House of Lords, vol II, House of Commons (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), I, 88.

<sup>51</sup> *Proceedings in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, II, 109.

<sup>52</sup> Jenny Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and the English Translation', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 36-54 (p. 37). As argued in the previous chapter, James was concerned to shape his representation of his political views according to his sense of his audience, but, as in this case, he might also misjudge his audience, or consciously risk provoking his audience in order to maintain the views in which he believed, particularly when he was facing opposition.

James's attempt to secure a Spanish Habsburg match for Prince Charles was also unpopular. For the majority of his subjects, the Habsburgs were the Popish enemy, and the match was unacceptable. In 1619 war broke out between the Catholic Habsburgs and James's daughter Elizabeth and son-in-law Frederick. The king maintained a pacifist stance and continued with the marriage negotiations, hoping that marrying his son into the Habsburg family against which his daughter and son-in-law were fighting would end the conflict. Many of his subjects, however, believed not only that James should not marry his son into the Catholic Habsburg dynasty, but also that he had a responsibility to intervene in the war.<sup>53</sup> When Prince Charles and the royal favourite Buckingham returned in October 1623 from a visit to Spain intended to finalise the match there was an unprecedented degree of popular celebrations because they had returned safely without a Spanish bride.<sup>54</sup>

Less critical attention has been paid to the fact that James's engagement with continental Europe also led to some clashes of expectation on the cultural level. His support of European architectural styles was primarily intended to impress European visitors; it may not have been entirely appreciated by the English. In 1594 Sir Francis Bacon reflected an awareness of architecture as an appropriate medium for royal self-representation, arguing that the only 'plain and approved way, that is safe and yet proportionable to the greatness of a monarch, to present himself to posterity, is [...] the visible memory of himself in the magnificence of goodly and royal buildings and

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<sup>53</sup> The Protestant Bohemians began to revolt against the Catholic Habsburgs in 1618, precipitating the start of the Thirty Years War. In 1619 the Bohemians deposed Ferdinand II, a Habsburg, and elected Frederick as King. In 1620 the Spanish army invaded the Palatinate, forcing Elizabeth and Frederick to flee. This only served to make James more determined to conclude the Spanish match, but for many of his subjects it increased the need for intervention. For further detail, see Cogswell, 'England and the Spanish Match', and *The Blessed Revolution*, and Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). See chapter three of the current study for consideration of the increased discussion of state affairs that resulted from these events and the ways in which James tried to control that discussion.

<sup>54</sup> See David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 93-109.



foundations'.<sup>55</sup> A number of prominent Jacobean were interested in Italian architecture.<sup>56</sup> Yet the Banqueting House had 'no precedents in England and few immediate imitators'.<sup>57</sup> In April 1621 Chamberlain made a passing and disparaging reference to the Banqueting House: 'this day the King kept St Georges feast in the new built banquetting roome, which is too faire and nothing sutable to the rest of the house' (II, 367). Citing Chamberlain as the only contemporary commentator whose opinion has survived, Newman suggests that the 'monumental classicism' of the new Banqueting House 'may well have been incomprehensible to a generation which still felt gothic to be the national style'.<sup>58</sup> The fact that James was not celebrated as magnificent for his use of architecture may be an indication that many of his subjects were not as receptive to European forms of magnificence as the king himself was.

Most importantly, there was a clash between James and parliament as to what level of expenditure on magnificence was appropriate, as we will consider in more detail below. Parliament's unwillingness to fund what it saw as extravagance contributed to the continual financial difficulties that left James unable to realise his wider aspirations for redeveloping Whitehall,<sup>59</sup> and unable to meet expectations of magnificence in international diplomacy. This inability to meet expectations is exemplified in the period of February to October 1623 when Prince Charles and Buckingham visited Madrid in an attempt to finalise the Spanish match. James sent after them some jewels for them to wear and to present to the Infanta. In an accompanying letter, he gives instructions as to how the jewels should be used, suggesting his desire to

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<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 34.

<sup>56</sup> Sir Henry Wotton, for example, bought a Latin manuscript version of Leon Battista Alberti's *De re aedificatoria* when he was James's ambassador in Venice (Alberti, *On the Art of Building in Ten Books*, trans. by Joseph Rykwert, Neil Leach, and Robert Tavenor [Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT, 1988], Introduction, p. xviii.). He would later write his own treatise on architecture, *The Elements of Architecture* (London, 1624). Italian writings on architecture were becoming available in the Jacobean period. Giovanni Botero's *A Treatise Concerning the Causes of the Magnificency and Greatness of Cities*, for example, was translated by Robert Peterson and published in English in 1606.

<sup>57</sup> Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 65.

<sup>58</sup> 'Inigo Jones and the Politics of Architecture', p. 237.

<sup>59</sup> Robertson, 'Stuart London', p. 44.

control what would ultimately reflect on him. When Charles and Buckingham complained that these jewels were not adequate, James urged them 'ye must be as sparing as ye can in your spending there [...] God knows how my coffers are already drained'.<sup>60</sup> He simply could not afford to meet the expectations of Charles and Buckingham, who, in turn, were trying to impress their Spanish hosts.

The presence of the English Prince involved the Spanish engaging with magnificent display too. A recent Spanish proclamation against gorgeous apparel was dispensed with for the visit.<sup>61</sup> The importance of the visit as an occasion for the Spanish to project magnificence is indicated in an anonymous Spanish account, which claims that the entertainments provided for the Prince 'sin falta seran grandiosissimas'.<sup>62</sup> Another Spanish account, translated into English and published in 1623, states that the Spanish king, not satisfied with the festivities so far provided for Prince Charles, determined that before the prince's departure he would 'conclude his festivities publikely in the great Market-place of the towne'.<sup>63</sup> Again the public nature of the occasion and its representation in published accounts demonstrates concern to project widely an image of magnificence. In fact, the efforts at magnificence on both sides could not solve the problem of religious and political differences and the marriage negotiations failed.

James seems to have been aware of the limitations of his magnificence, and anxious that Spanish magnificence might lead his heir and favourite to look upon him less favourably: 'the news of your glorious reception there makes me afraid that ye will both miskenne your old dad hereafter'.<sup>64</sup> Moreover, the terms in which Buckingham

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<sup>60</sup> *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. by G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley, Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 397-99, 403.

<sup>61</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, IV, p. 827.

<sup>62</sup> Jose Simon Diaz, *Relaciones de Actos Publicos Celebrados en Madrid, 1541-1650* (Instituto de Estudios Madrilenos, 1982), p. 199.

<sup>63</sup> *James*, ed. by Nichols, IV, 890.

<sup>64</sup> *Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, p. 403.

reproached James for not sending sufficient jewels hint at the potentially problematic relationship between royal magnificence and the magnificence of other prominent figures in the Jacobean court. Buckingham writes ‘you have been so sparing that whereas you thought to have sent him sufficiently for his own wearing ... I, to the contrary, have been forced to lend him’.<sup>65</sup> He is contrasting James’s failure to be adequately magnificent with his own magnificence, and asserting his agency in the situation. During the Madrid visit Prince Charles gave away jewels obtained from Buckingham later valued at a staggering £18,292.<sup>66</sup> This reflects the level of expectation that James himself was struggling to meet and the fact that some members of the court, even Buckingham whose wealth came largely from the king (see below), might outshine royal magnificence.

### **Reinforcement or Threat? The Magnificence of those around the King**

James was keen to use the magnificence of others to reinforce his image or for specific political purposes. Yet there was always the risk of others outshining him or exposing his limitations. This risk is highlighted by the visit in 1606 of Christian IV. The visit was an opportunity for both kings to reinforce their public images: as one contemporary published account emphasises, the King of Denmark ‘is one with ours, to make ours more compleat,/ As ours with Him makes him in better case’.<sup>67</sup> Jonson’s ‘Entertainment of the two Kings of Great BRITAIN and DENMARKE’ is, however, more ambivalent. It addresses ‘Two Kings, the worlds prime honors, whose accesse/ Showes eithers greatnesse, yet makes neither lesse’,<sup>68</sup> the ‘yet’ clause subtly drawing

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<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham* (London; New York: Longman, 1981), p. 154.

<sup>66</sup> Smuts, ‘Art and the Material Culture of Majesty’, p. 91.

<sup>67</sup> John Davies, *Bien venv. Greate Britaines welcome to hir greate friendes, the Danes* (London: Nathaniel Butler, 1606).

<sup>68</sup> *Ben Jonson*, ed. by C. H. Herford, and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925-52], VII, 148, lines 12-13.

attention to the potential for the greatness of either king to be diminished by the greatness of the other.

Contemporary commentators noted that Christian did indeed outshine James in magnificent display, in terms of both expenditure and performance. The Venetian ambassador, Zorzi Giustinian, comments on the King of Denmark's departure that he 'left everybody well satisfied on account of his presents [...] The King of England made presents, too, but not of such great value'.<sup>69</sup> In a letter to Chamberlain of August 1606, Dudley Carleton refers to Christian's 'good success, and the ill success of King James at the tilt'.<sup>70</sup> Giustinian goes on to relate an incident which suggests that Christian not only won admiration, but also appeared to some to provide an example that James should follow: 'a letter has been picked up in which the King is urged to declare war, to leave the chase and turn to arms, and the example of his brother-in-law, the King of Denmark, is cited, who for his prowess at the joust has won golden opinions'.<sup>71</sup> James may have hoped that the visit of a fellow Protestant monarch would emphasise concord and unity, but, ironically, Christian's example was thus used to argue that the English king should change his pacifist foreign policy.<sup>72</sup>

James's awareness of the need to strike a careful balance between exploiting the image of others and not letting others overshadow him, an awareness perhaps increased by his experience with Christian IV, is evident in his approach to the ceremonies for the creation of Henry as Prince of Wales in 1610. Prince Henry was very popular and adopted a very different style to his father. The 1607 report on the English royal family of the Venetian ambassador, Nicolo Molin, suggests that Henry, aged only thirteen,

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<sup>69</sup> *C. S. P. Ven.*, X (1603-7), p. 394.

<sup>70</sup> *C. S. P. Dom.*, 1603-10, p. 329.

<sup>71</sup> *C. S. P. Ven.*, X (1603-7), p. 398.

<sup>72</sup> See also Davies, 'The Limitations of Festival'. Davies argues that Christian loved public display and was an imposing and impressive man, and that this won him the widespread public admiration that his host could not command. He goes so far as to suggest that James's popularity actually diminished as a result of the unfavourable comparison with Christian, but he does not provide sufficient evidence for these conclusions.

already had different priorities to his father. Molin describes the prince being upbraided by James for not attending to his lessons, then telling his tutor 'I know what becomes a Prince. It is not necessary for me to be a professor, but a soldier and a man of the world'.<sup>73</sup> Henry became an icon for those who elevated military, chivalric ideals, harked back to the Elizabethan age, and sought an aggressive foreign policy.<sup>74</sup>

Henry's popularity was potentially useful to James, but it was also a potential threat. His promotion of these widely held ideals did not reflect well on James and his pacific policies. As Smuts observes, Henry's court at St. James was a centre of opposition to the King's court and, in contrast to Whitehall, it emphasised formality and order.<sup>75</sup> The contrast added to the perception of Whitehall as corrupt and disordered. Francis Osborne, for example, wrote that the piety of Henry's court 'was looked upon as too great an upbraying the contrary proceedings of his fathers'.<sup>76</sup> Whatever the bias against James of Commonwealth historians such as Osborne, such accounts show that criticism of the king was fuelled by Henry's popularity and contrasting style. Molin's 1607 report suggests that James was aware of the threat that his son's popularity presented: the king was not 'overpleased to see his son so beloved and of such promise that his subjects place all their hopes in him; and it would almost seem, to speak quite frankly, that the King was growing jealous'.<sup>77</sup> Thus when James decided to try to exploit his son's popularity in the creation ceremonies he was, as he may have been aware, taking a considerable risk in terms of his own public image.

The king's specific political purpose was to convince parliament to grant him more money, specifically in the form of contributions towards the Prince's support.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Report in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, p. 96.

<sup>74</sup> See, for example, Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), especially p. 70.

<sup>75</sup> Malcolm Smuts, 'Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I' in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 99-112 (pp. 104-5).

<sup>76</sup> *Secret History of the Court*, extract in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, p. 99

<sup>77</sup> *James I*, ed. by Ashton, p. 96.

<sup>78</sup> For further detail on the parliament of 1610 see below.

Prior to the ceremony he told parliament 'the time of creation of my Sonne doeth now draw neere, which I chuse for the greater honour to bee done in this time of Parliament. As for him I say no more; the sight of himselfe here speakes for him'.<sup>79</sup> The descriptions of the ceremony in parliamentary records reveal the elaborate and costly nature of the ceremony at which both Houses were assembled.<sup>80</sup> After the ceremony, days of fireworks, masques and tilting, further sought to display Henry. A week after the ceremony, Salisbury reflected 'the creation of his son hath been performed with greatness, honor and magnificence. If the expense of that be thought too much, I answer none of both Houses, I am sure will think it'. He insisted that parliament has offered the king too little in supplies: 'for the quantity of supply, I leave unto yourselves, which now must be the greater seeing his Majesty gives a great yearly revenue out of the crown unto the Prince for his annual maintenance'.<sup>81</sup>

James seems to have been anxious about maintaining control over the proceedings. In May 1610 the Venetian ambassador wrote that 'the Prince is pleased to see so much honour paid him by everyone and desired to go to Parliament in procession, but the King was not content and has ordered him to go and to return by water, though there will be no lack of pomp even in this arrangement'. The addition of 'even in this arrangement' implies that James is making it more difficult for Henry to be displayed with pomp. James again refused to grant Henry's wishes later in the year, with regard to a masque Henry was arranging for Christmas. The same ambassador wrote of Henry that 'he would have liked to present this masque on horseback could he have obtained the King's consent'.<sup>82</sup> James may have refused his son's requests in order

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<sup>79</sup> Speech to parliament of March 1610 (p. 541).

<sup>80</sup> See various accounts in *Proceedings in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, I, 95-8 and II, 126-8. For Cecil's involvement in planning the ceremonies, see Pauline Croft, 'Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court' in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 134-147 (pp. 141-2).

<sup>81</sup> *Proceedings in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, II, 136, I, 105.

<sup>82</sup> Marc' Antonio Correr to the Doge and Senate, *C.S.P. Ven.*, 1607-10, p. 496, and *C.S.P. Ven.*, 1610-13, p. 79.

to assert his authority over him. He may have felt that a procession to parliament and performance on horseback involved more risk for his own image than the kinds of display that he was prepared to allow Henry. Certainly a procession to parliament would give Henry more exposure to, and more of an opportunity to interact with, the general populace than a trip along the river. Such exposure would have been more difficult for James to control than the exposure of Henry in parliament. James may also have been projecting his own preferences and priorities onto his son. What is clear, is that he was trying to tread a fine line between showing his heir off enough, and not letting his heir promote himself too much.

Prince Henry too was treading a fine line. The Venetian ambassador comments in November 1610 that Henry 'is now arranging his household and appointing his officers and gentlemen [...] although his Highness does nothing without the King's permission, yet he is extremely particular that everything shall be the result of his own choice'.<sup>83</sup> The ambassador is emphasising what he hints at in his other comments quoted above: a perception that Henry was seeking to assert his own ideas and preferences. Although James dictated the nature of the creation ceremony, Henry commissioned one aspect of the associated entertainments: Jonson's masque, *Prince Henry's Barriers*. This gave Henry the opportunity to represent himself in public in terms of chivalric and militant ideals.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> *C.S.P. Ven.*, 1610-13, pp. 79-80.

<sup>84</sup> See J. R. Mulryne, "'Here's Unfortunate Revels": War and Chivalry in Plays and Shows at the Time of Prince Henry Stuart' in *War, Literature and the Arts in Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 165-189; Norman Council, 'Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry', *English Literary History*, 47 (1980), 259-75, and Strong, *Prince Henry*. While Queen Anne's use of court masques is beyond the scope of the current discussion, for a consideration of the possibility that she also used them to promote her own court, to deflect attention from the king and his court, and to forward her own programmes, see Leeds Barroll, 'Inventing the Stuart Masque', in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998). Barroll provides further reassessment of Queen Anne as more culturally important, and more politically aware and active, than previous commentators have allowed in 'The Court of the First Stuart Queen', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 191-208, and *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001).

Thus, though James had tried to use to his own advantage the expectation that his heir should make public appearances, by putting Henry on a public stage in 1610 he increased the risk that his own image would be undermined through negative comparison with his son. His attempt to use Henry to manipulate parliament into granting him more in supplies failed as the 1610 session proved fruitless.<sup>85</sup> Ironically, between 1610 and Henry's death in 1612, Henry's spending rapidly outstripped his allowance, thereby adding to the financial problems James had tried to use him to counter.<sup>86</sup>

If it was difficult for James to control how the Prince was represented, it was still more difficult for him to control the self-representation of other members of his court. Patronage and liberality gave him some control and in many ways the Jacobean court did support his image. Far from being simply 'extravagant and parasitic', the aristocracy maintained the pomp of the court, gave hospitality and conducted lavish foreign embassies, all at considerable personal cost.<sup>87</sup> At the same time, these courtiers were also promoting themselves, as James's contemporaries were aware. As Francis Bacon cautions in his essay 'Of Nobility', 'a great and potent nobility addeth majesty to a monarch, but diminisheth power [...]. It is well when nobles are not too great for sovereignty, nor for justice, and yet maintained in that height as the insolency of inferiors may be broken upon them before it come on too fast upon the majesty of kings'.<sup>88</sup> This suggests that the self-representation of the monarch requires the additional majesty lent by the nobility, but at the same time there is a danger of that

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<sup>85</sup> See below.

<sup>86</sup> Croft, 'Robert Cecil', p. 142.

<sup>87</sup> Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 126, 499. The scholarly attention that Renaissance court culture has recently attracted has resulted in a revision of the view of courtiers as 'extravagant and parasitic' that Stone reiterates. *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Peck, for example, explores the diverse and complex cultural activities of individual members of the Jacobean court.

<sup>88</sup> *The Essays*, ed. by John Pitcher (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985), p. 99. This essay first appeared in the 1612 edition. Bacon rather undermines his own warning and testifies to the power of Buckingham by dedicating to him his 1625 edition of essays, in which, ironically, this particular essay appears.



nobility becoming too powerful. The greatness of the nobility can support the image of monarchy that the king projects beyond the nobility, but within the circle of nobles and king, that very greatness can be a threat to the king's self-representation.

For as much as James might have desired royal magnificence to be on a different scale from aristocratic self-display, vast aristocratic wealth and the rising tide of luxury imports enabled some members of the nobility to compete with James's magnificence. Cecil, for example, had the resources to create magnificence on a royal scale. When he was made a member of the Order of the Garter in 1606 he ensured that his elevation at Windsor would stun with its magnificence. Croft states that this ceremony 'was reported as surpassing the coronation itself'.<sup>89</sup> Such reports may have led to a perception of a deficiency of magnificence on James's part.

The royal favourite George Villiers, Earl and later Duke of Buckingham, rose to a position of wealth and power from 1616 onwards, rapidly acquiring a fortune through royal favour and the influence that flowed therefrom. By 1620 he was among the wealthier members of early Stuart society.<sup>90</sup> James had chosen to honour and elevate Buckingham, but this had the ironic outcome that the favourite's magnificent self-display could draw attention away from the king. For example, the title of *The Court of the Most Illustrious and Most Magnificent James* (London, 1619), by a writer only identified as A. D. B., suggests that the focus is on James, but it is only a pretext for A. D. B. to offer praise to Buckingham, to whom the book is dedicated. He tells Buckingham that it is he who, in the court, 'doe most resplendently glister and shine, like a most pretious Jewell richly garnished in the purest Gold' (p. 2). Applying this language of superlative and hyperbole to the royal favourite, instead of to the king, implies inadequacy on James's part. Lockyer suggests that Buckingham 'was treated

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<sup>89</sup> Croft 'Robert Cecil', p. 140. No reference for this report is given.

<sup>90</sup> Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 61.

with a deference normally reserved for members of the royal family' and quotes Theophilus Field, Bishop of Landaff hailing Buckingham as 'high and illustrious prince' (p. 215). These addresses to the royal favourite reflect the fact that his position in the court made those looking for favour or patronage turn to him. They also suggest that he had appropriated for himself some of the admiration and deference that should have been directed at the king. Worse still, however, James's preferential treatment of Buckingham caused resentment and added to criticism of royal extravagance, as we will see below.

Almost all the leading noblemen at the Jacobean court spent enormous amounts of money on building grand 'prodigy houses'.<sup>91</sup> Bacon's essay, 'Of building', gives a vision of a 'princely palace',<sup>92</sup> a vision which, as Colin Platt points out, 'matched the grandest English models: Theobalds or Burghley, Hatfield, Ham House or Audley End'.<sup>93</sup> All of these buildings were owned by nobles. Bacon's essay thus inadvertently reveals that what might traditionally be seen as a monarchical style of living has been appropriated by the nobility. These buildings conveyed the wealth, status, power and taste of their owners, and were as grand as royal buildings, despite James's investment in architectural magnificence. Audley End, for example, built for Thomas Howard, Earl of Suffolk, in 1604-14 was perceived to be one of the stateliest palaces in the kingdom. A mixture of the antique and the modern, the opposite of the restrained classical style that the Banqueting House was to epitomise, Audley End exemplified the kind of ostentation and extravagance that was soon to be out of favour. At the time that it was built, however, it was greatly admired. For example, Justus Zinzerling, a visitor to England in 1610 with a special interest in royal palaces, seeing Audley End alongside

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<sup>91</sup> Linda Levy Peck, 'The Mentality of a Jacobean Grandee', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 148-168 (p. 148).

<sup>92</sup> *The Essays*, pp. 194-6.

<sup>93</sup> *Great Rebuildings*, p. 33.

Whitehall and St James's Palace, favoured Audley End. He was later to write of it that, when finished, 'no other palace will compare with it.' James himself said of Audley End, when he learnt how much it cost, that it was 'too big for a King but might do for a Lord Treasurer'.<sup>94</sup> This wry comment points to the difficulty for James that his financial limitations made it difficult at times for him to compete with the magnificence of some of his court.

The owners of these grand buildings had to try to balance self-promotion with reinforcement of the king's image. The splendour of their buildings could be justified by the need to provide appropriate accommodation for the king. For example, Cecil, whose building programme was 'by far the greatest of its age', entertained James magnificently, presenting him with fine gifts and curiosities and giving court suppers, masques and entertainments. At the same time he was reaffirming his position, 'not least by underscoring his links with the royal family';<sup>95</sup> noble magnificence could be justified by entertaining the king, but entertaining the king also reinforced noble prestige.

One of many occasions when James was Buckingham's guest of honour took place in 1618 at Wanstead, a great house in Essex which Buckingham had recently acquired. During the feast Buckingham presented James with the house, to the king's delight.<sup>96</sup> Through this gesture Buckingham was implying that all his magnificence was designed to serve the King, and clearly this pleased James. He was also thereby aggrandising himself by emphasising his link with the king and by claiming that his home was fit for the king. Another such occasion took place during the visit to Burley-on-the-Hill that, as we have seen, James made in 1621. This time Ben Jonson's masque,

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<sup>94</sup> Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, pp. 72-5.

<sup>95</sup> Croft 'Robert Cecil', pp. 139-40.

<sup>96</sup> Lockyer, *Buckingham*, p. 55.

*The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, gave Buckingham the opportunity to express gratitude to his king. Upon arrival the king was told in the character of a porter

The house yor bountie hath built, and still doth reare  
 Wth those highe fauors, and those heaped increases,  
 As showes a hand not greiu'd, but when it ceases.  
 The *Master* is yor Creature, as the *Place*,  
 And euerie good about him is yor *Grace*.<sup>97</sup>

Again we see the conceit of James as maker, possessor and beneficiary of his favourite's magnificence. Later in the masque, Buckingham, playing the part of the first gypsy, was able to deliver to the king lines celebrating royal bounty (336-51). Again this emphasised his link with the king. While his lines carefully give James credit, they also advertise Buckingham's prominence: 'My selfe a *Gypsye* here doe shine,/ Yet are you Maker, Sr, of mine' (341-2). In celebrating royal bounty and promising his continuing gratitude (349-51), Buckingham was also seeking to ensure that he continued to be a recipient. *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* was so well-received that, unusually for a masque, it was performed two further times.<sup>98</sup> The positive responses that Buckingham's gestures and performances met suggest they formed an effective strategy for overlaying self-promotion with the claim to be a humble servant of the king.<sup>99</sup>

Ironically, while on the one hand James might be outshone by noble

<sup>97</sup> *Jonson*, ed. by Herford and Simpson, VII, lines 12-16.

<sup>98</sup> At Belvoir on 5 August and at Windsor, probably early in September, in a revised version (*Jonson*, ed. by Herford and Simpson, VII, 541).

<sup>99</sup> While it is beyond the scope of the current chapter, also at play here is of course the self-promotion of the poet, Jonson. For a discussion of how Jonson presents Buckingham in this masque, and of the relationship between Jonson and Buckingham, see Martin Butler, "'We are one mans all': Jonson's *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*", *Yearbook of English Studies*, 21 (1991), 253-73.

magnificence, on the other hand he had to spend money he could not afford on rewards and favours in order to maintain the nobles he had created at a level of magnificent living whereby they would reflect well on his own image.<sup>100</sup> Yet nobles James had created, such as Buckingham, not only added to some of the problems that he faced; they also faced some of the same problems. Like his sovereign, Buckingham had to meet certain expectations that his position created, and financial problems resulted. His projection of a magnificent image symbolised his position as royal favourite, but was also required by that position. He had to ensure he maintained favour with the king, and credibility with those who looked to him for patronage and promotion. In the competitive world of the Jacobean court, Buckingham could not afford to let himself be outshone by anyone else. It is likely 'that Buckingham's income, enormous as it was, did little more than cover his expenditure', yet even when in debt, he 'continued to live in the lavish and carefree style that he and his contemporaries took for granted in a great magnate'.<sup>101</sup> In the culture of magnificence that both inhabited, Buckingham added to James's problems precisely because he shared them.

### **Magnificence as Extravagance**

James faced a range of conflicting expectations as to what constituted appropriate royal magnificence. As we have seen, in the royal court and on the European stage it was politically necessary for him to meet certain expectations of magnificence in terms of largesse and liberality. Indeed, as late in the reign as 1619 *The Court of the Most Illustrious and Most Magnificent James* represents Jacobean courtly magnificence in an entirely unproblematic way and proposes that unlimited liberality is appropriate in a king: it is not 'fit we should prescribe bounds or limits to a Princes

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<sup>100</sup> Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 123.

<sup>101</sup> Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 62, 213.

bountie and liberality'.<sup>102</sup> James could not, however, control how his efforts to meet such expectations were perceived, and royal liberality, court ceremony and court entertainments excited criticism on financial, moral and cultural grounds. Moreover, although the culture of magnificence dictated that a monarch give the impression that he could afford to be endlessly bountiful, the reality for James was severe financial difficulty. There was concern about his extravagance from the beginning of his reign, but criticisms increased as financial problems grew and attitudes to magnificence and to the court changed during the reign. Exploring royal financial difficulties, contemporary attitudes towards royal and courtly 'magnificence', and various re-presentations of such 'magnificence' as 'extravagance', exposes the contradictions of James's position.

James was financially inept and, in particular, bad at refusing suitors, as he had also been in Scotland.<sup>103</sup> As we have seen, upon arriving in England he spent vast sums on liberality. He would later offer two reasons for this: 'at my first comming here, partly ignorance of this State [...] and partly the forme of my comming being so honourable and miraculous, enforced me to extend my liberalitie'.<sup>104</sup> The ignorance to which James refers could be a misapprehension that England was richer than it actually was, and it could be a misjudgement of what was expected from him. The phrase 'enforced me to extend' may not be just an attempt to deflect responsibility away from himself, but an indication that he felt compelled to be liberal by virtue of his position. The possibility that James in fact resented being as liberal as he felt his position required is supported by the fact that, angered by the volume of requests for royal reward, he once exclaimed:

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<sup>102</sup> Almost in the same breath, the writer, A. D. B., suggests to Buckingham, to whom the book is dedicated, that James may 'in his Princely *Magnificence* reserve a greater benefit or reward, for a wise and faithfull Courtier' (p. 156). In the sycophantic praise A. D. B. offers Buckingham, it seems that he too is hoping to be a recipient of James's magnificence, indirectly, through the King's favourite. This would explain his unqualified praise of royal bounty.

<sup>103</sup> Wormald suggests that Menna Prestwich's *Cranfield: Politics and Profits under the Early Stuarts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966) 'makes it virtually certain that any reappraisal of James will not upgrade his financial abilities' ('Two Kings or One?', p. 199).

<sup>104</sup> 1610 speech to parliament, p. 542.

‘you will never let me alone. I would to God you had first my dublett and then my shirt, and when I were naked I think you would give me leave to be quiett’.<sup>105</sup>

Despite his generosity, James was not entirely responsible for his own financial problems. He inherited a debt from Elizabeth and did have some genuine expenses that she had not, including the costs of maintaining the households of his Queen and heirs. The financial problems he faced ‘ran deep to the foundation of seventeenth-century fiscal theory and practice’. The king was still expected to ‘live of his own’ in time of peace. This involved James’s predecessors in confiscating lands and raiding aristocratic and episcopal fortunes. By the time the Stuart king acceded to the throne, ‘there was little to be squeezed from lands, peers or bishops’. By 1608 estimates of the king’s debts topped £600,000. By 1618 royal debt had risen to £900,000, the largest peacetime debt in English history.<sup>106</sup> As early as 1605 James himself was anxiously aware of the financial difficulties of his position. In a letter to Cecil he ‘cannot but confess that it is a horror to me to think upon the height of my place, the greatness of my debts, and the smallness of my means’. He asks Cecil to let ‘me see how my state may be made able to subsist with honour and credit, which if I might be persuaded were possible I would be relieved of a greater burden than ye can imagine’.<sup>107</sup>

While James’s expenditure worsened the inevitable financial problems of the Crown, he did not utilise the Crown’s resources without thought or purpose. As we have seen, he used royal liberality as a way of manipulating and controlling the nobility. In 1604 he supported episcopal interests by issuing an act preventing alienations of episcopal property to the Crown. Kenneth Fincham comments that ‘it was a remarkable move for an extravagant monarch to renounce a potential source of revenue and

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<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 478 (no date or reference given).

<sup>106</sup> Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, pp. 83, 86, 88.

<sup>107</sup> *Letters*, ed. by Akrigg, pp. 261-2.

patronage'.<sup>108</sup> This incident demonstrates James's little recognised political acumen – he was not an extravagant and frivolous king who loved to spend, but a king who was willing to spend or to deny himself revenue in order to win favour and support. He was also willing to limit, or at least to appear to limit, his expenditure in order to placate parliament, as we will see below.

James's generosity was initially welcomed. Elizabeth had been seen as mean and creations and promotions were initially necessary as she had made so few, many people had strong claims, and the population had grown. The 1603 account of Sir Roger Wilbraham suggests, however, that even from early in James's reign there was concern about his generosity. Wilbraham emphasises the different approaches of the two monarchs but parallels Elizabeth's reluctance to give with James's generosity and suggests that where the queen caused complaint, the king causes fear: 'the King most bountifull, seldome denying any sute: the Quene strict in geving [...]: the one often complayned of for sparinge: th'other so benigne, that his people feare his over redines in gevinge'. Wilbraham may represent James as bountiful and benign, but he appears anxious that the king will be corrupted by his new circumstances, praying that he is not 'depraved with ill councell, and that nether the welth & peace of England mak him forgett God, nor the painted flatterie of the Court cause him forgett himself'.<sup>109</sup>

In describing the king as 'seldome denying any sute', Wilbraham reflects what quickly became a major concern: James appeared to be giving indiscriminately, distributing favours to people whether or not they deserved reward or reciprocated it in any way. As early as 1604 the outcry against James's bounty was such that the Privy Council 'apparently devised some sort of system [...] to provide for the orderly dispensation of patronage and to ensure that the Elizabethan practice of demanding

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<sup>108</sup> *Prelate as Pastor*, p. 40.

<sup>109</sup> *Journal of Sir Roger Wilbraham*, pp. 59-60.



service in return for reward continued'.<sup>110</sup> Smuts argues, however, that the patronage system was of benefit to so many influential people that it could not be significantly reformed.<sup>111</sup>

An important factor in this opposition to James's bounty was English objection to the Scots James brought with him and the favouritism it was felt he showed them.<sup>112</sup> A proclamation issued in July 1603 made an early attempt to respond to this problem by stating that the king was resolved to treat the subjects of both nations with 'equall affection'.<sup>113</sup> The perception that there was a Scottish monopoly on royal bounty continued, however, Sir John Holles naming it as a public grievance in the parliamentary session of 1610.<sup>114</sup> The fact that James's first major favourite in England was Scottish and not of noble blood – Sir Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset – increased opposition to royal bounty. The wealth Carr acquired from the king was conspicuous in his magnificent personal appearance and extensive art collections.<sup>115</sup> Such display was likely to increase resentment towards favourite and king.

Buckingham, the other major favourite of James's English reign, was initially promoted by Pembroke and others, who opposed the Howard faction, in order to replace Carr. By 1620, having destroyed the Howard empire, he had become 'the major single political influence at court'. James made him Duke of Buckingham in May 1623, when he was in Madrid. This was an exceptional honour: he 'was the first duke for nearly a century to have no royal blood in his veins'.<sup>116</sup> Buckingham was at least English, but he

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<sup>110</sup> Peck, *Northampton*, p. 28.

<sup>111</sup> 'Art and the Material Culture of Majesty', p. 91.

<sup>112</sup> As noted in the previous chapter, many English viewed the Scots as greedy, lawless and uncivilised. See Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', pp.190-1, 193.

<sup>113</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 39.

<sup>114</sup> Peck, "'For a King not to be bountiful were a fault'", p. 46.

<sup>115</sup> The 1615 inventory of Carr's possessions includes many black garments, but more brightly coloured and richly decorated outfits. His role as a collector and patron of art has tended to be neglected, but A. R. Braunmuller has recently demonstrated that his collection, though smaller than those of the Earl of Arundel, Buckingham, and Charles, was fashionable and extensive ('Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, as Collector and Patron', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 230-50 [pp. 345 (note), 238-9]).

<sup>116</sup> Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 16, 65, 155.

was not of noble blood and his elevation offended many people, especially the ancient peers.<sup>117</sup> In 1622 the Venetian ambassador, Girolamo Lando, wrote of the favourite that people ‘cannot endure that one born a simple gentlemen [sic], a rank slightly esteemed there, should be the sole access to the Court, the sole means of favour’.<sup>118</sup> As a result of Buckingham’s control over the dispensation of royal patronage from 1616 onwards, in addition to the increasing importance of money in patron-client relationships, royal bounty and court patronage came increasingly under attack.<sup>119</sup>

Buckingham’s wealth was conspicuous in his appearance, art collections and lifestyle. His ‘sartorial magnificence was excessive even by Jacobean standards’.<sup>120</sup> In the early 1620s he amassed a major collection of works of art, buying Italian paintings in particular. He owned several great houses. York House, for example, which he officially acquired in late 1624 and used to display his paintings, was itself magnificently decorated, with a number of rooms adorned with rich velvet hangings.<sup>121</sup> Even more so than with Carr then, the wealth Buckingham acquired from the king (and ultimately from the tax-payer) was on display, advertising what was to many the extravagance, wastefulness and corruption of the king. From this perspective, the lines quoted above from Jonson’s masque, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, first performed at Buckingham’s recently acquired Burley-on-the-Hill in 1621, have a rather different significance, and Jonson may indeed have intended them to be ambivalent. The masque’s celebration of royal bounty might also have been viewed as a reflection of the excessive nature of royal giving – not only has James’s bounty built the house, but it ‘still doth reare/ Wth those highe fauors, and those heaped increases’ (12-3). What was for Buckingham an expression of loyalty to the king – ‘The *Master* is yor Creature, as

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<sup>117</sup> Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 123.

<sup>118</sup> *C.S.P. Ven., 1621-3*, p. 439.

<sup>119</sup> “‘For a King not to be bountiful were a fault’”, p. 33.

<sup>120</sup> Smuts, ‘Cultural Diversity’, p. 109.

<sup>121</sup> Lockyer, *Buckingham*, pp. 214, 213, 214-5.

the *Place*' (15) – was also a rather tactless display of James's favouritism. The royal 'hand not greiu'd, but when it ceases' reflects the king's seeming inability to stop giving to his already wealthy favourite.

James's liberality and the level of royal debt inevitably brought him into conflict with parliament, which had to fund James. His distribution of favours 'infuriated the taxpayers and was an important factor in causing Parliament to refuse financial aid'.<sup>122</sup> Of course, individual members of parliament were amongst those who benefited from royal bounty. In a speech of 1610 James suggested that parliamentary criticism of his liberality was therefore hypocritical: 'I hope you will neuer mislike me for my liberalitie, since I can looke very few of you this day in the face, that haue not made suits to mee, at least for some thing, either of honour or profit' (p. 542).<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, conflict between James and parliament over the cost of courtly magnificence continued. We will consider James's negotiations with parliament over royal expenditure below.

Even within the royal court itself, the nature and cost of royal and courtly magnificence met increasing criticism, not only because the Crown was in financial difficulty, but also because in the early seventeenth century there was a questioning of the very concept of magnificence. The cost of masques, balls, dances, tilts, and receptions of ambassadors in fact represented a drop in the ocean compared to everyday fine dining in the court, to the extent that they were not even budgeted for by the Household.<sup>124</sup> Yet these forms of expenditure, along with the cost of banquets, public pageants and building, all excited negative comment. As Malcolm Smuts emphasises, Jacobean court culture was complex and heterogeneous, and within it 'the scale and the type of display appropriate to the great had become an issue'.<sup>125</sup> Magnificence was

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<sup>122</sup> Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 495.

<sup>123</sup> Unless otherwise specified '1610 speech' refers to the speech of 21 March 1610 included in James's *Workes*, where it is dated as 1609.

<sup>124</sup> Cuddy, 'Reinventing a Monarchy', p. 69.

<sup>125</sup> 'Cultural Diversity', p. 110.

criticised not only on financial grounds but also because of a moral objection to certain kinds of magnificence as wasteful, corrupt, and immoral.

This clash of attitudes towards magnificence informs *Bien venv*, a poem by John Davies celebrating the visit of Christian IV in 1606. This poem repeatedly praises and justifies the money spent on traditional magnificence during the visit. Davies emphasises the importance of magnificent hospitality: ‘the Master of a feast the more he spends,/ The more it seems, he loues th’ inuited friends’. He insists that expenditure brings glory and honour: ‘Spare no cost, sith Gold for glori’s made,/ And glory now is got which cannot fade’; ‘Bountie brings Honour’. He also suggests that such expenditure is politically necessary in international relations: ‘Two Kings thus met, make Kingdomes richly thriue,/ Though it vnlines their Purse’; ‘Though Money be the sinewes of the warres,/ It must be spent too, to preuent those Iarres’. Thus we see all of the values and expectations of the culture of magnificence. This poem’s tone is, however, defensive. The extent of Davies’s concern to justify this magnificence and its cost reflects the fact that the values he presents are not shared by all of James’s subjects. He even borrows the language of those who found such expenditure inappropriate when he advises ‘let euey thing/ Thou dost, of Bountie taste, yea, touch Excesse’.<sup>126</sup>

Davies seems to be trying to persuade a resistant audience, as indeed he was – even Jonson, who had written an entertainment for the two kings, was to be critical of the pomp provided for and by Christian:

O, but to strike blind the people with our wealth, and pomp, is the thing!  
 What a wretchedness is this, to thrust all our riches outward, and be  
 beggars within. [...] Have I not seen the pomp of a whole kingdom, and

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<sup>126</sup> *Bien venv. Greate Britaines welcome to hir greate friendes, the Danes* (London: Nathaniel Butler, 1606).

what a foreign king could bring hither also to make himself gazed, and wondered at, laid forth as it were to the show, and vanish all away in a day?<sup>127</sup>

Jonson is here critical of the values Davies celebrates, asserting the emptiness and transience of pomp and display. Again, however, we may read in the force of the rhetoric Jonson employs a sense that he is trying to defend a viewpoint rather than reflecting a commonly held view. This further suggests the conflict of contemporary attitudes towards such display.

Other accounts of Christian IV's visit fuelled views of the court as being not only extravagant, but corrupt and debauched. Sir John Harington's famous letter describes excesses of drinking and feasting, focusing on the chaos caused by a drunken attempt by some members of the court to perform a show before the two kings. He emphasises that even the ladies of the court 'roll about in intoxication'. While he writes with humour, he also emphasises that he never witnessed anything of the kind 'in our Queens days' and that this debauchery is a departure from how a court should behave: 'I did never see such lack of good order, discretion and sobriety as I have now done'.<sup>128</sup> Whether or not this letter was biased and inaccurate,<sup>129</sup> such accounts were clearly very damaging to the court's reputation.

It was in the second half of James's reign that criticism of courtly extravagance became more widespread. Certain events led to a more negative perception of James and his court as corrupt and immoral. In particular, the controversial divorce of the Earl

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<sup>127</sup> *Timber: or Discoveries*, in Ben Jonson, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by George Parfitt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), pp. 415-6.

<sup>128</sup> Letter extracted in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 243-4.

<sup>129</sup> Maurice Lee points out that such scenes were far from typical at James's court, while Christian IV was a notorious drinker, and that Harington had an axe to grind, having tried and failed to become a recipient of James's largesse (*Great Britain's Solomon: James VI and I in his Three Kingdom* [Urbana; Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1990], p. 131). *The King of Denmarkes welcome* stresses that Christian's followers showed temperance and abstained from drunkenness (pp. 8-9).

of Essex and Lady Frances Howard, followed by the remarriage of Lady Frances to Robert Carr in 1613, and the discovery in 1616 of the involvement of Lady Frances and Carr in the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury, caused public scandal.<sup>130</sup> From 1616 onwards, there was resentment of the new royal favourite Buckingham. As we have seen, James's pacifist policies were unpopular, especially after 1619. There was a conventional association between peace and corruption and vice, which fed into criticism of the prolonged Jacobean peace and the perceived corruption of the Jacobean court, as is reflected in Jonson's poem, 'An Epistle to a Friend, to Persuade him to the Wars'.<sup>131</sup> Above all, as we have seen, royal debt continued to rise throughout the reign and by 1618 was the largest peacetime debt in English history.

Chamberlain's letters, especially in the second half of James's reign, repeatedly represent expenditure on court entertainments and ceremonies as excessive and inappropriate. For example, in February 1617 he comments that 'this feasting begins to grow to an excessive rate' (II, 54). He also points out that such excess is unprecedented: in January 1621 he describes a court banquet provided by Lord of Doncaster at Essex House as having 'that sumptuous superfluitie, that the like hath not ben seene nor heard in these parts' (II, 333). In April 1619 he is critical of the preparations being made for Queen Anne's funeral on the grounds of excess, the lack of precedent, and the Crown's financial problems. He writes that 'the number of mourners and the whole charge spoken of is beyond proportion, above three times more then was bestowed upon Quene Elizabeth, which proceeds not of plenty for they are driven to shifts for monie, and talke of melting the Quenes golden plate and putting yt into coine' (II, 232). Chamberlain is particularly critical of expenditure on court masques: in December 1614 he complains

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<sup>130</sup> For a detailed study of representations of Overbury's murder, the circulation of those representations, and the political significance of this court scandal, see Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>131</sup> *Underwoods, Complete Poems*, ed. by Parfitt, pp. 150-155.

that 'for all this penurious world we speak of a maske this Christmas towards which the King geves 1500li' (I, 561), and in December 1620 he again complains that 'for all this penurie there is monie geven out and preparation made for a maske at court' (II, 332).

Masques indeed exemplify the problem that what might seem to James and others to be necessary expressions of magnificence, might be perceived by others as extravagance. In his essay 'Of masques and Triumphs', Bacon asserted that 'these things are but, toyes [...]. But yet, since princes will have such things, it is better, they should be graced with elegancy, then daubed with cost', pointing not only to the cost of such entertainments, but also complaining at their frivolity.<sup>132</sup> Again, even Jonson who wrote court masques was troubled by their transience and wastefulness, as is indicated in the following extract:

Nor throng'st (when masquing is) to haue a sight  
Of the short brauerie of the night;  
To view the iewells, stufes, the paines, the wit  
There wasted, some not paid for yet!<sup>133</sup>

Smuts suggests that Jonson was shifting 'toward a more austere concept of the sort of display in which royalty and noblemen should engage'.<sup>134</sup>

The clash of attitudes is perhaps most extreme with regard to the 'ante-suppers' Lord Hay devised in 1617.<sup>135</sup> While the extravagance and wastefulness of the Jacobean court was being widely criticised, the very point of these 'ante-suppers' was that the food would be displayed and then not eaten. This was an extreme version of the

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<sup>132</sup> *The Essays*, p. 175.

<sup>133</sup> 'To Sir Robert Wroth', *The Forrest* in Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London, 1616), p. 822, lines 9-12.

<sup>134</sup> 'Cultural Diversity', p. 110.

<sup>135</sup> See Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, p. 561.

Renaissance culture of 'conspicuous consumption', which dictated that spending vast amounts of money on 'things surplus to basic requirements: comforts, conveniences, luxuries and beguiling ostentations' brought prestige.<sup>136</sup> Again, resentment of Hay also related to the fact that he was Scottish. This extravagance gave ammunition to those who would criticise the court. For example, Francis Osborne wrote with horror of the unheard of practice of 'ante-suppers', suggesting that these were 'unpractised by the most luxurious tyrants'.<sup>137</sup> Thus we see the way in which perceptions of James and his court as extravagant and wasteful fed into, and were furthered by, historical accounts.

Stone suggests that after about 1620 conspicuous consumption began to decline, attributing this change to 'the rise of individualism, privacy, puritanism, and the cult of the virtuoso'.<sup>138</sup> The later part of James's reign saw the emergence of a new form of magnificence, which was restrained, tasteful, and austere. This style was exemplified by Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel. In the late 1610s he 'deliberately adopted a simpler style of clothing, which became something of a trademark'. He associated his style with the "old nobility", thereby distinguishing 'himself from the court's newly minted noblemen, especially the Duke of Buckingham'.<sup>139</sup> Arundel House was unlike the vast palaces such as Audley End considered above. Rather than projecting its owner's status through its size, cost, and extravagance, it served as a museum for Arundel's outstanding collections of items of Italian and antique culture, particularly sculpture and paintings.<sup>140</sup>

Arundel's particular style was not indicative of political opposition to James and Buckingham. Nevertheless, as Earl Marshal, he was heavily involved in Jacobean politics, and his involvement was marked by a concern with order, propriety and

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<sup>136</sup> John Hale, *The Civilisation of Europe in the Renaissance* (London: Fontana, 1994), pp. 261-262.

<sup>137</sup> *Secret History of the Court*, quoted in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 232-3

<sup>138</sup> *Crisis of the Aristocracy*, pp. 187-8.

<sup>139</sup> Smuts, 'Cultural Diversity', p. 109.

<sup>140</sup> Peck, 'Introduction', *Mental World*, p. 10.



honour.<sup>141</sup> His values were expressed in the style of his self-presentation, and both values and style formed a kind of cultural opposition to James. Arundel was admired for his learning and cultural patronage, and his style was recognised as being magnificent. For example, in a popular manual of 1622, *The compleat gentleman*, Henry Peacham commended Arundel for being ‘as great for his noble Patronage of Arts and ancient learning, as for his birth and place. To whose liberall charges and magnificence, this angle of the world oweth the first sight of Greeke and Romane Statues’.<sup>142</sup> This recognition of Arundel’s style as magnificent reflects a new conception of magnificence, which James’s style did not fit.

What has not been sufficiently recognised, however, is that James participated in this questioning of some aspects of court life in the later part of his English reign. ‘The Epistle Dedicatorie’ to his *Meditation vpon Saint Matthew or a Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* (1619) represents the court in terms of temptation and bad company (p. 602). The epistle also cites the examples of Dionysius and Henry IV to show that kings, even tyrants and usurpers, are aware of the emptiness of princely magnificence in relation to the cares of the crown (p. 604).

James satirises personal display, fashion, and excessive spending in a poem of 1622. He addresses the poem to women who ‘Care not what fines your honest husbands pay/ who dream on nought but visers maskes & plays’. The poem emphasises the superficiality of appearance, telling these women that ‘your husbands will as kindly you embrace/ without your jewels or your painted face’. It also admonishes that to be in fashion these women ‘will be servile apes of any nation’, pointing to the influences on fashion that came from abroad.<sup>143</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London: Pinter, 1989), p. 205. Sharpe argues that Arundel only began to oppose Buckingham towards the end of James reign, while he was a ‘staunch supporter’ of James’s main project at this time, the Spanish match (p. 189).

<sup>142</sup> Platt, *Great Rebuildings*, p. 82.

<sup>143</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh; London: Blackwood, 1955-1958), II, pp. 178-181, lines 4-5, 37-8, 48. Subsequent line numbers in parentheses in the text.

This poem's criticisms of personal display are specifically directed. It criticises women in particular and suggests that attendance at court is only appropriate to those of high status:

Ladies in honour grace the Courte I graunte  
 but tis no place for vulgar dames to haunte  
 the Country is your Orbe and proper sphere. (27-9)

This poem also has a political motivation. It refers to a proclamation of the same year instructing the nobility to return to their country houses.<sup>144</sup> In attempting to support this proclamation it represents London in terms of debauchery, temptation, and expense, and the country in terms of a simplicity that has been wrongfully scorned. Nevertheless this poem's criticisms of the frivolous, expensive and superficial nature of appearance and fashion seem to extend beyond 'vulgar dames'. James appears to be satirising the very extravagance of which he was a part. When he refers chidingly to 'wanton pleasures which doe ruinate/ insensibly both honour wealth & state' (44), it is ironically applicable to his own conduct, or at least to the perception of his conduct. While the degree of James's self-awareness is not determinable, there is an indication that he was uncomfortable with the emphasis on, and cost of, personal appearance and fashion. What emerges then, is not only that James's engagement with courtly magnificence conflicted with some contemporary attitudes, but that he felt he had to engage with courtly magnificence despite having some ambivalent attitudes towards it himself.

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<sup>144</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 561-2. The reason the proclamation gives for this instruction is the need for the nobility to fulfil their duties and keep hospitality in the country. James may also have hoped that such a movement away from London would reduce opportunities for discussion of his unpopular foreign policy.

## James's Verbal Re-Presentation of Royal Magnificence

One of the ways in which James responded to the conflicting attitudes as to what constituted appropriate royal magnificence he faced, was through verbal re-presentation. He re-presented and justified as appropriate and necessary his attempts to be 'magnificent', when he was addressing those who were likely to view him as 'extravagant'. This was particularly necessary when he was addressing parliament, since James was, as we have seen, heavily in debt, and for him, the 'main business of parliament was to secure money or supply for the crown through a grant of subsidies'.<sup>145</sup> Parliament recognised the importance of expenditure for the sake of royal magnificence, but was unwilling to fund what it viewed as extravagance.

The most extended debates over royal expenditure and the level of parliamentary subsidy took place in 1610. In this year Cecil, the Lord Treasurer, presented to parliament a proposal 'for a one-time subsidy to pay off the King's debts and a "contract" to commute some prerogative rights into an annual tax on land worth £200,000'. Parliament debated this 'Great Contract' for five months. In the end the Commons granted a subsidy worth only £100,000 and royal debt went on to rise.<sup>146</sup> James made a number of addresses to parliament in 1610, including a speech in March which was one of the more well-received.<sup>147</sup> Speeches such as this were all the more important to James because the English parliamentary system cut him off from the centres of debate, denying him the political asset of his skill in personal debate, and

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<sup>145</sup> *Proceeding in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, I, introduction, p. xv. Elizabeth likewise asked twelve of her thirteen sessions of parliament for supply (Haigh, *Elizabeth*, p. 113).

<sup>146</sup> Kishlansky, *Monarchy Transformed*, pp. 86-8.

<sup>147</sup> A letter of March 1610 from John More to Sir Ralph Winwood, for example, though it reports that 'the most strictly religious could have wished *that his Highness would have been more spareing in using the Name of God, and comparing the Deity with Princes Sovereignty*', celebrates the conclusion of the speech that '*howsoever the Sovereignty of Kings was absolute in generall, yet in particular the Kings of England were restrained by their Oath and the Privelidges of the People*' (in *James I*, ed. by Ashton, pp. 67-8). As I have previously argued, James was concerned to shape his representation of his views according to the context and audience. In March 1610 he tried to be conciliatory without lessening or undermining his authority.

forcing him to use the set speech as a substitute for such debate.<sup>148</sup> The fact that he chose his speech of March 1610 for inclusion in his 1616 *Workes* suggests that he felt it was an effective piece of self-representation. In the face of continued need for greater financial support, he was perhaps taking the opportunity to remind parliamentary readers of his *Workes* of the arguments this speech makes. In this final section we will explore the ways in which this particular speech illuminates the contradictions of James's position and the strategies he adopted in responding to those contradictions.<sup>149</sup>

James claimed that royal expenditure was a question of prerogative, while engaging with the political reality that he was financially dependent on parliament and parliament was not obliged to grant him as much in subsidies as he wanted. In his speech of March 1610 this tension between claim and reality is evident in the way his language equivocates between assertion, qualification and appeal:

one of the branches of duetie which Subiects owe to their Soueraigne, is Supply: but in what quantitie, and at what time, that must come of your loues. I am not now therefore to dispute of a Kings power, but to tell you what I may iustly craue, and expect with your good wills. (p. 539)

He asserts that his subjects are obliged to grant him supplies, then immediately qualifies this by giving them an element of choice and appealing to their love. He alludes to royal power and implies it is beyond question, then makes an appeal that he asserts is just, then suggests that what he justly expects will be willingly granted. Such tension runs through the speech as James maintains that he does not need to persuade and justify

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<sup>148</sup> Wormald, 'Two Kings or One?', p. 205.

<sup>149</sup> I am concerned with the speech as published, but for reports of this speech in parliamentary records, which Foster suggests reflect 'the speech actually given, and actually heard, not as later revised', see *Proceedings in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, I, 45-52 and II, 59-63.

while trying to persuade and justify. This parallels James's dual rhetorical strategy, identified in the previous chapter, of emphasising either what he is not obliged to do, in an attempt to respond to opposition, or what he will choose to do, in an attempt to win support. Here James equivocates between the defensive approach of emphasising his power and what his subjects owe him, and the conciliatory approach of emphasising that his subjects have a degree of choice. The equivocation results from the fact that the parliamentary audience he is addressing represents simultaneously both a source of criticism and a source of support.

In attempting to gain more financial support from parliament, James emphasises to parliament specific occasions of public display and ceremony, which were the forms of expenditure that met traditional expectations and which, he seems to have felt, parliament was likely to view as appropriate. In his speech he gives a list of such occasions:

should I haue spared the funerall of the late Queene? or the solemnitie of mine and my wiues entrie into this Kingdome, in some honourable sort? or should I haue spared our entrie into *London*, or our Coronation? And when most of the Monarches, and great Princes in Christendome sent their Ambassadors to congratulate my comming hither, and some of them came in person, was I not bound, both for my owne honour, and the honour of the Kingdome, to giue them good entertainment? (p. 541)

James's rhetoric – 'should I haue spared', 'was I not bound' – forcefully conveys his claim that he was obliged to fulfil expectation. His argument is weakened, however, by the fact that each of the occasions to which he refers had occurred six or seven years

earlier. This reveals the lack of royal public ceremony after the first year of James's English reign.

While James emphasised these occasions, he also had to justify the expenses that parliament was likely to view as extravagance. These were expenses that were less explicit and more intrinsic to the life of the court. He was anxiously aware that parliament was less likely to acknowledge the necessity of such forms of magnificence. This anxiety is evident in the extract from his speech quoted above: the public occasions are simply listed – it is only when he refers to entertaining ambassadors that he goes into detail and provides a justification, claiming that this is both for his honour and the honour of his kingdom. Similarly, he goes on in the same speech to claim that for 'his liuing to bee ruled according to the proportion of his greatnesse, is aswell for the honour of your Kingdome, as of your King' (pp. 542-3). He seems to emphasise the honour of his kingdom precisely because there may be no perceived connection between private entertainment and public benefit.

James had to convince parliament that courtly magnificence was not excessive. Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, represented the king to his parliament as being 'far from excess in diet, play, apparel, building, bargaining and such other vanities'.<sup>150</sup> This again reflects a clash of attitudes: though dismissed here as mere 'vanities', these were some of the most important ways of expressing royal magnificence in the period and areas in which James and his court spent vast sums of money. What is 'far from excess' is, however, undefined and subjective. This indeterminacy gave James room to manoeuvre.

It was particularly with regard to liberality that parliament was likely to view James's 'magnificence' as 'extravagance'. In his speech of March 1610 James uses various strategies in an attempt to justify his liberality. On the one hand he is assertive

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<sup>150</sup> November 1610, *Proceedings in Parliament*, ed. by Foster, I, 272. Howard was Lord Privy Seal.

and threatening, claiming that he has the right to choose whom he rewards, even if his choice goes against tradition or expectation, and implying that the resources of the crown are his to give away as he pleases:

a Father may dispose of his Inheritance to his children, at his pleasure:  
yea, euen disinherit the eldest vpon iust occasions, and preferre the  
youngest, according to his liking; make them beggers or rich at his  
pleasure; [...] So may the King deale with his Subiects. (p. 530)

On the other hand, he is conciliatory. He reassures parliament that his private expenses have been made explicit to them: 'I haue made my Treasurer already to giue you a very cleere and trew accompt both of my hauing, and expenses: A fauour I confesse, that Kings doe seldome bestow vpon their Subiects' (pp. 538-9).<sup>151</sup> He is trying to manipulate parliament by representing as a favour what is actually for his own benefit. He also responds to criticism of his liberality, acknowledging that in the first two or three years of his English reign he spent vast amounts, and insisting that this period of 'Christmas and open tide is ended' (p. 542).

Another tactic James employed was appealing to the self-interest of individual members of parliament. He emphasises that his subjects benefit from royal liberality: 'It is trew, a Kings liberalitie must neuer be dried vp altogether: for then he can neuer maintaine nor oblige his seruants and well deseruing Subiects'. He refutes the perception that he has given out much amongst his Scottish followers by claiming to have given out twice as much among English, and argues that his new subjects could

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<sup>151</sup> We will explore the rhetorical strategy that this speech adopts of emphasising transparency in more depth in chapter four.

not expect gratitude if he failed to reward the old.<sup>152</sup> He points out 'I haue spent much in liberalitie: but yet I hope you will consider, that what I haue giuen, hath bene giuen amongst you' (p. 542). Thus in representing his liberality, he is also using his liberality to manipulate parliament as individuals.

In 1610 James released 'A Declaration of His Maiesties Royall pleasure, in what sort He thinketh fit to enlarge, *Or reserve Himselfe in matter of Bounty*'. A facsimile reprint of 1897 includes a letter by Samuel R. Gardiner suggesting that this declaration is not James's personal production, but an official declaration issued in his name. Gardiner states that it was 'one of Salisbury's many attempts to check James's extravagance'. The editorial notes also state that this declaration was endorsed by parliament and reprinted in 1619 by James's order.<sup>153</sup> In keeping with his portrayal of James in *History of England* as wasteful, weak, and corrupt, Gardiner represents this declaration as being imposed upon him. Yet the fact that James endorsed it and ordered it to be reprinted suggests his willingness to limit his liberality – or at least to appear to do so. The publication date of 1610 indicates that this declaration formed part of James's attempt, aided of course by Cecil, to convince the parliament of 1610 to grant him more in supplies.

The declaration insists that James will not engage in unnecessary expenditure, but maintains his right to be liberal where he deems it necessary. He will '*decline from all maner of Expence that shall not bee necessary for the safetie of our Crowne, and honour of that Estate and dignitie (which no King can suffer to fall, but hee must run into contempt both abroad and at home)*', but will not '*stop all liberalitie from Our well deserving Seruants*' (pp. 2-3). He expressly forbids all his subjects to '*offer any Suites*

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<sup>152</sup> 'Only at the beginning of the reign did Scots recipients outnumber the English. But in almost every year, a proportionately small number of Scots walked off with a disproportionately large amount of money' (Wormald, *Two Kings or One?*, p. 207).

<sup>153</sup> 'A Declaration of His Maiesties Royall pleasure' (London: Robert Barker, 1610), facsimile reprint (1897). The notes at end of the facsimile reprint are not paginated.



*to Us, by which Our People may be impouerished or oppressed*' (pp. 3-4). The terms of the declaration seem to be deliberately left open to royal interpretation. It is left to James to decide what is necessary expenditure, who is a well deserving servant and what constitutes impoverishment of the people. Thus the declaration tries simultaneously to uphold the royal prerogative, to maintain a balance between the king being able to grant suits and not being overwhelmed by suitors, and to appease parliament.

Despite James's efforts to negotiate with parliament, and use of various strategies of rhetoric and representation, parliament refused to grant James as much in supplies as he wanted. The anxieties for James went beyond needing the money. In his speech of March 1610, James proclaims dramatically 'consider that the eyes of all forreine States are vpon this affair', hoping that this will be a persuasive argument. This may be an overblown sense of England's importance, but reflects James's concern with how he is perceived abroad. He states that if parliament does not agree to give James the support he requests, it must give foreign states the impression 'that either ye are vnwilling to helpe mee, thinking me vnworthy thereof, or at least that my State is so desperate, as it cannot be repaired'. This 'cannot but weaken my reputation both at home and abroad' (p. 543). He reiterates this concern at the end of his speech: 'now that word is spread both at home and abroad of the demaunds I haue made vnto you; my Reputation laboureth aswell as my Purse' (p. 547), succinctly reflecting the equation between reputation and wealth. Thus parliament refusing to grant James as much in supply as he requested exposed the discrepancy between his self-representation and the underlying political and economic reality. According to the view James presented as to how 'this affair' would be seen abroad, by engaging in, and losing, a battle with parliament over supplies, he damaged his international reputation.

In several ways then, James's attempts to play the role of magnificent king, though necessary, risked undermining rather than reinforcing his image. This was largely the result of the style he had developed in Scotland, the impossibility of simultaneously satisfying a range of conflicting expectations, and the financial limitations he faced. He clearly had anxieties about his performance of the role of king and its perception. What has begun to emerge in this chapter is his tendency to fall back on the word as either a substitute for public performance, as in the case of his proclamations and letters of 1603, or a re-presentation of public performance, as we have seen in his negotiations with parliament. The economic, political, and cultural difficulties we have seen that he faced form the context in which he tried to reinforce his image through his writings, and may indeed have strengthened his preference for this form of self-representation. While his style of performance was unlike that of his predecessor, however, his use of his own writings was without precedent in England.

## Chapter 3

### The Royal Author in England: James's Literary Strategies

As James brought to England a personal and political style that he had developed in Scotland, so he brought a preference for verbal means of self-representation and particular literary strategies. In the very first year of his English reign several of the works he had written in Scotland were republished in London.<sup>1</sup> As we will see in the following chapter, however, verbal self-representation would, like his attempts to perform the role of magnificent king, be problematic for James, for as he could not control how his performances were 'read', so he could not control reading of his verbal representations. In this chapter I will examine his aims for the writings he wrote or republished in England, exploring in more detail the literary strategies already identified and showing how they developed in some of the texts he wrote in England.

As established in the introduction, critics are beginning to recognise the importance of monarchical writing as a genre and James's writings are attracting increasing scholarly attention. His scriptural exegeses and poetry continue to receive little consideration, yet, as we saw in the Scottish context, these were politically engaged texts that formed an important part of James's self-representation.<sup>2</sup> While some of the individual texts included in James's folio edition of his *Workes* (1616), particularly the political treatises *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law*, have been studied in some depth, the *Workes* has attracted very little consideration as a text in itself. Yet this carefully framed collection makes James's boldest claims for his authorship. Thus, while the range of the present discussion is texts that James wrote or republished in

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<sup>1</sup> See chapter one.

<sup>2</sup> *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002) has contributed towards redressing the balance, as we will see at various points in the present discussion.

England, the focus is his scriptural exegeses, a manuscript poem, and the *Workes* as a text. My discussion begins with the aims and implications that underlie all of James's writings, but come to the fore in his explicit engagements with the bible, not only as a writer, but also as the authoriser of a new translation. I then consider the strategies he employed to realise these aims in the *Workes* and a manuscript poem, two very different kinds of texts. While James tried to make his word authoritative, however, he was anxious about how he might be read. Finally, I consider the anxieties about interpretation and representation that inform all of his writings.

### **The Word of God and The Word of the King: James's scriptural exegeses and the King James Bible**

In England James showed a continuing desire to represent himself through interpretation and translation of the bible, by republishing *A Fruitful Meditation* in London in 1603, by including all of his scriptural exegeses in his *Workes* of 1616, and by authorising a new translation of the bible, a project which began after the Hampton Court Conference of 1604 and was completed in 1611. In this section I will explore in more detail the way James uses his engagement with the bible to reflect and reinforce his political and textual authority.

The bible equates divine language and divine authority: 'in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God' (John. 1:1).<sup>3</sup> The Latin root of author, 'auctor', has multiple meanings that reflect this equation of power and language – it means not only 'writer', but also 'creator, maker, inventor, father, teacher'.<sup>4</sup> 'Author' is of course the root of 'authority' and 'authorise'. The bible as a

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<sup>3</sup> All references to, and quotations from, the bible, the translators preface and the epistle, refer to *Authorised King James Version with Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>4</sup> *The Oxford Latin Minidictionary*, ed. by James Morwood (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 29.

text is, however, at one remove from language as authority – it is a *representation* of language as authority. The language in which the bible represents language as authority is itself open to a range of translations and interpretations. Thus language both creates and represents; the bible is both a source of meaning – creating and instructing – and a vehicle or representation of meaning. Interpretations of Scripture and editions of the bible inevitably reproduce the irreconcilable tensions regarding language and authority that the bible presents. As we will see later, James's manipulations of Scripture, while intended to support his authority, also add to his anxieties about language and authority and create tensions elsewhere in his writings.

Producing his own interpretations of Scripture gave James the opportunity to emphasise divine unknowability, the authority of the divine word, the unquestionable nature of divine authority, and the relationship between language and authority. It also enabled him to emphasise his proximity to God and to imply parallels between divine authority, language and unknowability, and royal authority, language, and unknowability.<sup>5</sup> He did make such parallels explicitly elsewhere, asserting in a speech to parliament of March 1610, for example, that 'as to dispute what God may doe, is Blasphemie [...] so is it sedition in Subjects, to dispute what a King may do in the height of his power'.<sup>6</sup> This went too far for some: a letter from John More to Sir Ralph Winwood reports that 'the most strictly religious could have wished *that his Highness would have been more spareing in using the Name of God, and comparing the Deity*

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<sup>5</sup> James had biblical justification for his claim to royal unknowability, and for a parallel between royal and divine unknowability, in the proverbs of Solomon:

It is the glory of God to conceal a thing:  
But the honour of kings is to search out a matter.  
The heaven for height, and the earth for depth,  
And the heart of kings is unsearchable. (Proverbs of Solomon, 25.2-3)

<sup>6</sup> James I, *The Workes* (1616), facsimile reprint (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, 1971), p. 531.

*with Princes Sovereignty*'.<sup>7</sup> Interpreting Scripture and authorising a new translation of the bible enabled James to make these parallels in more subtle and indirect ways.

By producing his own writings on Scripture James implies that the divinely ordained hierarchy by which he is King by Divine Right places kings in a unique position to interpret God's Word.<sup>8</sup> Within his scriptural exegeses he further emphasises the divine hierarchy and implies that his writings reproduce a pattern created by God. In *A Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* (1619), for example, he justifies his dedication to Prince Charles by asking '*whom can a paterne for a Kings Inauguration so well fit as a Kings sonne and heire, beeing written by the King his Father, and the paterne taken from the King of all Kings?*'.<sup>9</sup> Here James is playing on the ambivalence of the terms 'Father' and 'King' to emphasise the proximity of God and God's Elect.

James's writings on Scripture reinforce his position in several ways. By emphasising his proximity to God, James is also emphasising that his authority is divinely authorised. By interpreting God's word, he is reinforcing the view of the king as possessed of special insight and understanding. His self-professed capacity to reproduce God's Word faithfully and accurately puts him in an exclusive category, thereby reflecting his unique authority. James is careful to insist that this is an exclusive category, in which he has been placed by God.<sup>10</sup> For example, in a marginal note in his

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<sup>7</sup> *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), pp. 67-8.

<sup>8</sup> As noted in the first chapter, in Scotland James wrote *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle St. John*, Revelation 18:2-4 (Edinburgh, 1588?), *A Fruitful Meditation, Containing a Plaine and Easie Exposition*, a commentary on Revelation 20:8-10 (Edinburgh, 1588), and *A Meditation* on the first book of the chronicles of kings, chs. 25-9 (Edinburgh, 1589). All of these texts were included in James's *Workes* (1616). *A Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer* and *A Meditation vpon Saint Matthew or a Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* were both written in 1619 and included in the 1620 edition of James's *Workes*. Though it is outside the scope of the current discussion, James also embarked upon a major project to translate the psalms. His psalms, like his other scriptural writings, have received minimal critical attention, but have been given some consideration in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, in an essay by James Doelman, 'The Reception of King James's Psalter', pp. 454-475.

<sup>9</sup> The facsimile reprint of *The Workes*, which includes the two meditations first included in the 1620 edition (see previous footnote), gives the page number as 593 but this is a misprint and should be 603. Note also that 'inauguration' is printed as 'inavgvration' in the title and 'inauguration' in the text.

<sup>10</sup> The translators who produced King James Bible also suggest that theirs is an exclusive role. They claim that 'the very meanest translation of the Bible in English, set foorth by men of our profession [...] containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God'. The translators are qualified for the task by being men of the Church; James is qualified by being King ('The translators to the reader', p. lxii).

*Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer*, he complains of 'euery ignorant woman, and ordinary craftsman, taking vpon them to interpret the Scriptures' (p. 575), then goes on in the main text to claim that he 'will, with Gods grace, shortly interpret the meaning therof' (p. 577). He is thereby trying to maintain authority over the most important text of authority. Other monarchs of the post-Reformation period shared this desire to control the meaning of Scripture,<sup>11</sup> but what is distinctive about James is the fact that he attempted to use his own textual authority as well as his political authority to achieve that end.

James extends his attempt to maintain authority over biblical interpretation by placing himself in the role of a preacher or teacher (another meaning of 'auctor'). The subtitle of a *Fruitfull Meditation*, which James wrote in 1588 when he was only twenty-two years old, states that it is 'in forme and maner of a sermon' (p. 73). The text goes on to explain that he will 'first expound or lay open by way of a Paraphrase the hardnesse of the words, next declare the meaning of them, and thirdly note what we should learne of all' (p. 74). He is thus asserting his special ability to penetrate the difficulty of the text to reveal its single and true meaning, which he will then deliver to his readers as a lesson. What he is delivering is, of course, his meaning.

James's self-representation as a vehicle for God's Word is taken a step further in his 'Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle of S. Iohn'. The Book of Revelation begins by introducing John in the third person, but James's paraphrase departs from this convention to begin by speaking on behalf of John in the first person. This establishes a more direct relationship between the king and his readers and deliberately blurs his voice with the voice of John. Thus when James inserts parenthetical comments such as

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<sup>11</sup> Robert Weimann describes how both Henry VIII and Elizabeth tried to use their political authority to control reading of Scripture, in a time when 'the authority of Protestant exegesis was ever more widely being appropriated by the public' and 'questions of textual exegesis and the issue of political power were inextricably entwined' (*Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse*, ed. by David Hillman [Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996], pp. 63, 79).

‘which ye haue presently heard declared’, ‘as I did shew before’, ‘this vision which I am next to declare vnto you’ (12: 0), the two voices become indistinguishable. God instructs John ‘write thou in a Booke what thou seest’ (1: 11) and James is reproducing this: in writing this paraphrase he is revealing to others what the scriptural text has revealed to him. He echoes John’s position as one to whom God has chosen to give a special understanding. By blurring and paralleling prophet and King, James is trying to strengthen his claims to having direct access to God’s truth and the capacity to reproduce God’s truth for others.<sup>12</sup> This brings to the surface what is continually an implication in his writings.

Any act of translating or paraphrasing is an act of interpretation. Even the preface to the King James Bible acknowledges, albeit unintentionally, that the scriptural text is mediated: the translators ‘desire that the Scripture may speak *like it self*’ (p. lxxviii, italics mine). James is not a mere vehicle for God’s word; even when he is translating or paraphrasing the bible he is constructing his own meanings to serve particular political purposes. By paraphrasing Revelation, he was involving himself in a tradition of contested and politicised interpretations, using his scriptural exegeses to assert his Protestantism and attack the papacy, as we saw in the first chapter. His manipulations of Scripture at times amount to misrepresentations. In *The Trew Law*, for example, he discusses ‘the duety and alleagance that the Lieges owe to their King: the ground whereof, I take out of the words of *Samuel*, dited by Gods spirit’. He includes ‘the very words of the Text’ (1 Samuel 8: 9-20) and goes on to analyse each line of it in detail (p. 196-200). In his notes to *The Trew Law*, James Craigie points out several discrepancies between James’s paraphrase and the actual words of the scriptural text on

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<sup>12</sup> Esther Gilman Richey quotes William Kerrigan’s observation that in the Renaissance the term ‘prophet’ could mean ‘teacher, preacher, poet, or inspired interpreter of the bible’ (*The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* [Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998], p. 1). James is placing himself in these roles, and the fact that ‘prophet’ could mean any of these roles made it easier for James to blur the boundaries between them.



which it is apparently based. Most notably, James writes that ‘Kings are called Gods by the propheticall King *David*, because they sit vpon GOD his Throne in the earth, and haue the count of their administration to giue vnto him’ (p. 194). Craigie points out that while the first clause paraphrases Psalm 82: 6, the ‘because’ clause which follows ‘is not to be found either in the passage referred to or at any other place in Scripture’.<sup>13</sup> Thus James is emphasising that Kings are not just called gods but are like gods and answerable only to God, in a context which gives the false impression that he is taking this from Scripture.

While we can see that James is manipulating Scripture and applying it to particular contexts, he tries to conceal this manipulation by emphasising the authority of the divine word and maintaining that he is merely reproducing God’s truth. In so doing he is also emphasising the authority of his interpretation and reflecting the power of the royal word. Thus his expansions on the Book of Revelation in his paraphrase tend to extend its emphasis on the word. For example, at 1: 16 the bible refers to the two-edged sword coming out of God’s mouth, but James emphasises that it is the ‘Sword of the word’; at 3: 14 the bible simply refers to ‘the beginning of the creation of God’, but James specifies that God ‘is that Word which did create all’. The king also expands upon the bible’s description of no one being able to open or look upon the Book of Mysteries, adding that ‘neither Angel or deuil either knows or dare meddle with the high mysteries of God, and things future, except so farre as pleaseth him to commit and reueale vnto them’ (5: 3). This reflects the terms in which he rejects people ‘meddling’ in his affairs (see below). He defends his interpretation, implicitly through such additions as, at 6: 6, an assurance that God’s word and truth ‘shall neuer be destroyed, nor any wayes corrupted’, and explicitly in the ‘Epistle to the Church Militant’. In this ‘Epistle’ he claims that he esteems the meaning of Revelation to be an attack upon ‘our

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<sup>13</sup> *Minor Prose Works of King James VI and I* (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 1982), p. 128.

*common aduersaries the Papists: whom I would wish to know, that in this my Paraphrase vpon it, I haue vsed nothing of my owne coniecture, or of the authoritie of others*' (p. 2), and asserts that he has worked to '*square and conforme my opinions to the trew and sincere meaning*' of the biblical text (p. 1). James thus remains a presence in the text, insisting that his meaning is God's meaning.<sup>14</sup>

The claim that James's meaning is synonymous with God's meaning requires a deliberate blurring of interpretation and creation, of divine authorisation and royal authorship. This deliberate blurring also informs James's secular writings, especially his poetry. This is illuminated by one of the sonnets following the preface to his *Reulis and Cautelis* entitled 'Sonnet Decifring The Perfyte Poete'.<sup>15</sup> Poetry is a divine art, as James emphasises in the title of his first volume, *The Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (1584), in which this sonnet appears. The title of the sonnet signifies that the king has access to the divine art of poetry and is able to interpret it to his readers, in the same way that he would later interpret the bible. James is not only interpreting the divine art of poetry here however, he is also creating poetry; this is a carefully constructed sonnet designed to display his mastery of the form. James uses his claimed proximity to God to authorise his position not only as interpreter of meaning, but also as source of meaning, with the continual implication that the meaning he constructs is a reproduction of God's meaning. He tries to maintain this implication throughout his writings.

The translators who produced the 1611 Bible reflect James's blurring of the king as vehicle for God's Word and as source of meaning. James involved himself very

<sup>14</sup> See also Daniel Fischlin who argues that James's 'rhetorical technique disallows the notion of the interpreter as capable of manipulating Scripture even as such a manipulation occurs, almost by sleight of hand, before the reader's very eyes' ('To Eat the Flesh of Kings': James VI and I, Apocalypse, Nation and Sovereignty' in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 388-420 [p. 397]).

<sup>15</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh; London: Blackwood, 1955-1958) I, 69.

closely in the translation.<sup>16</sup> We do not know what direct influence he may have had on the 'Translators to the reader' and 'Epistle Dedicatorie' with which the 1611 Bible begins, but this prefatory material supports his self-representation. It projects onto the king the different meanings of 'author' intrinsic to the bible's representation of language and authority. Being God's elect gives James the authority to authorise a new translation of the bible, but being King also makes James the principal 'Author' of this bible ('The Epistle Dedicatorie', p. lxxii).<sup>17</sup> On the previous page the Epistle states that James's subjects bless him as 'that sanctified person, who under GOD, is the immediate Author of their true happiness' (p. lxxi), presenting James as 'author' in the sense of 'creator'. By naming him as author, this Epistle implicitly places James in God's position.

James not only 'creates' this bible however; he is also creating through it meanings that serve his own purposes. As his interpretations of Scripture are not only a reproduction of God's Word, but also a statement by James, so by authorising a new translation of the bible, he was making a clear statement of his piety and his authority over the church.<sup>18</sup> Known as the *King James Bible* or the *authorised* version, it clearly

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<sup>16</sup> 'Bishop Bancroft's Rules for the Revisers' reflect James's involvement: 'as any one Company hath dispatched any one book in this manner, they shall send it to the rest, to be considered of seriously and judiciously, for his Majesty is very careful in this point' (*King James Bible: A Selection*, ed. by W. H. Stevenson [London; New York: Longman, 1994], p. 497). Linda Levy Peck suggests that 'not since King Alfred had the king himself played such an important role in the translation of sacred writing' ('Introduction', *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. by Peck [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991], pp. 1-17 [p. 5]).

<sup>17</sup> The proposal for a new translation of the Bible came from Oxford theologian and controversialist John Rainolds, but James responded enthusiastically and actively sponsored the project (Richard Helgerson, 'Milton Reads the King's Book: Print, Performance, and the Making of a Bourgeois Idol', *Criticism*, 29 (1987), 1-26 [3]). The translators' preface states that after the Puritans complained of the state of the bible during the Hampton Court Conference, James thought of the good that would ensue from a new translation and gave order for this one (p. lxxii). This firmly gives James agency and credit.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth I also wanted to keep firm control over the Church and supported the production of a new official version of the Bible, which was first printed in 1568. Elizabeth was less directly involved, however, and this bible had the more neutral title of *Bishops' Bible* (Stevenson, *King James Bible*, p. 29). The comparison emphasises how bold James was being in authorising a bible under his own name. James's attitude to authorising a new bible is closer to that of Henry VIII, who authorised the King's Bible (see Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000], pp. 28-9). James's identification with the *King James Bible* is, however, even stronger than the identification of Henry with the King's Bible.

associates James, the bible and authority. This reflects and reinforces his political authority.

The King James Bible further reinforces James's authority by serving as a replacement for the Geneva Bible. The major change was the removal of the Geneva Bible's copious marginal notes, which are discursive, indicating and seeking to clarify textual difficulties. The Geneva Bible's preface to the reader states that the notes have been provided, and the text clarified through the use of italics and extra punctuation, so 'that by all meanes the reader might be holpen'.<sup>19</sup> These notes acknowledged the interpretative openness of the text, even as they sought to guide interpretation, whereas the King James Bible aimed to present a single, authoritative text. Moreover, the Geneva Bible's notes on doctrinal and moral points could be read as anti-monarchist. At the Hampton Court conference James explicitly stated that no marginal notes should be added to the authorised version, having found in the Geneva Bible 'some notes very partiall, vntrue, seditious, and savouring too much of daungerous, and trayterous conceites'.<sup>20</sup> The *King James Bible* firmly countered any association between the bible and anti-monarchism. The fact that this Bible (unlike the Geneva Bible) was published in gothic type associated it with texts of political authority, such as proclamations and ordinances, which were also printed in gothic type at this time.<sup>21</sup> Thus the ways in which the King James Bible differed from the Geneva Bible were attempts to make the later Bible more authoritative and to make its readers more passive; to accommodate it

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<sup>19</sup> *The Cambridge Geneva Bible of 1591*, facsimile reprint (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

<sup>20</sup> James went onto give the following examples: 'Exod I, 19, where the marginal note alloweth *disobedience to Kings*. And 2. *Chron* 15, 16, the note taxeth *Asa* for disposing his mother, *onely*, and not *killing her*' (from a contemporary account, quoted in M. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: the Printed Page in Early Modern England* [Charlottesville, 1993], p. 52). The Geneva Bible was the first English bible published in Scotland. It was published by James's printers, financed by a vote of the Scottish Church (Stevenson, *King James Bible*, p. 28). Presumably James was in fact forced by the Scottish Church into accepting the Geneva Bible. This may have fuelled his enthusiasm for the production of the King James Bible early in his English reign.

<sup>21</sup> Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*, p. 51. The Geneva Bible was printed in Roman type (Stevenson, *King James Bible*, p. 28).

to, and to reinforce, the monarch-subject relationship. The King James Bible was even printed by ‘*Robert Barker, printer to the Kings most Excellent Maiestie*’, who would also print James’s *Workes*. Thus, like James’s scriptural exegeses, the King James Bible attempts to assert royal authority over the most important text of authority.<sup>22</sup>

The translators of the 1611 Bible also reinforce James’s textual authority. ‘The Epistle Dedicatorie’ renders explicit the fact that James is himself making a statement through this bible: ‘there are infinite arguments of this right Christian and religious affection in Your Majesty; but none is more forcible to declare it to others than the vehement and perpetuated desire of accomplishing and publishing of this work’. The previous paragraph identifies one of those ‘infinite arguments’ as James ‘writing in defence of the Truth’ (p. lxxii). Thus the translators also represent James as ‘author’ in the sense of ‘writer’. The suggestion that James is making the same statement through the King James Bible as he is through his own writings, implicitly aligns the bible with writings by James.

The translators even explicitly identify God’s Word with the royal word:

the very meanest translation of the Bible in *English*, set forth by men of our profession [...] containeth the word of God, nay, is the word of God: As the King’s Speech which he uttered in Parliament, being translated into *French, Dutch, Italian* and *Latin*, is still the King’s Speech, though it be not interpreted by every translator with the like grace. (p. lxii)

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<sup>22</sup> In fact, the King James Bible did not entirely replace the Geneva Bible, which continued to be published until 1644 (Stevenson, *King James Bible*, p. 28). Tribble suggests that the Geneva Bible remained the most popular bible until about ten years after the King James Bible was published (*Margins*, p. 32).

The translators suggest that James's language, like God's language, has a fixed and reproducible meaning that exists unchanged through the processes of translation and interpretation.

James's representation of his proximity to God, of his creation of meaning as being an interpretation of God's truth, and of the parallels between divine and royal authority and authorship, which the King James Bible thus reinforces, supports his desire for his word to be treated as God's Word should be treated, for his unknowability to be respected, and for his authority to be beyond question. His following instructions to Prince Henry as to how to read the Scriptures also reflect how he wants to be 'read':

Admire reuerently such obscure places as ye vnderstand not [...] the Scripture is euer the best interpreter of it selfe; but preasse not curiously to seeke out farther then is contained therein, for that were ouer vnmannerly a presumption, to striue to bee further vpon Gods secrets, then he hath will ye be; for what hee thought needfull for vs to know, that hath he reuealed there.<sup>23</sup>

We will see how James claims for himself what he claims for God here: he has the right to privacy, to control what he reveals, to resist the prying of others, to be treated with reverence even when he cannot be understood. He claims essentially to be the best interpreter of himself.

### **Royal Authorship: from James's *Workes* to his manuscript poetry**

As James wrote and disseminated a wide range of texts as King of Scotland, so after 1603 he continued to publish widely, justifying his political decisions, re-

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<sup>23</sup> *Basilikon Doron* (p. 151).

presenting his speeches to parliament, engaging in European debates on matters of political and religious controversy. He also continued to read widely: 'James I was the first English monarch systematically to keep printed dossiers on subjects that interested him'. In particular, he 'tried to collect all the books written by everyone who wrote against him'.<sup>24</sup>

In the writings he produced in England he addressed the same range of audiences as he did in performing the role of king – the popular audience, the court, parliament, and leading European figures – and again was particularly concerned with his European audience. His most extended pieces engaged in debates over the powers of monarchs with continental Catholics, such as Cardinal Du Perron. These works include *An Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* (1607), and *A Premonition to All Most Mightie Monarches, Kings, Free Princes, and States of Christendome* (1609), the title of which emphasises its intended international audience. Most of James's writings were translated into Latin, the international language of learning. T. A. Birrell suggests that James's printer John Bill, or one of his staff, travelled to the Frankfurt Fair every year between 1605 and 1622 and tried to sell translations of the king's work on the Oath of Allegiance there.<sup>25</sup> James also attempted to have copies of *A Premonition* presented to all the sovereigns of Europe.<sup>26</sup>

James's major publication was the folio edition of his *Workes*, first published in 1616, published in Latin in 1619, and republished in English in 1620. This is a prestigious publication that reflects James's desire to elevate and monumentalise his word, and to leave his writings to posterity. The preface by James Montague, Bishop of

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<sup>24</sup> T. A. Birrell, *English Monarchs and Their Books* (London: British Library, 1987), pp. 26, 27.

<sup>25</sup> *English Monarchs and Their Books*, p. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Many Catholic rulers refused to accept it as the Pope had rapidly placed it on the Index (J. P. Sommerville, 'James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English Politics and Continental Theory', in *Mental World*, ed. by Peck, pp. 55-70 [p. 59]). See Sommerville's study, esp. pp. 60-2, for further consideration of James's intellectual involvement with continental Europe, as not only a writer but also as a reader and patron of European scholars.

Winchester renders explicit the hope that preserving these writings will win James lasting admiration and renown. Montague suggests that through time other monuments fade but writings '*gaine strength and get authoritie*'.<sup>27</sup> This points to the equation between authorship and authority.

As keen as James had been to disseminate his poetry widely prior to becoming King of England, he did not publish any further volumes of poetry during his English reign.<sup>28</sup> He continued to write and circulate poetry, however, as is evidenced by a group of unpublished poems, some written between 1583 and 1604 and some between the end of 1618 and the early months of 1623, that have survived in private poetical miscellanies and other manuscript collections of the time. Craigie suggests that some of these poems were well known in the second quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>29</sup>

Contemporary comments on James's *Workes* suggest an awareness that he could have chosen to include his poetry, Chamberlain, for example, noting that 'the Kings workes (all save his Poetrie) are abrode in one volume'.<sup>30</sup> This suggests that the fact James did not publish poetry during his English reign did not stop the English from continuing to think of him as a poet.

The lack of publication has tended to obscure the importance of the poetry James wrote in England. In discussing his Scottish poetry in the first chapter, we saw that he believed poetry to be an appropriate and effective vehicle for his self-representation. He continued to use the poetry he wrote in England as part of his self-representation within specific contexts and for specific political purposes. For example, to return to the occasion with which this thesis began, in 1621 James read out the verses

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<sup>27</sup> Sig. D1. Montague's 'Preface to the Reader' is omitted from the facsimile reprint of James's *Workes*, but it appears in the original 1616 and 1620 editions.

<sup>28</sup> Craigie proposes that a manuscript collection of short poems probably written between the start of 1616 and the later part of 1618, 'All the kings short poesis that ar not printed' may have been intended for publication, in connection with the 1616 edition of James's prose works (*Poems*, II, xxii-xxiii).

<sup>29</sup> *Poems*, II, xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>30</sup> *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. by Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols (Lancaster: Lancaster Press, 1939), II, 51.



he had written to his favourite, Buckingham, at a banquet held in Buckingham's Burley House. According to the Venetian ambassador's account, James also ordered these verses 'should be written on the walls, and carved in the marble of the doors for a perpetual memorial',<sup>31</sup> thereby literalising the metaphor of poetry as monument. James often chose to preserve his performances in written form – his desire for these verses to be written up parallels his publication of the speeches he delivered in parliament. In each case the written representation is an attempt to control the meaning of the performance. Though the reading of 1621 took place within an elite context, it exemplifies James's continued desire to elevate his own poetry, to leave his poetry to posterity, and to publicise himself as a poet. It seems that in England James intended his poems to have a continuing public function, but was now more concerned with a more specific readership. Perhaps he felt that within this narrower context he was better able to control the reception of his verse.

James also circulated poems in manuscript that participated in manuscript libel culture. One such poem, 'King James his verses made vpon a Libell lett fall in Court and entituled "The wiper of the Peoples teares/ The dryer vpp of doubts & feares"' (end of 1622/ start of 1623) is particularly illuminating as to James's literary strategy.<sup>32</sup> The early 1620s was a critical time for James as he struggled to pursue his unpopular foreign policy of a marriage between Prince Charles and the Spanish Infanta, as we have seen. In this manuscript poem he explicitly engages with criticism, sets out his view of his authority and argues that others do not have the right to represent him. The poem thus represents both general notions of royal authority and specific concerns and decisions. The fact that this is one of the few poems by James to have attracted the interest of

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<sup>31</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 260.

<sup>32</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 'Uncollected Poems', 182-191. From here on referred to as 'The wiper of the Peoples teares'. Quotations taken from *a* not *b* text. Line numbers in parentheses in the text.

historians reflects its historical importance.<sup>33</sup> I will address the range of the writing in which James involved himself during his English reign and the strategies he used to associate divine and royal authority, and political and textual authority, by considering two very different texts: the prestigious *Workes* and 'The wiper of the Peoples teares'.

In his *Workes* James brought together writings ranging from engagements in international theological debates, to social satire, as represented by *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*.<sup>34</sup> The collection thus demonstrates the range of his knowledge and writing ability and reflects his awareness of the range of audiences he had to address. He renders this awareness explicit in the preface to his 1619 *Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer*, included in the 1620 edition of his *Workes*. He states that this meditation was written 'for the benefit of all his subjects, especially of *such as follow the Court*' (p. 571) and reminds the reader

*how carefull I haue euer beene to obserue a decorum in the dedication of my bookes. As my BASILIKON DORON was dedicated to my Sonne HENRY, [...] because it treated of the Office of a King, it now belonging to my only Sonne CHARLES, who succeeds to it by right [...] and as I dedicated my Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance to all free Christian*

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<sup>33</sup> See Kevin Sharpe, 'The King's Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 117-138 [p. 130], and Thomas Cogswell, *The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 31.

<sup>34</sup> I concur with Fischlin and Fortier's suggestion that 'we can assume, given James's reputation for pedantry, that he had a hand in the choice, order, and shape of the texts that were printed' (*The True Law of Free Monarchies and Basilikon Doron* [Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1996], p. 29), and Fischlin's argument that 'the choices made in deploying a particular sequence of texts in the *Workes* are far from random and unconsidered' ('"To Eate the Flesh of Kings"', p. 391). This essay is one of the few studies of James's writings to consider the *Workes* as a text. Fischlin is, however, mainly concerned with James's apocalyptic writings, and he does not consider the framing apparatus in the *Workes*, other than Montague's dedication to Prince Charles. While *A Counterblaste to Tobacco* may seem to be a surprising choice for inclusion in the *Workes*, Sandra J. Bell argues convincingly that this text participates in the rhetorical and political strategies characteristic of James's early English reign ('"Precious Stinke": James I's *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 323-343).

*Princes and States, because they had all of them an interest in that argument. Other of my bookes which treated of matters belonging to euery qualitie of persons, being therefore indefinitely dedicated to the Reader in generall, I cannot surely finde out a person, to whom I can more fitly dedicate this short Meditation of mine, then to you, BUCKINGHAM. For it is made vpon a very short and plaine Prayer, and therefore the fitter for a Courtier. (p. 572)*

This passage claims that James chooses dedicatees for his works according to how the content of his works matches their status and appeals to their interests.<sup>35</sup>

In the 1620 edition the inclusion of the *Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer* with a preface that thus refers to a number of other texts in the collection, helps to present the *Workes* as a collection of texts which were written with attention to decorum, which appeal to a range of readers, and to which the general reader has been given privileged access. Most of the texts included in the *Workes* had already been published individually; many were responses to specific circumstances, events or debates; many were explicitly addressed to particular audiences. By publishing his writings as a collection, however, James was asserting that the individual texts transcended their contexts of production and were relevant to a more general audience. He was thereby making claims not only about his authority but also about his authorship.

The volume reflects the progression of James's writing career. In *A Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer*, James recalls his scriptural exegesis of the 1580s with which his *Workes* begins: he has come from 'wading in these high and profound Mysteries in the

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<sup>35</sup> It suppresses, however, any sense of the dedication as a tool for manipulating the reader, for serving diplomatic interests, or for displaying a relationship in order to reinforce the royal image. This split between what is claimed and what is suppressed can also be discerned in the way the passage builds towards dedicating this meditation to Buckingham. Though the passage addresses him directly, the fact that it was published suggests James was primarily concerned to justify to others dedicating his work to the royal favourite, who was, as we saw in the previous chapter, powerful and unpopular by 1619.

*Reuelation, wherein an Elephant may swimme; to meditate vpon the plaine, smoothe and easie Lord's Prayer [...] the reason is, I grow in yeeres'* (p. 571-2). In thus reflecting on the chronology of his writing career, James is also reflecting on the movement of this volume. Despite the self-deprecation, he is indicating the length of his writing career and the range of his writings. In the 'Epistle Dedicatorie' to the final piece added to the 1620 edition, *A Meditation vpon Saint Matthew or a Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration*, James reflects on his *Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer*. While there he chose a plain and easy subject, he has now been moved to meditate on the passion of Christ (p. 601). This edition thus begins and ends with reference to the King's ability to interpret God's mysteries. Dedicated to his heir and offering advice on kingship, *A Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* also recalls *Basilikon Doron*, one of the first pieces in the volume. The 1620 edition in particular thus has a circular coherence. James's *Workes* is not just a collection of writings, but a culmination of, and a reflection upon, a long and varied writing career.

James's *Workes* can be seen as the culmination of his efforts to present his word to be read as God's Word should be read. The frontispiece pictures James sitting on a throne with royal regalia, but overall the visual impression is one that confirms the prioritisation of the verbal. Behind him is a cloth of state bearing his motto, *Beati Pacifici*. Behind him on his right is a book showing the title *Verbum Dei*. God is symbolised by the book as James is representing himself through this book.<sup>36</sup> Across the book of God lies the sword of justice, preparing for James's emphasis in his *Paraphrase*

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<sup>36</sup> The position that the bible occupies in the frontispiece to James's book is occupied by James's book itself in an official engraving by Willem van de Passe, dating from 1622-24. In this engraving Charles stands with his hands placed on the Bible, besides which lies James's *Workes*, with its Latin title, *Opera Regis* (Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature* [Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1983], pp. 90-1). This engraving makes an explicit parallel between God's word and the king's word, and emphasises the extent to which the *Workes* became a symbol of royal authority.

*upon the Revelation* on the sword of God's mouth as the force of his word.<sup>37</sup> Below the picture are four lines of verse that conclude '*knowledge makes the KING most like his maker*'. We have seen the relations between 'author' and 'maker'. James's *Paraphrase upon the Revelation*, which the reader is about to encounter, emphasises the power of God's word to create. The frontispiece implies that James's book is informed by God's book and that the king is like God in the power of his word. The title-page then pictures the four crowns of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, topped by a divine crown. John N. King suggests that, 'shaped like the imperial crown of England', this is 'a distinctly regal variation of the celestial crown'.<sup>38</sup> Thus, as the frontispiece implies parallels between the royal and the divine, so too the iconography of the title page blurs the royal and the divine.

The *Workes* represents royal authority not only in terms of writing, but also in terms of reading. For the title-page James appropriates God's words to Solomon '*loe I haue giuen thee a wise and an vnderstanding heart*' (1 Kings 3: 12). This again celebrates the knowledge and understanding that James derives from God, which is what his interpretations of Scripture demonstrate. His self-representation as interpreter of God's meaning underpins his assertion of his capacity to interpret successfully the meaning of others, however hidden. The notion of James as a reader of special understanding is picked up later in the volume in a secular context. 'A Discovrse of the Maner of the Discoverie of the Powder-Treason' reflects the Solomonic image James tried to project.<sup>39</sup> The account explains that Lord Mountegle received a letter of warning about the treason, which he and the Earl of Salisbury showed to James partly because of the 'expectation and experience they had of his Maiesties fortunate Iudgement in

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<sup>37</sup> John N. King points out that the sword, traditionally signifying justice, and the book are defining symbols of Tudor majesty, which first appear in Henry VIII's hands in the Coverdale Bible title page. ('James I and King David: Jacobean Iconography and its Legacy', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 421-453 [p. 432]).

<sup>38</sup> 'James I and King David', p. 435.

<sup>39</sup> This account of the Gunpowder Plot was first published in 1605 and republished in James's *Workes*.

clearing and solving of obscure riddles and doubtful mysteries' (p. 226). The account continues that the king read the letter and concluded that it ought to be taken seriously 'for that the Style of it seemed to bee more quicke and pithie, then is vsuall to be in any Pasquil or libel' (p. 227). Having considered the letter in detail, James ordered the searching of the under-rooms of parliament house, the treason was discovered and disaster averted. His reading of the letter is described not only in this account, but in his 1605 speech to parliament (p. 502), also included in the *Workes*. These self-representations send out politically useful warnings that intention and meaning cannot be concealed from the king, even when this is the aim of the writer or speaker.

The title-page states that James's book has been published by Bishop Montague, and pictures the figures of Religio and Pax, Religio holding an open book towards the reader and next to the central words 'THE WORKES OF THE MOST HIGH AND MIGHTY PRINCE, JAMES'. Thus the reader is invited by Religio to enter James's book. Kevin Sharpe suggests that the layout of the title-page invites the reader to recall the King James Bible.<sup>40</sup> Such echoing would reinforce James's implication that his word is, like an edition of the bible, a reproduction of divine truth.

The following page reiterates the title and author, the biblical quotation and the publication details, and presents another image of an open book illuminated by the sun in the heavens. The reader then encounters a dedicatory epistle and preface by Montague. This continues the sense that James's book is not only authorised by God, but also by the Church. This is a reversal of James authorising the 1611 Bible – in these two books there is a mutually reinforcing relation between the Church and the Crown.

Montague's dedicatory epistle tells Prince Charles to 'let these *Workes* [...] lie before you as a Patterne'. His preface then justifies collecting James's works, and James

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<sup>40</sup> Foreword, *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, p. 19.

writing these texts in the first place, by citing God as a precedent.<sup>41</sup> Thus God provides a pattern for James and James in turn provides a pattern for his son. This supports James making the same claim in *A Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* (see above). Montague stresses that '*the Workes of GOD*' began with God's direct and unmediated production of his word: '*hee beginnes with the word out of his owne mouth, proceeds with the Tables written by his owne fingers*'. This emphasis seems intended to justify James writing himself, rather than employing others to write for him. Montague thus establishes associations between James's *Workes* and '*the Workes of GOD*'. He goes on to state that all of James's writings included in his *Workes* '*carry in them so much diuine trewth and light*', and to represent the power of these writings in terms that recall the bible's representation of the power of God's word: James's adversaries '*are not safe from being blasted by the breath of his Maiesties Bookes*'.<sup>42</sup> This preface thus in some ways reinforces James's claim that his writing is divinely authorised, his representation of his writings as a reproduction of God's truth, and his desire for his word to have authority comparable to the authority of God's word.

The individual works by James make the same claims for his authority and reinforce each other, but it is in being brought together as a collection, with this framing apparatus, that they make the strongest claims. While they are ordered broadly chronologically, their order has certain implications that further support James's self-representation. The *Workes* begins with James's early scriptural exegeses. As we have seen, James's expansions on the Book of Revelation in his paraphrase emphasise the power of the divine word. The positioning of this paraphrase as the first text in James's *Workes* strengthens the claims it is implicitly making for the power of the royal word, for it introduces and forms part of an extended demonstration of the power of the royal

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<sup>41</sup> Sig. A4, B1-B1v. Montague goes on to give a range of biblical and historical precedents, up to Queen Elizabeth (B2-C4).

<sup>42</sup> Sig. B1v, D4v, C4v.

word.<sup>43</sup> In his paraphrase James follows John's reiteration that it is he who has seen and heard the things he is describing with the explanation that 'I declare you my name the oftener, lest the authority of the Booke should be called in doubt, through the vncertaintie of the Writer' (22: 8). This has particular resonance for James, reflecting his desire for authority to lie with the writer not the reader and, more specifically, his sense that *his* royal identify should give *his* word authority. While James's *Workes* is continuously paginated, several of the texts have separate title-pages, which means that the reader is repeatedly reminded of the identity of the author.

In the context of the *Workes* in particular, the paraphrase also supports James's claims for royal unknowability and the unquestionable nature of royal authority. The biblical text of Revelation in itself reflects how James wants his word to be read, particularly in ending with the injunction that no man should add to or take away from the words of the book of this prophecy. James's paraphrase expands significantly on the idea of misreading:

whosoeuer in coping [sic] or translating this Booke, adulterateth any waies the Originall, or in interpreting of it, wittingly strayes from the trew meaning of it, and from the analogie of Faith, to follow the fantastickall inuention of man, or his owne preoccupied opinions [...] shalbe accursed as a peruerter of the trewth of God and his Scriptures.  
(22: 19)

Coming at the end of a text in which James blurs his voice with that of John, which is positioned as the first text of the *Workes*, it also serves as an injunction to James's

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<sup>43</sup> Fischlin also points out that it is 'not surprising' that James's *Workes* should begin with his 'apocalyptic texts, which testify to his faith while highlighting the importance of the book [...] in relation to his sovereign position as *fidei defensor*' ("To Eat the Flesh of Kings", pp. 390-1).



readers as to how to read his book. This injunction is consonant with comments he makes on how people should not misread his word, some of which come in texts included later in the volume. For example, in March 1610 James instructed parliament: ‘peruert not my words by any corrupt affections, turning them to an ill meaning, like one, who when hee heares the tolling of a Bell, fancies to himselfe, that it speakes those words which are most in his minde’ (p. 547-8).<sup>44</sup> Such echoing reinforces the implication that James’s word should be treated as God’s word should be treated.

After the scriptural exegeses, the volume continues with James’s writings on political and social matters. This sequencing in itself implicitly identifies God’s Word with the King’s word. The transitional point is ‘His Maiesties Owne Sonnet’, with which the last of the scriptural writings concludes (p. 89). This sonnet firmly asserts James’s authorship, yet is situated as part of a text that is presented as interpretative. As we have seen, being both creative and a ‘divine art’, poetry enables the blurring of creation and interpretation. This transition helps to suggest that each of James’s forthcoming texts is, like the scriptural exegeses, an interpretation of God’s truth. At the end of the volume *A Paterne for a Kings Inavgvration* reiterates that ‘the authority of a King [...] is onely giuen by *God*’ (p. 614). Coming at the end of an extended demonstration of James’s authorship, this is also intended to reinforce the God-given authority of the king’s writings. Again James renders synonymous authority and authorship. Thus James’s *Workes* is a representation of the God-given authority of the King’s word. It is an extended attempt to equate political and textual authority, to imply parallels between royal and divine authority and authorship, and to control how the king is read.

The manuscript poem ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’, introduced above,

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<sup>44</sup> I will be exploring James’s attempts to avoid misinterpretation of his words, in this speech and elsewhere, in chapter four.

represents the opposite end of the spectrum of James's writings in terms of form and style. While James's *Workes* is intended to function as a lasting monument, 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' appears to be an immediate response to specific challenges. We shall see, however, that this poem is informed by the same premises and shares the same aims as the *Workes*.

'The wiper of the Peoples teares' must be considered in the context of the tensions created by James's unpopular foreign policy of seeking a Catholic match for Prince Charles. The king faced increasing pressure to end the negotiations and intervene in the war that broke out in 1619 between the Catholic Habsburgs and his daughter Elizabeth and Protestant son-in-law, Frederick V.<sup>45</sup> There was a marked rise in the discussion and representation of state affairs.<sup>46</sup> James had always tried to control public discussion and responded to this rise by increasing royal censorship in various ways. At the end of 1620 he issued a proclamation asserting that his subjects should not 'intermeddle by Penne, or Speech' with matters 'above their reach and calling'. This was followed in July 1621 with an even severer proclamation against discussion of political affairs by 'all manner of persons, of what estate or degree soever'.<sup>47</sup> The timing of this proclamation raises the possibility that James's disengagement from political

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<sup>45</sup> For further detail see chapter two and Cogswell, 'England and the Spanish Match', in Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, eds, *Conflict in Early Stuart England* (London and New York: Longman, 1989), and *The Blessed Revolution*, and Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics 1621-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>46</sup> See Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 350. One clear indication of an increased interest in political matters at this time is the fact that it was in 1621 that the first news-sheets, dealing only with foreign affairs, were published in London (p. 394). For a discussion of the various ways in which news was circulated in the 1620s, and of its impact on politics and public perception of politics, see Richard Cust, 'News and Politics in Early Seventeenth Century England', *Past and Present*, 112 (1986), 60-90.

<sup>47</sup> *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. by James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes, 2 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973) I, 495-6, 520. These proclamations urged people to respect already existing laws. England had long had strict laws of sedition and censorship. These were tightened in the sixteenth century and measures introduced by Elizabeth in 1581 remained the basis for the restriction of speech throughout the seventeenth century (Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, pp. 337-8). Some of James's proclamations may not have been written entirely by him, but, as noted in the introduction, he told parliament in 1621 'most of them myself doth dictate every word. Never any proclamation of state and weight which I did not direct' (quoted in *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, v-vi). On this basis I am assuming that he was responsible for the wording of these proclamations against public discussion.

concerns in the verses he read out to Buckingham at Burley-on-the-Hill in August 1621, discussed in the first chapter, was in part a further attempt to shift attention away from the matters he did not want others to discuss. In December 1621 he responded to discussion in parliament by sending a letter commanding that none 'shall presume henceforth to meddle with anything concerning our government or deep matters of State, and namely not to deal with our dearest son's match with the daughter of Spain'. This exchange formed part of the most extended of the parliamentary debates on freedom of speech, which ended in James dissolving parliament in January 1622.<sup>48</sup> In 1622 he responded to discussion of the Spanish match in the pulpits by having 'a procession of clergymen' reprimanded,<sup>49</sup> and by issuing '*Directions concerning preachers*' in August that year. These directions state that henceforth no preacher 'shall presume [...] to declare, limit, or bound [...] in any lecture or sermon the power, prerogative, and jurisdiction, authority, or duty of Sovereign Princes, or otherwise meddle with matters of state'.<sup>50</sup> At the end of 1622/ start of 1623 he responded to an anonymous verse lampoon of the Spanish match (that has not been traced) by writing 'The wiper of the Peoples teares', in which he rejects 'railing rhymes and vaunting verse / Which your kings brest shall neuer peirce' (23-4).

This poem, though unpublished, was circulated in manuscript form as the king's verse. According to Craigie, it has survived in numerous copies in private poetical miscellanies and other manuscript collections of the time, and was well known in the

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<sup>48</sup> *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I*, ed. by J. R. Tanner (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), pp. 278-279. For James's account of this conflict with parliament, see *His Maiesties Declaration, Touching his Proceedings in the Late Assemblie and Conuention of Parliament*, published shortly after he dissolved parliament, in *King James VI and I: Political Writings*, ed. by Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). It was not, of course, unusual for a monarch to try to control the subjects discussed in parliament. For example, in 1585 Elizabeth, using similar language to James, threatened those members of parliament who 'meddle with matters above their capacity'. It was indeed Elizabeth who formulated a new distinction between 'matters of state', which parliament should only discuss if invited, and the social and economic issues that were the ordinary business of parliament (Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, second edn (London: Longman, 1998), pp. 124, 125). James clearly subscribes to this distinction.

<sup>49</sup> Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, p. 27.

<sup>50</sup> *Constitutional Documents*, ed. by Tanner, pp. 81-2.

second quarter of the seventeenth century.<sup>51</sup> The full title – ‘King James his verses made vpon a Libell lett fall in Court and entituled “The wiper of the Peoples teares/ The dryer vpp of doubts & feares” – suggests that the poem addresses those responsible for the ‘Libell lett fall in Court’. Even if the court was its primary intended audience, however, it seems likely that James would have been aware that if the poem were circulated in the court, it would also be disseminated beyond the court. He may even have wanted his poem to be more widely read. As Curtis Perry argues, James is trying to extend his ‘powers of “discursive imposition” beyond the immediate reach of the law’, to reassert the centrality of the royal voice by injecting it into the decentralised form of discourse represented by manuscript verse. He is responding to the new challenge represented by the culture of manuscript libel.<sup>52</sup> Rather than merely ignoring or dismissing the original lampoon, he engages with it on its own terms. This poem thus forms another example of the king trying to assert his control over a sphere of discourse within which he has been negatively represented.

The political motivations of ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ go beyond the immediate pretext of responding to manuscript verse. James is using his poem to support and interpret his public declarations, particularly the proclamations he issued at the end of 1620 and in 1621, each of which had met with little success.<sup>53</sup> That James’s poem serves this purpose is emphasised by the fact that it concludes with the reflection

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<sup>51</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 263, xxvi-xxvii.

<sup>52</sup> Curtis Perry, “‘If Proclamations Will Not Serve’: The Late Manuscript Poetry of James I and the Culture of Libel”, in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 205-232 (pp. 210, 225).

<sup>53</sup> The unofficial market for news could not be controlled (Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, p. 21). In 1621 Chamberlain refers to the reissued proclamation against public discussion of matters of state, ‘which the common people know not how to understand, nor how far matter of state may stretch or extend; for they continue to take no notice of yt, but print every weeke (at least) corantas with all manner of newes’ (II, 396). Despite James’s attempts to prevent parliament from discussing the Spanish match, he had to resort to dissolving parliament in 1622 and the parliament that reassembled in 1624 continued to favour war with Spain (see Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics*). Peter Lake argues that despite James’s ‘Directions for preachers’, the court sermons of 1622-5 represent a coherent attempt to argue for war with Spain (*The English Sermon Revised*, ed. by Lori Anne Ferrell and Peter McCullough [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000], p. 175).

'If proclamations will not serue / I must do more' (175-6).<sup>54</sup> In his proclamation, as well as in his letter to parliament and the directions for preachers, James represents the hierarchy by which he is king by divine right as a hierarchy of access to knowledge and capacity for understanding. He asserts that it is inappropriate, presumptuous, and pointless for his subjects to attempt to discuss matters that are beyond their understanding – in each he emphasises these assertions by using the verb 'meddle' – and urges restraint and obedience. 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' reiterates both the instruction 'Meddle not with your princes cares' (97) and the notion of a hierarchy of access to knowledge and capacity for understanding:

Purblinde people why doe yow prate  
 Too shallowe for the deepe of state  
 You cannot iudge whats truely myne (3-5)

Kings cannot comprehended bee  
 In Comon circles [...]. (145-6)

Thus James is expressing the same instructions and ideas in a simpler and more emotive form, in order to reach and convince a particular audience. His insistence on royal unknowability here is comparable to his emphasis elsewhere on divine unknowability.

In 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' James reiterates the claims about his authority and mystique, which he has been making throughout his writings, and which

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<sup>54</sup> That James is using poetry to support proclamations is also suggested by the example cited in the previous chapter of a poem he wrote in 1622 urging people to leave London. He released in November of the same year a proclamation making the same request (*Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 561-2), and the poem begins by addressing 'Ye women that doe London loue so well / whome scarce a Proclamation can expell' (*Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 179).

underlie his public declarations regarding the discussion of royal affairs. He emphasises that his authority derives from God:

God and Kings doe pace together

[...]

God aboue all men Kings enspires

Hold you the publique beaten way

Wounder at Kings, and them obey. (9, 14-16)

The verbs he uses in this poem are particularly illuminating. He asserts that his subjects are unable fully 'to see', 'to comprehend', least of all 'to judge', and therefore should adopt passive roles, 'consenting' and 'obeying'. James, by contrast, 'knows', 'chooses', 'refuses', 'corrects'. This matches his presentation in *The Trew Law* of a one-sided contract in which the King has 'right and power' while his subjects owe him 'allegiance and obedience'. He is trying to use his poem to present this 'contract' in a more popular, more persuasive form. The fact that within this poem James refers his readers to his previous writings – 'doe remember euery thinge/ That I haue heretofore put out' (135-6) – suggests that he sees this poem as participating in a broader literary strategy.

'The wiper of the Peoples teares' thus exemplifies James attempting to represent his political power as giving him control over interpretation and representation. The poem argues that as his subjects cannot understand him, they should not attempt to represent him. His subjects should not pry into his secrets but should be content with what he chooses to reveal. He should be revered and obeyed, even when he cannot be comprehended. He is 'ever the best interpreter' of himself. These instructions as to how James should be read, closely echo the instructions he gives Prince Henry as to how Scripture should be read, quoted above.

Thus James intended all of his writings – even his unpublished poetry – to be read as forceful expressions of royal political and textual power, to be read as God’s word should be read, to maintain his God-like inscrutability. The fact that he produced not only prestigious publications like his *Workes*, but also verse that participates in manuscript libel culture, demonstrates not only his consciousness of the need to address different audiences in different ways, but also his belief that his word should have authority whatever medium he writes in, and his attempt to control through direct participation all the spheres of discourse in which he might be represented.

### **James’s anxieties about interpretation and representation**

Throughout this discussion we have seen that despite the claims James made about his authority, he was anxious about how he might be ‘read’ in every sense. I will now explore in more depth these anxieties. Essentially he was anxious about being misinterpreted, challenged, or criticised, about anything that was a threat to his authority. The extent of these anxieties may relate to his experience in Scotland of challenges to his political authority, both theoretical in the form of the advocacy of resistance theory, and actual in the form of attempted coups.<sup>55</sup> These anxieties led him to try to maintain secrecy and mystique, to control or prevent representations or discussion by others, as we have seen, and to justify his political authority. This is evident in the following extract from a speech of 1616:

that which concernes the mysterie of the Kings power, is not lawfull to be disputed; for that is to wade into the weakenesse of Princes, and to

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<sup>55</sup> See chapter one.

take away the mysticall reuerence, that belongs vnto them that sit in the  
Throne of God.<sup>56</sup>

This extract suggests that James felt that it was with regard to royal mystique that he was both most powerful and most vulnerable; his authority depended in part on a reverent perception of mystique, so exposure might mean a lessening of reverence, and therefore authority. Yet what we also see here is that James is representing, explaining and justifying his inscrutability, mystique and authority. Thus he has opposing impulses towards self-mystification and self-disclosure and this is a central paradox in his self-representation.

These anxieties that James reveals about his political authority are analogous to his anxieties about how his word would be interpreted. He was anxious about how his spoken word would be interpreted and recorded. In his speech to parliament of 1610, for example, he says, apparently spontaneously, 'I wish you here now to vnderstand me rightly. And because I see many writing and noting, I will craue your pardons, to holde you a little longer by speaking the more distinctly, for feare of mistaking' (p. 536).<sup>57</sup> He was also anxious about how his written word would be read. Again, the extent of James's anxieties about textual authority may relate to his early experiences in Scotland, with regard to the *Lepanto* and *Basilikon Doron*. As we saw in chapter one, he may originally have written both pieces with deliberate ambiguity, and his claims in the prefaces of the published versions that he has been misinterpreted may have been

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<sup>56</sup> Speech in the Star Chamber (p. 557).

<sup>57</sup> It was not only James who was anxious about the re-presentation of his speeches. Members of parliament were afraid of misrepresenting the royal word within parliament. The day after James's speech of May 1610 the House of Commons agreed it was 'not fit for any man to take upon him to be the reporter of it'. In November 1610 the Speaker reporting to the House of Commons on an audience with the king was reluctant to take responsibility for conveying what James had said. He stated he 'was not ignorant that 'twas dangerous to carry the words of a prince in a subject's mouth and therefore desired his gracious pleasure that I might have it in writing'. He then read out what James had written (*Proceedings in Parliament, 1610*, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, vol I, House of Lords, vol II, House of Commons [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966], II, 108, 313).



merely a strategy to justify changing and publishing the original texts. Whether the misinterpretations James describes were actual or not, however, his addition of prefaces that attempt to control reading of the texts reflects his awareness of the political danger of his texts being open to a range of interpretations.

While James was aware of this political danger, he also seems to have shared the increasing awareness, within the rhetorical, literary culture he inhabited, of the instability of textual meaning and the difficulty of controlling interpretation. Reading was increasingly being understood as an active process in which multiple meanings can be perceived.<sup>58</sup> Above all, the rise of Protestantism and religious division had exposed the fact that even the bible could be interpreted in a range of ways. Even the King James Bible – which was intended to present a single authoritative voice – was open to multiple interpretations. Anxiety about this is evident in the translators' preface: 'things of this quality have ever been subject to the censures of illmeaning and discontented persons' and these translators too express the fear that they will meet 'calumniation and hard interpretations' (p. lxxii). James reflects a sense that Scripture is being widely misread when he warns his son in *Basilikon Doron* 'beware ye wrest not the word to your owne appetite, as ouer many doe, making it like a bell to sound as ye please to interpret' (p. 149). These words are echoed in James's 1610 speech when he asks parliament 'that yee peruert not my words by any corrupt affections, turning them to an ill meaning, like one, who when hee heares the tolling of a Bell, fancies to himselfe, that it speakes those words which are most in his minde' (p. 547-8). This parallel furthers

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<sup>58</sup> Annabel Patterson, in *Censorship and Interpretation* (Wisconsin; London: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), cites the work of a French poet, Clement Marot, as an early instance of this awareness. In a collection of poems first published in 1532 Marot addressed a poem to Francis I in which he expressed 'the individual's right to decide for himself on the meaning of texts' (pp. 4-6). In *Reading Revolutions*, Sharpe explores in depth the nature and conception of reading in the period, drawing attention to the fact that Renaissance educational theory emphasised the arts of reading, and humanism recognised 'the independence and power of readers, as well as authors, to construct their own meanings' (p. 40). Montague's preface to James's *Workes* presents as a truism that the works of men are 'subject to so many interpretations' (sig. B1v).

our sense that James believes others should treat his word as they *should* treat God's word. As much as he uses the bible to lend his language authority, his awareness that even Scripture is open to misinterpretation must have increased his anxiety about the misinterpretation of his word.

James even represents his own reading in terms of actively looking beyond literal or surface meanings. In 'A Discovrse of the Maner of the Discoverie of the Powder-Treason', for example, he is described as being

moued to interprete and construe the latter Sentence in the Letter [...] against all ordinarie sence and construction in Grammar, as if by these words, *For the danger is past as soone as you haue burned the Letter,* should be closely vnderstood the suddaintie and quicknesse of the danger [...] turning that word of *as soone*, to the sense of, *as quickly*.  
(pp. 227-8)

He reads carefully, responds to style, and produces an interpretation of the letter that is reliant upon actively changing the meaning of certain words. This is also admitted in his 1605 speech to parliament, where he states that upon seeing the letter he 'did vpon the instant interpret and apprehend some darke phrases therein, contrary to the ordinary Grammer construction of them' (p. 502).

This has the political purpose of emphasising royal judgement, insight and authority, and functioning as a deterrent against those who would try to deceive the king, or to conceal satire against him. Thus in the proclamation 'against excesse of Lavish and Licentious Speech of matters of State', which James issued in 1620 in response to discussion of the Spanish match, he warns:

neither let any man mistake Us so much, as to thinke, that by giving faire, and specious attributes to Our Person, they can cover the scandalls [...] but conceive, that Wee make no other construction of them, but as fine, and artificial glosses, the better to give passage to the rest of their imputations and scandalls.<sup>59</sup>

James acknowledges that sometimes it is necessary to look beyond the surface; he was aware that when he read, and re-presented his reading, he was actively constructing meaning.

Thus James was in a contradictory position: he was an active interpreter who did not want to be actively interpreted. He wanted the authority to determine meaning to lie with him when he was the writer *and* when he was the reader. While his interpretations of Scripture reiterate the bible's representation of language as authority, of control over meaning as lying in the word not in the reading of the word – which is exactly what he wanted for his writings – his interpretations of Scripture also reflect the authority of James as a reader.<sup>60</sup> The more he advertised his capacity to perceive hidden meanings in texts, the more he acknowledged that meanings he had not intended might be perceived in his texts. Even though he may have felt that he was in a unique position to interpret because he was God's elect, because, like Solomon, he had vision, insight, and judgement, while his subjects had less ability to perceive and interpret than he, his experience as a reader must have fed into his anxieties about the interpretation of his meaning by others.

These anxieties about political and textual authority may explain James's ambivalence towards publication. In addition to these anxieties, there was a 'stigma of

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<sup>59</sup> *Proclamations*, ed. by Larkin and Hughes, I, 496.

<sup>60</sup> While James intends to advertise his interpretative authority, Fischlin suggests that his paraphrases also implicitly recognise the reality of 'exegetical diversity' ("To Eat the Flesh of Kings", p. 400).

print' for men of rank, that was particularly associated with poetry.<sup>61</sup> If publishing verse was beneath the gentility, then it was even further beneath a monarch. James's first volume, *The Essayes of a Prentise* (Edinburgh, 1584), was not printed under his name, as though he was trying to maintain a degree of privacy. It includes, however, such obvious clues to the author's identity as an acrostic dedicatory poem that spells out JACOBUS SEXTUS, reflecting James's urge to publicise himself.<sup>62</sup> His second volume declares his identity: *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Hours* (Edinburgh, 1591), but the title also plays down the significance of his poetry and associates the collection with the notion of poetry as a courtly pastime, rather than with print as a public and commercial enterprise. The claim in the preface to the *Lepanto* that James has been forced into print by the fact that an unofficial version is in circulation may be merely a strategy for avoiding the stigma of print (no such versions are known). The anxieties about publication at which these publications hint, may have increased through experience, leaving James unwilling to publish the poetry he wrote in England.<sup>63</sup>

Some of James's prose publications also indicate anxiety about monarchical publication. The claim in the preface to *Basilikon Doron* that James has been forced into print by the circulation of an unofficial and incomplete version may again be merely a strategy to legitimise publication (no such copies are known). The list of contents at the end of Montague's preface to James's *Workes* notes that *The Trew Law, A Counter-*

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<sup>61</sup> Through most of the sixteenth century and much of the seventeenth, the 'stigma of print' made many men of rank either deliberately avoid print or try to maintain the illusion that they had only reluctantly allowed their work to be printed (Arthur F. Marotti, *Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* [Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1995], p. 228). See also J. W. Saunders, 'The stigma of print: a note on the social bases of Tudor poetry', *Essays in Criticism* 1 (1951), 139-64.

<sup>62</sup> While Marotti argues that the publication of Sir Philip Sidney's verse in the 1590s began to provide the necessary sociocultural legitimation for printing verse (*Manuscript*, p. 228-9), Stephen W. May suggests that the publication of *Essayes of a Prentise* had already helped to reduce the stigma of print ('Tudor Aristocrats and the Mythical "Stigma of Print"', *Renaissance Papers* 1980, 16-17).

<sup>63</sup> The fact that James did not publish any volumes of poetry in England may also result from the changed context: he no longer had the 'Castalian Band' around him and may no longer have felt the same need to publish his verse as a counter to satiric verse, such verse not being as widely published in England as it had been in Scotland (see chapter one).

*blast to Tobacco, A Discourse of the Powder Treason* and *An Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* were all originally published anonymously. Again, despite the ostensible anonymity in the original publications, the identity of the author was not entirely concealed; the preface to *A Counter-blast to Tobacco* identifies James; *The Trew Law* was published by the King's printer, Robert Waldegrave, making the identity of the author obvious. While James's *Workes* confidently and repeatedly proclaims the identity of its author, it thus acknowledges his previous ambivalence towards publication. This acknowledgement, plus the fact that the *Workes* includes a lengthy preface that attempts to justify James publishing his works, betrays his continuing anxieties and indicates the continuance of the contemporary view that it was not appropriate for a King to publish.

In the preface Montague admits that many people think '*it had beene better his Maiestie had neuer written any Bookes at all*'. Although Montague tries to present writing as a forceful political weapon, not an alternative to political engagement, he engages with the view that James writes instead of acting: '*little it befitts the Maiesty of a King to turne Clerke, and to make a warre with the penne, that were fitter to be fought with the Pike*'.<sup>64</sup> That people might have this perception must have been a particular anxiety for James by the time the *Workes* was republished (1620), as at this time he was struggling to justify his non-intervention in the Palatinate war.<sup>65</sup> Montague also addresses the perception that royal publication is inappropriate because of the commercialisation of the book: '*since that Booke-writing is growen into a Trade; It is*

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<sup>64</sup> Sig. B2v.

<sup>65</sup> Even early in James's reign, before the outbreak of war in Europe, there was a sense that writing took him away from other responsibilities. Chamberlain, for example, commented in 1608 that he hears the king is 'so wholly possest and over-carefull about his booke [*An Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance*], that till that be finished to his liking, he can brooke no other sport or busines' (*Letters*, II, 291). Malcolm Smuts suggests that in this period several of James's continental allies also got impatient with him for dealing with religious controversy by writing books instead of by taking decisive action ('The Making of *Rex Pacificus*: James VI and I and the Problem of Peace in an Age of Religious War', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 371-387 [p. 382]).

*as dishonorable for a King to write bookes; as it is for him to be a Practitioner in a Profession*'.<sup>66</sup> As James is not writing for money, so, as Montague feels the need to point out in his dedication to Prince Charles, he is not like a court writer: 'these *Workes* come not to you, as vsually Bookes doe to men of great *Dignitie*, for *Patronage* and *Protection*; for Protection is properly from iniurie; and that the Royall *Author* of them is best able to right'.<sup>67</sup> This concern to differentiate James from the other kinds of people who write betrays the anxiety that he may not appear to be different, and leaves it difficult to justify why he writes at all. Montague's dedication hints that a King should only receive not produce writings, that as the King is the source of patronage – and it is nonsensical for him to write to himself – James's writings have a certain redundancy.

Montague urges that '*if a King will needs write; Let him write like a King, euery Lyne a Law, euery Word a Precept, euery Letter a Mandate*'.<sup>68</sup> This is how a King *should* write and how James *wants* his word to be received, but Montague is here acknowledging that a king's writing does not automatically have this kind of authority. He is admitting the possibility of – and perhaps even reflecting upon experience of – James not writing like a king.

Thus while James intends to express his political authority through his textual authority, in fact his anxiety about justifying political authority is analogous to his anxiety about maintaining textual authority. He is anxiously aware of the role of the reader in constructing meaning. His manipulations of Scripture and representations of himself as a reader contradict his claims that his own words have only one fixed meaning. Even the appropriateness for a monarch of the very medium of publication is still in question.

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<sup>66</sup> Sig. B2v. For a discussion of the history of the book trade, see H. S. Bennett, *English Books and Readers, 1558-1603* and *English Books and Readers, 1603 to 1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1965, 1970).

<sup>67</sup> Sig. A3v.

<sup>68</sup> Sig. B2v.

In accordance with his anxieties about language, in *Basilikon Doron* James expresses a desire to be judged by his actions: he wishes ‘*all men to iudge of my future proiects, according to my by-past actions*’ (p. 145), and advises Prince Henry ‘*kythe more by your deedes then by your wordes*’ (p. 154). He is, however, expressing this idea in writing – we get a sense that James feels language is inadequate, yet knows he has no better tool. The circulation of the poetry James wrote in England and his extensive publications of prose works reflect his continuing desire to self-publicise, despite his anxieties. For, somewhat paradoxically, James responds to his anxieties about how he is ‘read’ through writing about himself and disseminating his writings. His literary strategy is one of responding to anxieties, of trying to control and manipulate interpretation, of trying to counter or forestall opposition. The texts that make the strongest claims for James’s authority are thus the very same texts that reveal his anxieties about interpretation and representation. By responding to his anxieties in writing, however, James not only revealed his anxieties, but also, as we will see in the following chapter, risked adding to the problems about which he was anxious.

## Chapter 4

### The Problem of the Reader and the Risk of Royal Self-Demystification

'To speak at all is to give some other power over us.'<sup>1</sup>

Describing the fact that it is impossible for the author of a statement to control its meaning, J. G. A. Pocock here points out that to speak is to give interpretive power to another. In his writings James is continually struggling with the impossible: to control how he is read. Despite the literary strategies he employed, he was often read in ways he had not intended. By representing himself in words he gave his readers power over him.<sup>2</sup> He may have hoped that writing would reinforce his image, particularly given the problems he faced in trying to perform the role of magnificent king, but writing brought comparable problems. This chapter explores the contradictions and ambivalences of James's self-representation in language, arguing that in responding to his anxieties about interpretation and representation, his writings risked undermining and demystifying him. I explore a range of texts, including the speeches included in James's *Workes*,<sup>3</sup> in terms of his problematic responses to these anxieties, then focus on the particular problems of royal poetry. Finally, I consider the ways in which the nature and status of both manuscript circulation and print further undermine James's intentions for his writings.

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<sup>1</sup> J. G. A. Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1989), p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> By 'reader' I also mean 'listener', in the case of James delivering his speeches in parliament.

<sup>3</sup> As I suggested in the previous chapter, the collection seems intended to reflect not only royal authority but also royal authorship, so we may consider the five speeches in the volume in these terms. All references to James's prose works, including speeches, refer to James I, *The Workes* (1616), facsimile reprint (Hildesheim; New York: Georg Olms, 1971), unless otherwise specified. Page numbers will follow in parentheses.



The texts that make the strongest claims for James's authority and authorship are the same texts that attempt to respond to his anxieties and to the political problems he faced. This is exemplified in the two texts focused on in the previous chapter, the *Workes* (published in 1616, in Latin in 1619, and again in English in 1620) and 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' (written at the end of 1622 or the start of 1623). As we saw in the second chapter, in this period the Crown was suffering from severe financial problems and the court was seen by many as corrupt, wasteful and immoral. In particular, the Essex affair and the Overbury murder caused public scandal in the period 1613-1616. Many people were also critical of the power and influence held by Buckingham from 1616 onwards. The outbreak of war in Europe in 1618 created, as we have seen, major political and public relations problems for James. In the period 1619-20 German and Bohemian Protestants were appealing to the English for assistance, but James continued refusing to intervene and negotiating for the Spanish match for Prince Charles, even after Spanish troops invaded the Palatinate in 1620. In the early 1620s negotiations for the Spanish marriage continued and pressure for war against Spain built. All of these events and personalities were satirically represented in the period, as is evidenced by contemporary manuscript collections.<sup>4</sup>

James did not respond to these growing public relations problems by making more public appearances. As we have seen, he made few civic appearances after the first two years of his reign, and the other major public occasions of his reign – the visit of Christian IV in 1606, the ceremonies for the creation of Henry as Prince of Wales in 1610, the wedding of Princess Elizabeth in 1613 – all came in the first half of his reign. He responded by defending his actions and policies, and trying to control representation and interpretation, through his writings.

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<sup>4</sup> Arthur F. Marotti discusses the verse material that commonly circulated in manuscript in the period and gives examples of specific collections. He quotes Harold Love's description of the collections of political documents circulating in the reigns of James and Charles as typically including material relating to the

James may have hoped that his *Workes* would provide his public image with a much-needed boost and, especially with regard to the later editions, that it would lend authority to his pacifist stance.<sup>5</sup> He may also have hoped that it would provide an alternative to the satiric representations of his court and policies that were in circulation. The representation of James's pacifism, piety, and authority in this volume would, however, have appeared to many as increasingly ironic in the political climate of the time. Dedicating his *Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer* (1619, included in the 1620 edition of James's *Workes*) to Buckingham may have been an attempt to defend the increasingly unpopular royal favourite. In the preface James states that Buckingham gives 'so good example to the rest of the Court, in frequent hearing the word of God' and 'in so often receiuing the Sacrament, which is a notable demonstration of your charitie in pardoning them that offend you' (p. 573). The fact that this was published suggests it was written less to offer praise to Buckingham directly than to improve the favourite's image in the eyes of others. Ironically, James's concern to defend his favourite risked adding to the view that he was dominated by him.<sup>6</sup>

'The wiper of the Peoples teares', is even more obviously an anxious response to opposition. It reflects the king attempting with increasing desperation to maintain public perception of his authority and to justify his foreign policy. While it was intended to

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Somerset scandal, the rise of Buckingham, and the Spanish match negotiations (*Manuscript, Print and the English Renaissance Lyric* [Ithaca: Cornell University press, 1995], p. 83).

<sup>5</sup> James's anxious desire to justify his pacifist stance at this time is also demonstrated by the tract entitled *The Peace-Maker: or, Great Brittaines Blessing* published in London by Thomas Purfoot in 1618, and republished in 1619 and 1620. This tract has been variously attributed to James himself, Thomas Middleton, the dramatist, and another writer of the same name. Though probably not written by the king it was clearly authorised by him. James's desire to justify his stance is also evident in *A Meditation vpon the Lords Prayer*, written in 1619 and included in the 1620 edition of his *Workes*. Here he writes 'I know not by what fortune, the *dicton* of PACIFICVS was added to my title, at my coming in *England*, that of the Lyon, expressing true fortitude, hauing beene my *dicton* before: but I am not ashamed of this addition; for King *Salomon* was a figure of CHRIST in that, that he was a King of peace' (p. 590). These more explicit attempts to defend royal policy make it seem likely that the republication of the *Workes* in 1620 was a conscious attempt to boost James's image in the face of opposition to his policies.

<sup>6</sup> This view is expressed, for example, in manuscript verse libels. See Marotti, *Manuscript*, p. 83, and Adam Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 388.

support his public declarations against discussion of state affairs, it also points to the failure of those declarations. This poem, as we shall see, exemplifies the ways in which James's responses to his anxieties about political authority and exposure risked adding to the problems about which he was anxious. First of all, however, we will consider the anxious responses to the problem of textual misinterpretation that underlie all of his texts.

### **James's textual responses to his anxieties about textual authority**

As James tried to use his writings to control how he was perceived, so did he try to control how his texts themselves were read, presenting himself as his own best interpreter. We have seen that in the official versions of the *Lepanto* and *Basilikon Doron* he added prefaces to rectify what he claims have been misreadings of his texts. In both prefaces he rejects certain readings and points out to his reader the 'only meaning' of his text. He claims that these explanations will prevent any further misreadings: in the preface to the *Lepanto* he 'will by setting downe the nature and order of the Poeme, resolute the ignorant of their error, & mak the other sort inexcusable of their captiousnes' (p. 198). The preface to *Basilikon Doron* will 'cleare such parts thereof, as [...] may be mis-interpreted therein' (p. 142).

In the cases of both the *Lepanto* and *Basilikon Doron* James seems to be responding to having been read in politically undesirable ways – perhaps having learned from these experiences, in his later writings he tends to start from a position of trying to prevent such readings. Thus his attempts to close his texts and guide the reader to his intended meaning are no longer in the form of added prefaces but incorporated within the original texts. One of the tactics he uses within his texts is to claim transparency while using rhetoric to manipulate the reader. A 'Declaration against Vorstius', in which James justifies his role in a religious controversy of 1612, provides a clear

example of this.<sup>7</sup> He states that he is publishing the discourse of all the negotiations with the United Provinces, and the reasons for his actions, in order ‘to cleare our owne honour from the darke mists of these false and scandalous imputations, as also to make it trewly appeare vnto the Christian world, in what sort wee haue proceeded herein.’ (p. 349). In publishing this discourse James is implicitly making claims of transparency, creating the impression that he is giving the reader the opportunity to consider the evidence and reach independent conclusions. Yet he includes only extracts from Vorstius’s religious writings. James claims these extracts are representative, but the process of selection is obviously highly subjective. After these extracts James concludes on behalf of the reader: ‘by this may the Reader manifestly discern, that there is nothing which a man, speaking in this fashion shall not be able to maintaine, [...] certainly his manner of excuses and euasions are framed iust after the mould of the ancient Heretiques’ (pp. 372-6). Words such as ‘manifestly’ and ‘certainly’ increase the pressure on the reader to agree with James.

James responded to his anxiety about how his spoken word would be re-represented by trying to direct re-presentation within his speeches. For example, he concludes his speech in the Star Chamber of 1616 by instructing his audience ‘enforme my people trewly of me, how zealous I am for Religion, how I desire Law may bee maintained and flourish; that euery Court should haue his owne Iurisdiction; that euery Subject should submit himselfe to Law’ (p. 569). The grounds for his anxiety – and the failure of such instructions to lead to accurate re-presentation – is demonstrated by

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<sup>7</sup> As Samuel R. Gardiner relates it, Conrad Vorstius, a learned man with controversial views on the nature of God, had recently been appointed professor of theology in the University of Leiden. James attacked Vorstius and met with a mixed response from the Dutch. Most of the clergy were on James’s side, while the statesmen were on the side of toleration. Their resistance resulted in a ‘torrent of protests and invectives’ from James. Eventually, through fear of alienating James, Gardiner suggests, the opposition yielded and Vorstius was ordered to resign his professorship (*History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of Civil War 1603-1642*, 10 vols [London: Longmans, Green, and co., 1883], II, p. 128). James’s declaration was published in English and French in London, and in Dutch in Amsterdam, in 1612, indicating that James was eager to disseminate his version of the debate to the relevant parties straightaway. The declaration was also included in the 1616 Folio, suggesting James felt its importance went beyond its immediate context.

Chamberlain's reference to this 1616 speech, 'which beeing long and of many matters is so mangled in the rehersall of them that heard yt, that I can make no coherence, nor wherto yt principally tended'. James also responded to this anxiety by publishing official versions of his speeches to replace these 'mangled' reports. Indeed, Chamberlain continues by saying he is 'the lesse curious to inquire after yt because I presume we shall shortly have yt in print' (II, 11).

Even aside from re-presentation by others, however, James was also anxious as to how the official versions of his speeches would be interpreted, and so includes within them instructions to guide his listeners, and his readers once they were published and open to even wider scrutiny. In his speeches to parliament he was particularly preoccupied with being misinterpreted because he was facing a particularly important and particularly resistant audience.<sup>8</sup> He again uses the tactic of claiming transparency: in the speeches he included in his *Workes* he repeatedly makes this claim by adopting a biblical image. He states in 1605 that he wishes 'with those ancient Philosophers, that there were a Christall window in my brest, wherein all my people might see the secretest thoughts of my heart' (p. 504). When he uses the same image in 1607 the 'window' becomes a 'transparent glasse' (p. 512). In 1610 the 'glass' becomes a 'mirror', 'not such a Mirror wherein you may see your owne faces, or shadowes; but such a Mirror, or Christall, as through the transparantnesse thereof, you may see the heart of your King' (p. 527). In these speeches, James explicitly associates the transparency to which he claims to aspire with simple, plain language. In 1607, for example, he states 'I will discover my thoughts plainly vnto you; I study clearenes, not eloquence' (p. 512). James's claims of transparency and of 'plainness' in speech are

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<sup>8</sup> For Jacobean parliamentary history see, among others, Kevin Sharpe, *Faction and Parliament: Essays in Early Stuart History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978) and Conrad Russell, *Parliaments and English Politics, 1621-1629* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979). See also my discussion of the 1610 parliament in chapter two.

rhetorical devices aimed not only to reassure his listeners or readers of his sincerity, but also to prevent unintended readings of his words by creating the impression that there is no need to look beyond the surface of the King or his words.

James also responds to his anxiety about being misinterpreted by explicitly addressing misinterpretation and instructing his readers against it. In the prefaces to the *Lepanto* and *Basilikon Doron*, he identifies both inadvertent and malicious misreading: he blames the misreading of his poem on the ignorant and the captious (p. 198); he writes of his treatise that '*the malicious sort of men haue detracted therein; and some of the honest sort haue seemed a little to mistake*' (p. 142). In his speech to parliament of 1610, he tries to forestall both types of misinterpretation. He asks parliament not to wrong the mirror he has offered them, firstly addressing inadvertent misreading: 'looke not vpon my Mirroure with a false light: which yee doe, if ye mistake, or mis-vnderstand my Speach, and so alter the sence thereof'. He then turns to malicious misreading: 'peruert not my words by any corrupt affections, turning them to an ill meaning, like one, who when hee heares the tolling of a Bell, fancies to himselfe, that it speakes those words which are most in his minde' (p. 547-8).

James's concerns about language lead him at times to fall back on appealing to interpretations of his words that derive from the reverence, faith and fear his royal authority should inspire. Again we see the same difference between his later writings and the *Lepanto* and *Basilikon Doron*. In the two earlier texts the explicit emphasis on his royal authority as authorising his word comes in response to alleged misinterpretation, as we saw in chapter one, but in some of his later writings that emphasis is there in the original versions. In the preface to *A Remonstrance for the Right of Kings* (1615), for example, he justifies taking it upon himself to offer counsel to foreign kingdoms by claiming '*that one of the maynes for which God hath aduanced me vpon the loftie stage of the supreme Throne, is, that my words vttered from so*

*eminent a place for Gods honour [...] might with greater facilitie be conceiued* (p. 382). In his speech to parliament of 1610 he renders explicit the notion that his royal status authorises his word. He tells parliament that he confirms and avows what his treasurer has explained about his expenses 'to be trew in the word and honour of a King; And therein you are bound to beleue me' (p. 539). The final instruction he gives at the end of this speech as to how parliament should treat the crystal mirror he has offered them, appeals to the esteem for his word he believes parliament should have: 'beware to let it fall or breake; (for glasse is brittle) which ye doe, if ye lightly esteeme it, and by contemning it, conforme not your selues to my perswasions' (p. 548). He seems to be using the fragility of glass to reflect the destructive danger of misinterpretation, but it also implies his vulnerability. By asking his listeners to conform themselves to his persuasions, James seems to be acknowledging that all he can expect of his listeners is that they should respond to the force of his rhetoric.

James's responses to his anxieties about misinterpretation thus undermine themselves. His attempts to forestall misinterpretation in his speeches to parliament betray his anxiety, with the result that his own rhetoric undermines itself. Rhetoric implies the persuasion of a resistant audience and there is a clear sense in these extracts that he is so concerned to assert his sincerity because he expects that he may not be believed. When he states in 1607 that if his breast were a transparent glass 'then would you be satisfied of my meaning' (p. 512), it implies doubts that parliament will not be satisfied. (Indeed, in this speech James was trying – and ultimately failing – to overcome parliament's resistance to the union of England and Scotland.) The instructions against misinterpretation at the end of James's 1610 speech undermine the claim at the beginning of the speech that his meaning is transparent. While he had emphasised at the beginning of the speech that the mirror he is offering parliament is not a mirror wherein one may see one's own reflection, he is still anxious that people

will interpret his words as a reflection of their own preconceptions. Though intended to represent the king's transparency, the crystal glass is an ambiguous image that may be read as emphasising the impossibility of transparency. The fact that glass is both transparent and reflective is appropriate to the complexities of James's position, whereby he claims he wants people to see his inner truth, but they may only see what is on the surface, a reflection of their own expectations. The slippage of terms from 'window' (1605) to 'glass' (1607) to 'mirror' (1610) in fact moves James's image further away from associations of transparency, towards associations of reflectiveness. His claims that the existence of such a mirror would enable his true meaning to be perceived, could be taken to imply that the impossibility of such a mirror means that it is impossible to perceive his true meaning, that he does have hidden thoughts. Thus James's metaphor actually works against his intention for it and is, ironically, open to a range of interpretations.

By blaming his readers for misinterpretation, James is acknowledging the agency of the reader in constructing meaning. In the warnings his 1610 speech offers he even affirms that interpretation depends upon the perspective of the reader. This is in conflict with his desire for his words to have only the one meaning he proposes. As we saw in the last chapter, James was anxiously aware that this contradiction between the authority of the writer and the authority of the reader also emerges when he represents his own reading. He responded to this anxiety in his writings by trying to reconcile the contradiction, justifying his reading and differentiating it from the readings of others. He struggles to reconcile the contradiction in his 'Declaration against Vorstius', in which he defends having attacked Vorstius for his controversial theological views and responds to the reception his initial attack on Vorstius met. He states that his requests to the United Provinces that Vorstius should be banished as a heretic 'hath bene so ill interpreted, or rather wrested to a peruerse sence, by a sort of people, whose corrupted



stomacke turnes all good nourishment into bad and pernicious humors' (p. 349).<sup>9</sup> Whilst responding to having been misinterpreted and trying to prevent further misinterpretation, James is also defending himself against accusations of having misinterpreted Vorstius. He knows 'that some will say *Vorstius* is not rightly vnderstood; that some consequences are violently wrested out of his words, contrary to the intention of the Author' (p. 367). He implies that the 'ill' interpretation of his requests is invalid because of the 'sort of people' responsible, whereas his reading of Vorstius is validated by his status. He cannot, however, escape the contradiction and the repetition of the term 'wrested' draws further attention to the parallel between what he claims happened to his requests and what he claims he is not doing to Vorstius's writings.

In his scriptural exegeses James tries more explicitly to justify and differentiate his interpreting. When he claims in his 'Epistle to the Church Militant', which prefaces his *Paraphrase vpon Revelation*, that he has worked to '*square and conforme my opinions to the trew meaning thereof*', he is opposing his approach to those who have sought '*to wrest and conforme the meaning thereof to their particular and priuate passions*' (p. 1). This attempt to justify his interpretation as being in accordance with Scripture and to differentiate his approach from that of others betrays his anxiety that he will be seen to be doing what he is actually doing – manipulating Scripture to serve his own purposes. This anxiety is further revealed when James justifies his reading of Revelation in terms of the Pope as the Antichrist. In the 'Epistle to the Church Militant' he claims that in reading Revelation as an attack upon the Papists, he has '*vsed nothing of my owne coniecture*' (p. 2). In *A Fruitfull Meditation* however, he states 'whether the Pope beareth these markes or not, let any indifferent man iudge; I thinke surely it

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<sup>9</sup> This recalls James writing in the preface to *Basilikon Doron* of people who '*thinking their stomacke fit ynough, for turning neuer so wholesome foode into noysome and infectiue humours*' (145). Again we see the continuity in the rhetoric James employs in discussing what he claims is misreading.

expounds it selfe' then for half a page lists, in a rhetorically persuasive form, signs that the Pope is the Antichrist (p. 78). If the text did expound itself James would not need to provide what he presents as evidence. The insertion of 'I thinke surely' before 'it expounds it selfe' betrays the anxiety that prompts him to justify his reading. By justifying his reading he admits that it is not a mere reproduction of God's truth but a contestable interpretation, and he thereby invites debate. James cannot entirely justify or conceal the way that he is manipulating Scripture and this manipulation ironically implies the possibility that his word too can be manipulated to support the purposes of others.

The contradiction between the claim that the scriptural text 'expounds itself' and the action of expounding the text reflects the contradictions that we have seen in James's presentation of his own writings. He wants the '*onely meaning*' of his texts, like the rightness of his scriptural interpretations, the validity of his actions, and the basis of his authority, to be self-evident and beyond question, and repeatedly claims that it is. He seems aware, however, that these things are not self-evident and beyond question and this leaves him unwilling to risk letting others interpret for themselves the meaning that he claims is self-evident. So he is continually expounding himself, trying to be his own interpreter – as he claims that the bible expounds itself and demonstrates that the bible does not expound itself.

James's attempts to expound himself, to provide frameworks and guides to interpretation, to encode in his texts an ideal reading to which he encourages his actual reader to adhere, cannot overcome the fundamental impossibility of controlling interpretation. The actual reader must read not only what James says, but also what he says he means. Thus there is always one level of reading beyond the guides to interpretation James offers, which is a reading of the offered guides to interpretation.

The instructions and explanations James gives are as open to misinterpretation as the texts through which they attempt to guide the reader.<sup>10</sup>

In several ways, James's attempts to provide instructions and explanations as to how his words should be interpreted, undermine his attempt to maintain control over the meaning of his texts. These attempts implicitly acknowledge that his word does not have the authority he wants it to have and does not dictate its own meaning. He is thereby admitting that the correct interpretation is not self-evident, that a reader may be manipulated into accepting a certain interpretation, and therefore that a text does not have a single fixed meaning. By trying so hard to guide interpretation, James draws the attention of the reader to the process of interpretation and to the possibility of misinterpretation, thereby risking making the reader more alert to the different meanings to be found in his texts.

Thus James is continually struggling to maintain control over meaning – the meaning of the texts he reads and the meaning of the texts he writes – but the ironic outcome of his attempts to maintain control is that he undermines, and exposes as untenable, his claims of textual authority. His anxious awareness of the difficulty of controlling how any text is read creates a continual tension that underlies his attempts to use his writings to respond to the exposure of his position, to justify his political authority, and to represent his inscrutability.

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<sup>10</sup> Even parliamentary records do not accurately reproduce the instructions given in the published version of James's 1610 speech. In the House of Lords they were paraphrased as 'a mirror may be abused in three kinds: first with the carriage; secondly, with foul hands or stinking breath; thirdly with a fall and with the beholding it in a false light, which will darken it, therefore must be held with a true light' (*Proceedings in Parliament, 1610*, ed. by Elizabeth Read Foster, vol I, House of Lords, vol II, House of Commons [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966], I, 52). This may, of course, be a more accurate version of what James actually said than the published version.

## **James's textual responses to his anxieties about public exposure and political authority**

As noted in chapter one, Elizabeth maintained that she did not need to justify or explain her authority, declaring in 1598 that 'we are no way bound to yield account to any person on earth of any our actions more than in love and kindness', and James responded in that year by agreeing that 'it becomes none that enjoys such places as we both do either to give account [or] be judged by any'.<sup>11</sup> In a letter of 1621 he is still maintaining that explaining oneself is beneath a king, but he is also showing his willingness to do so, stating 'we are thus far contented to descend from our royal dignity by explaining at this time our meaning'.<sup>12</sup> For, as he responds to his anxieties about his textual authority both by maintaining that his texts have only one self-evident meaning and by trying to explain how his texts should be read, so he responds to his anxieties about his political authority both by maintaining that his authority is beyond question, and by explaining and justifying it. He claims inscrutability and the right to act in secrecy, but in explaining and justifying his authority and actions in his speeches and writings is choosing to expose, even to lower, himself. I will now explore in more depth James's opposing impulses towards self-mystification and self-disclosure and the ways in which they were problematic for him.

His tendency both to assert and justify his authority is evident, for example, in his speech to parliament of 1610. He states 'the State of MONARCHIE is the supremest thing vpon earth'. He then explains 'for Kings are not onely GODS Lieutenants vpon earth, and sit vpon GODS throne, but euen by GOD himselfe they are called Gods'. Demonstrating his extensive knowledge of theology and political theory, he relates the

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<sup>11</sup> *Letters of King James VI and I*, ed. by G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley, Los Angeles; London: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 163, 161.

<sup>12</sup> From a letter of 1621, included in *Constitutional Documents of the Reign of James I*, ed. by J. R. Tanner (London: Cambridge University Press, 1930), p. 287.

ways in which this point is illustrated by Scripture, and the ‘grounds of Policie and Philosophie’. The rhetorical structure is clear: he makes a statement, explains it, then provides evidence for it. Thus he continues, again using the conjunction ‘for’, ‘Kings are iustly called Gods, for that they exercise a manner or resemblance of Diuine power vpon earth’ (p. 529). This tendency towards justifying and explaining undermines James’s assertions of political authority. By justifying his authority he is giving the impression it needs to be justified. We saw above that he tries to control the meaning of his texts by providing explanations of his meaning, for example in the form of prefaces, but that the explanations he gives are equally open to misinterpretation. In the same way, in attempting to reinforce his political authority James justifies and explains it, but the justifications and explanations are equally open to challenge. Moreover, every time he justifies and explains his political or textual authority, he is acknowledging that it is not assured.

These opposing impulses towards self-mystification and self-disclosure are played out in ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’, which is a response to the specific challenges to James’s authority and mystique presented by the lampoon against the Spanish match and by discussion of the match more generally.<sup>13</sup> James feels the need to respond to these challenges to his policy by justifying his political authority and the decisions he has made. In the poem he remarks ‘We are knowne to thee, that knowes vs not’ (131), indicating he feels that people see his public image and make judgements accordingly, but do not really know him, so he needs to expose himself further in order to correct misapprehensions. The structure of the poem makes the pattern of assertion – justification particularly clear: ‘Wounder at Kings, and them obey/ *ffor* vnder God they

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<sup>13</sup> For another discussion of this poem, see Curtis Perry, “‘If Proclamations Will Not Serve’: The Late Manuscript Poetry of James I and the Culture of Libel”, in *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, ed. by Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), pp. 205-232. Perry explores this poem in the context of manuscript verse libel and provides some valuable insights, but does not pay sufficient attention to James’s anxieties, the range of strategies the poem employs, and the many problems inherent in the very act of James writing this poem.

are to chuse/ What right to take, and what refuse'; 'Religion is the right of kings/ *As they best knowe what good it brings*' (16-8, 25-6, italics mine). Again, the justification undermines the assertion. At the same time, James wants to respond to having been satirised by representing his mystique and inscrutability, and his control over the sphere of discourse in which he has been represented. Thus he is in effect explaining himself while maintaining that he does not need to explain himself. This creates a tension that runs through the poem.

In several ways this poem undermines rather than reinforces James's authority by exposing too much. It engages specifically with criticisms made in the libel to which it is responding. For example, it tries to justify James's choices as to those he has favoured: 'The men you nam'd seru'd in their tyme/ And soe may myne [...]' (35-6).<sup>14</sup> This poem may be responding to a demand made in the original lampoon when it states reassuringly 'The *parliament* I will appoint/ When I see thyngs more out of ioynt' (60-1). Engaging with the criticisms made by the libellers gives them some credence, and it is clearly beneath a king to justify his choices of whom he favours. The phrase 'more out of ioynt' represents an acknowledgement that things are already somewhat out of joint. His attempt to offer reassurance as to when he will appoint parliament involves him in exposing his intentions and his reasons, rather than maintaining the autonomous, inscrutable position the poem is ostensibly claiming for him.

By writing about the difficult issue of public representation of royal affairs, James inevitably exposes the contradictions of his position. The poem commands his subjects 'hold your pratling spare your penn/ Bee honest and obedient men' (171-2), but these are two potentially contradictory things: in order to be obedient his subjects may have had to avoid being honest, at least in the sense of not voicing their opinions on

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<sup>14</sup> By the time this poem was written, numerous libels had attacked James's favouritism. Attacks on Buckingham and James's previous favourite Robert Carr continued to circulate in the manuscript miscellanies of the 1620s (Perry, "If proclamations will not serve", pp. 214-5).

certain matters. James also asks 'I doe desire noe more of yow/ But to knowe mee as I knowe yow' (99-100), suggesting parallels between the King and his subjects in terms of both capacity to know and potential to be known. This contradicts the view of kingship as both possessed of knowledge above all other men and inscrutable that James upholds elsewhere – even elsewhere in this poem. This contradiction in itself reflects his opposing impulses towards self-mystification and self-disclosure. The assertion the poem makes that it is inappropriate for James's private affairs to be made public is undermined by the fact that he exposes himself within the poem and has brought it into the public sphere. The poem even, as we have seen, acknowledges the inadequacy of proclamations, a constitutional, formal, public form of discourse. Thus the poem's overt claims as to the necessity of royal privacy are contradicted by the sense it creates that only by revealing private matters can James assert his authority. Ironically then, while he derides 'railing rymes and vaunting verse/ Which your kings brest shall neuer peirce' (23-4), James pierces his breast himself in his own poem.

James's stated desire to maintain inscrutability and mystique is thus undermined by his compulsion to explain and justify his political and textual authority in an attempt to avoid being misunderstood. For him the contradiction is reconcilable in terms of the royal prerogative: he may choose to reveal himself, but he will not accept others prying into his affairs. The distinction, however, is a subtle one, and James's self-exposure in his writings was taken by others as a license to write about state affairs. For example, Thomas Scott, minister at Utrecht, wrote several pamphlets, arguing against the Spanish match and urging war with Spain, which exemplify the kind of discussion and representation of royal affairs about which James was so anxious.<sup>15</sup> In the preface 'To

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<sup>15</sup> P. G. Lake suggests that while Scott's actions were unusual, in that he criticised royal policy so openly, his attitudes and opinions were not. He was dealing in 'the common currency of contemporary political debate'. Once his identity as the writer of *Vox Populi* (1620) became known, Scott fled to the Low Countries, from where he wrote his subsequent pamphlets ('Thomas Scott and the Spanish Match', *Historical Journal*, 25 [1982], 805-25, [pp. 806, 805]).

the Reader' of *Vox Regis*, published in 1622 and again in 1624, Scott justifies writing about state affairs by arguing that James's writings set a precedent: he has for his 'warrant his Maiesties Mandate or Commission; since he hath done it before by word and writing, and will'd me to doe it againe by reading and repeticion'. Scott asserts that James's writings have been published to the end of enabling his subjects to know him 'perfectly'.<sup>16</sup> The suggestion that James can be known 'perfectly' is antithetical to royal claims of inscrutability and mystique. Scott is, however, responding to James's claims that he has nothing to hide and frequent attempts to explain himself in his writings. This justifies Scott's writings as he is further revealing James to his subjects. That Scott's pamphlets were not only published, but also republished, in and beyond England,<sup>17</sup> reflects widespread interest and the impossibility for James of preventing the representation and discussion of state affairs. James's efforts to prevent discussion even risked encouraging it.<sup>18</sup>

The emphasis in 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' on royal authority and the importance of obedience suggests James is anxious that the picture the poem represents is not necessarily how things are but how they should be. The poem is in fact an attempt to 'keepe all in obedience' (177), and his self-exposure within the poem forms part of that attempt. The poem is by turns threatening, defensive, reassuring, and coercive, demonstrating again the dual rhetorical strategy we saw in *The Trew Law* and his speech to parliament of March 1610. As in that speech, in this poem James equivocates between defence and appeal, assertion and justification, because in the difficult political

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<sup>16</sup> *Vox Regis* was published in London in 1622 and in Utrecht in 1624. Quotations taken from preface which is not paginated.

<sup>17</sup> The most widely disseminated was *Vox Populi*, first published in London in 1620, published again in Amsterdam in 1621, in London in 1622, and in Utrecht in 1625.

<sup>18</sup> 'Tom Tell-Troath: Or, a free Discourse touching the Manners of the Time', published anonymously in 1622, asserts that the proclamations against public discussion legitimate this particular publication as they ask people to inform on those who speak against the king. This provides a pretext for the writer to articulate criticisms of James's foreign policy and arguments in favour of military action against Spain. Initially the writer maintains the ambiguity of the title as to whether the truth being revealed is simply that the discussion is occurring, or whether it is the content of the discussion, but he then slips into direct appeal to the king (in *Harleian Miscellany*, 6 vols [London: T. Osborne, 1744], II, 400-430).



climate of the early 1620s he was in a position of both responding to criticism and of trying to win support.

'The wiper of the Peoples teares' exemplifies the way in which these rhetorical strategies undermine James's claims for his authority. The poem's oscillations in tone reflect uncertainty and anxiety, and create the impression he is struggling to gain or regain control, while also diminishing its overall effectiveness. For while he is trying to use his control over language to parallel his political power, this poem actually exhibits a lack of control over language, being somewhat rambling and repetitive, with frequently shifting tones. This suggests a greater lack of control and power. The attempts to be conciliatory and persuasive undercut the assertions and instructions they run alongside, for they expose the fact that while James claims his political authority derives only from God and he is answerable only to God, his authority actually depends upon maintaining the obedience of his subjects. 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' thus, in many ways, exemplifies the risk of James's attempts at self-authorisation descending into unintentional self-demystification.

The fundamental problem for James then, is his emphasis on *representing* his royal authority and mystique, rather than on *being* an authoritative, mystified king. He describes, explains and justifies, rather than simply embodying and asserting. Thus he fails to write as Montague in his preface to the *Workes* suggests a king should – his concern to justify and explain himself amounts to an acknowledgement that his '*euery Lyne*' is not '*a Law*', his '*euery Word*' is not '*a Precept*', and his '*euery Letter*' is not '*a Mandate*'. The tension between assertion and justification reflects a tension that was inherent in the position of an early modern monarch: James had to uphold the contemporary myth of monarch as mystified authority that simply demands support, while also negotiating with the contemporary reality that he actually had to work as a

politician, winning support for particular policies and actions.<sup>19</sup> Through his self-representation James exposes the reality and thereby undermines the myth.

Whatever the particular problems of James's style of verbal self-representation, however, the problematic relationship between representing and being is inescapable.<sup>20</sup> As even the bible can only *represent* language as authority, so James can only *represent* his language as authority. In other words, James's language may attempt to represent authority, as critics such as Goldberg have considered, or to enact authority, as Sharpe has emphasised more recently, but ultimately language itself – even the language of the bible – can only represent the *notion* that language is authority.<sup>21</sup> As James's own readings of the bible demonstrate, once something is represented it is open to a range of interpretations.<sup>22</sup> Thus even the notion of the authority of royal language is open to question once it is represented. James's poetry not only – as we have so far considered – reflects the problems that are present throughout his writings, but it intensifies them. For the role James adopts of Poet-King embodies the dualism between representing and being.

### The problems of being a Poet-King

Being a poet adds to the problems for James of being viewed as engaging in

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<sup>19</sup> This also reflects the tension between James's sense that he should be able simply to demand parliament to give him more financial support, and the actual need to *persuade* parliament to grant it (see chapter two).

<sup>20</sup> For a discussion of representation theory and the etymology of 'representation', see Hanna Fenichel Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967).

<sup>21</sup> As noted in the introduction to the current study, Jonathan Goldberg explores writing as a representation of authority in *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1983); Kevin Sharpe points out that in this period 'language is *politics*, not the means of articulating *Politics*' (*Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* [New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000], p. 15).

<sup>22</sup> Pocock, for example, discussing the impossibility of controlling interpretation with reference to political discourse, expands on this point, stating that 'the author of a political statement may intend to be ambiguous; he is employing a language by its nature inherently ambiguous, but because the language and the range of its ambiguities are given him by society and exist in a context of use and meaning whose multivalency he cannot expect to control, his statement may convey meaning to others [...] outside any range of ambiguity he may have intended' (*Politics, Language and Time*, p. 23-4).

forms of discourse inappropriate in a King, of self-exposure, of undermining his own attempts to maintain control over the meaning of his texts, and of inviting responses from others. We have seen that in Scotland James developed two strategies for his poetry: trying to circumvent sensitive political issues by emphasising that he is writing as a poet and attempting to control interpretation by emphasising that he is writing as a king. He employed the first strategy less frequently, but it re-emerged in the verses he wrote for Buckingham in 1621. This strategy was problematic for James in two main ways, as his 1621 verses illustrate.

Firstly, the stance of the poet, particularly the poet of praise, was a disempowered one, and therefore inappropriate in a king. Given James's place in the hierarchy as he presented it, the only being he could praise in his poetry without lowering himself was God. Even writing about his own authority and mystique was problematic. More undermining still was addressing sycophantic poetry to others, as he did in 1621. The verses James read out to Buckingham praise the royal favourite and his wife in conventional ways, even using the poetic trope that their virtues cannot be adequately represented in writing.<sup>23</sup> He was creating a role reversal whereby he was giving the kind of praise a monarch would expect to receive. The previous day Buckingham had offered praise to the king in lines written by Jonson, in the masque, *The Gipsies Metamorphosed*.<sup>24</sup> By returning the praise immediately in verses of his own James risked being perceived as lowering himself to the level of those, such as the noble Buckingham, and worse still the court poet Jonson, who needed to engage in panegyric in order to win favour. As we saw in the last chapter, Montague's dedication in James's *Workes* tries to differentiate the king from court writers who seek patronage, but

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<sup>23</sup> *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*, ed. by James Craigie, 2 vols (Edinburgh; London: Blackwood, 1955-1958), II, 177, line 8. See introduction.

<sup>24</sup> See chapter two.

James's behaviour at this banquet undermines that attempt at differentiation. James was playing the role of poet at the expense of the role of king.

James himself had earlier acknowledged: '*it becomes not the honour of my estate, like an hireling, to pen the praise of any man*'.<sup>25</sup> His failure to follow his own proscription results from his impulse towards self-publicising. He perhaps also felt that he was in control of this elite occasion. The Venetian ambassador states, however, that the king's reading 'caused more comment than if he had done some great wrong to his kingdom'.<sup>26</sup> This may relate not only to attitudes towards James's favouring of Buckingham, which reading out the poem broadcasts, but also to a perception that he was playing a role that was beneath him. The fact that the ambassador reported the occasion indicates its significance and reflects the fact that such inappropriate behaviour in a King was all the more unwise because it was likely to be re-presented beyond its immediate context. Again James was inadvertently inviting discussion and re-presentation that he could not control.

Secondly, as we have now seen, this reading took place in a tense climate of political controversy, public discussion and censorship. In this poem James may have been deliberately disengaging from that context, but this risked exacerbating the problem he faced of his writing being viewed as a distraction from state affairs. It may have seemed irresponsible for the king to be devoting his energies to wishing for the felicity and fertility of Buckingham and his wife when there were major political decisions to be made and problems to be resolved. For even if James emphasised that he was writing as a poet, he would still be read as a king.

The second strategy, of emphasising in his poetry that he is writing as a king was also problematic because, as we have seen in 'The wiper of the Peoples teares', this

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<sup>25</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, preface to the *Lepanto*, p. 200.

<sup>26</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, XVII (1621-3), p. 439. For further detail on the ambassador's response, see introduction.

involves him in writing about his own mystique and authority. Representing mystique and inscrutability is anyway almost a contradiction in terms, but representing it in poetry is particularly problematic. However much James's poems claim mystique, they are by their very nature exposing the King. The king was not required to write poetry as he was required to release proclamations and make speeches – by choosing to write poetry he was volunteering to reveal himself.

The fact that James's unpublished poetry occupies an ambiguous space between the private and public spheres makes the fact that the poems both expose the King and represent the royal right to privacy still more problematic. The ambiguous status of James's poetry is reflected in some contemporary responses. Edmund Bolton in *Hypercritica* (? 1618), for example, wrote 'I dare not speak of [James's poems] because I see them all left out in that Edition which Montague, Lord Bishop of *Winchester*, hath given us of his royal Writings'.<sup>27</sup> Bolton was obviously familiar with James's poetry, but was concerned that without the sanction of publication it should not be discussed. By circulating but not publishing his poetry in England, James only succeeded in sending out an ambivalent message that was open to a range of interpretations.

James could not control how any of his writings were read, but poetry in particular invites active interpretation from the reader; according to the following lines that the king himself translated from Du Bartas, the Poet 'Doeth graue so viue in vs his passions strange,/ As maks the reader, halfe in author change'.<sup>28</sup> These lines justify James's position as a reader who is re-authoring Du Bartas in translating him. James's experience as a reader, his aesthetic sense that poetry should stimulate the reader's imagination, was, however, in conflict with his politically motivated desire for control over the interpretation of his texts. He must have been anxiously aware that the readers

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 278.

<sup>28</sup> *The Vranie*, originally published in *The Essayes of a Prentise, Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 27.

of his poems might half change into authors who created undesirable meanings.

By writing poetry James is presenting himself on a level whereby others can engage with him. That is to say, only the King can, for example, release royal proclamations, so no one can respond to a royal proclamation in kind, but anyone can write poetry. This creates a tension in poems such as ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ which try to claim a unique and elevated position for the king. The non-exclusivity of poetry was of course a potential problem for all poets. Back in 1603 Thomas Greene dedicated a poem to his new King in which he bemoans the current state of poetry in England. The poem suggests that ‘throng[s] of learned and inspired poets would write if it were not that ‘eu’rie Cuckowe [has] accesse,/ And bring[s] vnsau’rie writings to the Presse’.<sup>29</sup> Greene flatters James’s poetry and looks to him to renew poetry in England. From James’s perspective, however, Greene is simply yet another of the throngs of poets who can claim to take the impetus to write from his poetry. This claim enables the self-promotion of individual poets; poets might also take it to license satirical engagement with James and his poetry. The libellers who wrote the lampoon which provoked ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ may have chosen to write it in verse in response to James’s use of poetry.

The problem we have seen of James inadvertently legitimising others to write about his affairs is intensified by the fact that he writes in the genre of poetry, and made worse still by the content and form of his poetry. In the treatise on poetry he wrote in Scotland, *Reulis and Cautelis* (1584), he specifically rejected poetic representations of state affairs: ‘materis of commoun weill [...] are to graue materis for a Poet to mell in’.<sup>30</sup> He writes about such affairs in his own poetry, however. This statement was of

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<sup>29</sup> *A Poet’s Vision, and a Princes Glorie* (London [William Leake], 1603).

<sup>30</sup> *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, I, 79.

course made very early in his writing career, in a very different context, but he reiterates that verse representations of royal affairs are inappropriate in ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’, which is itself a poem that represents royal affairs. James would presumably have felt that there was no contradiction as his royal authority authorises his poetry and his poetry reflects his royal authority. Nevertheless, by engaging explicitly with popular discussion of state affairs, James’s poetry risks undermining his condemnation of such discussion. He is inadvertently legitimating not only the writings of others, but also the use of poetry in particular. This is especially problematic for the king because poetry was associated with libel and satire, particularly the verse that was circulated in manuscript.

Given the danger of libelling, the manuscript system provided a safer place than print for satirical comment, and verse satirising, for example, royal favouritism and the rise of Buckingham was common.<sup>31</sup> Anti-Spanish verses continued to circulate throughout 1623.<sup>32</sup> ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ forms James’s response to this challenge to royal authority and reflects his contradictory attitude towards the culture of manuscript libel. On the one hand, he desires to make use of this culture for public relations purposes. ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ reflects verse libel not only in its engagement with criticism and the nature of its dissemination, but also in its form: having used complex metres and rhymes elsewhere, in this poem James uses rhyming

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<sup>31</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript*, pp. 76, 83; Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture*, p. 388. See also Thomas Cogswell, ‘Underground verse and the transformation of early Stuart political culture’, in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. by Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995); Alastair Bellany, ‘“Rayling Rymes and Vaunting Verse”: Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603-1628’, in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 285-310, and Adam Fox, ‘Popular Verses and their readership in the Early Seventeenth Century’, in *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England*, ed. by James Raven, Helen Small and Naomi Tadmor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). Cogswell discusses ‘underground’ verse as a response to, and an impetus for, the growing demand for news and political commentary. Fox argues that verse read aloud was an important means of disseminating information amongst the many illiterate. Such verse could easily be retained and repeated (p. 129).

<sup>32</sup> Bellany, ‘Libellous Politics’, p. 294.

couplets, the preferred form of writers of verse libels.<sup>33</sup> He is thereby descending to the level of his detractors, in an attempt to reconquer the territory of representation they have tried to claim. At the same time, he tries to play down the political importance of manuscript verse and denounces it for its decentralisation of political discourse and its meddling in state secrets. By participating in manuscript libel culture James in fact acknowledges the political importance of this culture and the crown's failure to contain it.<sup>34</sup> Such participation obviously risks legitimising this culture, while this participation and the style of 'The wiper of the Peoples teares' may have been viewed as inappropriate in a king – this is hardly 'the divine art of poesie'. Moreover, the nature of manuscript circulation exacerbated the problems James faced in trying to control how his texts were read.

### **Manuscript and textual malleability; print and royal self-exposure: public ownership of the royal text**

Curtis Perry has pointed out that manuscript poems circulated by James as his own may have been produced collaboratively or by others. The king may in some cases have merely corrected and amended verses others had written. This requires us to rethink the notion of royal authorship: 'as his sponsorship of the King James Bible suggests, James may have had a broader sense of his authorial function than have subsequent critics'.<sup>35</sup> The blurring between authoring and authorising we identified with regard to the King James Bible thus illuminates other areas of James's 'writings'.

Whether James authored or authorised a text, the text still had his authority.

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<sup>33</sup> Cogswell, 'Underground verse', p. 286.

<sup>34</sup> Perry, "'If proclamations will not serve'", p. 224.

<sup>35</sup> 'Royal authorship and problems of manuscript attribution in the poems of King James VI and I', *Notes and Queries*, n.s. 46 (1999), 243-6. Perry points out that the potentially collaborative nature of James's poetry also calls attention to 'the larger collaborations implicit in the construction of royal authority: the way that others routinely speak for and represent the King in public texts and performances' (p. 246). We have seen a form of these 'larger collaborations', and the problems they could involve, in my discussion of the relationship between the magnificence of James's court and royal magnificence in chapter two.



Collaborative production of royal texts is in tension with the notion of monarch as sole vehicle for divine authority, as possessed of unique textual authority, but as long as the illusion of sole authorship was maintained this did not undermine royal authority. The problem for James was not so much how a text was produced prior to his authorisation of it, but what happened to it after that stage.

By circulating his word in manuscript James risked undermining his own textual authority:

in the system of manuscript transmission, it was normal for lyrics to elicit revisions, corrections, supplements, and answers [...]. In this environment texts were inherently malleable, escaping authorial control to enter a social world in which recipients both consciously and unconsciously altered what they received. [...] The manuscript system was far less author-centered than print culture and not at all interested in correcting, perfecting, or fixing texts in authorially sanctioned forms.<sup>36</sup>

If James's preface is to be believed, he experienced exactly this kind of textual corruption with *Basilikon Doron* before he published an official version. He claims that the pamphlet called 'The King's Testament' was a misrepresentation of his word because it lacked '*both my methode and halfe of my matter*' (p. 146). This reflects his awareness that manuscripts are susceptible to being manipulated and changed and that decontextualisation can amount to misrepresentation. Yet he continued to circulate poetry in manuscript form.

Discussing the relative authorities of manuscript and print in the early

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<sup>36</sup> Marotti, *Manuscript*, p. 135. One of the major ways in which manuscript texts were 'unconsciously altered' was in being transcribed from memory (p. 143).

seventeenth century, Sharpe suggests that James may have regarded personal interventions as more authoritative than printed proclamations and statutes.<sup>37</sup> ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ is an example of such a personal intervention, but the nature of manuscript circulation undermined the poem’s claims for royal authority in several ways. Circulating a poem in manuscript, allowed others to take more control of its meaning, by recontextualising it or even, as Marotti suggests was common practice, amending it. ‘The wiper of the Peoples teares’ was itself a response and risks inviting further response. It thereby involved James in a debate rather than positioning him above the debate. By participating in a culture that was less author-centred than print culture, James was not only undermining his claims of textual authority, but also, by virtue of the parallel he had emphasised, his political authority.

Manuscript circulation decontextualised the poems, leaving them still more open to unintended interpretations. Individual readers often gathered poems into verse miscellanies, and this was particularly common with poems that appeared individually in manuscript rather than in published collections. In these contexts, poems might acquire meanings not originally intended by their writers. Perry gives the example of a ‘fairly typical verse miscellany’ that includes James’s unpublished poem ‘Off Jacke and Tom’, alongside various satirical verses. James’s 1623 poem gives a pastoral version of the controversial visit to Madrid in that year of his favourite Buckingham and Prince Charles; another poem in the miscellany criticises Buckingham, while another suggests James’s vulnerability to his favourites.<sup>38</sup> This context clearly encourages a view of ‘Off Jacke and Tom’ as evidence to support the perception that James was excessively fond of Buckingham and dominated by him.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Foreword, *Royal Subjects*, p. 20.

<sup>38</sup> “‘If proclamations will not serve’”, p. 206. ‘Off Jacke and Tom’ is in *Poems*, ed. by Craigie, II, 192-3.

<sup>39</sup> For a consideration of the importance of context in determining how we read, see Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions*.

As Marotti points out, ‘print worked to stabilize or fix texts that were constantly changing in manuscript transmission’.<sup>40</sup> Whatever the attractions of print however, in some ways it was more problematic for James than the more limited circulation of manuscript texts. The wider his writings were disseminated, the greater the problem of others taking control of his words; the longer a text continues to be read, the more it opens itself to a wider range of interpretations as the context – even the meanings of particular words – changes through time.<sup>41</sup> Print also brought problems of its own. In this final section I will consider some responses to James’s self-exposure in his published writings that illuminate the ways in which his self-representation undermined and demystified him.

In the preface to *Basilikon Doron* James had expressed his anxiety about public exposure by using a familiar theatrical metaphor: kings are set ‘*vpon a publike stage, in the sight of all the people; where all the beholders eyes are attentiuely bent to looke and pry in the least circumstance of their secretest drifts*’ (p. 141). The repetition of ‘all’, the superlatives ‘least’ and ‘secretest’, the qualifier ‘attentively’, and, above all, the negative connotations of the verb ‘pry’, forcefully convey James’s resentment at being thus seen. While the metaphor is a visual one, he is specifically referring to the impossibility he claims he has found in keeping this text private. He is anxious that now his book is in the public view, it is ‘*subiect to euery mans censure*’ (p. 142). Thus what is implicit here is a sense that, although James tries to use writing as an alternative – or complement – to public appearance, writing is merely another kind of self-exposing performance.

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<sup>40</sup> *Manuscript*, p. 144.

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Marshall provides an example of this in ‘Reading and Misreading King James 1622-42: Responses to the *Letter and Directions Touching Preaching and Preachers*’, in *Royal Subjects*, pp. 476-511.

This sense is reflected in the preface to the 1611 Bible. The translators suggest that religious writings are particularly likely to meet with negative responses: as James ‘knew full well’

whosoeuer attempteth any thing for the publick, (specially if it pertain to religion, and to the opening and clearing of the word of God) the same setteth himself upon a stage to be glouted upon by every evil eye; yea, he casteth himself headlong upon pikes, to be gored by every sharp tongue. [...] Notwithstanding his royal heart was not daunted [...] but stood resolute, *as a statue immoveable*. (p. lv)

These lines combine images from theatre, war and the visual arts, and praise James’s courage for an action that has nothing to do with visual performance or war. This supports his attempt to redefine kingship in terms that are not primarily performative or martial. If James has to some extent shifted the terms of royal self-representation however, he has not changed the problem of royal exposure. These lines suggest not only that books are another kind of self-exposing performance, but also that such self-exposure brings negative responses. While James only imagined himself being *seen* onstage, the translators emphasise that spectators have tongues.

Montague’s preface to James’s *Workes* engages with negative responses to James’s writings. Though intended to justify James’s use of print, the preface actually acknowledges that ‘whether it may sorte with the Maiestie of a King, to be a writer of Bookes, or no’ is a debatable issue. While Montague attempts to counter the view that royal publication is inappropriate, he also acknowledges that this view is widely held; ‘*I haue had my eares so oft dung through with these Obiectiions*’. He gives enough space to citing objections to royal publication to suggest some ambivalence towards royal

publication on his behalf.<sup>42</sup> He is particularly equivocal about those writings that engage in religious controversies, such as *An Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance* (1607), *A Premonition to All Most Mightie Monarches, Kings, Free Princes, and States of Christendome* (1609), and *A Remonstrance for the Right of Kings* (1615), all of which were republished in the *Workes*.<sup>43</sup> James engaged in these controversies despite the awareness of it being beneath his honour to debate with a cardinal that he expresses in the preface to *A Remonstrance for the Right of Kings*: ‘*doe I not conceiue it can any way make for my honour, to enter the lists against a Cardinall: For I am not ignorant how far a Cardinals Hat, commeth vnder the Crowne and Scepter of a King*’ (p. 390).

Montague suggests that James should be wary because in such controversies ‘*the person of a King is more exposed and lyes more open, then the person of a poore Scholler can doe; for as he is a farre greater marke, so he may farre more easily be hit*’. Rather than James’s royal status authorising his writings, his status makes him more vulnerable to attack. Implicit here is the view that such forms of writing are more appropriate for a scholar than for a King. When James wrote against the Pope and Cardinal Bellarmine, there was such a commotion, Montague reflects, that there is scarce a nation ‘*out of which his Maiestie hath not receiued some answere or other; either by way of refuting, or at least by rayling*’. Thus James is exposing himself to

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<sup>42</sup> Sig. B2v-B3, D1-D2. Omitted from the facsimile reprint of James’s *Workes*, Montague’s preface has received virtually no critical attention. Its ambivalence and the effect it has on the volume as a whole has not been sufficiently acknowledged. One of the few commentators even to mention the preface, W. B. Patterson, reads Montague’s assertion that James’s writings are a political weapon that his theological opponents look upon with amazement and fear (sig. C4v) as evidence that James’s writings caused apprehension in the Catholic world, without considering that the exercise required Montague to engage in this kind of rhetoric (*King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997], p. 97). Fischlin and Fortier cite Patterson in their introduction to *Royal Subjects* without examining the primary text (pp. 45-6). None of the contributors to *Royal Subjects* engages with Montague’s preface.

<sup>43</sup> Montague had in fact assisted James in the Oath of Allegiance controversy (Kenneth Fincham, *Prelate as Pastor: The Episcopate of James I* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990], p. 37). His particular ambivalence towards his king’s engagement in religious controversies thus derives at least in part from personal experience. Bishop Goodman also criticises James for writing religious controversies when he had ‘so much employment and business in state affairs’, arguing that in many instances the king disparages himself in these writings (in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton [London: Hutchinson, 1969], p. 149).

disagreement and vilification on a large scale. The underlying problem is that by engaging with issues which produce '*diuersity of Opinions*',<sup>44</sup> with people who are not subject to his authority, James is writing in a context in which his writing will not be perceived as authoritative. He is thereby exposing the limits of his authority.<sup>45</sup>

Montague goes on to ask if we should wish James had not written these pieces and states that, when he thinks of the abuses and indignities his Majesty has suffered, he is '*somewhat of that minde*'. He continues by stating that when he considers James's zeal and ability, and the blessing he has thereby gained from God, he cannot but change his mind. He has, however, firmly registered his concerns. Having himself equivocated, Montague then explicitly attempts to convince the reader: '*the better to induce you to bee of my minde; I will make vnto you a trew Relation [...] and then leaue it to your consideration*'.<sup>46</sup> This implies that there is resistance to the view that it is acceptable for James to produce such texts. The reader is asked to be of Montague's mind, but we have been made to feel that Montague has ambivalent views. As Montague acknowledges, whether or not James should produce such texts is a question that invites debate. His preface thus mirrors the problem of the texts in question – they invite debate. Thus the preface to James's most prestigious publication points to, and even re-enacts, some of the key problems of royal publication. While James must have intended Montague's preface to justify his use of print, in some ways it undermines the publication it precedes.

In the preface to *Basilikon Doron* James claims that '*I haue euer thought it the dewtie of a worthie Prince rather with a pike, then a penne, to write his iust reuenge*' (p. 145). He wrote this in the context of defending himself against accusations of having

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<sup>44</sup> Sig. D1v-D2.

<sup>45</sup> Patterson suggests that James's conduct in the Oath of Allegiance controversy did, however, win him much support in the Protestant community (*King James VI and I*). See this volume for a detailed discussion of the controversy.

<sup>46</sup> Sig. D2.

written against England and of having urged his son to seek revenge for the death of Mary Queen of Scots in the original version of *Basilikon Doron*. In the context of its republication in his *Workes*, however, this emphasis on acting over writing becomes deeply ironic. As we have seen, in the preface to James's *Workes*, Montague acknowledges that the view that James writes instead of acting is widely held. Montague reproduces this view in terms that – perhaps deliberately – echo James's preface to *Basilikon Doron*: 'little it befitts the Maiesty of a King to turne Clerke, and to make a warre with the penne, that were fitter to be fought with the Pike'.<sup>47</sup> Montague is, at least ostensibly, attempting to dismiss this particular objection to royal publication. Yet for the reader of the *Workes* what James states in the preface to *Basilikon Doron* appears to confirm the objection that Montague's preface is apparently trying to dismiss. James, by including his statement that a King should fight with a pike rather than a pen in his *Workes* – which is an extensive volume, which has a preface that admits that many of his subjects hold this view, which was published and republished just before and during a period of opposition to his pacifist policies – ironises and undermines his most prestigious publication. This encapsulates the problem that the context in which James's word was presented could give it new and unwanted significance – even when it was James who chose the context.

By publishing his writings James was giving his subjects something they could know, manipulate and own. In an oration to James in 1620, George Herbert responds to the king's self-exposure in his writings:

truly thou wast borne before in our hearts; but thou wishest also to be  
 thumbed in our hands; and laying aside thy majesty,  
 thou dost offer thyself to be gazed upon on paper,

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<sup>47</sup> Sig. B2v.

that thou mayest be more intimately conversant among us.<sup>48</sup>

Whilst Herbert is ostensibly praising James, he implies that his self-presentation in his writings is incompatible with majesty; to offer himself on paper James lays aside his majesty. Herbert creates a sense of James's readers possessing him in visual and physical terms, which is exactly the kind of exposure James sought to avoid. The intimacy Herbert describes contradicts James's claims of mystique and inscrutability. The image of the reader physically manipulating the text points to the control the reader has over the royal text.<sup>49</sup>

Contemporary sermons exemplify the fact that James's word was exploited as a source of authority, while at the same time interpretative authority was assumed by his readers. William Pemberton in *The Charge of GOD and the KING* (1619), for example, points his listeners (and subsequently readers) towards 'that worthy saying of our most *learned & religious King*'. He puts the references to the king's word in the margin, where he also places his biblical and classical sources of authority. He thereby, to some extent, supports James's identification of the authority of the royal word with the authority of the divine word. Having quoted James speaking in a 1614 disputation at Cambridge University, however, Pemberton continues 'and this accords with his *Maiesties* instructions to the Prince' and quotes the relevant passage for comparison (p. 18). Thus the preacher is taking upon himself the authority to interpret and compare James's words, and the authority to guide the interpretation of others, in the same way that preachers and others – including James – assumed the authority to interpret the bible. William Hayes in *The Lawyers Looking-glasse* (1624) treats the sensitive issue of

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<sup>48</sup> Cited in James Doelman, "'A King of thine own heart': The English Reception of King James VI and I's *Basilikon Doron*", *Seventeenth Century*, 9 (1994), 1-9 (7).

<sup>49</sup> The control of a reader over a text is also of course limited – Fischlin points out that texts themselves are resistant to attempts to fix their meaning ("To Eate the Flesh of Kings": James VI and I, Apocalypse, Nation and Sovereignty', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 388-420, [p. 405]).



monarchs having a responsibility to observe human laws. He argues that if monarchs fail in this responsibility others will follow their example. He continues: ‘which his Maiesty implies in aduise to his sonne in 2d booke of his *Basilikon Doron*’. Rather than quoting James, Hayes is offering his interpretation of what he thinks the king means. And what is implicit in Hayes’s text is that James should follow his own precepts, as interpreted by Hayes.<sup>50</sup>

Control of the royal text could thus enable a form of control over the King. In his discussion of the reception of *Basilikon Doron*, James Doelman argues that by reflecting back to James the ideals and principles he had articulated in *Basilikon Doron*, ‘English readers attempted to govern the King by his own words’. The official published version was perceived to have authority – it was even treated by some like holy writ, just as the king wanted – but that authority became detached from him. James can be read as authorising the royal word in a way that is separable from the King within *Basilikon Doron* when he advises Prince Henry that ‘your writes will remaine as true pictures of your minde, to all posterities’ (p. 184). Doelman suggests that *Basilikon Doron* was even perceived to have authority over the King. One of the examples he gives is a sermon in which William Thorne encouraged James to ‘read himselfe as it were, & rule out of his owne booke’. While the readers to whom Doelman refers may have claimed, and even believed, that authority resided in the word, the reception of *Basilikon Doron* in fact demonstrates that authority lay in the reading of the word. In quoting James’s book back to him, his readers were reappropriating it for their own purposes, placing passages into different contexts where they accrued new significance,

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<sup>50</sup> William Pemberton, *The Charge of GOD and the KING* (1619), p. 17; William Hayes, *The Lawyers Looking-glasse* (Oxford, 1624), p. 22.

using it to manipulate the King in ways he never intended.<sup>51</sup> Thus the ironic outcome of James's attempt to authorise his word, was that he thereby authorised his readers.

Reappropriation of the royal word could form a way of opposing the King. We have seen that Thomas Scott took a justification for writing against the Spanish match and in favour of war against Spain from James's writings. Scott even turns James's own words against him, punning on the title of James's major publication to support Scott's contention that James should turn his words into actions: James's writings, says Scott, are '*called his Works, because they should be turned into workes*'.<sup>52</sup>

While James seems to have welcomed the power of print to preserve and monumentalise his word, it thus empowered his readers who could assume interpretive authority, and use their interpretations to manipulate or even oppose the king. Indeed, other people could change the royal word even after it was published. *The Prince's Cabala: Or Mysteries of State* (London, 1715), for example, includes an altered version of *Basilikon Doron*, under the title 'Religio Regis; or the Faith and Duty of a Prince'. While the original title emphasises what James is choosing to give, this new title shifts the emphasis onto what subjects expect of a prince. This version of *Basilikon Doron* is abridged and entirely detached from its previous contexts of publication. It even lacks the preface to the reader that James was so careful to add to the official version. This publication subverts James's intentions for his word, not only by corrupting it but by representing what it thereby reveals as mysteries of state uncovered.

James himself, however, could not 'undo' what he had said in print. The translators' image of the king as an unmoveable statue serves as an appropriate

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<sup>51</sup> "'A King of thine own heart'", pp. 1, 2, 6. Doelman suggests that '*Basilikon Doron* was most blatantly used to serve particular ends in the literature of religious controversy' and gives a range of examples (p. 3ff).

<sup>52</sup> Quotations taken from the preface to *Vox Regis*, which is not paginated. This is an example of the kind of reappropriation of James's words that Goldberg fails to acknowledge when he confidently asserts 'royal power expresses itself by giving others words' (*James I*, p. 19). Scott's contention echoes Montague acknowledging in his preface to James's *Workes* that some people object to royal publication because a King should act rather than write (see above).

metaphor for this. There was an expectation that James's views should be consistent. We have seen the preacher Pemberton comparing a disputation at Cambridge University of 1614 with *Basilikon Doron*, without considering the lapse of time or the very different contexts. Yet James's printed texts only preserved the views he held at a particular point in time – if his views changed they could be measured against the publication.

James's representation of his views on kingship in *Basilikon Doron*, in particular, gave his subjects a standard by which to expose inconsistencies and self-contradictions; as we saw in chapter one, Samuel Daniel's *Panegyric Congratulatorie* (1603) referred, somewhat ominously, to the king's treatise as 'an earnest that doth even tie/ Thy sceptre to thy word'.<sup>53</sup> One of the pieces of advice to Prince Henry in *Basilikon Doron* that must have been particularly well-received by many of the English is 'I would rathest haue you to Marie one that were fully of your owne Religion' (p. 172). Those who opposed James's policy of seeking a Catholic marriage first for Henry and then for Charles could refer to this to expose the shift in James's stance. The king's earlier anti-Catholic writings were also held up against his negotiations with Catholic Spain. In a sermon preached in Northampton in 1621 Robert Bolton directed his audience to the full range of such writings by the king. While he was ostensibly praising James for his anti-Catholicism as demonstrated in his earlier writings, in 1621 this implied criticism of his current policy.<sup>54</sup> In 1618, at the outbreak of the Thirty Years War, Archbishop George Abbot directed James himself back to his paraphrase on

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<sup>53</sup> Sig. A3v, quoted in Doelman, "A King of thine own heart", p. 6.

<sup>54</sup> Bolton makes his point even clearer by praising England for the military valour it has enjoyed since the beginning of Elizabeth's reign and focusing on the problems caused by the presence of papists in England. This sermon indicates that in 1621, even away from the capital, one could expect people to be familiar with a range of James's writings and to have access to them (*Two Sermons Preached at Northampton* [1635], pp. 12-15, 30-31). For discussion of ways in which the image of Elizabeth I was used to question James's development of closer relations with Spain – and the consequent amplification of the Elizabethan legend in the early 1620s – see David Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989).

Revelation, thereby suggesting he carry out the role of militant Protestant king he had once assigned himself.<sup>55</sup> As Joseph Marshall considers, circumstances had changed and James realised that a different political approach was necessary, but his 'readers felt they should make the king live up to his words'.<sup>56</sup> We saw above that by collecting and republishing his works James was claiming that they transcended the contexts of their production; here we see how problematic it was for him that readers did *not* interpret his texts in the contexts of their production.

James addresses the problem that he was not expected to change his mind in 'The wiper of the Peoples teares'. He asks that his reader remember all the writings he has 'heeretofore putt out/ And yet beginn not for to doubt' (136-7), thereby acknowledging that reading his earlier texts in the light of his current policy is leading his subjects to doubt him. He then tells his readers to remember that 'the wise may change, yet free from fault' (140). The fact that James felt it necessary to make this response indicates the extent to which there was an assumption that a king should not change his mind. (Indeed, even as a modern critic one tends to read one text against another and to find contradiction problematic.) James's response also suggests an awareness of the contemporary climate of doubt and criticism that must have fed into his anxieties about the representation and interpretation of his kingship.

This develops our sense of how difficult it was to be both king and politician. As king James was expected to embody fixed and unchanging ideals, but as a politician working in a rapidly changing political environment he had to be adaptable and flexible. Print reflected the ideal of the unchanging king, but James's continuing and necessary

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<sup>55</sup> Esther Gilman Richey, *The Politics of Revelation in the English Renaissance* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1998), pp. 3-4. For a discussion of James's pacifism, see Malcolm Smuts, 'The Making of *Rex Pacificus*: James VI and I and the Problem of Peace in an Age of Religious War', in *Royal Subjects*, ed. by Fischlin and Fortier, pp. 371-387. Smuts convincingly argues that while James in the late 1580s was more outspoken than Elizabeth in justifying Protestant resistance, then became increasingly committed to peace through his English reign, he was not inconsistent. Rather, he remained adept at adjusting theoretical positions to meet immediate needs.

<sup>56</sup> 'Reading and misreading King James 1622-42', p. 478-9.

work as a politician undermined his publications. The more transient and malleable medium of manuscript was perhaps more appropriate for the representation of the circumstantial detail of James's policies, but its very transience and malleability was in conflict with the ideal of the unchanging king. While print and manuscript present different specific problems for James, ultimately the problem they present is the same: James's texts are open to being quoted selectively, reinterpreted from particular perspectives, and read in ways that expose the limits of his authority. This study itself is of course another example of that.

The tensions between the roles of Writer and King thus involved James in self-exposure, self-contradiction, inappropriate forms of discourse, and invitations to others to represent royal affairs. He tried to represent himself as having textual authority to reflect and reinforce his political authority, but ultimately this exposed the limits of the theory of kingship by divine right he maintained. For James's attempts to impose his authority reveal that as textual authority is dependent on the consent and co-operation of the reader, so political authority is actually dependent on the consent and co-operation of the subject. What ruler and writer try to present as the imposition of absolute authority is in fact a dialogue, within which strategies of negotiation, persuasion, and manipulation are required, the outcome of which is rarely assured. The impression James creates that political and textual authority are mutually dependent – that political authority *requires* textual representation and textual authority *requires* an explicit emphasis on the political authority of the writer – exposes the limits of both forms of authority.

The tensions between the roles of writer and king did not begin for James in 1603, but they are greater in his later writings. The reason may be that while he did not face as much opposition to his political authority in England as he had in Scotland, he faced more criticism of his style of politics and performance, largely as a consequence

of the translation of the style he had developed in Scotland into the rather different English context. This criticism may have increased his anxieties about interpretation and representation, thereby leading him more and more to respond to those anxieties in his writings, thus increasing the problems this chapter has explored. If so, then we can see the problems of James's verbal self-representation as in part a consequence of the difficulties he faced in trying to perform his role.

James's efforts to represent himself through language risked undermining themselves not only because of the particular nature of the representations, however, but also because of contemporary expectations of kingship and attitudes towards monarchical writing. His self-representation as a writer did not dispel the objections to royal writing and publication that Montague's preface to the *Workes* reflects.<sup>57</sup> In the same way, James's attempts to perform the role of magnificent king risked undermining themselves both because of his particular style, and because of changing and conflicting expectations of magnificence in the period. His failure to meet certain expectations, particularly the expectation that a monarch should make public appearances and engage with his or her subjects, does not seem to have diminished those expectations.

Whatever the particular problems of style and context, James's representations of royal authority and mystique were also problematic simply by virtue of being representations, for *to represent* authority and mystique is not necessarily *to be* authoritative and mystified; representation requires interpretation, and, whether the

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<sup>57</sup> James's purposes may have been better served by relying more on representations by court writers and image-makers, as Elizabeth had. Of course he did employ court writers, most notably Ben Jonson, but he was not surrounded by writers creating a national cult as Elizabeth had been. Curtis Perry suggests this was precisely because it was so difficult for poets to respond to James's self-styling as a poet (see *The Making of Jacobean Culture* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997]). The intentions and interpretations of such representations were, however, even further out of the King's control than were the interpretations of his own texts, and even court writers might encode in their texts the kinds of criticism and satire about which he was so anxious. The court masques of Ben Jonson, for example, have been read in this way. See *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially Martin Butler, 'Courtly Negotiations', pp. 20-40, Butler, 'Ben Jonson and the Limits of Courtly Panegyric', in *Culture and Politics*, ed. by Sharpe and Lake, pp. 91-116, and Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987).

representation is verbal or visual, interpretation cannot be controlled. Thus 'the problem of the reader' is also the problem of the observer. Yet in this period authority required the perception of authority and therefore had to be represented. Royal authority was based on the mystique of being King by Divine Right – on, as James realised, 'the mysticall reuerence, that belongs vnto them that sit in the Throne of God'<sup>58</sup> – so mystique too had to be represented. Thus the fundamental problem is that royal representation was both necessary and potentially undermining for the monarch; while the nature of James's self-representation exacerbated the problem of royal representation, the problem itself was irreconcilable.

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<sup>58</sup> 1616 speech in the Star Chamber (p. 557).

## Conclusion

Since King James is significant as a monarch, as a writer, and for the ways in which he combines the two roles, my study has implications for our understanding of both the political and the literary culture of the Jacobean period and beyond. In this conclusion I wish to outline briefly how my study relates to other areas of work on the representation of royalty and on authorship in the early modern period, and to suggest some possible wider implications of my work and directions for further study.

Firstly, my study of James's self-representation has not only explored his specific concerns, but also highlighted several issues that relate to the representation of royalty more generally. I have suggested that in some ways James could not fundamentally change existing expectations in England as to royal performance and representation, and that his failure to meet certain expectations that Elizabeth had met and shaped contributed to negative perceptions of him in the Jacobean period and subsequently. I have argued that the problems he faced in trying to reinforce his image through representation derived not only from his particular style, but also from several more general factors: the diversity of audiences for royal representation; the inherent tensions between the myth and the reality of early modern kingship, and the fundamentally problematic nature of representation itself.

This raises a number of questions. What impact did James have on the culture of royal representation? Did he have any effect on public expectations of, or attitudes towards, monarchical performance and representation? What determines expectations of monarchical performance and how far is it possible for any single monarch to change them? Did James have any influence on the style of representation of any of his successors? What might my study of James tell us about the considerations and difficulties faced by other early modern monarchs? One of the ways in which some of



these questions could be pursued is by considering the relation between the self-representation of James and that of his son, Charles I.

Charles's style of self-representation was very different from that of his father, particularly in that he favoured visual over verbal forms of representation. As many critics have explored, he was a major collector and patron of art and he commissioned leading artists to produce numerous portraits of him and his family.<sup>1</sup> His portraits represented in visual form the same political ideology as his father had maintained. This is evident, for example, in 'Van Dyck's official images of Charles as paterfamilias, imperial cavalier, sacred majesty or *re galantuomo*, [which] translate the doctrine of divine right into the glorious amenities of baroque portraiture, creating an imaginative world in which the king's identity is defined first and foremost by his relationship to God'.<sup>2</sup> Charles and his wife, Henrietta Maria, danced frequently in masques at court and the masques themselves increasingly represented Charles's political ideals in visual rather than verbal form.<sup>3</sup> During his reign, unlike his father, he did not represent himself as a writer. Indeed, Kevin Sharpe has suggested that throughout his reign Charles represented himself as a 'man of silence'. Charles did, of course, have one major publication: the posthumously published *Eikon Basilike. The Pourtraicture of His*

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<sup>1</sup> See, amongst others, Roy Strong, *Van Dyck: Charles I on Horseback* (London: Allen Lane, 1972), Oliver Millar, *Van Dyck in England* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 1982) and *The Age of Charles I* (London: Tate Gallery, 1972); David Howarth, ed., *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts: Essays in Honour of Sir Oliver Millar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and *Images of Rule: Art and Politics in the English Renaissance, 1485-1649* (Hampshire and London: Macmillan, 1997), and John Peacock, 'The Visual Image of Charles I', in *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, ed. by Thomas N Corns (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 176-239.

<sup>2</sup> Peacock, 'Visual Image', p. 202.

<sup>3</sup> Charles's preference for the visual was a factor in the increasing dominance in court masques of Inigo Jones, and Jones responded to that preference: 'during the 1630s, when Jones was in the ascendant, he made sure that the masques became more and more pictorial in character, a tendency which accorded with Charles's love of the visual arts and his use of them to make statements of his political objectives and ideals' (Peacock, 'Visual Image', p. 230). For further discussion of the Caroline court masque, see Thomas N. Corns, 'Duke Prince and King', in *The Royal Image*, ed. by Corns, pp. 1-25; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), and Martin Butler, 'Reform or Reverence: The Politics of the Caroline Masque', in *Theatre and Government Under the Early Stuarts*, ed. by J. R. Mulryne and M. Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 118-56. For a history of Charles's personal rule, see Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992).

*Sacred Maiestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings*, but even this text positions 'the royal author above the polemical fray', and was not written single-handedly by the king.<sup>4</sup>

While much work has been done on Charles I and his self-representation, little consideration has been given to how the styles of self-representation of James and Charles compare and, in particular, to whether there is any causal relationship between the two styles. In the afterword of the recent collection of essays on Charles, *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I*, Sharpe suggests that 'inherited and remembered images, expectations and other representations all fashioned the production and consumption of the royal image'.<sup>5</sup> Sharpe does not relate this specifically to James, but James was surely one of the main influences on Charles's approaches to, and Charles's subjects' expectations of, royal representation.

Charles's interest in visual culture has been related to his mother, Queen Anne, having had the same interest.<sup>6</sup> Yet Charles's prioritisation of the visual, as well as his self-positioning above polemic and debate, may have had more to do with James. We have already seen that Charles's older brother, Henry, was concerned to present himself very differently from his father. An incident described in the 1607 report of the Venetian ambassador, Nicolo Molin, suggests that even at the age of thirteen Henry had different priorities to his father: the prince was upbraided by James for not attending to his lessons, then told his tutor 'I know what becomes a Prince. It is not necessary for me to be a professor, but a soldier and a man of the world'.<sup>7</sup> The 1622 'relation of England' by the Venetian ambassador, Girolamo Lando, suggests that Charles, then twenty-one,

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<sup>4</sup> 'The King's Writ: Royal Authors and Royal Authority in Early Modern England', in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. by Sharpe and Peter Lake (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), pp. 117-138 (pp. 131, 136). There has been much debate as to the authorship of *Eikon Basilike*. It was probably based on Charles's memoranda and given its final form by the Presbyterian divine, John Gauden (Elizabeth Skerpan Wheeler, 'Eikon Basilike and the Rhetoric of Self-Representation', in *The Royal Image*, ed. by Corns, pp. 122-140 [p. 124]).

<sup>5</sup> 'The Royal Image: an Afterword', pp. 288-309 (p. 291).

<sup>6</sup> Linda Levy Peck, 'Introduction', *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 1-17 (p. 7).

<sup>7</sup> Report in *James I by his Contemporaries*, ed. by Robert Ashton (London: Hutchinson, 1969), p. 96.

also lacked enthusiasm for study: the prince 'likes sometimes to pick up a book of history or poetry, but has not the grounded knowledge of his Majesty and does not apply himself so much to study'. Lando also writes of the prince that 'his special maxim is to adopt silence and sobriety of speech in affairs of state'. With regard to his feelings about the proposed Spanish marriage and the Catholic religion 'he does not disclose himself'.<sup>8</sup> This discretion is in stark contrast to the approach at this time of James, who was shortly to write 'The wiper of the Peoples teares'. It seems equally likely that the style of self-representation of both brothers was in part a reaction against the literary, intellectual, even self-exposing, style of their father, a sense that they knew better than he 'what becomes a Prince'.

If Charles was indeed reacting against the style of his father, there are several possible reasons for this. Charles must have been aware of the range of James's writings and some of the contemporary responses they met. He had been the dedicatee of his father's *Workes* which, as we have seen, reflects the range of James's writings and has a preface that ambivalently reproduces several contemporary objections to monarchical publication. He was therefore almost certainly aware of those objections; he may also have been aware that, as I have argued, James's use of his writings to explain and justify his authority exposed the limitations of his authority and risked demystifying him. Charles also witnessed James's lack of interest in portraiture and lack of performance in masques at court. Moreover, Charles had been involved in parliamentary debates over foreign policy at the end of James's reign, witnessed the weak position in which James ultimately found himself, and may have been aware of James's literary interventions in popular discussion of his foreign policy at this time. At the same time, Charles was surely aware of the other main version of royal representation circulating in the Jacobean period: the cultural memory of Elizabeth. We have noted that the Tudor

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<sup>8</sup> *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian*, XVII (1621-3), pp. 451-2.

Queen was increasingly mythologised during James's reign, partly in response to the perceived failings of James himself. Some of the key aspects of Elizabeth's self-representation were her use of portraiture, her avoidance of publication for many of her writings, her self-positioning above debate, and her consequent reliance on other image-makers and writers.

This raises the possibility that Charles reacted against the style of his father and returned to a more visual, more Elizabethan, style of representation not only because of personal inclination, but also because from his perspective the latter style appeared more effective.<sup>9</sup> This possibility would further illuminate Sharpe's insights into Charles's self-representation throughout his reign as a 'man of silence'. Sharpe points out that the new king told his first parliament in 1625, it did not "stand with my nature to spend much time in words"; he was often to repeat the statement'. This may reflect a concern on Charles's part to differentiate himself immediately from James's style of extended rhetorical engagement with parliament. As Sharpe observes, while Charles spoke and published where necessary – and it was particularly necessary after 1640 – he maintained that his authority and virtue ought to be self-evident and did not need to be justified. We have seen that both Elizabeth and James maintained this too, but that James undermined this claim by continually explaining his authority and his meaning both to parliament and to his reading audience. Perhaps Charles saw this as a mistake and was concerned not to repeat it. In 1641 he responded to discussion and criticism by telling parliament that 'it is below the high and royal dignity [...] to trouble ourself with answering those many scandalous seditious pamphlets and printed papers'.<sup>10</sup> This may

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<sup>9</sup> If Charles was to some extent trying to emulate Elizabeth's style of self-representation and to reject his father's, he still made same mistake as his father in not reproducing her common touch and her interaction with her subjects; 'like his father, Charles I was not given to appearing before his people, however successful such public self-exposure might have been for their predecessor' (Peacock, 'Visual Image', p. 176). Sharpe points out that while the Stuart monarchy did become less peripatetic, the extent of Charles's neglect of public festival and procession has been overstated ('The Royal Image', pp. 296-7).  
<sup>10</sup> Sharpe, 'The King's Writ', pp. 131-136.

in part have been a reaction against James troubling himself in exactly this way, responding in person to discussion in different spheres in the early 1620s, even responding in kind to a verse libel.

The possibility that Charles was reacting against his father's style of self-representation may also provide insights into his reasons for commissioning Rubens to represent the apotheosis of James in a series of paintings for the Banqueting House ceiling, a project that was completed in 1635. As Roy Strong indicates, these paintings translate into visual form what James had written: 'Mercury surely represents James in his spoken and written pronouncements, the learned monarch who is able to instruct his subjects in the mysteries of his office'; *Basilikon Doron* is 'without doubt the key source-book for the iconography'.<sup>11</sup> Rather than simply a compliment to his father and a reflection of Charles's aesthetic preferences, this may have been a deliberate attempt to re-present James in the visual terms he had used so little, because Charles believed they were more effective than the verbal terms his father had used. If so, these paintings reflect not only the image James sought to portray of himself in his writings, but also the limitations his son perceived in his style of self-representation.

Even *Eikon Basilike* does not present an argument; unlike James's writings, it does not explain and justify the king's views, nor does it make explicit attempts to guide the reader. It begins not with an introductory note or preface, as James's writings invariably did, but with the famous, fold-out frontispiece engraved by William Marshall.<sup>12</sup> It succeeded in 'raising the king above the polemical fray and constructing an image that appealed to all classes of readers'.<sup>13</sup> The key term here is 'constructing an

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<sup>11</sup> 'Britannia Triumphans: Inigo Jones, Rubens and The Whitehall Banqueting House', in *The Tudor and Stuart Monarchy: Pageantry, Painting and Iconography*, 3 vols (Woodbridge: Boydell, 1998 [this study first published in 1980]), III, 127-58 (145). See this study for a full description of the iconography of the paintings.

<sup>12</sup> Skerpan Wheeler, 'Eikon Basilike and the Rhetoric of Self-Representation', p. 125.

<sup>13</sup> Sharpe, 'The Royal Image', p. 304. *Eikon Basilike* was so popular that thirty-five London editions were produced within a year (Steven N. Zwicker, 'The King's Head and the Politics of Literary Property: the *Eikon Basilike* and *Eikonoklastes*', in *Lines of Authority: Politics and English Literary Culture, 1649-*

image': this text is consistent with Charles's preference for visual forms of representation, and extends his attempt to remain above debate and to maintain his virtue is self-evident, for it presents itself not as a defence or an explanation, but rather as 'The Pourtraicture' of the king. Again, critics have identified these qualities in *Eikon Basilike*, but have not fully compared it with James's writings, considered whether it is shaped by a deliberate attempt not to emulate his style, or explored the different effect of the two styles.

Whatever the nature of the representation, however, to represent the claim that something is self-evident is still, as we saw in discussing James, potentially problematic. In *Eikonoklastes* (1649), his response to *Eikon Basilike*, Milton exploits this problem. As Sharon Achinstein points out, he 'asserts that the king's image is not self-evident, as the king himself is aware: he needs an inscription to explain himself'. Milton argues that 'he who writes himself *Martyr* by his own inscription, is like an ill Painter, who, by writing on the shapeless Picture which he hath drawn, is fain to tell passengers what shape it is; which els no man could imagin'.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that Charles's style of verbal representation had not avoided the problems faced by his father that explaining what is claimed to be self-evident is a contradiction, and that representation requires interpretation, which cannot be controlled. Milton's analogy is, however, instructive, for it represents writing as an adjunct to a picture that compensates for the ill-execution of the picture. This implies that a well-executed picture requires no explanation. The intended implication is of course that Charles and his text would require no explanation if his claims were self-evident and true. Ironically, however, by

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1689 [Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993], pp. 37-59 [p. 37]). Sharpe suggests, however, that it 'may have depended upon the real tragedy on the scaffold for its effect' ('The Royal Image', p. 304).

<sup>14</sup> 'Milton and King Charles' in *the Royal Image*, ed. by Corns, pp. 141-161 (p. 156). For further discussion of the two texts, see Zwicker, 'The King's Head and the Politics of Literary Property'; Richard Helgerson, 'Milton Reads the King's Book: Print, Performance, and the Making of a Bourgeois Idol', *Criticism*, 29 (1987), 1-26, and Sharpe, 'The King's Writ', pp. 136-8.

suggesting that pictures present, words explain, the terms of Milton's analogy justify Charles's prioritisation of the visual.

If one aspect of James's impact on the culture of royal representation was indeed that Charles I reacted against his style to favour visual over verbal representation, this reaction raises further questions about the differences between the two forms of representation, which relate to some of the central concerns of this thesis. Charles seems to have believed that, as Milton's analogy suggests, pictures present and language explains, and that visual representation was therefore less open to multiple interpretations than discourse is, less likely to invite response, and a more effective means of maintaining that his authority and virtue were self-evident and indisputable. To what extent, if any, does visual representation have these advantages over verbal? Do the distinctions between the visual and the verbal hold, or can we see *Eikon Basilike* as blurring their boundaries by trying to translate a notion that pictures present but do not explain into a verbal form of representation? Pursuing such questions further may illuminate or add to recent work on Charles, and on the representation of royalty more generally.

While my study of James's self-representation has raised these questions in the sphere of political culture, my focus on his writings has also highlighted several issues that relate to authorship more generally. I have shown James's anxious awareness that his texts may be open to a range of interpretations and the various strategies he used in attempting to control interpretation. In his writings he tried to combine the roles of author and authority, poet and king, writer and reader, source and interpreter of meaning. I have argued, however, that there were tensions and contradictions between these twin roles, which were exposed by James's attempts to combine the two roles, and which undermined his attempts to self-authorise through his writings. I have also suggested that James used various strategies to legitimise publication, explored some of

the specific problems for him of print and manuscript, and suggested that fundamentally both presented the same problem of the impossibility of controlling interpretation.

Again, this range of arguments raises a number of questions. Did James's writings shape the work of other contemporary writers? Did his writings have any impact on attitudes towards, or concepts of, authorship and the status of the author more generally in the early modern period? What do the strategies James employed and the problems he faced tell us about the problems facing any writer? Addressing such questions may illuminate the central critical issues of authorship and authority, yet, as critics are only just beginning to recognise the literary and cultural importance of monarchical writing, so little work has been done on its relation to the work of other contemporary writers. One of the most fruitful ways these questions could be explored is by focusing on Ben Jonson, for he was a prominent writer and commentator of the period who wrote directly for James. Moreover, he explicitly addressed many of the issues I have explored with regard to the king, he shared many of his concerns, and he was a major influence on the development of the notion of authorship.

Study of the relationship between James and Jonson has largely been confined to examining the ways in which Jonson's writing for the Jacobean court negotiated patronage relationships and the demands of panegyric and decorum.<sup>15</sup> Recently, Curtis Perry's *The Making of Jacobean Culture* (1997) has explored some of Jonson's work in terms of it responding to and negotiating with James's style of self-representation. Perry suggests the difficulty court poets faced in responding to a king who was also a poet, without seeming either redundant or seeming to imply the inadequacy of the king's own verse. Little attempt has, however, been made to compare James and Jonson as writers,

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<sup>15</sup> See Jennifer Brady, 'Jonson's "To King James": Plain Speaking in the *Epigrammes* and the *Conversations*', *Studies in Philology*, 82 (1995), 380-99, and Jean le Drew, 'Subjecting the King: Ben Jonson's Praise of James I', *English Studies in Canada*, 17 (1991), pp. 135-49.



yet such comparison reveals a number of significant parallels, which may illuminate other concerns in study of Jonson and early modern authorship.

A major concern in study of Jonson has been his contribution to the 'emergence of the author', through his self-representation, his deliberate attempts to elevate the status of literary writing, and his use of publication.<sup>16</sup> Jonson has been prominent in more general study of the relationship between authorship and authority in the early modern period. Critics such as M. Tribble have explored this relationship in terms of authors not yet being perceived to be their own source of authority, but still requiring authorisation from external sources of authority, such as a patron. Tribble suggests that in his earlier work Jonson uses plural external authorities, including royal authority, but that he moves towards abandoning such authorities in 'an early anticipation of the eighteenth-century construction of the literary subject, of the authored – and owned – text'.<sup>17</sup> Such work has not considered the special case of monarchical writing, yet as both author and source of authority James focuses the relationship between authorship and authority.

In their desire to control the meaning of their work, James and Jonson shared a number of anxieties, faced similar difficulties and adopted similar strategies. These include anxieties about the reception and misinterpretation of their writing, which for James might be politically dangerous, and for Jonson might bring him into conflict with state authorities,<sup>18</sup> and might be economically detrimental, in that he depended for his

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<sup>16</sup> See Richard C. Newton, 'Jonson and the (Re-)invention of the Book', in *Classic and Cavalier: Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, ed. by Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh press, 1982), pp. 31-55; Richard Helgerson, 'The Elizabethan Laureate: Self-Presentation and the Literary System', *English Literary History*, 46 (1979), pp. 193-220; David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London: Harvard University Press, 1989); *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. by Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991); Richard Dutton, *Ben Jonson: Authority: Criticism* (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), and *Re-Presenting Ben Jonson*, ed. by Martin Butler (London: Macmillan Press, 1999).

<sup>17</sup> *Margins and Marginality: the Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville, 1993), p. 10. See also Robert Weimann, *Authority and Representation in Early Modern Discourse*, ed. by David Hillman (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1996).

<sup>18</sup> Jonson did of course come into conflict with the authorities over a number of his plays, including *Sejanus* and *Eastward Ho!* in the early Jacobean period. See Riggs, *Ben Jonson*, pp. 105ff, 122ff.

living on his success as a writer. We have seen that in the preface to *Basilikon Doron* James expressed an awareness that decontextualisation can amount to misrepresentation, claiming that the pamphlet called 'The King's Testament' was a misrepresentation of his word because it lacked '*both my methode and halfe of my matter*' (p. 146). Jonson also expresses this awareness, writing that 'they would offer to urge mine own writings against me; but by pieces (which was an excellent way of malice)', and that this leaves things 'subject to calumny, which read entire would appear most free'.<sup>19</sup> This may have given impetus to the desire of both writers to publish their writings. Publication enabled them not only to provide full versions of their texts but also to place them in contexts where they could guide the reader with prefaces, notes and marginalia.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, both James and Jonson favoured the verbal over the visual and were concerned to re-present performances – in the case of the king, these included parliamentary speeches, in the case of Jonson, plays and masques – in written form. This indicates that both believed publication to be a way of asserting their authorial control over their texts. As it was impossible for James – even with his royal authority – to control the meaning of his texts, however, so it was impossible for Jonson.

While both were anxious about misinterpretation, both may also have deliberately written texts that were open to a range of interpretations as a further strategy for controlling audience response. Annabel Patterson has described Jonson's use of what she terms 'functional ambiguity' – a style of writing that leaves a text open to different interpretations – as a means of avoiding censorship.<sup>21</sup> Much has been written on the difficulties Jonson faced, and the strategies of writing in an open and ambivalent way he used, in such commissions as the masques *Prince Henry's Barriers*

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<sup>19</sup> *Timber: or Discoveries*, in Ben Jonson, *The Complete Poems*, ed. by George Parfitt (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1975), p. 415.

<sup>20</sup> For a study of Jonson's use of marginalia, see Tribble, *Margins and Marginality*, pp. 130-157.

<sup>21</sup> *Censorship and Interpretation* (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

(1610) and *Oberon* (1611). These commissions required Jonson to represent Henry in chivalric, militant terms without appearing to criticise James's pacifist stance.<sup>22</sup> What has not been fully considered is that this parallels the difficulties James faced, and the strategies he used, in some of his writings, such as the *Lepanto*. The original text of the *Lepanto* reflects James's desire to maintain favour with both Catholics and Protestants, a desire which arose from the potential political benefits of alliance with either side. For both Jonson and James, an open, ambivalent style of writing was a necessary response to the need to satisfy simultaneously two different audiences.

As we have seen, when the circumstances in which James wrote the *Lepanto* changed, he responded by publishing his poem with an added preface that attempts to change the way the poem will be read. Writing court masques also involved Jonson in facing the risk that the specific circumstances with which he was engaging would change, and this did indeed happen, most notably in the case of the masques he wrote for Frances Howard. In *Hymenaei* (1606) he celebrated her marriage to the Earl of Essex, which ended in a controversial divorce. He then wrote two further masques in 1613, *A Challenge at Tilt* and *The Irish Masque at Court*, for Howard's remarriage to Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset. Even greater scandal quickly ensued when Howard and Carr were accused of involvement in the murder of Thomas Overbury. Like the king, Jonson responded to these changed circumstances not by abandoning his texts, but by re-presenting them, including all three masques in his *Workes* (1616) with all mention of their specific occasion deleted.<sup>23</sup> Both writers thus exhibit a certain confidence in their ability to re-present their texts so that they transcend their circumstances of

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<sup>22</sup> See J. R. Mulryne, "'Here's Unfortunate Revels': War and Chivalry in Plays and Shows at the Time of Prince Henry Stuart', in *War, Literature and the Arts in Sixteenth Century Europe*, ed. by Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 165-189; Norman Council, 'Ben Jonson, Inigo Jones, and the Transformation of Tudor Chivalry', *English Literary History*, 47 (1980), 259-75, and Martin Butler, 'Courtly Negotiations', in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, ed. by David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 20-40.

<sup>23</sup> See David Lindley, 'Embarrassing Ben: the Masques for Frances Howard', *English Literary Renaissance*, 16 (1986), 343-59.

production. Both of course made the claim that their texts transcend their circumstances of production in a bold way by publishing the range of their writings as collections.

Jonson's *Workes* has received a considerable amount of critical attention. It was an unprecedented publication which marked an important step in the 'emergence of the author' and the acceptance of drama as literature.<sup>24</sup> Little attempt has been made to compare it with that of the King. Yet both collections of *Workes* were unprecedented; both were lavish and prestigious publications; both reflect the desire of the author to elevate and monumentalise their writing; both reflect the range and chronology of the authors' literary careers; both were published within the same year, and both span a similar time period (the first text in James's collection, *A Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle St. John*, was written in 1588, the first in that of Jonson, *Every Man in His Humour*, was written in 1598). Despite their extensive use of publication, however, both writers also express ambivalence towards it. We have seen that James published some of his early texts anonymously and claims in the prefaces to *Basilikon Doron* and *Lepanto* that he was forced into publication. In Epigram III, 'To My Booke-Seller', for example, Jonson expresses anxiety that his work is being commodified and that it will not be appreciated. Jonson's epigrams are included in his *Workes*, as *Basilikon Doron* is included in James's *Workes*. Thus both collections, however much they exploit print, contain expressions of anxiety about the medium. As I will suggest further below, much might be learned about authorship and authority in the Jacobean period through detailed comparisons of these two texts.

While both writers thus try to assert authorial control over their texts, both also make claims for the authority of the reader. James was both author and source of authority, poet and king, and he tried to present these roles as complementary. What my

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<sup>24</sup> See Newton, 'Jonson and the (Re-)invention of the Book', and *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. by Brady and Herendeen.

study has shown, however, are the tensions between his twin roles of poet and king in terms of the creation and interpretation of meaning, as he is forced to contradict his claims for his own writing that it dictates its own meaning by also claiming that he has interpretative authority as a reader. I would suggest that these tensions reflect and may illuminate potential tensions between other authors and their external sources of authority, particularly when the external source of authority is the king himself. I would further suggest that these tensions are intensified in the case of Jonson because he, like the king, both tries to control the meaning of his writing – by providing prologues, by publishing and including notes and marginalia – and claims that the reader or audience has interpretative responsibility. As James emphasises his authority as a reader in order to emphasise that dangerous or seditious meanings cannot be hidden from him, so Jonson shifts responsibility onto the reader when his work may be read as having satirical implications. For example, in the induction to *Bartholomew Fair* (1614) he begins by stating that he does not want ‘any state-decipherer, or politic picklock of the scene’ to try to work out who was meant by each of his characters.<sup>25</sup> For both James and Jonson the self-contradictory shift of authority onto the reader is thus a defence mechanism.

In considering James’s writings, we have seen that the tensions between the authority of the text and the authority of the reader emerge in particular in his interpretations of the bible. For while James was a source of authority as well as an author, as king he still required external authorisation in the form of the bible. The main external authority Jonson drew on was classical writers. Classical authorities were of course not as absolute and indisputable as the bible and allowed Jonson more scope to manipulate and change. Indeed, Jonson maintained that writers *should* interpret for themselves and move beyond classical writings: ‘I know nothing can conduce more to

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<sup>25</sup> *Three Comedies*, ed. by Michael Jamieson (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), lines 123–4.

letters than to examine the writings of the ancients, and not to rest in their sole authority [...]. It is true they opened the gates, and made the way, that went before us; but as guides not commanders'.<sup>26</sup> The very fact that he felt the need to make this claim, however, reflects the problem that he was assuming the authority to interpret other texts in the way that he did not want other readers to interpret his. Again we see the tension between the authority of the text and the authority of the reader.

While some of these anxieties and strategies were common to other early modern writers, I would suggest that the extent of the parallels between James and Jonson derives from the extent to which both attempted to use external authorities in order to self-authorise. I will begin to draw out the further significance of the parallels I have outlined by focusing on this issue. Jonson's use of classical writers as external authorities and his attempt to present his own work as 'classical' has attracted much critical attention. Richard C. Newton, for example, suggests that Jonson 'labors throughout his writing, through allusion and imitation, to appropriate to himself the epithet "classical"', and 'in the 1616 *Workes*, his translation of the Latin *opera* specifically makes the claim that Jonson as a writer is a classic'.<sup>27</sup> Again, what has not been considered is that this has much in common with James's use of the bible as a source of authorisation. This is highlighted by considering the way both writers draw on these external authorities for their 1616 folio collections. The similarities in the strategies used are striking. As we have seen, James's *Workes* begins with a frontispiece that has a picture of the king next to a book showing the title *Verbum Dei*, and verse that concludes '*knowledge makes the KING most like his maker*', thereby implying that James's book is informed by God's book and that the king is like God in the power of his word. The frontispiece of Jonson's *Workes* portrays him as a classical poet,

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<sup>26</sup> *Timber: or Discoveries*, in *The Complete Poems*, ed. by Parfitt, pp. 378-9.

<sup>27</sup> 'Jonson and the (Re-)invention of the Book', pp. 39, 37.

complete with laurel wreath. In both cases the writer is trying to authorise their work, not only by drawing on these external authorities, but also by implying their proximity to those sources; James implies that his word is like God's word and should be treated as such, Jonson implies that his writings are worthy of the status of classical texts; James is supporting his claim to be God's representative on earth, Jonson is supporting his claim to be the representative of a poetic tradition.

The reader of the king's *Workes* then encounters a dedication and preface by Bishop Montague, the reader of Jonson's *Workes* a series of contemporary poems. As Montague is a representative of the church, his support of James's book reinforces the king's claims of proximity to God. Likewise, the contributions to Jonson's *Workes* by a number of contemporary poets emphasise Jonson's important place in a continuing poetic tradition. James's *Workes* then includes his interpretations of scripture and his secular writings which also draw on the bible, often adopting the practice of placing the biblical reference in the margins (see for example *The Trew Law*). Jonson's *Workes* includes his interpretations of classical forms, such as the epigram, and his use of new forms such as the court masque, which incorporate classical ideas and references. Again, his classical references are often placed in the margins of his texts.

What we see in both cases then, is the author trying to move beyond the external authority, not only referring to it, but incorporating, reinterpreting and emulating it. In other words, both authors are using the external authority as a basis for self-authorisation. Jennifer Brady has suggested that the ironic outcome of Jonson's attempt to make his *Workes* an authoritative text was that he was held accountable to it – the text supplanted his authority.<sup>28</sup> This clearly parallels the problem that we have seen James encountered in *Basilikon Doron* being treated as having authority that became

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<sup>28</sup> "Noe Fault, but Life": Jonson's Folio as Monument and Barrier', in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. by Brady and Herendeen, pp. 192-216 (p. 193).

detached from him. Jonson was expected to maintain the literary standards he had set in his *Workes*, James was expected to maintain the principles and policies he had represented in *Basilikon Doron*. Their attempts to produce authoritative texts simply gave their readers standards by which to judge them.

Pursuing the comparisons I have outlined may further illuminate the work of both writers and the wider issues of authorship and authority. Further study may also reveal that the way James combined authorship and authority directly influenced, or even helped to enable, the process by which writers such as Jonson began to self-authorise. Ultimately then, while James's use of verbal self-representation may have led his royal successor to view authorship as an inadequate vehicle for the representation of political authority, it may also have participated in a process by which textual authority was increasingly assumed by authors.



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