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Law and the Equivocal Image: Sacred and Profane in Royal Portraiture

The World in Pictures.

“I am Richard II, know ye not that?”¹ Elizabeth I was supposed to have asked this question in August 1601 of William Lambard (1536–1601), the antiquary, lawyer and newly-appointed Keeper of the Records. Earlier that year, the Essex Rebellion had been staged, ending in ignominious failure for the participants and in execution for the eponymous Earl. For Shakespearean scholars the most memorable moment in this misguided and botched attempt at decisive political action against an absolutist regime was the staging of Shakespeare’s *The Tragedy of King Richard II* at the Globe Theatre on the afternoon of 7 February, the eve of the Rebellion.² Essex’s chief accomplice was Shakespeare’s patron, the Earl of Southampton, who was convicted with Essex of High Treason, but reprieved by the Queen from execution.³ The

* I formulated many of the ideas in this essay while completing *Shakespeare’s Imaginary Constitution: Late-Elizabethan Politics and the Theatre of Law* (Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2010). I am grateful to Hart Publishing for permission to include brief extracts from that book.

¹ Quoted in E. K. Chambers, *William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems*, Vol. 2. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), 326–327; also, in F. L., “Queen Elizabeth and Richard II”, *Notes and Queries* 7 (1913), 6–7.

² For interpretations of this performance, see Paul E. J. Hammer, “Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, the Play of 7 February 1601, and the Essex Rising”, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (2008), 1–35; Jonathan Bate, *Soul of the Age: the Life, Mind and World of William Shakespeare* (London: Penguin, 2008), 249–286. Worden argues that the play performed on 7 February was not Shakespeare’s *Richard II* but a dramatized version of Sir John Hayward’s *The First Part of the Life and Reign of King Henry IV*; see Blair Worden, “Which Play Was Performed at the Globe Theatre on 7 February 1601?”, *London Review of Books*, Vol. 25, No. 13 (10 July, 2003), 22–24.

³ Unlike Essex, after sentence was passed, Southampton pleaded for mercy: “[...] but since the Law hath cast me, I do submit myself to Death, and yet I will not despair of her Majesty’s Mercy; for that I know she is merciful, and if she please to extend it, I shall with all humility receive it”, “The Trial of Robert Earl of Essex, and Henry Earl of Southampton, before the Lords, at Westminster, for High-Treason,

supporters of Essex had commissioned the one-off performance by the Chamberlain's Men (of which Shakespeare was a principal member and "sharer") in an attempt to rally support from the citizens of London for the next day's insurrection. It is sometimes assumed that the comparison made by Elizabeth I between herself and Richard II was a reference to Shakespeare's play and its special performance on 7 February 1601; after all, the play portrays an absolutist and heirless monarch, and its central scene depicts the deposition of a king and the usurpation of the throne. It is small wonder given the heightened speculation in the 1590s over the succession to Elizabeth, that the deposition scene (4.1) was not included in a published version of the play until the Fourth Quarto in 1608, five years after the death of the Queen and 13 years after the play's first performance in 1595.⁴

The resemblances between their reigns notwithstanding, we should be wary of linking too closely with Shakespeare's play the comparison made by Elizabeth between herself and Richard II. The connection is made because of the dialogue between Lambarde and the Queen, which followed her initial question to him. Lambarde supposedly replied: "Such a wicked imagination was determined and attempted by a most unkind gent[leman], the most adorned creature that ever your Majestie made." To which the Queen responded: "He that will forget God, will also forget his benefactors; this tragedy was played 40 times in open streets and houses." The meaning of this last phrase is ambiguous. It cannot refer to the performance of Shakespeare's *Richard II* on 7 February, as that took place at the Globe Theatre; although it may allude to possible private performances of Shakespeare's play in the houses of noblemen and members of the gentry. For example, there is evidence to suggest that one of the play's first performances was given in December 1595 in the house of Sir Edward Hoby.⁵ It is possible even that the Queen was referring to public discussions on the nature and extent of Essex's ambitions, which took place "in open streets and houses."

the 19th of February 1600. 43 Eliz.," *A Complete Collection of State-Trials, and Proceedings for High Treason*, Vol. 1 (London: C. Bathurst, J. & F. Rivington, 1776–1781), 207.

⁴ Cyndia Susan Clegg, "'By the choise and Inuitation of al the realme': *Richard II* and Elizabethan Press Censorship" (1997), *Shakespeare Quarterly*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (1997), 432–448; Janet Clare, "The Censorship of the Deposition Scene in *Richard II*", *Review of English Studies* 41.161 (1990), 89–94. Gurr suggests that the deposition scene might always have been performed, but that it was cut by the publishers of the first three Quartos, only to be restored by the publisher of the 1608 Quarto (Mathew Law). "Introduction", *King Richard II*, ed. A. Gurr (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 9.

⁵ Gurr, "Introduction", *Richard II*, 1–3.

On the reverse side of the manuscript, which records the conversation between Lambarde and the Queen, is an acknowledgment: “This was given me by Mr Thomas Godfrey 26 November 1650. He married Mr Lambard daughter or grandchild.”⁶ This refers to Lambarde’s only daughter, Margaret, who presumably came into possession of the document after her father’s death on 19 August 1601, only two weeks after his meeting with the Queen. The manuscript is probably a fairly accurate transcript of the conversation which took place that day between Lambarde and Elizabeth I. He was renowned throughout his long life for honesty and trustworthiness: Elizabeth herself referred to him as “good and honest Lambarde.”⁷ My interest lies not in establishing or refuting whether Elizabeth intended comparison to be made with Shakespeare’s *Richard II* or with the actual Richard II. I am concerned rather with exploring the iconography and semiotics of kingship in figurative art, through which we may identify a visual rhetoric that, in the words of Peter Goodrich, marks “[t]he entry of the individual into the symbolic [...] the capture of the subject of law.”⁸ An analysis such as this locates subject and object firmly in the narcissistic realm of the aesthetic image; or rather, in Nietzschean terms, in the ordered and artificial dream world of Apollo.⁹ As Louis Marin noted in his study of the reign of Louis XIV: “The king is only truly king, that is, monarch, in images. They are his real presence.”¹⁰ Marin refers not only to the persuasive power of royal iconography, but also to a mystical process of transubstantiation, whereby the person of the king is recreated as monarch. The symbolic connection with the Eucharist (at a theoretical level, what may be termed the absent presence of the deity) is obvious, and is one that was artfully nurtured by the kings of medieval and early modern Europe.¹¹ In terms of medieval political theology, the phenomenon of kingship may be explained by reference to the *character angelicus* of the king. In other words, as Ernst H. Kantorowicz famously opined, the body politic of the king “represents, like the angels, the Immut-

⁶ F. L., “Queen Elizabeth and Richard II”, 6–7.

⁷ In May McKisack, *Medieval History in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1971), 82.

⁸ Peter Goodrich, *Languages of Law: From Logics of Memory to Nomadic Masks* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990), 282. See also, Pierre Legendre, “Introduction to the Theory of the Image: Narcissus and the Other in the Mirror”, in Pierre Legendre, *Law and the Unconscious: a Legendre Reader*, trans. P. Goodrich, A. Pottage and A. Schütz (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 211–254.

⁹ “It was in dreams, according to Lucretius, that the wondrous forms of the deities first appeared before the souls of men.” Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, trans. S. Whiteside (London: Penguin, 1993), 14.

¹⁰ Louis Marin, *Portrait of the King*, trans. M. Houle (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), 9.

¹¹ On the Eucharist and English law, see Goodrich, *Languages of Law*, 53–110.

able within Time.”¹² The iconography of a divinely appointed angelic host played a crucial rhetorical role in shaping the constitutional settlement in late-medieval and early modern England; not least, in the self-depiction of common lawyers as ministers of divine will, expounding the Word of God to His people on earth. This ministerial or angelic role was envisaged by Sir John Fortescue (Chief Justice of the King’s Bench during the reign of Henry VI), in his paean to English law, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*: “[W]e, who are the Ministerial Officers, who sit and preside in the Courts of Justice, are therefore not improperly called: Sacerdotes (Priests): The import of the Latin Word (Sacerdos) being one who gives or teaches Holy Things.”¹³ In *The Accedens of Armory*, Gerard Legh describes the transformation of lawyers into angels at the formal ceremony that ended the Inner Temple revels of Christmas 1561, in which members of the Inn were initiated into the Knighthood of Pallas. The rites of initiation precede and enable metamorphosis or transubstantiation, from corporeal beings to celestial hierarchs. Legh concludes his eulogy to “these houses of honour” – the Inns of Court – with the following assertion of their members’ seraphic qualities:

Herein I might compare your state (but yt you are men) unto the heavenly Ierarches, for that you have all the three things that Ierarches have, that is, Order, cunningg, and woorking. In your order, is office, in your cunningg, readiness, and in your woorkyng, is service.¹⁴

I began with a discussion of dramatic art, in the form of Shakespeare’s *Richard II*, but there are strong correlative links between drama and pictorial

¹² Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King’s Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1957), 8. For recent critiques of Kantorowicz, see Raffield, *Shakespeare’s Imaginary Constitution*, 88–101; Jennifer R. Rust, “Political Theology and Shakespeare Studies”, *Literature Compass*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (2009), 175–190; Lorna Hutson, “Not the King’s Two Bodies: Reading the ‘Body Politic’ in Shakespeare’s *Henry IV, Parts 1 and 2*”, in V. Kahn and L. Hutson, eds., *Rhetoric and Law in Early Modern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 166–198; David Norbrook, “The Emperor’s New Body? *Richard II*, Ernst Kantorowicz, and the Politics of Shakespeare Criticism”, *Textual Practice*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1996), 329–357.

¹³ Sir John Fortescue, *De Laudibus Legum Angliae*, ed. J. Selden (London: R. Gosling, 1737), 4–5.

¹⁴ Gerard Legh, *The Accedens of Armory* (London: Richard Tottill, 1562), 232.r. On the visit by Legh to the Inner Temple during Christmas 1561, see Paul Raffield, “The Inner Temple revels (1561–62) and the Elizabethan rhetoric of signs: legal iconography at the early modern Inns of Court”, in Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight, eds., *The Intellectual and Cultural World of the Early Modern Inns of Court* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 32–50.

art in the early modern era, especially in respect of the representation of governance in sixteenth-century England. As Stephen Greenblatt noted of this period: “Royal power is manifested to its subjects as in a theatre, and the subjects are at once absorbed by the instructive, delightful, or terrible spectacles [...]”¹⁵ The reference to spectacles is apt, as it indicates the primacy of the visual image in facilitating the manifestation and communication of monarchic power. Government was conducted as a form of *tableau vivant*: an emblematic theatrical genre in which, in the case of the Tudor dynasty, the portrait was brought vividly to life by regal actors and their servants.¹⁶ Although the Tudor monarchs cultivated and exploited the idea of the king as *Imago Dei* – the image of God – the first English monarch to establish what might be termed the theatre of divine kingship was Richard II.¹⁷ It was during the reign of Richard II that a vocabulary not only of words, but also of gesture was developed, intended to represent and enhance the mystical presence of

ording to the Canterbury *Eulogium* chronicler, Richard II invariably sat, “throned in state from dinner till vespers, observed by his courtiers, who were expected to bend the knee whenever his gaze fell on them.”²⁰ There is much in common with the visual rhetoric associated with Elizabethan rule, and it may have been this theatrical aspect of Ricardian kingship (as well as Richard’s lack of an heir, his absolutism, and his eventual deposition) that the Queen had in mind when she posed her enigmatic question to Lambarde: “I am Richard II, know ye not that?”

Precedent and Paradigms in Royal Iconography

Returning briefly to the Lambarde manuscript, the narrative continues: “Then returning to Richard II, she demanded ‘Whether I had seen any true picture, or lively representation of his [Richard II’s] countenance and person.’” Following Lambarde’s reply that he had only ever seen those “such as be in common hands”, the Queen informed him that “The Lord Lumley, a lover of antiquities, discovered it fastened on the back-side of a door of a base room; which he presented unto me, praying, with my good leave, that I might put it in order with the ancestors and successors [...]”²¹ The fascination of Elizabeth with Richard II, or, to be more precise, with the representation of Richard II, is demonstrable. It is at least partly based upon that particular king’s manipulation of spiritual iconography for temporal purposes: strengthening and extending the ambit of the royal prerogative.²² The most striking pictorial images of Richard II that were painted during his lifetime are undoubtedly the “Coronation portrait” in Westminster Abbey (c. 1395) and “The Wilton Diptych” (c. 1395–1399). The former painting is the earliest known portrait of an English monarch and, I shall argue, it serves as a template and precedent for “The Coronation portrait” of Elizabeth I. (See Figures 1 and 2.) In it, the newly crowned king stares directly at the viewer; the sceptre (symbol of temporal authority) in his left hand, and

²⁰ In Saul, “Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship”, 875.

²¹ F. L., “Queen Elizabeth and Richard II”, 6–7. F. L., the unidentified author of “Queen Elizabeth and Richard II”, notes that the manuscript in which the conversation between Lambarde and the Queen is recorded was originally published in John Nichols’ *Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*, No. 42, in the 1780s. The location of the manuscript remains unknown; that it ever existed has not been proved.

²² “Richard came to see those who accroached on the royal prerogative as ‘rebels’: or, to be more precise, as ‘rebels’ against ‘majesty’”, Saul, “Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship”, 867.

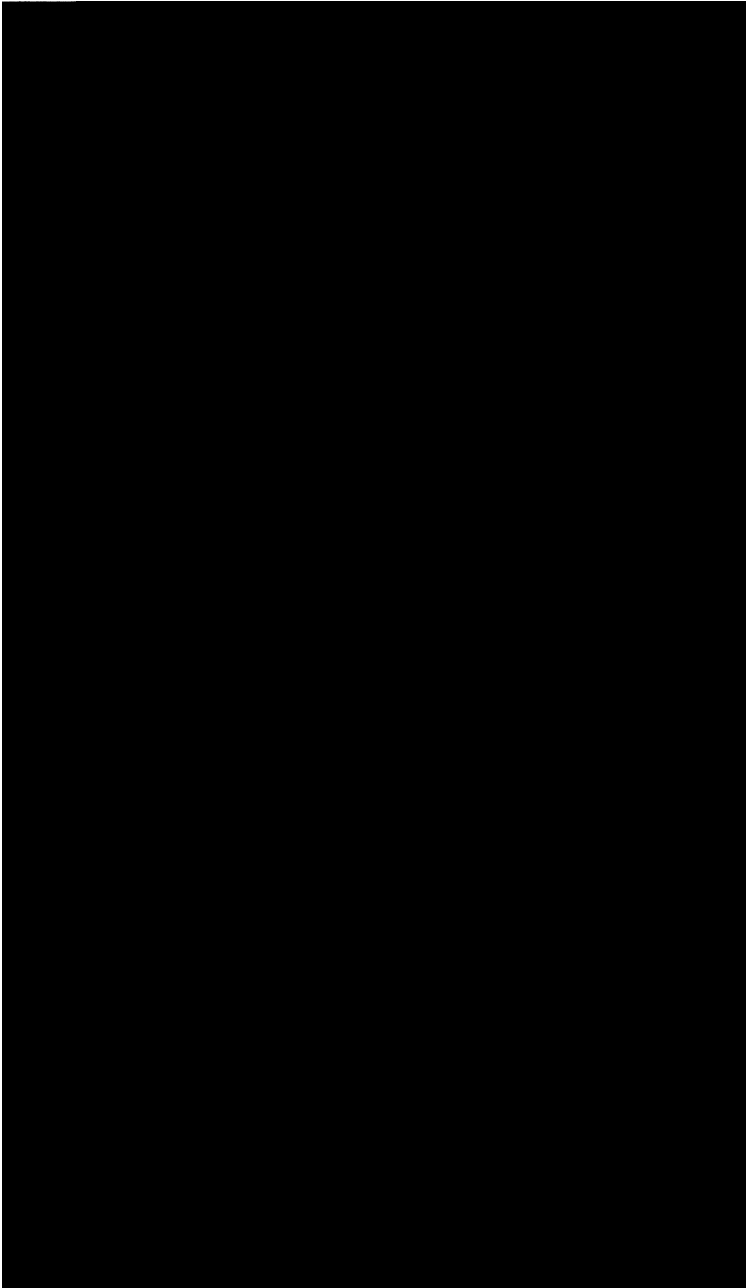


Figure 1. Portrait of Richard II, wood panel painting (c. 1395). Unknown artist.
© Dean and Chapter of Westminster.



Figure 2. "The Coronation portrait" of Elizabeth I (c. 1600). Unknown artist.
© National Portrait Gallery, London.

the orb (symbol of Christ's dominion over the world and of the king's role as God's anointed deputy) in his right. The facial resemblance of the young king to popular images of Christ is such that Nigel Saul describes it as "like an iconic close-up of the face of Christ."²³ The pose was to recur in numerous early-Renaissance depictions of Biblical scenes, as for example in Piero della Francesca's "Resurrection" (c. 1463), in which the risen Christ stares unflinchingly over his sovereign territory, the flag of the Resurrection in his hand.²⁴

Throughout her 45-year reign Elizabeth was herself the subject of numerous portraits, many of which sought to mythologize her as a goddess, endowing her with supernatural powers. See for example "Elizabeth I and the Three Goddesses" (1569, attributed to Hans Eworth), in which the aura of splendor surrounding the Queen alarms and discomforts Juno and Pallas-Minerva, while Venus can only gaze in wonderment at her beauty;²⁵ or the Ditchley Portrait (painted to commemorate the visit by Elizabeth to Sir Henry Lee's house at Ditchley, Oxfordshire) in which the Queen, supremely majestic in bejewelled dress, appears to float over a map of England, thunderous skies behind her and bright sunlight in front. Her feet rest above the county of Oxfordshire, in appreciation of the hospitality she received at Ditchley.²⁶ Astraea, Venus, Gloriana and Diana all figure largely in the liter-

²³ Saul, "Richard II and the Vocabulary of Kingship", 862.

²⁴ On the capacity of figurative art to represent the divinity of Christ, see Arthur Coleman Danto, *Embodied Meanings: Critical Essays and Aesthetic Meditations* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1995).

²⁵ On the frame of the painting is the inscription: "IVNO POTENS SCEPTIS ET MENTIS ACVMINE PALLAS / ETROSEO VENERIS FVLGET IN ORE DECVS / ADFVIT ELIZABETH IVNO PERCVLSA REFVGIT OBSVPVIT PALLAS ERVBVITQ VENVVS." ["Pallas was keen of brain, Juno was queen of might, / The rosy face of Venus was in beauty shining bright, / Elizabeth then came, And, overwhelmed, Queen Juno took flight: / Pallas was silenced: Venus blushed for shame."] The painting is in The Royal Collection. For analysis of this painting, see Susan Doran, "Virginity, Divinity and Power: The Portraits of Elizabeth I", in T. S. Freeman and S. Doran, eds., *The Myth of Elizabeth* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 175–176; Karen Hearn, ed., *Dynasties: Painting in Tudor and Jacobean England, 1530–1630* (New York: Rizzoli, 1995), 63.

²⁶ Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger (c. 1592, National Portrait Gallery). Sir John Harington wrote of Elizabeth I: "When she smiled, it was a pure sun-shine, that every one did chuse to bask in, if they could; but anon came a storm from a sudden gathering of clouds, and the thunder fell in wondrous manner on all alike", quoted in Charles Saumarez Smith, *The National Portrait Gallery* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2000), 46.

ary and pictorial iconography of the Queen. Christopher Haigh argues that “the public Elizabeth was not a real person, but a cluster of images.”²⁷ He quotes from Thomas Dekker’s play *Old Fortunatus* (1599), in which an old man is travelling to the temple of Eliza: “Even to her temple are my feeble limbs travelling. Some call her Pandora, some Gloriana, some Cynthia, some Belpheobe, some Astraea, all by several names to express several loves.”²⁸ During the reign of Elizabeth I, the use of Judaeo-Christian religious iconography was, to say the least, contentious. Iconoclastic reformers interpreted ecclesiastical imagery as inherently idolatrous, embodying falsehood and dissemblance. Hence, the *character angelicus* of the Queen was represented through the classical mythography of the ancient world. It was permissible therefore to depict the Queen as Astraea, the virgin goddess, who took flight from the wickedness of mankind and ascended to the heavens as the constellation Virgo (drawn from Book 1 of Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*).²⁹

There was another iconic, virginal figure with whom the Queen was associated, and which links the portraiture of Elizabeth (and one portrait in particular) with the religious iconography surrounding Richard II. I refer to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Indeed, it has been argued that the cult of Elizabeth was a response to strenuous attempts, made during the English Reformation, to disband the cult of the Virgin Mary. In some sixteenth-century eyes, Elizabeth was a Protestant substitute for a Roman-Catholic icon of motherhood and selfless devotion.³⁰ “The Coronation portrait” of Elizabeth I depicts the Queen, crowned and wearing the cloth of gold robes, which she wore at her coronation on 15 January, 1559. They had been worn by her predecessor Mary at her coronation. The portrait was painted between 1600 and 1610. It has been argued that it is a copy of a lost original, completed at some

²⁷ Christopher Haigh, “Introduction”, in C. Haigh ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1984), 5.

²⁸ Haigh, “Introduction”, 5–6.

²⁹ “All duty to gods and to men lay vanquished; and Justice the Maiden was last of the heavenly throng to abandon the blood-drenched earth”, Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, trans. D. Raeburn, Book 1 (London: Penguin, 2004), 148–150, 12. Jonathan Bate notes that “Queen Elizabeth was mythologized as the returned Astraea of Virgil’s fourth eclogue,” *Titus Andronicus*, ed. J. Bate (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1995), Introduction, 28. See Frances A. Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 75–80.

³⁰ See Helen Hackett, “Rediscovering shock: Elizabeth I and the cult of the Virgin Mary,” *Critical Quarterly*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (1993), 30–42; Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995).

point in 1559; but no evidence exists of an earlier version, and as John Fletcher has argued: “There was no precedent in England in 1559 for the newly-crowned monarch to be painted in her coronation robes, let alone for a painting on a very large panel.”³¹ Fletcher’s claim notwithstanding, there was one outstanding precedent: the “Coronation portrait” of Richard II. The portrait of Elizabeth I is a portrait not only of a monarch, but a depiction also of youthful femininity and beauty, even of vulnerability. It is strikingly similar in theme, composition and appearance to the “Coronation portrait” of Richard II. The crown, orb and sceptre are regal artefacts common to both paintings, although missing from the portrait of Richard II is the ring that was placed on his finger during the coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey: the seal of his faith and symbol of his pastoral responsibility.³² The shapes of the faces in the two portraits are similar, so too is the coloring of the hair (which, in the case of Elizabeth, was the same shade as her father’s). Both faces stare directly at the viewer, expressing the inexperience of youth, while conveying the mystical aura of kingship (at his coronation in 1377, Richard II was only ten; at hers in 1559, Elizabeth was 25): the body natural subsumed into the body politic.

Arguably the most significant historical fact regarding both portraits is that they were painted retrospectively: neither was contemporaneous with the actual event depicted in the painting. The portrait of Elizabeth was painted about 40 years after her coronation and that of Richard II between 18 and 22 years after his. Richard himself commissioned the “Coronation portrait” and it appears that the form and subject-matter of the painting were determined by political events of the mid to late-1390s. Thomas Walsingham summarized the shift towards absolute rule in his *Chronicle* of 1397, in which he states that during this year the King “began to tyrannize” his subjects.³³ Walsingham refers to the imposition of forced loans and blank charters, so-called because although the sums specified to be “lent” were included in the documents, the names of the lenders were omitted until it became known which people had the requisite funds to lend. Such procedures were undoubtedly unconstitutional and almost certainly illegal. The levying of this tax had not been approved by Parliament, and the manner of its imposition called into question the constitutional validity of general or non-

³¹ John Fletcher, “The Date of the Portrait of Elizabeth I in her Coronation Robes”, *The Burlington Magazine* 120.908 (1978), 753.

³² Nigel Saul, *Richard II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 26.

³³ Chris Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution, 1397–1400: Reign of Richard II* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), 71.

specific warrants, the illegality of which was established only in the 18th century in the cases of *Wilkes v. Wood* and *Entick v. Carrington*.³⁴

It was during 1397 also that Richard II turned against his opponents among the nobility, arresting the three senior Lords Appellant – Warwick, Gloucester and Arundel – and trying them by appeal in the “Revenge” Parliament. By the time of his due appearance before the High Court of Parliament in September 1397, Gloucester had been murdered while imprisoned in Calais. The killing was almost certainly carried out on the King’s orders: Richard feared the impression Gloucester’s eloquence might have made on the court, and anyway it was by no means certain that the High Steward of the court, Gloucester’s brother (John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster), would pass sentence of death on him, it being considered ignoble to execute a prince of the royal blood.³⁵ Arundel was executed, but Warwick pleaded guilty and begged for mercy from the King. The death sentence was commuted to life imprisonment on the Isle of Man. The three earls had been the principal instigators of the uprisings of 1386–1388, in which the exercise of the royal prerogative with which to levy tax at an unprecedented level was challenged and the political influence of the King’s favourites destroyed.³⁶ In effect, the measures taken by Richard II in 1397 instanced a coup against those influential personages who sought to restrain his political excesses. His proclamation of 15 July 1397 referred only generally to their “extortions, oppressions, grievances etc. Committed against the king and people, and for other offences against the king’s majesty [...]”³⁷ According to the Parliamentary Roll (recorded in old-French), at the opening of the September 1397 Parliament (on St Lambert’s Day, 17 September), the new chancellor, Edmund Stafford, Bishop of Exeter: “*ont il prist a son theme la pole de Ezechiel le*

³⁴ *Wilkes v. Wood* (1763) 19 St Tr 1153; *Entick v. Carrington* (1765) 19 St Tr 1029. In discussing these two cases, Goodrich refers to “the inviolability of soil” and the immemorial law of unwritten tradition that guarantees protection of proprietary interests by the courts, Goodrich, *Languages of Law*, 215.

³⁵ See A. E. Stamp, “Richard II and the Death of the Duke of Gloucester”, *The English Historical Review* 38.150 (1923): 249–251; R. L. Atkinson, “Richard II and the Death of the Duke of Gloucester”, *The English Historical Review* 38.152 (1923), 563–564.

³⁶ On the rejection by Parliament in October 1386 of Chancellor de la Pole’s request for taxation in order to defend the realm from French invasion, see Saul, *Richard II*, 157; on the arrest and subsequent treatment of the three earls, see Saul, *Richard II*, 366–379.

³⁷ *Calendar of Close Rolls preserved in the Public Records Office: Richard II* (Neldeln: Kraus Reprint, 1972), 208.

Prophete, Rex unus erit omnibus.”³⁸ Stafford was referring to *Ezekiel* 37.22: “one king shall be king to them all [...]” The arrogation to the Crown of absolute power was justified by reference to Biblical sources: the Word of God condoned the autocratic conduct of a divinely ordained king. That was the message relayed by Stafford to a Parliament whose new members included 25 royal retainers, 85 holders of crown offices, and a Speaker (Sir John Bushy) who was a close councillor of the King.³⁹ Such also was the visual message conveyed by the “Coronation portrait” of Richard II. It is a pictorial representation of unchallengeable, irrefutable right, bestowed by God, and claimed for the king in Stafford’s address to the 1397 Parliament: “*ils ont de droit plusieurs Privileges donez a eux, come Regalies, Prerogatives, & plusieurs autres Droitz annexes a la Corone [...]*.”⁴⁰

Just over two years later, on 29 September, 1399, Richard II abdicated while imprisoned in the Tower of London. Ever aware of the rhetorical power of theatrical gesture, when he surrendered the crown it was recorded that “he placed it on the ground and resigned his right to God.”⁴¹ On 13 October (St Edward’s Day), his usurper, Henry Bolingbroke, Duke of Lancaster, was crowned King of England. By mid to late-February 1400, Richard was dead: either hacked to death by Sir Piers Exton and his followers (the story preferred by Shakespeare), or (more likely) starved to death in his cell at Pontefract Castle, Yorkshire.⁴² Was this the dreadful, prophetic comparison that Elizabeth I had in mind when she asked of Lambarde, “I am Richard II, know ye not that?” Further examination of the Elizabethan “Coronation portrait” goes some way towards answering that question.

A miniature of the Queen in her coronation robes was painted by Nicholas Hilliard in about 1570 (possibly in 1569, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the coronation).⁴³ Elizabeth would have been 36 when Hilliard

³⁸ J. Strachey, ed., *Rotuli Parliamentorum; Ut Et Petitiones, Et Placita in Parlamento Tempore Edwardi R. I.*, Vol. 3 (London, 1767–1777), 347.

³⁹ Saul, *Richard II*, 376.

⁴⁰ Strachey, ed., *Rotuli*, 347. [“they have by right several Privileges given to them, like Regalities, Prerogatives, and several other rights annexed to the Crown [...].”]

⁴¹ Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 155.

⁴² The single reference to Sir Piers Exton is contained in *Traison et Mort*, in Given-Wilson, ed., *Chronicles of the Revolution*, 233–234; the person of Exton is otherwise unknown; on the death of Richard, see Saul, *Richard II*, 425–429.

⁴³ “[I]t is an authentic painting by Hilliard [...] [showing] the highest perfection of the accomplished goldsmith [and] must have been painted right at the end of his apprenticeship with Brandon in c. 1569”, Erna Auerbach, *Nicholas Hilliard* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1961), 58. See also Janet Arnold, “The ‘Coronation’ Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I”, *The Burlington Magazine* 120.908 (1978), 728.

painted his miniature of her, so it is probable that he modelled this work on a portrait of Elizabeth as a younger woman, although as I note above, the existence of an original “Coronation portrait” painted in 1559 has never been proved.⁴⁴ As with the later panel portrait of Elizabeth, the form of Hilliard’s miniature suggests that the “Coronation portrait” of Richard II was the prototype or precedent. Accomplished work though it undoubtedly is (especially in the realistic depiction of the young Queen’s crimped and slightly wiry hair), Hilliard’s Elizabeth lacks the appearance of haunted vulnerability that is a salient feature of the panel painting. The date of the latter is significant, as the scholar or curious viewer is impelled to ask why the painting was commissioned so long after the coronation itself. In this respect, the painting of the portrait on oak boards has facilitated an extraordinary degree of accuracy. Tree-ring analysis of the three timbers that make up the large panel has established that the tree from which they were made was felled in 1597, or at most a few years after that date. This would suggest that the probable date for the painting of “The Coronation portrait” is between 1600 and 1610. John Fletcher, who carried out tree-ring measurements on the painting, argues that it may have been painted as part of the elaborate events which surrounded the funeral of Elizabeth I in April 1603: “intended to remind one of her ‘Second Coronation’ after her ascent from earth to heaven.”⁴⁵

Fletcher’s is a plausible explanation, but for more satisfactory exegesis we need to consider the tendency of figurative artists in the Elizabethan era to allegorise their subjects. As Roy Strong has noted of Elizabethan visual art, paintings served an iconic function, guiding the viewer to comprehension of the underlying theme of the particular artefact. With reference to the numerous paintings of Elizabeth I, Strong suggests that they are texts, “which call for reading by the onlooker.”⁴⁶ With Strong’s injunction to semiotic analysis of Elizabethan royal portraiture in mind, I turn to the coronation robes, depicted in the panel portrait. The painting accurately reflects the description in the Inventory of the Wardrobe of Robes: “one mantle of Clothe of golde tissued with golde and silver furred with powdered Armyons [ermine] with a mantle lace of silke and golde with buttons and tassels to the same [...]”⁴⁷ The cloth of gold mantle and kirtle worn at the coronation of Elizabeth were

⁴⁴ See text to note 31, above.

⁴⁵ Fletcher, “The Date of the Portrait of Elizabeth I”, 753.

⁴⁶ Roy Strong, *The Spirit of Britain* (London: Hutchison, 1999), 177.

⁴⁷ Arnold, “The ‘Coronation’ Portrait”, 727; Roy Strong, *Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1963), 54.

made not for that particular occasion, but for the coronation of her predecessor, Mary. For Jane Arnold, the fact of Elizabeth's wearing her Catholic half-sister's robes at her own coronation "must have seemed like a triumphant and tangible symbol of safety and freedom."⁴⁸ This may or may not have been the case, but in the encoded vocabulary of Elizabethan visual symbolism the thematic connection with Mary and Roman-Catholicism recalls the cult of another Virgin Queen, to whom I have already referred: the Blessed Virgin Mary. The association with the mother of Christ establishes a further link with Richard II, one that is manifest in the other royal portrait commissioned by Richard: the Wilton Diptych, in which the veneration of the Virgin Mary by Richard II is a principal theme.

Richard II and the Art of Kingship

The Wilton Diptych, named after Wilton House, in which the artefact was kept by the Earls of Pembroke until it was bought by the National Gallery in 1929, is a portable altar-piece consisting of two hinged oak panels. Commissioned by Richard II in the mid to late-1390s, it is one of the outstanding works of western European art of the late-medieval period (see Figure 3). The left interior panel of the Diptych depicts King Richard II, wearing cloth of gold and vermillion robes emblazoned with white harts and branches of rosemary, the emblems respectively of the King and his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, who died in 1394. Around his neck he wears a collar of broom cods, the emblem of Charles VI of France, whose daughter, Isabella, Richard II married in 1396.⁴⁹ On his breast he wears the badge of the white hart. He is kneeling in front of three saints, two of them English: St. Edmund the Martyr (d. 869), holding the arrow which killed him; and St. Edward the Confessor (d. 1066), holding the ring which according to legend he gave to the disguised St. John the Evangelist.⁵⁰ Closest to Richard is his patron saint, St. John the

⁴⁸ Arnold, "The 'Coronation' Portrait", 728.

⁴⁹ Broom cods are the seeds of the common broom, whose Latin title, *planta genista*, gave its name to the Plantagenet dynasty. On the Wilton Diptych, see Dillian Gordon, "A New Discovery in the Wilton Diptych", *The Burlington Magazine* 134.1075 (1992), 662–667; more generally, see David Crouch, *The Image of Aristocracy in Britain, 1000–1300* (London: Routledge, 1992); J. Alexander and P. Binski, eds., *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England, 1200–1400* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 1987).

⁵⁰ The composition of the painting may allude to the worship of Christ by the three wise men (*Matthew* 2.11): Richard II was born on 6 January 1367. His baptism in Bordeaux was attended by three kings: Jaime IV of Majorca, Richard of Armenia,



Figure 3. Richard II presented to the Virgin and Child by his Patron Saint John the Baptist and Saints Edward and Edmund. “The Wilton Diptych” (c. 1395–1399). Unknown artist. © The National Gallery, London.

Baptist, holding the paschal lamb in his left hand and presenting the King to the Virgin and Child, who provide the central figures of the right interior panel. Mary and the infant Christ are surrounded by 11 angels (dressed, like the Virgin, in robes of lapis lazuli), all of whom wear Richard’s emblem – the badge of the white hart – on their left breasts. They mirror the King by wearing broom-cod collars around their necks. Christ offers a blessing to Richard, who appears to extend his hands either in homage or prayer. Standing next to the Infant, an angel holds a flagstaff, which bears a banner with a red cross on a white background: the flag both of St George and the Resurrection. The angel looks up at Christ and points a finger towards Richard.

In 1992, during restoration work, a discovery was made which goes some way towards enlarging and illuminating our understanding of the complicated metaphysical notion of divine kingship. The discovery concerns a minute detail of the Diptych, namely the larger of the two orbs surmounting the

and Pedro of Castile; see Saul, *Richard II*, 12; Saul notes that the names of the Biblical “Three Kings” were engraved on a ewer belonging to Richard II: “Jasper, Melchiser, Balteser”, Saul, *Richard II*, 12, n. 15.

banner, in the right interior panel. Prior to the restoration process, and upon investigation by infra-red photography, the tarnished orb (no more than one centimetre in diameter) revealed a landscape of a green island on which was painted a white, turreted castle with six black windows and, behind this, some trees with blue sky above; in the foreground a brown ship in full sail traverses a sea made of silver leaf. In the context of Shakespeare's *Richard II* the miniature scene depicted in the orb recalls immediately the valedictory speech of John of Gaunt, and his lyrical description of England as "this little world, / This precious stone set in the silver sea" (2.1.45–46). The secular symbolism of the orb suggests that the banner may be interpreted as both the flag of England and the flag of the risen Christ, thereby conjoining the spiritual and temporal authority of the King (unlike in Piero della Francesca's "Resurrection", in which the banner is explicitly and exclusively the emblem of the risen Christ). According to Dillian Gordon, the hands of the King are extended not in prayer but in anticipation of receiving back the banner from the angel; it having been given first by Richard to the infant Christ, who hands the flagstaff to the angel in order that He may bless the King.⁵¹ The governance of an earthly realm by a devout civil magistrate and the patronage of an English king by the deity may therefore be seen as a central thematic feature of the Diptych.

The significance to the Diptych of the Virgin may be inferred from a lost altar-piece, pre-dating the Wilton Diptych and influencing its subject matter, which in the seventeenth century had been in the English College in Rome.⁵² The altar-piece portrayed Richard II and his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, being presented by St John the Baptist to the Virgin, and offering her "the globe or pattern of England."⁵³ At the base of the panels was the inscription:

Dos tua, Virgo pia
Haec est, quare rege, Maria.⁵⁴

The spiritual devotion of Richard II to the Virgin is well documented. For example, in Book Two of *Chronicles*, Jean Froissart records that the King prayed before the image of the Virgin in Westminster Abbey, "dedicating himself to it" prior to his meeting with Wat Tyler, Jack Straw and John Ball at

⁵¹ "[T]he king waits to receive back the banner in order to rule Britain under the protection, and with the blessing, of the Virgin." Gordon, "A New Discovery in the Wilton Diptych," 667.

⁵² Gordon, "A New Discovery in the Wilton Diptych", 666.

⁵³ B. L. MS. Harley 360, fo. 98.*v*

⁵⁴ Gordon, "A New Discovery in the Wilton Diptych", 665–666. ["This is your dowry, O holy Virgin, wherefore O Mary, may you rule over it."]

Smithfield in 1381.⁵⁵ The reference in the lost altar-piece to *dos* implies a symbolic marriage between Richard II and the Virgin, and the concomitant bestowal of a marriage gift. *Dos* referred in most legal systems to a dowry (a gift to the husband, or the husband and wife, usually from the bride's parents).

The subject matter of the Wilton Diptych depicts the synthesis of temporal and spiritual power in the person of the King. Saul argues that from the mid-1380s these two aspects of Richard's rule "were fused in a single vision."⁵⁶ A major task for any investigation into the purported indivisibility of divine and municipal monarchic authority is to determine the legitimacy of each of these strands and the limits which the legal institution could impose upon the jurisdiction of the Crown. To this end, the exterior panels of the Diptych may provide some illumination (see Figure 4). These bear entirely secular heraldic emblems: the left panel carries the mythical arms of Edward the Confessor (martlets and cross fleurie), impaled with the arms of France and England (lilies and leopards), on which stands a helmet, surmounted by a cap of maintenance and a lion passant guardant. The right exterior panel reproduces the emblem of Richard II, the white hart. The devotion of Richard to his first wife, Anne of Bohemia, may be inferred from the fact that the white hart is lying on a bed of rosemary, which was Anne's emblem. But arguably the most notable feature of the painting is that the hart is tethered to the ground by a chain. The chain is connected to a crown, which is situated not on the head of the hart but around its neck, like a collar. The imagery suggests that the Crown is restricted in its exercise of power, bound to the realm by its office. In the painting the chain is firmly embedded in the earth of England, rendering the white hart subject to *lex terrae*: the unwritten constraints of the ancient constitution, the immemorial *suprema lex* or common law, whose jurisdiction is unchallengeable and whose judges are the ultimate arbiters of juridical disputes.

Conclusion

The above interpretation of the limited power of the Crown, tethered to English soil by its connecting chain, was not of course one that Richard II intended when he commissioned the Wilton Diptych. The altar-piece remained in the Royal Collection after the death of Richard (it was documented in a 1649 inventory of the art collection of Charles I), and in the late-

⁵⁵ Jean Froissart, *Chronicles*, trans. and ed. Geoffrey Brereton (London: Penguin, 1978), 224.

⁵⁶ Saul, *Richard II*, 304.

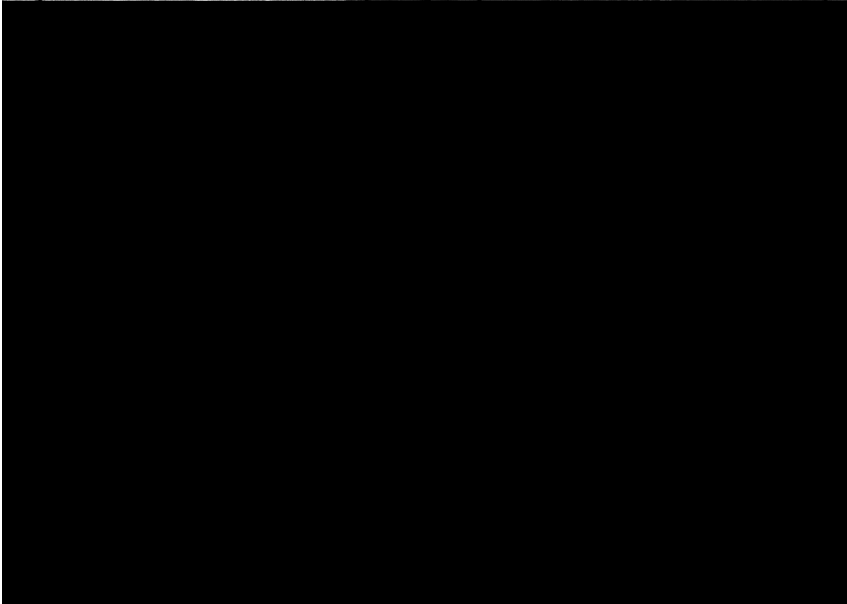


Figure 4. Royal arms of England and France Ancient, impaled with the arms of Edward the Confessor, surmounted by helmet with cap of maintenance and lion passant guardant (left exterior panel); white hart lying among branches of rosemary (right exterior panel). “The Wilton Diptych” (c. 1395–1399). Unknown artist. © The National Gallery, London.

sixteenth century, as the ominous parallels between the reigns of Richard and Elizabeth became more apparent, mine is an interpretation that was shared by those opposed to the absolutist tendencies of fin-de-siècle Elizabethan rule. Sir Edward Coke demonstrated his alertness to the representational power of the sign and its effect as metaphor, when he asserted in *Postnati. Calvin’s Case*, regarding the theory of the king’s two bodies, that “a King’s crown is an hieroglyphic of the laws, where justice, &c is administered.”⁵⁷ In other words, the crown was an iconic symbol of law, rather than law itself. Did Shakespeare see the Wilton Diptych? He probably did: his elevated status within the Chamberlain’s Men would have given him privileged access to the royal court. During visits by the company to the various royal palaces, and on the inevitable occasions when he met the Lord Chamberlain and the Master of the Revels to discuss future performances of his plays, he would have seen the aesthetic artefacts that adorned the Queen’s

⁵⁷ *Postnati. Calvin’s Case*, in Part 7 (1608) of *The Reports of Sir Edward Coke, Knt. In English*, ed., George Wilson, Vol. 4 (London: Rivington, 1777), 1a, 11b.

residences.⁵⁸ It is tempting to think that the Diptych influenced his depiction of so-called divine kingship in *Richard II*. Speculation over the derivation of Shakespeare's text notwithstanding, it is not my intention to attempt to prove that he saw the Wilton Diptych; rather it is to note the manner in which the meaning of a particular image is capable of infinite mutation and reinvention. The sign is the trace of a memory, an absent presence, and for a legal system that is predicated upon a system of precedent rather than a codified institutional edifice, the reflection of that memory in an order of signs is of paramount importance.⁵⁹ Emotional attachment and willing obedience to the legal institution are contingent upon the persuasive power of the sign. As Lord Mansfield, C. J. noted in 1770: "Matters of practice are not to be known from books. What passes at a judge's chambers is matter of tradition: it rests in memory."⁶⁰ The institutional memory of English law is selective: its apologists in Elizabethan England ceaselessly proclaimed its immemorial, indigenous origins, while conveniently ignoring the influences of foreign, rival jurisdictions (notably those of civil and canon law).⁶¹ The images and narratives of English law have been continuously adapted to suit the circumstances of its immediate condition.⁶² Just as the crown – the image of the king – is "an hieroglyphic of the laws," so the royal portraits of the late-medieval and early modern periods are signs, unravelling in visual images the complex emotional bond between the legal institution and the subject of law. In the words of Sir Philip Sidney, they provide "a speaking picture – with this end: to teach and delight."⁶³

⁵⁸ Licences to perform in public had been granted to the Lord Chamberlain's Men and the Admiral's Men, "to use and practise stage playes, whereby they might be better enabled and prepared to shew such plaies before her Majestie as they shalbe required at tymes meete and accustomed, to which ende they have bin cheefelie licensed and tolerated as aforesaid", E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, Vol. 4 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 325.

⁵⁹ On "the memory of presence" in the English legal tradition, see Goodrich, *Languages of Law*, 53.

⁶⁰ *R v. Wilkes* (1770) 4 Burr 2527, 2566.

⁶¹ For example: "If the ancient laws of this noble island had not excelled all others, it could not be, but some of the several conquerors and governors thereof, that is to say, the Romans, Saxons, Danes, or Normans, and specially the Romans, who (as they justly may) do boast of their civil laws, would (as every of them might) have altered or changed the same." Coke, *2 Reports* (1602) 1: Preface, x.

⁶² For a theoretical discussion of the adaptation of traditions to suit contemporary institutional circumstances, see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. W. Glen-Doepel (London: Sheed and Ward, 1979).

⁶³ Sir Philip Sidney, "The Defence of Poesy", in G. Alexander, ed., *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (Penguin: London 2004), 10.

I have refrained from speculation regarding the possible influence of the Wilton Diptych over Shakespeare's depiction of the reign of Richard II, beyond noting the striking resemblance between the hidden detail contained in the orb atop the banner – of an island surrounded by a sea of silver leaf – and John of Gaunt's nostalgic yearning for a lost idyll. I shall allow myself one such speculative moment over "The Coronation portrait" of Elizabeth I. The known facts are that it was not commissioned by the Queen, and it was painted between the years 1600 and 1610. If it was painted to commemorate her death and her second coronation in a Protestant Heaven, why is she portrayed in robes worn nearly 45 years earlier, and in robes worn originally by her Roman-Catholic half sister? As Susan Doran has noted, Marian iconography is unusual in portraits of Elizabeth: "[I]n works where she was the patron of a portrait, she was more usually depicted as a Protestant ruler than a virgin queen."⁶⁴ The template for "The Coronation portrait" was not a lost original, which in all probability did not exist, but rather the "Coronation portrait" of Richard II. The allusion to Marian devotion in the Elizabethan "Coronation portrait" refers us inevitably to the other painting associated with Richard II: the Wilton Diptych, and its representation of divinely ordained kingship. Given Richard's insistence on his right to govern absolutely, which he justified by reference to his status as God's anointed deputy (accountable to God alone and not beholden to municipal law), the humiliating circumstance of his deposition and his inauspicious demise in Pontefract Castle provide a salutary counterpoint to the image of unassailable kingship presented in the Diptych.

Elizabeth's successor to the English throne, James VI of Scotland, had made public his opinions on the nature of monarchy in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*, first published in 1598. His theory of kingship bore a startling resemblance to that of Richard II, as the following extract demonstrates:

The duetie, and alleageance of the people to their lawfull king, their obedience, I say, ought to be to him, as to Gods lieutenant in earth, obeying his commands in all things, except directly against God, as the commands of Gods Minister, acknowledging him a Iudge set by GOD over them, having power to iudge them, but to be iudged only by God, whom to only hee must give count of his judgment.⁶⁵

A few paragraphs later, he expressed the same sentiment; only this time, more concisely: "[T]he King is above the law."⁶⁶ In their resolute belief in the

⁶⁴ Doran, "Virginity, Divinity and Power", 172.

⁶⁵ James I, "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies", in J. P. Sommerville, ed., *King James VI and I: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 72.

⁶⁶ James I, "The Trew Law of Free Monarchies", 75.

divine right of kings, the early Stuart monarchs demonstrated conformity with the providential autocracy of Richard II.⁶⁷ Like Richard II, James I endowed the royal prerogative with mystical and irrefutable authority: judges were not permitted to question its exercise, on the grounds that “[t]hat which concerns the mysterie of the Kings power, is not lawfull to be disputed.”⁶⁸ I suggest that “The Coronation portrait” of Elizabeth I was an encoded warning to her successor, along the following lines: abide by the Bractonian doctrine of limited kingship, or perish like your Plantagenet forebear. The augury was ignored. The Stuart kings adhered from the start to the imperial model of governance: “*quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem*”.⁶⁹ In *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, the Elizabethan divine (and political theologian) Richard Hooker had urged restraint, reiterating Bracton’s assertion that the king was subject not only to the law of God, but to municipal law also: “The axioms of our regal government are these, *Lex facit Regem*.”⁷⁰ The year after James I acceded to the throne, the then Attorney General, Sir Edward Coke, published the same admonition in Part Four of *The Reports*: “the King is under no man, but only God and the law; for the law makes the King [...]”.⁷¹ All this was to no avail: the Stuart dynasty was set on a course of absolute rule, which would lead eventually to civil war and the abolition of monarchy.

⁶⁷ On the divine right of kings, the threat posed to the Crown by Presbyterianism, and specifically the claim of Thomas Cartwright that the governance of the Church and the State should be distinct, see John Guy, “The Elizabethan Establishment and the Ecclesiastical Polity”, in J. Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 127; also, Peter Lake, *Anglicans and Puritans? Presbyterianism and English Conformist Thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988): 1–2; Claire Cross, *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1969).

⁶⁸ James I, “Speech In The Starre-Chamber”, in Somerville, ed., *King James VI and I*, 213.

⁶⁹ Justinian, *The Institutes*, Bk. I, Title II, “*De Iure Naturali, Gentium et Civili*” [“that which pleases the prince has the force of law”]. The quotation continues: “*cum lege regia, quae de imperio eius lata est, populus ei et in eum omne suum imperium et potestatem concessit*” [“for by the royal law which is passed to confer authority on him, the people yield up to him all its authority and power”]. See Ewart Lewis, “King Above Law? ‘Quod Principi Placuit’ in Bracton”, *Speculum* 39.2 (1964), 240–269.

⁷⁰ Richard Hooker, *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, ed., A. S. McGrade (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), Bk. VIII.III.III, 147. The full quotation from Bracton reads: “*Ipse autem rex non debet esse sub homine sed sub deo et sub lege, quia lex facit regem*” [“The king must not be under man but under God and under the law, because law makes the king”], Henry de Bracton, *De Legibus et Consuetudinibus Angliae* (c. 1235), trans. S. E. Thorne, Vol. 2 (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1968–1977), 33.

⁷¹ Coke, 4 *Reports* (1604) 2: Preface, xix.

“I am Richard II, know ye not that?” That was the encoded message of “The Coronation portrait” of Elizabeth I. The precedent for the painting was over 200 years old, and to be seen in Westminster Abbey, seat of kings, where the memory of monarchy was both engendered and entombed. In the 200 or so years that separated the Coronation portraits of Richard II and Elizabeth I, the meaning of the royal image had mutated. The Tudor dynasty successfully exploited the capacity of portraiture to transform the person of the king into the symbolic body of the monarch. The failure of the early Stuart monarchs may be attributed to a lack of transubstantiation. In place of *veritas* was simulacrum; in place of truth was falsehood; in place of iconography was idolatry.⁷² The first half of the seventeenth century instanced the transformation of the king from “deputy elected by the Lord”⁷³ into a vulnerable and flawed human body, flimsily concealed by the tarnished raiment of kingship. The consequences to the Crown were fatal.

⁷² See Robert Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999); Thomas N. Corns, *The Royal Image: Representations of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁷³ *Richard II*, 3.2.57.