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**“Happy are they that read and understand”**

Reading for Moral and Spiritual Acuity in a Selection of  
Writings by King James VI and I



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## Abstract

This thesis attempts to offer a consideration of some of the many questions raised by the significant literary revisionism focussed on the writing of King James VI and I published during the past decade (such as Bawcutt 2001, van Heijnsbergen and Royan 2002, Fischlin and Fortier 2002, Rickard 2007, and McGinley and Royan 2010). Notwithstanding the importance of previous scholarship for opening up the field of study on King James VI and I and his authorial corpus, there nevertheless remain imperative questions to be asked, not least in relation to the cultural function of a man who was in the course of his lifetime as revered an intellect as he was an antagonistic politician and monarch.

If, as Bawcutt (2001) identified, the previously prevalent critical idiom of the ‘Castalian band’ is nothing more than a retrospective *sobriquet* for a grouping of writers who clearly did not define themselves by those terms, then how ought we to regard those – including James himself – previously encompassed by the ‘Castalian’ epithet? Recent scholarship in the field has started to bridge the gap between the now-outmoded narratives of ‘Castalian’ coterie on the one hand, and the study of individual writers on the other. Whilst scholarship has also sought to re-evaluate James’s portfolio in terms of individual works or indeed in terms of how his authority as king impacted or even forged his authorial identity, questions still remain about James’s cultural sovereignty. How exactly should we define the cultural remit of the man once regarded as the figurehead of the ‘Castalian band’? When we dissolve the ‘Castalian band’ and transfer critical attention away from the courtly *puy* towards the site of individual writers and their individual contexts, what cultural role is left for King James and his own writing to play? If the Castalians are to be ‘dis-banded’, then where do we place the ‘poetic manifesto’ (‘Reulis and Cautelis’), and his *Essayes* more specifically, in the literary trajectory of late sixteenth-century Scotland? Finally, moving beyond 1603, is it possible to locate a thematic or ideological strand proceeding from the outset of James’s literary career in Edinburgh to its end in London in

1625 which could bind an ostensibly diverse literary portfolio together in a more coherent whole?

These questions represent the starting point, as well as providing a framework, for the present study which reads a selection of James's literary writings in order to explore his cultural function in more depth. In order to analyse the role and position of James's writing in this 'critically revised' cultural context, the ensuing thesis attempts to offer a theoretical repositioning of James not as a 'writer' *per se*, but rather as a 'reader' who feels compelled to then write about his reading. When the critical kaleidoscope is altered thus, what becomes visible is the culturally and politically central function of reading as a means of securing enduement with heightened moral authority in a Christian humanist context. By adopting the tutelary position as an author, the king opens up his ideas to the reader, guiding them through the perils and pitfalls of a detached approach to writing in which poets write for the *cause célèbre* or monetary lucre rather than for heightened spiritual gain. James shows the able and willing reader (arguably those reasonably well acquainted with poetic endeavour and scripture) of his literature just how to transform bookish scriptural learning into scripturally-informed writing.

There are necessarily limits to what this thesis can achieve in the given space and time, and it cannot therefore admit to being exhaustive in scope. Within its five chapters, critical focus falls on three major literary publications within James's literary *oeuvre*; *The Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie* (1584), James's 'royal gift' to his son, the *Basilikon Doron* (1596), and finally James's prose *magnum opus*, *The Workes* of 1616. In presenting these three texts (from the beginning, middle and later years of James's career) for scrutiny it is hoped to show two things: firstly, that in his 'prentise' piece of 1584, James made a conscious decision to embed within his *Essayes* a clear-cut literary agenda which was predicated on shaping a body of readers (in his native land and beyond) who might eventually be viewed in terms comparable to the king in both reading ability and religio-political interests; and, secondly, it is hoped to show that continuity and

coherence does exist within a corpus of writing which has generally been viewed as generically diverse and thematically miscellaneous. It is the contention of this thesis that by paying closer attention to *Basilikon Doron* and *The Workes* and to how such texts were informed by James's approach to reading, it is possible to read in James's writing a continual consolidation of the agenda set out in his first publication. Even as James's politics became more tapered, opportunistic and divisive, his cultural insistence on the primacy of God's word (as outlined in 1584) continued to dominate his literary endeavour.

The fundamental purpose of this thesis is, therefore, to define what James's readerly objectives were, and how these were shaped and moulded from his adolescence to his later years. Once defined, this 'schema' of reading objectives will be applied to a reading of James's later works. In so doing, it is hoped that it will be possible to chart the evolution of the king's outlook on practices of reading over a prolonged period of time. Although the focus will remain firmly on the literature of James VI and I, apposite discussion of other writers and readers who can either be seen to influence or embody the cultural directives of the Scottish monarch will also take place. To this end, three short vignettes are included at various junctures throughout this thesis. The first is an analysis in Chapter Two of the Young Copybook, a carefully maintained inventory of the holdings of the royal library from 1573 to 1583, the second is a reading of Thomas Hudson's *Judith* in Chapter Three, the third an analysis of William Alexander's *Anacrisis* in Chapter Six. These will serve as a complement to the chapters on *Essayes*, *Basilikon*, and *The Workes*.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to extend my gratitude towards the Arts and Humanities Research Council for funding this doctoral research project. I would likewise wish to thank those members of staff within the Department of Scottish Literature at the University of Glasgow who helped me secure such generous funding back in 2009. The department has often felt like a home-from-home, and I have thoroughly enjoyed each one of the ten years spent studying in 7 University Gardens. In particular, sincerest thanks go to my second supervisor, Dr Kirsteen McCue, and also equally to Dr Rhona Brown, for their supportive ears and strong guidance, with the PhD and more. I would also like to thank my dear friend, Dr Linden Bicket, for being there with tea and sympathy when the going got tough.

I will be forever indebted to the rigorous feedback, tireless pastoral support, insight, patience, academic challenge and good humour offered to me over the course of the last five years by my primary supervisor, Dr Theo van Heijnsbergen. Without Dr van Heijnsbergen's guidance, and his belief in what I have to say, this PhD would never have come to fruition.

I am sincerely grateful to my examiners, Dr Sarah Dunnigan and Dr Robert Maslen, for taking the time to read this thesis, and for preparing such rigorous feedback.

To my parents, my brother, family and friends – the debt of gratitude I have for you is truly insurmountable. I can only hope that, one day, I might begin to repay a little of your enduring faith, unconditional support and love.

This thesis is for my best friends, Elizabeth and Cameron, who have given me the resilience and determination to complete this project. They have been, and continue to be, my guiding lights: I owe them the world and more.

‘Wee Jamie eh? Born tae be King James the Saxt o’ Scotland. Some day. If ye live sae lang [...] An awfy big name for sicc a wee rid-faced scrawny shilpit wee scrap o’ humanity, eh? Dinna greet. Aye wha’s the lucky laddie tae have made it this faur, eh?’

(La Corbie, *Mary Queen of Scots Got Her Head Chopped Off*)

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## Definitions

**Read, *réd*, v.t.** to advise (*arch.*; see **rede**): to make out: to interpret: to expound: to make known (*Spens.*): to declare: to name (*Spens.*): to solve: to understand as by interpretation of signs: to collect the meaning of: to go over progressively with silent understanding of symbols or with utterance aloud of words or performance of notes: to accept or offer as that which the writer intended: to learn from written or printed matter: to find recorded: to observe the indication of: to register, indicate: to teach, lecture on: to study: to impute by inference (as to read a meaning into).—*v.i.* to perform the act of reading: to practise much reading: to study: to find mention: to give the reader an impression: to endure the test of reading: to deliver lectures: to have a certain wording:—*pa.t.* and *pa.p.* **read** (*red*).—*n.* **read** (*réd*), a spell of reading: an opportunity of reading (*Scot.*): counsel [...] —*adj.* **Read** (*red*), versed in books [...]—**read'er**, one who reads or reads much: one who reads prayers in church [...]: a proof-corrector: one who reads and reports on MSS [...]—*adj.* **read'ing**, addicted to reading [...] perusal: study of books [...].<sup>1</sup>

**Intelligent**, *in-tel'i-jənt*, *adj.*, having intellect: endowed with the faculty of reason: alert, bright, quick of mind: well-informed: cognisant: bringing intelligence (*obs.*): communicative (*Shak.*). —*ns.*<sup>2</sup>

**Religion**, *ri-lij'ən*, *n.* belief in, recognition of, or an awakened sense of, a higher unseen controlling power or powers, with the emotion and morality connected therewith: rites or worship: any system of such belief or worship: devoted fidelity: monastic life: a monastic order: Protestantism (*obs.*). —*adj.* **relig'ionary** (*rare*), religious. —*n.* a member of a religious order: a Protestant (*obs.*). —*v.t.* **relig'ion-ise, -ize**, to imbue with religion. —*v.i.* to make profession of being religious [...] **relig'iose** [...] morbidly or sentimentally religious [...].<sup>3</sup>

**Acumen**, *ə-kū'men*, *ak'u-mən*, *n.* sharpness: quickness of perception: penetration. —*v.t.* **acū'minate**, to sharpen: to give point to. —*v.i.* (*rare*) to taper [...].<sup>4</sup>

**Humanism:** 'The term 'humanism' is currently much misunderstood, and since the Romantic period it has come increasingly to mean different things: from belief in the mere humanity of Christ to the quality of being human, and thus to any system of thought or action concerned with merely human interests – as well [...] with some of us still carrying the original concept developed during the Renaissance of a dedication to classical studies and to culture founded on classical ideals [...]. But humanism was not only a programme; it was a spirit, a new enthusiasm for the classics, and it led to the desire to comprehend the ancient world as a whole.'<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A. M. Macdonald, ed., *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (Edinburgh: W & R Chambers Ltd, 1972), pg. 1123.

<sup>2</sup> Macdonald 1972: 682.

<sup>3</sup> Macdonald 1972: 1141.

<sup>4</sup> Macdonald 1972: 13.

<sup>5</sup> John MacQueen, *Humanism in Renaissance Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1990) 2-10.



### **Author's Declaration**

I declare that, except where explicit reference is made to the contribution of others, that this thesis is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Glasgow or any other institution.

Word Count: 92,816

Signature:

Printed name: **GILLIAN SARGENT**

## Chapter 1: The ‘Castalians’ Disbanded

### *Scholarship on James VI and I's Cultural Patronage*

The death of King James VI and I in 1625 – the inevitable conclusion of a prolonged period of ill-health and quite unimaginable physical pain<sup>6</sup> – was keenly felt by those around him, and responsibility fell to the artistic community to articulate the deep loss felt by the subjects James left behind:

the sombre magnificence of John Donne's funeral sermon was not just rhetoric; it conjures up the vibrant personality who had gone, and is a reminder that for his English subjects also there was a sense of loss. After his death men looked back on James as the king of scholarship and wit. (Wormald 2011)

No matter the terms by which James was immediately eulogised in the wake of his death, his posthumous reputation as a ‘king of scholarship and wit’ was shortlived. In the 150 years following his passing, historians viewed the king – and his literature – in negative terms. Aspects of the king’s character which had not previously posed problems (his homosexuality for example) were conflated to the point where they became too contentious moral issues to simply ignore. Moreover, the royal union of England and Scotland in 1603 – an event which, with the benefit of hindsight, occurred relatively organically and with some political momentum and inevitability behind it – became, in historical narratives of the king’s reign, the staging post from which to clearly demarcate the division of the ‘Scottish monarch’ from his English manifestation. Somewhat ironically, the event which had been a long time in the making and which had brought a superficially peaceful confederacy of two factious neighbours, became (in literary-historical narratives) the point at which a schismatic cultural, political and theological fracture began to manifest itself in Scotland. The dislocation of James to a London court easily lent itself to literary-historical narratives as the symbolic catalyst for cultural stagnation in Scotland, and as the moment at which King James transformed from a moderate and opportunistic diplomat into a more

determined, and uncompromising monarch-theologue. In the most extreme cases, historianship ‘detected in [James] an instinct for absolutism, even tyranny; and in their hands, paradoxically, James I (now separated from James VI) became indissolubly linked to the very different Charles I’ (Wormald 2011).

By the middle of the twentieth-century the accumulation of three centuries’ worth of unflattering and derogatory depictions of the ‘wisest fool in Christendom’ lead (somewhat inevitably) to D.H. Willson’s *King James VI & I* (1956), a caustic monograph and ‘astonishing spectacle of a work whose every page proclaimed its author’s increasing hatred for his subject’ (Wormald 2004). In Willson’s opinion, King James VI and I was an imprudent scholar and infinitely worse monarch, a man whose books were nothing but badges gleaned from his illustrious education. By extension, those prized books would remain untouched throughout the king’s rule of Scotland and England and largely unconsulted in the formulation of his religio-political policy.<sup>7</sup> Nor, to Willson’s mind, was James’s bookish learning put to good use in his maverick literary endeavour; James’s ‘earliest verse, composed while he was still in his teens, [is] crude, immature and amusingly ambitious, the work of a clever schoolboy’ (1956: 58).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the pioneering scholarship of R.D.S. Jack and Helena M. Shire opened up a field of study into the Scottish literary output of the Jacobean period. A series of closely-linked and engaging publications by Jack<sup>8</sup> and Shire<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> The king had for some time endured problems with his kidneys, made all the more painful by worsening arthritis. By March 1625, fever had set upon the king before he suffered a stroke. His misery was compounded by the onset of dysentery.

<sup>7</sup> ‘In the case of King James, [books] served truly for delight for the King always loved his books; they also served for ornament, though marred by pedantry and conceit; for ability and for the disposition of business they scarcely served at all’. See D.H. Willson’s *King James VI & I* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956) pg. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Jack’s contribution to the field over the course of his career has been vast. The following titles represent an indicative selection of his work in this area: ‘James VI and Renaissance Poetic Theory’ in *College English XVI*, No.91 (1967) pp. 208-09; ‘Imitation in the Scottish Sonnet’, *Comparative Literature XX* (Eugene, OR: University of Oregon, 1968) ‘Drummond: The Major Scottish Sources’, *SSL 6* (Columbia: University of South Carolina, 1968-9), pp. 36-46; *The Italian Influence on Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972), pp.113-43; *Alexander Montgomerie* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1985); ‘The French Connection: Scottish and French Literature in the Renaissance’, *Scotia 18* (Old Dominion University, 1989), pp.1-16; ‘Poetry under King James VI’, *The History of Scottish Literature Vol 1, Origins to 1660* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1988); *The Mercat Anthology of early Scottish Literature 1373-1707* (Edinburgh: Mercat Press, 1998).

sought to promote the literary merit inherent in a clearly-defined corpus of writing (royally-authored and otherwise) which had ostensibly emanated from the Edinburgh court of James VI. Within these insightful critical narratives, the cultural production and patronage undertaken during the 1580s and 90s by James occupied a central position. Two fundamental concepts concerning James's cultural function came to fruition in these fresh perspectives on Jacobean Scotland: firstly, that the teenage king wrote a seminal treatise on versification for aspirant Scottish poets, and, secondly, that this advice manual was then utilised as the definitive rule-book in a courtly writing 'game', wherein the poetic mimesis of the king's rules secured royal favour and patronage. It is worth dwelling on these key ideas for a short time, in order to fully appreciate the more recent critical developments in the field, developments to which this present thesis responds.

In an illuminating article, 'James VI and Renaissance Poetic Theory',<sup>10</sup> Jack convincingly argued that the novice (and critically overlooked) theoretical work on Scottish poetics written by King James VI (1566-1625) – 'Ane Schort Treatise Containing Some Reulis and Cautelis to be obseruit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie' (1584) – ought to be re-situated by scholars to sit within an established and respected tradition of continental Renaissance writings on poetic theory. In its promotion and definition of nuanced metric and stylistic rules for the writing of Scottish poesis Jack argued that King James's treatise entered into dialogue with a series of contemporaneous texts about the merits of writing poetry in the vernacular. Jack made the important acknowledgment that the 'Reulis and Cautelis' existed as an articulate response to the near-contemporaneous poetic theory of Giovan Trissino, Jean du Bellay, Pierre de Ronsard, George Puttenham and Roger Ascham. However, even as James's treatise signalled its engagement with the topic of vernacular writing (as evidenced by the very title of the work itself), the 'Reulis and Cautelis' remained, in the main, a 'technical handbook of poetry on the model of

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<sup>9</sup> See Shire's article 'Alexander Montgomerie: "The Oppositione of the Court to Conscience"', *SSL 3* (Columbia: University of South Carolina), pp. 144-50, and her longer study *Song, Dance and Poetry at the court of James VI and I* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

Gascoigne's *Notes of Instruction*' (Jack 1966: 211). Despite conceding that James's treatise is of a poorer quality than Puttenham's or Gascoigne's, Jack nevertheless maintained that

if the *Reulis* are seen as a guide to versification written by a young man and not as a national poetic manifesto, they do constitute a valuable contribution to Renaissance learning. (Jack 1969: 211)

In this final reaffirmation of the text's worth, Jack suggested that the 'Reulis and Cautelis' be viewed as an influential style guide, rather than as a 'national [...] manifesto'.

However, it was the latter suggestion that the 'Reulis and Cautelis' might be considered a 'national poetic manifesto' that was consolidated and evolved in Helena Mennie Shire's hugely influential monograph, *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under King James* (1969). In this comprehensive and somewhat ground-breaking study, Shire sought to delineate the parameters of the cultural 'game' at the Jacobean court (Shire 1969: 104). In Shire's narrative the king naturally stood at the fountainhead of cultural productivity: James (in his Apollonian guise) was at once both the inspiration for, and beneficiary of, a 'new poetry for Scotland'. In Shire's interpretation,

the creation of a new poetry for Scotland was a project of the first importance yet it had a jesting aspect [...]. Companionship and witty exchange of thoughts [...] make the name and nature of a play world. Now a mixed company of king, kinsmen and court-servants making poetry on the slopes of a Scottish mountain jestingly enjoy the parallel they present to the nine Muses on Mount Helicon, to the personified forces of creative composition in ancient times.

In order to critically contain this 'mixed company' of artists, Shire drew upon the term 'Castalian band', a *sobriquet* which (in Shire's usage of the word) simultaneously bore connotations of companionship, friendship, amusement, intimacy and artistic prestige. Throughout the study, Shire persuasively attempted to define the membership of this predominantly court-based and male-dominated group of familiars: Alexander Montgomerie, Thomas Hudson (and his brother Robert), Patrick Hume of Polwarth (and his brother, Alexander) and William Fowler are defined as 'Castalian' poets, John Stewart

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<sup>10</sup> 'James VI and Renaissance Poetic Theory' in *College English XVI*, No.91 (1967) pp. 208-09.

of Baldynneis is viewed as a writer on the peripheries of the courtly ‘band’,<sup>11</sup> whilst Robert Ayton, William Alexander and William Drummond are bracketed by Shire as ‘late Castalians’. In this reading, the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’

‘was the manifesto of the new poetry of Renaissance Scotland. It was the work of a schoolboy, perhaps, and a prentice poet, but also of Buchanan’s gifted pupil and the King of Scotland’. (Shire 1969: 98-99)

In light of these critical recognitions, a subsequent generation of scholarship accepted James as Castalia’s ‘Apollo’ – the imperial captain in a courtly writing game of poetic wits for which the king himself had devised and defined the authorial rules in his *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie*.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, King James’s own poetry – although admirable in its effort – was nevertheless regarded by critics as being desperately lacking in refinement. Regardless of the man’s unquestionable rhetorical and oratorical erudition and overwhelming interest in the art of *poesis*, when the king was assessed against his own self-defined poetic rubric (a favoured approach by literary-historians), he was found severely wanting as a ‘poet’. Owing to the retrospective critical desire<sup>13</sup> to categorise or shape a physical poetic coterie around King James in the 1580s and 90s, posterity remembers the king as being the influential cultural figurehead of a short-lived (but moderately accomplished) ‘band’, even

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<sup>11</sup> Although as McClune 2005 has argued, there is no evidence to prove that he ever made the acquaintance of the king during James’s Scottish reign.

<sup>12</sup> Whilst not entirely responsible for the genesis of the ‘Castalian Band’ as a critical concept, Helena Mennie Shire’s *Song, Dance and Poetry at the Court of James VI and I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) has generally been held responsible for the misapplication and perpetuation of this concept in the critical consciousness. Bawcutt argues that ‘what is highly questionable [about the misapplied conceit] is that these poets formed a tightly-knit group, or literary ‘brotherhood’, and that this group was ‘called’, ‘styled’ and ‘proclaimed’, both by themselves and their contemporaries, ‘the Castalian Band’’, Bawcutt 2001: 253.

<sup>13</sup> The scholarly precedent to find in Scottish literature of the early modern period literary counterparts to English traditions manifestly resulted in the flowering of ‘Castalian’ terminology in the critical domain. In these comparative aesthetic analyses literature emanating from the English Renaissance (characterised by groupings such as the Sidney-Herbert circle, the School of Donne, Jonson and the sons of Ben, and the Cavendish network), or indeed from the ‘cultured leisure of the Italian Academies’, is generally perceived as more accomplished than the literary output of James’s ‘Castalians’. For more on the phenomenon of literary coteries in early modern England see Summers and Peabworth, in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England* (Columbia; London: University of Missouri Press, 2000) pg. 7.

if he himself as ‘leader’ achieved nothing more than mediocrity in poetic composition.<sup>14</sup>

Through a shared ‘Castalian’ lexicon, scholars continued the imperative excavation of an under-appreciated period in Scottish literature.<sup>15</sup>

Whilst not entirely responsible for the genesis of the ‘Castalian Band’ as a critical concept, Helena Mennie Shire’s *Song, Dance and Poetry at the Court of James VI and I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) became the focal point for a critical re-appraisal of the term in 2001, owing largely to Priscilla Bawcutt’s cogent article ‘James VI’s Castalian Band: a Modern Myth’. In this article, Bawcutt examined the way in which

the term ‘Castalian’ has had a remarkable vogue during the past half-century, not only within the world of literary studies, but among historians and other scholars concerned with the court culture of Scotland in the later sixteenth century. For illustration one has only to glance at the first volume of *The History of Scottish Literature*, and consult R.D.S. Jack’s chapter on ‘Poetry under King James VI’; there in a mere fourteen pages ‘Castalian’ occurs twenty-six times. This is not unusual. Again and again one encounters references to the Castalian period, the Castalian style, the Castalian Renaissance, or circle, movement, ethos, sonnet, poetics, and other phenomena. Not only poetry but also prose has been termed ‘Castalian’.<sup>16</sup>

Bawcutt nowhere denied the occurrence of a transactional poetics at court in this article.

What Bawcutt questioned, rather, was the validity of using ‘Castalian’ terminology so frequently, and so widely, when the writers in question might not have utilised the term to refer to the poetic activity in which they were engaged:

what is highly questionable [about the misapplied conceit] is that these poets formed a tightly-knit group, or literary ‘brotherhood’, and that this group was ‘called’, ‘styled’ and ‘proclaimed’, both by themselves and their contemporaries, ‘the Castalian Band’. (Bawcutt 2001: 253)

<sup>14</sup> As Summers and Pebworth explain, ‘the literary circle is widely recognized as a significant feature of Renaissance literary culture [...] it is one of the essential material conditions for the production of literature in an era in which patronage relations were crucial and in which manuscripts were frequently circulated among coteries of sympathetic readers’ (2000: 1).

<sup>15</sup> See for example Walter A. Bernhart, ‘Castalian Poetics and the “verire Twichstane musique”’, *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Scottish Language and Literature (Medieval and Renaissance)*, eds Dietrich Strauss and Horst W. Drescher (Frankfurt am Main: P. Lang, 1986); Gerard Carruthers, ‘Form, Substance in the poetry of the Castalian Band’, *SLJ* 26 (2) (Aberdeen: Association for Scottish Literary Studies, 1999); G.P.V. Akrigg, ‘The Literary Achievement of King James I’, *University of Toronto Quarterly* 44 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 115-29; and Derrick J. McClure, ‘“O Phoenix Escossois”: James VI as Poet’, *A Day Estivall*, eds Alisoun Gardner-Medwin and Janet Hadley Williams (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990), pp.96-111.

<sup>16</sup> Priscilla Bawcutt, ‘James VI’s Castalian Band: A Modern Myth’ in *Scottish Historical Review* 53, Vol. LXXX, No. 2 (October 2001) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25531047>> [accessed 30 October 2008] pp. 251-259, 251.

In Bawcutt's reading the main problem stemming from 'Castalia's' critical floods was that the imprudent acceptance,<sup>17</sup> and continued misappropriation, of a scholarly fabrication resulted in a body of critical narratives which presented a somewhat obfuscated picture of the literary pre-occupations of the Scottish Jacobean period. Literary and courtly connections and friendships between a number of poets are demonstrable in this period, whilst it is very easy to find residual traces of the king's compositional rules and cautions for Scottish poesie in the work of a number of the artists formerly known as 'Castalian'.<sup>18</sup> Yet the ubiquity of critical mis-application of the term and, additionally, the scholarly insistence that the perimeters of the 'Castalian' era could be extended further than the late-1580s, lead (in Bawcutt's estimations) ultimately led to an over-determined categorisation of male poets.<sup>19</sup> Bawcutt's article on the 'Castalian myth' instigated a critical sea-change,<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Bawcutt writes: 'A term so ubiquitous (and indeed clichéd) should surely be understood by its users. Yet there are small but disturbing signs that this is not so. One is the occasional appearance of 'the Castilian band', as if they had travelled from the kingdom of Castille' (2001: 251-52).

<sup>18</sup> See for example John Stewart of Baldynneis' presentation manuscript of 1587, in the National Library of Scotland.

<sup>19</sup> One glance at the contents page of *Song, Dance and Poetry* reveals a somewhat artificial categorisation at its most contrived; amongst the many headings we find 'Younger castalians: a Court-tradition of Poetry and Song-Making Continues', 'An unclaimed repertory of Castalian songs and sonnets', 'A Second 'younger Castalian', 'Castalian continuity: W.M. 'and some of his ain', 'The Last Castalian: Sir Robert Ayton' and 'From Castalian to Cavalier' (the latter almost implying a seamless transition from one style to the other). The latter categorisation especially ('Castalian to Cavalier'), from the Scottish into the English literary-critical tradition, reveals how much of Shire's genuinely 'Scottish' focus is actually informed by anglo-centric norms and critical narratives.

<sup>20</sup> An article from 2009 gives a good indication of the scholarly distance being sought from the notion of any 'Castalian Band'. For Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, previous scholarship on the history and culture of the Scottish Renaissance period has attempted 'on one hand to impose some kind of retrospective coherence on very diverse regions, and (on the other) to produce a narrative of "progress" in which the Kirk, literacy, the Protestant Work ethic and other signposts on the way to modernity superseded Catholicism and ignorance'. In terms of the classification of Scottish literature of the Jacobean period, Stevenson and Davidson argue that the concerted scholarly effort to read it along anglo-centric lines has resulted in a contrived narrative: 'There were Petrarchan poets in sixteenth-century Scotland, but to advance James VI's 'Castalian Band' as the equivalent of the English renaissance canon of Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney and Shakespeare is a recipe for making Scottish culture look provincial and awkward [...] it begs the question of whether the English definition of renaissance is the only one which we might use'. Jane Stevenson and Peter Davidson, 'Ficino in Aberdeen: The Continuing Problem of the Scottish Renaissance', *Journal of the Northern Renaissance* 1.1 (Spring 2009), <<http://www.northernrenaissance.org/articles/Ficino-in-Aberdeen-The-Continuing-Problem-of-the-Scottish-RenaissancebrJane-Stevenson-and-Peter-Davidson/14>> [accessed January 2010]. See also Katherine McClune, 'The Poetry of John Stewart of Baldynneis (?1540-?1607)' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 2005); Sebastiaan Verweij, "'The inlegebill scribbling of my imprompt pen": the production and circulation of literary miscellany manuscripts in Jacobean Scotland, c. 1580-c.1630' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2008); Joanna Martin, 'The Maitland Quarto Manuscript and the Literary Culture of the Reign of James VI', in David Parkinson, Ed., *James VI and I, Literature and Scotland: Tides of Change, 1567-1625* (Leuven: Peeters, in press) pp. 65-81; and Theo van Heijnsbergen, 'Studies in the Contextualisation of Mid-Sixteenth-Century Scottish Verse' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Glasgow, 2010).



opening avenues for future scholarly excavation and leaving real scope to work towards securing a pronounced understanding of the poetic endeavour of James's Scottish reign. Notably, this article did not place limitations on subsequent generations of scholars, stopping just short of suggesting the direction in which scholars ought to take their investigations. Bawcutt's article also importantly appeared to re-energise scholarly interest in James as a writer of more than just a poetic treatise.

In the wake of Bawcutt (2001) increasing effort has been made to reconsider the literary endeavour of James VI and I and his contemporaries. In the past decade there have been three key publications from a Scottish (literary) perspective<sup>21</sup> – all interdisciplinary in scope – which have sought to reconcile the writing of the king with its contemporary publication context: these are namely *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I* (Fischlin and Fortier 2002), *Authorship and Authority: The Writings of James VI and I* (Rickard 2007), and *The Apparelling of Truth – Literature and Culture in the Reign of James VI* (McGinley and Royan 2010). The scholarship contained within the aforementioned publications form the theoretical nucleus of this thesis.

Kevin Sharpe, in the Foreword to *Royal Subjects*, describes the volume of essays as 'important and original' (2002: 15), and the significance of Fischlin and Fortier's collection ought not to be understated; amidst the wealth of scholarship on the reign(s) of King James VI (and I), his politics, his religion, and indeed his 'Castalian band', the absence of a single-volume study examining the king's entire literary *oeuvre* seemed a considerable critical incongruity, and one which Fischlin and Fortier's collected essays set out to address. James's writing portfolio is here presented as richly diverse, an eclectic assemblage of writings fundamentally concerned with notions of kingship, power and representation. The king's prose is described as being 'at once witty, observant, playful, learned, not afraid of ambiguity or equivocation, balanced between full-blown fustian,

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<sup>21</sup> A fourth, *James VI and I, Literature and Scotland: Tides of Change, 1567-1625*, Ed. David Parkinson (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), has only recently been published.

scholastic casuistry, and finely-honed rhetorical skills' (2002: 43), with a 'strongly developed sense of the performative presence and use of the spoken and written word' (2002: 43). In its revisionist remit, Fischlin and Fortier's collection seeks to erode the long-held critical belief that the 'poetic' writing of James's Scottish reign is of less importance than the prose of his English reign (2002: 47), and contends that the very notion of a palpable division between 'poetic' and 'prose' output – demarcated by the regal union of 1603 – is detrimental to understanding the ideas underpinning James's writing as a whole. By imbuing James's poetic portfolio with a renewed impetus *Royal Subjects* attempts to overcome the previous scholarly dismissal of James's 'early' writing by suggesting that it is deserving of critical parity with the king's later prose publications. Moreover, the essays collected within *Royal Subjects* show a nuanced appreciation of the communicative function, and dialogic nature, of the king's writing, in both prose and poetry.

As the title, *Royal Subjects*, suggests, the fundamental objective of the collection is to examine King James's writing – a literature which is presented as continuously and pragmatically shaped and re-shaped by James's kingly duties or defined by his conception of absolute monarchy. In its essence, what Fischlin and Fortier (2002) does is begin to tease apart the 'monstrous' (2002: 48) hybrid that is the royally-authored text. A rigorous study of the king's writings is problematized by his monarchic status, but as Sharpe observes 'whatever the complexities of authorship, what clearly emerges [...] is James's sense of the centrality of writing to his exercise of rule' (2002: 18).<sup>22</sup>

In this respect, *Royal Subjects* is a tangible antecedent to Jane Rickard's monograph, *Authorship and Authority: The Writings of James VI and I* (2007), a study which makes a hugely significant contribution to Jamesian scholarship by setting out to examine in greater detail the intricacies of a royally-authored corpus of writing. Rickard's

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<sup>22</sup> However, Sharpe's contention can and ought to be modified; unquestionably writing is an integral facet of James's kingly personae, but in order to write - indeed in order to write himself - the king must surely have had to *read* widely and wisely to find literary blueprints and ideological models for his writing and, secondly, would have had to come to some degree of understanding with regards the significance of the

important monograph is concerned with the ways in which James's writings reveal a man entranced by print, and allured by its potential, whose simultaneous performance and inhabitation of the roles of subject, author, king and audience, meant that his authorial and authoritative locus was never stable or easy to define. For Rickard, whilst

James's writings do not exist within some kind of transcendent literary realm, it is equally the case that they are not reducible to straightforward political autobiography. Royal thought is neither completely free nor completely isolable within his texts. Rather, his texts construct the King as much as they reveal him, and not even James himself has complete control over these processes of construction and revelation, and meanings thereby generated. [...] What is the relationship between literature and politics and how far can each be used in the service of the other?<sup>23</sup>

The critical worth of Rickard's monograph is unquestionable – its manuscript-based scholarship is authoritative, whilst the explorations of the English reception of James's works and the English trajectory into which James's writings fit are both excellent. By Rickard's own admission, however, the problem of a study of this nature is that contradictory readings often prevail, and these, as she notes, are only encouraged by James's authorial shapeshifting in what is ultimately a generically diverse portfolio. One further problem with this monograph ought to be highlighted in the present context; whilst Rickard appreciates King James in his Scottish political context, barely any attention is paid to the Scottish literary traditions on, or social conditions in, which James might be seen to model his own writing.

*The Apparelling of Truth* (2010), a collection of essays in honour of Roderick J. Lyall, implicitly acknowledges the absence of Scottish literary continuities in Rickard (2007), by returning to Jacobean Scotland to re-evaluate the cultural climate in James's reign. Despite its title derived from the 'Reulis and Cautelis', and the imposing portrait of the king which adorns its dust-jacket, only two essays (John Corbett's 'The Prentise and the Printer: James VI and Thomas Vautrollier', pp. 80-93, and Astrid Stilma's "'As Warriouris in ane Camp": The Image of King James VI as a Protestant Crusader', pp.241-

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material he read (whether that be a literary/theological/political text or himself). Writing thus becomes a vehicle through which the ideas set in motion by, or cultivated through, his devoted reading are realised.

251) deal directly with James himself, whilst one (Nicola Royan's 'Rebellion Under God: Judith at the Court of James VI', pp. 94-104) brings the literary dealings of James's Edinburgh court in 1584-5 under scrutiny. Nonetheless, in its far-reaching attempts to re-evaluate the literary culture of the period, *Apparelling of Truth* comes to a crucial recognition: 'authorial authority' (be that James's or otherwise) is inextricably interwoven with the concept of discerning reading.<sup>24</sup>

We might also wish to note here that the notion of literary aesthetics as the 'apparelling' of truth – 'apparel' in this instance meaning the poetic form, allegoresis, imagery, syntax, and lexicon employed by an author, and 'truth' taken to mean the scriptural message underpinning that author's text – is a concern not only located in James's 'Reulis and Cautelis' but also in Sir Philip Sidney's *Defense of Poesy*.<sup>25</sup> Later, in Sir William Alexander's<sup>26</sup> well-argued piece of literary criticism, *Anacrisis*, the notion that God's 'truth' is something which readers are obliged to unveil or derobe during an actively involved reading process, also resonates clearly. What these three writers (King James, Sidney and Alexander) have in common is their Protestant faith. Although Sidney's blend of Protestantism was far stronger than either James's or Alexander's relatively moderated versions, might it be viable, nonetheless, to view the aforementioned concern (with denuding the poetic whole to reveal an underlying theological truth) as a Protestant one? Whilst *Apparelling of Truth* (2010) strongly implies that this is a feasible conclusion to draw, it is nowhere explicitly stated. As the present discussion has highlighted, however,

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<sup>23</sup> Jane Rickard, *Authorship and Authority* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), pg. 3.

<sup>24</sup> See also Katherine McClune's 'Depictions of Experience in Three Older Scots Poems' and R.D.S. Jack's 'Obscure Ways to God?: *Ane Schersing Out of Trew Felicitie* and *The Cherrie and the Slae*' in McGinley and Royan 2010: 48-61, 119-133.

<sup>25</sup> According to Rickard (2007:4), King James certainly looked favourably upon the work of Sidney, even contributing a sonnet to a volume of Latin verse, *Academiae Cantabrigiensis Lachrymae Tumulo Philippi Sidneii Sacratae* (London 1587: sig. Kir). James's poem is the only poem within the collection to be rendered in both Latin and English, although Rickard also notes that 'it is difficult to determine who is responsible for the anglicisation' (2007: 4, fn.27).

<sup>26</sup> William Alexander's colonial prose writing is given a chapter in *The Apparelling of Truth*. See David Parkinson's chapter, 'Arcadia, Emulation and Regret in Sir William Alexander's *Encouragement to Colonies*' (McGinley and Royan 2010: 252-266). Alexander's *Anacrisis* – a text dated by Jack and Rozendaal as c.1630 (1997: 149, footnote 1) – will be examined in more detail in chapter six of the present doctoral thesis.

in the process of the 2010 collection of essays, two clear strands of scholarly interest are patent: in book culture around James in the first instance and Protestant writers in the second instance. The present thesis thus begins at *Apparelling of Truth*'s end by reconciling these strands in order to ask imperative questions of James as a Protestant reader and maker of books. The logical starting point for this discussion is therefore in James's foundations in reading (his education and royal library) and in his foundations in writing (*Essayes of a Prentise* 1584).

### ***Thesis aims and objectives***

It is the contention of this study that as a writer, King James VI and I was crucially aware of his poetic limitations, and that, far from attempting to argue to the contrary, in his 'prentise piece' of 1584, the king projects himself to his subjects – and to those who had ruled for him in his stead – as something other than an author. Much has been made of the king's enviable humanist education and his modest poetic talent, but until now, relatively little has been written on the king's proficiency as a reader. More than this, however, little has been said of James's interactions with other readers, especially during his adolescence, in the years leading up to his first publication. Chapter Two ('Bookish Transaction at the Scottish Court 1573-1583') will therefore do just that; this exploration of the inventory of books (Young copybook) within the royal holdings between 1573 and 1583 and the people with whom those books were traded, will serve as contextualisation of the ensuing interpretation of James's readerly cultural agenda in Chapter Three. This thesis argues that James uses his *Essayes* to postulate as one whose comprehensive education (and ongoing interest in the incidentals of book publication and consumption) had given him the authorial clout necessary to create a challenging, stimulating and, importantly, didactic, reading experience with which his own audience could (indeed ought to) engage. A rigorous re-examination of the 1584 work (as undertaken in Chapter Three) suggests that James's neophytic *Essayes* is stylistically, methodologically and thematically woven

together by a clearly defined agenda.<sup>27</sup> Taking his artistic cue from the French poet Guillaume Salluste du Bartas (1544-1590), James deliberately inflects the *Essayes* with his own brand of Christian humanism, which is underpinned by a notionally moderate Protestantism. With its insistence from start to finish on the importance of rigorously studying God's word, on its imperative instruction to the reader to seek out universal truths from the written word, and in its authorial exhortation to strive towards accuracy in scriptural interpretation, James's *Essayes* might thus be recognised as a manifesto for reading with discernment. Chapter Three will give due consideration to the latter claim.

The thesis subsequently argues that by recognising a paradigmatic leitmotif running through the *Essayes* we can do more than just recalibrate the singular importance of the 1584 publication. By understanding that reading to develop moral and spiritual acuity is a key concern for the king, we can arguably use this to attempt to bind together James's multivalent and generically diverse literary portfolio in the first instance. In the second instance, the *Essayes* might be used as a contextual glossary or 'reader' to facilitate a better understanding of the concerns and literary importance of other texts previously muted by the 'Castalian' appellation. As a case study to verify this assertion, just such a dual-reading will be undertaken in Chapter Three of this thesis, when Thomas Hudson's *History of Judith* (1584) will be read collaboratively with the *Essayes*, to reveal a mutually-reinforcing partnership occurring between both texts.

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<sup>27</sup> MacDonald, von Martels, and Veenstra acknowledge that the concept of 'Christian-humanism' has the potential to be viewed as a seeming contradiction in terms but in their understanding and application of the word, they have taken it to represent the 'articulation of the project of intellectual reconciliation that made it possible for literate and learned Christians to appreciate the classical literary and intellectual heritage'. This thesis will subsequently work within the parameters of this label, and use it to frame the discussion of James's Christian-humanism. See A.A. MacDonald, Zweder R.W.M. von Martels, and Jan R. Veenstra, Eds., *Christian Humanism* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2009), pg. ix. Elsewhere, H.A. Mason has highlighted Thomas More's *Utopia* as the 'most important document of Christian Humanism that we possess' as it serves as 'one of the finest expressions of that for which the Humanists deserve to be remembered; their aspiration towards a better way of life, towards civilisation; their power to conceive ideals that might be operative at least in conduct. Here is where we should lay the emphasis: not on the actual things they yearned for or dreamed of, but on the spirit in which they conceived their ideals': H.A. Mason, *Humanism and Poetry in the Early Tudor Period* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), pp. 104 and 116, 104.

This thesis contends that the *Essayes* can be viewed as a figurative foundation stone in the thematic development of a reading trope in James's own writing. It argues that by actively seeking out this thematic strand in a selection of the king's publications, what becomes apparent is that the literary interests articulated by James in the 1584 collection only seem to intensify with time and age. Whereas the notion of the 'Castalian band' and rule book have previously suggested that James's overt interest in cultural creativity was concentrated in the 1580s and 1590s and based on poetic composition, this thesis will challenge that assumption by presenting James's interests as deep-rooted and anything but fleeting in nature. Accordingly, Chapter Four will look to later writing produced by James, to see whether the reading principles that this thesis believes were outlined in the earlier *Essayes* are still prevalent. Consequently, the *Basilikon Doron* (1598) will not only be presented as an extension of the *Essayes* but also as a vehicle in which the central intentions of the 1584 text ripen to maturity. To prove this assertion, the chapter will draw particular attention to the French loan word adopted by the monarch – 'textuarie' – and show how the parameters of this readerly role are defined by James in the *Basilikon*, and marketed for his son Henry, as the 'ideal'. If *Essayes* contains the precept, *Basilikon*, arguably, contains the exemplar. The examination (in Chapter Five) of James's *Workes* (1616) interprets James's prose *magnum opus* as the ultimate realisation of the reader as 'textuarie' – in other words the practical application of the precept.

The final chapter of this doctoral thesis will move away from James's very public performance as a critical reader, in order to assess whether privately, the king's reading praxis exhibited patterns of continuity with the practice that he articulated publically in his printed work. This final chapter argues that even into the later years of his life, James was an actively engaged reader, and one who favoured meaningful artistic coalescence within distinct communities of like-minded readers. To evidence this assertion, a discussion will ensue on the intellectual dialogue (predicated upon a shared reading experience and theological mindset) which occurred between James VI and I, William Alexander and

William Drummond. By examining the way James reads and writes and then reflects upon that process in dialogue with others, Chapter Six will present James as the epitome of astute reading: the literary critic.

If the meaning of the noun ‘reader’ is accepted as ‘one who reads or reads much: one who reads prayers in church [...]’,<sup>28</sup> and the definition of the verb ‘read’ taken to mean

‘to advise [...] to make out [...] to make known [...] to declare [...] to understand as by interpretation of signs [...] to accept or offer as that which the writer intended: to learn from written or printed matter [...] to perform the act of reading [...]’

then this thesis will set out to show how in a sampler of key writings, King James casts himself as the adroit humanist reader and integral member of a much wider community of equally proficient readers. Whilst this thesis has sought to avoid the ‘critical imprudence’ of redefining the exact parameters of James’s artistic *milieu*, it has, nevertheless, been necessary to explore some of the many relationships forged through conversation, epistolary communication and reciprocal poetics, between James and those writers he engaged with in his own work.<sup>29</sup> In briefly alluding to readers such as Adam Bothwell, Helena and Clement Little, Peter Young, Magdelene Livingstone, and Lewis Bellenden, and writers such as Sir David Lyndsay, Robert Henryson, Thomas Hudson, John Stewart, du Bartas, William Alexander, and William Drummond (as well as a host of English writers such as Sidney, Harvey, Spenser and Drayton) in the course of the discussion, it is the aim to reveal James not as instigator of a ‘revolution’ in Scottish culture, but as the participant in, and developer of, an already deeply-embedded cultural and religio-political dialogue which is continental in outlook. In James’s hands this dialogue is promoted and subtly evolved to become a valuable poetic discussion on the art of wise reading and

<sup>28</sup> A. M. Macdonald, ed., *Chambers Twentieth Century Dictionary* (W & R Chambers Ltd: Edinburgh, 1972), pg. 1123.

<sup>29</sup> Whilst the term ‘Castalian’ is largely sidelined in this thesis, the term ‘coterie’ will continue to find application. As Summers and Peabworth outline (2000) the term’s definition is malleable; most often, the literary circle is defined as a coterie whose members are linked by shared social, political, philosophical, or aesthetic interests or values, or who vie for the interests and attention of a particular patron, or who are drawn together by bonds of friendship, family, religion, or location. Often writers are members of multiple, sometimes overlapping, coteries and communities, or during the course of their careers, they move from one circle to another (2000: 1-2).



critical thinking and government, not only in Scotland, but also in France, the Netherlands and England. In a letter of 1586 to du Bartas, James describes his Edinburgh court as a ‘godly community’<sup>30</sup> - and it is this idea of a wider artistic community of thinkers with shared theological concerns which is arguably crucial to unpicking James’s monarchic writing. The thesis will end by arguing that a scholarly reconsideration and re-definition of a more abstract network of readers (Scottish and otherwise), with James as an important (but not patron-like) figure, ought to be the next logical step in revisionist scholarship.

***Reading for moral investment: literary precedents and scholarly perspectives***

Before going on to look at the writing of James VI and I, it is necessary to further contextualise the ideas which are inherent in this study; the remaining part of Chapter One will thus present a brief discussion of the theme of reading for moral investment as that thematic impulse seemed to manifest itself in the work of some of the most exalted thinkers emanating from either the Italian or (later) Northern Renaissance. In this short discussion, a Scottish context will also be sought for James’s writing about reading. Throughout, the discussion will necessarily make recourse to book historianship, more specifically to aspects of this burgeoning discipline that are keenly interested in how early modern readers read, and continue to be read.

Francesco Petrarca (Petrarch), remembering his unprecedented ascent ten years previously of Mont Ventoux, recounts in *Epistolae familiares* (c. 1350), how having reached the summit of the mountain and having surveyed the panoramic vistas of the Rhone and Cévennes below, he was moved to reflect upon his life. More particularly, his mind was forced to reconsider his youth and the time spent in temporal adulation of, and unrequited love for, Laura. In his restive and reflective state Petrarch felt compelled to read:

While my thoughts were divided thus, now turning my attention to thoughts of some worldly object before me, now uplifting my soul, as I had done my body, to higher planes, it occurred to me to look at Augustine’s *Confessions*

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<sup>30</sup> See Chapter Three of this thesis for a more in-depth discussion on the notion of a ‘communis deus’.

[...] I opened the little volume, small in size but infinitely sweet, with the intention of reading whatever came to hand, for what else could I happen upon if not edifying and devout words. Now I happened by chance to open it to the tenth book. My brother stood attentively waiting to hear what St Augustine would say from my lips. As God is my witness and my brother too, the first words my eyes fell upon were: ‘And men go about admiring the high mountains and the mighty waves of the sea and the wide sweep of rivers and the sound of the ocean and the movement of the stars, but they themselves they abandon’.<sup>31</sup>

Seeking spiritual solace within the pages of Augustine’s *Confessions*, Petrarch’s reading is momentarily and purposefully guided towards a passage of real significance. Whether as a result of the elemental forces in operation at the peak of the ‘windy mountain’, or whether the consequence of divine intervention (the latter being a conclusion that Petrarch quite obviously invites the reader to reach), the leaves of the *Confessions* fall open on a narrative utterly consequential to the Italian’s own. Having instantaneously recognised the spiritual and personal import of his mountain-top reading, Petrarch is spurred on to further introspection:

I closed the book, angry with myself for continuing to admire the things of this world [...]. Then [...] I turned my inward eye upon myself, and from that moment on not a syllable passed my lips until we reached the bottom. The words I had read had given me enough food for thought and I could not believe that I happened to turn to them by mere chance. I believed that what I had read there was written for me and no-one else, and I remembered that St Augustine had once thought the same thing in his own case [...]. (Musa 2008: 17)

Petrarch’s moment of spiritual epiphany is symbolically enacted at the peak of the mountain, the moment at which the poet is at his closest (geographically) and furthest (spiritually) from God. Having only reached enlightenment via guided scriptural reading, Petrarch’s descent of the mountain is spent analysing the notion of living vicariously through scripture in order to pursue the moral life. Recalling how both St. Augustine and St. Anthony had encountered experiences similar to his own mountain-top epiphany, the enlightened older persona of the *Epistolae familiares* claims to have finally reached the understanding that involved recognising that the reading of God’s word can aid a man’s

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<sup>31</sup> From ‘The Ascent of Mount Ventoux’ in Mark Musa, Ed., *Selections from the Canzoniere and Other*

spiritual progression in the great chain of being. Petrarch's conception of the potential moral worth of engaging with the material book does not rest with scriptural texts alone, for it is thought that he ceremonially kissed his copy of Virgil before reading it.<sup>32</sup> Likewise, the pre-eminent humanist scholar, Desiderius Erasmus, is also noted (in Lyons 2010) as having enacted a similar ritual, kissing his copy of Cicero. The performative function of reading in the early modern period is taken one step further by the author of *Il Principe*, Niccolò Machiavelli. In anecdotal accounts of his reading 'routine' Machiavelli is said to have changed his outfit, removing his everyday clothes before entering his study, and replacing them with an outfit which was far more decorous to the task in hand of reading.<sup>33</sup> Writing on the topic of 'Renaissance books and humanist readers', Lyons (2010: 65) notes how

humanist readers tried to reach ancient authors unadorned. They wanted to scrape aside the thick sediment of medieval commentaries on the classics which had accumulated over the years and which they felt obscured rather than illuminated their meaning. They sought simple and straightforward access to their texts. They went, we might say, in search of the naked Virgil. They approached Latin texts with deliberate purpose [...] They looked for moral and practical guidance in the conduct of public life [...] This was purposeful reading with political aims [...] Readers knew they could become better diplomats or military strategists by studying the campaigns of Caesar or Hannibal, for example, and by avoiding their errors and indecisions. This was active reading with contemporary relevance.

For the humanist reader of the early modern period, reading might thus be seen as a ritualistic performance, yet they were not enslaved by the material book: for example, 'Joseph Scaliger crossed out the text of one book and wrote 'cacas' (shit) all over it' (Lyons 2010: 67), whilst 'Erasmus ridiculed an obsessive respect for Cicero in his *Ciceronianus*' (Lyons 2010:67).

The importance of book history as a discipline for the early modern period owes much to Grafton and Jardine's "Studied for Action": How Gabriel Harvey read his Livy'

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*Works*, Oxford World Classics (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pg. 17.

<sup>32</sup> Martin Lyons, 'Renaissance Books and Humanist Readers' in *A History of Reading and Writing* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010), pg. 58.

<sup>33</sup> David Lewis Schaefer, Ed., *Freedom Over Servitude: Montaigne, LaBoétie, and On Voluntary Servitude* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1998), pg. 80.

(1990).<sup>34</sup> Methodologically, Grafton and Jardine distinguish their work from pre-existing reader response theories<sup>35</sup> (and indeed from previous scholarship on Gabriel Harvey<sup>36</sup>) by presenting a focussed case study modelled on one particular reader which attempts to provide a general blueprint for how humanistically trained readers might have read in a very specific *professional* capacity. Grafton and Jardine argue persuasively that beyond the consumption of literature for the accumulation of knowledge, or for the leisured enjoyment of a text, active participation in the reading process in the early modern period could also take place in order ‘to give rise to something else’. The ‘something else’ for which they here argue is the pursuit of professional advancement by means of the active engagement with literature. Rigorous scrutiny of Harvey’s marginalia (rather than his original works) thus highlights the author as a goal-orientated and sometimes collaborative reader well-versed in ‘moral politique’ and predominantly driven by a fervent careerism. As Grafton and Jardine themselves concede, their study of Gabriel Harvey is an attempt to show one kind of purposeful reading. Notwithstanding this narrow scope, Grafton and Jardine (their 1990 article) instigated a critical movement away from previous book reception theories which operated within the parameters of an all-encompassing lexicon of ‘implied’ or ‘ideal’ reader as opposed to ‘real’ ones.

Although Richards (2005) finds much to commend in the scholarly approach of the aforementioned scholars it is (for Richards at least) monochromatic in scope, with its insistence that readers of Harvey’s social standing read for political and professional self-

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<sup>34</sup> Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, “‘Studied for Action’”: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy’, *Past & Present*, No. 129 (Nov., 1990) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/650933>> [accessed 9 January 2010], pp. 30-78

<sup>35</sup> See Stanley Fish, ‘Interpreting the “Variorium”’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 2, No. 3. (Spring, 1976) <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1342862>> [accessed 23 June 2012], pp. 465-485.

<sup>36</sup> ‘Gabriel Harvey has long been remembered for his connections rather than his writings [...] most of his publications have long since been forgotten, but he is valued from an antiquarian point of view as a collector and annotator of books’ as Jennifer Richards points out in ‘Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry’, *Huntington Library Quarterly* Vol. 71, No. 2 (2008), pp.303-321, 303. Prior to Grafton and Jardine’s scholarship, Harvey’s marginalia had captured the attention of the critics G.C. Moore-Smith (1913), Eleanor Relle (1979) and Virginia F. Stern (1979). More recently, Ann Blair, ‘Reading Strategies for Coping with Information Overload ca. 1550-1700’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 64, Number 1 (January 2003) pp. 11-28, and Nicholas Popper, ‘The English Polydaedali: How Gabriel Harvey Read Late Tudor London’, *Journal of the History of Ideas*, Volume 66, Number 3 (July 2005), pp. 351-381, have attempted to address Harvey’s reading praxis.

advancement and nothing more.<sup>37</sup> In Richards' own study, the case is put forward that early modern readers of a certain social order were more intellectually savvy than has been previously recognised. In Richards' study of Harvey, evidence is offered in support of the idea that early modern readers were both active *and* critical in their approaches to reading. Richards suggests that Harvey's annotations were a means by which he could communicate with the community in which he found himself and with which he interacted. She goes on to argue that Harvey was a reader who was willing to share his knowledge by means of his annotations and thus should be regarded as a reader who engaged with literature not purely for professional advancement.

The apposite title of Kevin Sharpe's *Reading Revolutions* (2000) indicates the book's concern with the politics of reading in early modern England, but also works synchronistically with the dust-jacket illustration – a reproduction of Agostino Ramelli's conception of the 'book wheel' – showing the cyclical and engaged approach to reading taken by astute readers in the sixteenth- and early seventeenth-centuries. Ramelli's contraption (the designs for which he outlined in his *La Diverse et Artificiose Machine*, 1588), a revolving desk (or bookshelf) loaded with open books for the reader to consult without rising from his seat, was referred to in Grafton and Jardine's study of Harvey as they figuratively envisaged the English humanist sitting at the helm of such a machine in his everyday duties as a professional reader. The image is used differently by Sharpe, to confirm the early modern humanist predilection for reading and re-reading.

Both Grafton and Jardine (1990) and Richards (2005) explore in their studies the 'exceptional' reader, yet a number of recently published critical monographs on early modern reading habits have largely sought to bring about some balance in the overarching narrative of the history of reading, by compensating for critics' failure to previously consider 'less extraordinary' readers. One of the most acclaimed studies in this area has

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<sup>37</sup> In an article entitled 'Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry' (2005), Richards sets out to partially challenge and subsequently evolve Grafton and Jardine's conception of Harvey as pragmatic humanist reader.

been undertaken by Heidi Brayman Hackel in *Reading Material in Early Modern England* (Cambridge 2005). Hackel's study is largely indebted to the scholarship of Grafton and Jardine and, although attempting to produce a wider study than the aforementioned scholars achieve, this monograph is also, necessarily, selective in its subject matter. Nonetheless, Hackel's arguments are purposefully and persuasively put. As Fred Schurink observes,

*Reading Material* aims to “complement and challenge” the focus of earlier scholarship on “the ‘goal-orientated’ reading of professional scholars” by concentrating on...the great Variety of Readers”.<sup>38</sup>

Fred Schurink has drawn his own conclusions on both the “exceptional” and the “less extraordinary” reader in ‘Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England’ (2010), a paper which develops previous scholarship on the history of reading. Schurink identifies

the need to move toward a model of reading that takes account of the multiple material, social, and intellectual contexts that shaped the reception of literature in early modern England.<sup>39</sup>

For Schurink, as with Jennifer Richards (2008), it is not easy to determine clear-cut distinctions (as Grafton and Jardine do in “Studied for Action”) between the reader who reads purely for political gain, and the reader who reads solely for enjoyment. In accordance with this theory, Schurink suggests that the same text might even be consulted by the same reader on several different occasions, applying a certain method on each occasion to suit each alternate purpose (Schurink 2010: 460). Schurink suggests that

rather than “recreational” or “goal-orientated” reading, manuscript and commonplace books with extracts from literary works in the vernacular thus support the idea of “the great Variety of Readers” so central to Brayman Hackel's book – if not in the sense of readers from different educational backgrounds and genders, then at least a variety of readers and reading practices *within* the circles of “scholars” and “men of letters” (Schurink 2010: 456)

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<sup>38</sup> Fred Schurink, ‘Manuscript Commonplace Books, Literature, and Reading in Early Modern England’ in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 73 (2010), pp.453-469, 454.

<sup>39</sup> Schurink 2010: 453.

Schurink's hypothesis is a valid contribution to the wider field of research into the history of reading, as it attempts to sample the way in which many readers of the early modern period were pliable pragmatists who could adroitly shift between readerly stances (the professional and recreational) as and when the occasion necessitated.

Most recently, Daniel Wakelin<sup>40</sup> has made the logical connection between Grafton and Jardine's "goal-orientated" reader, Richards' conception of the networking reader, and Schurink's "pragmatic" and "recreational" reader, to what Wakelin himself describes as the methods of "proleptic" and "retrospective" reading. Wakelin, like Grafton and Jardine, deals with 'professional' readers,<sup>41</sup> although his focus is on earlier scribal practise as opposed to readers of the printed book. Nevertheless, Wakelin's scholarship advances the study of practical reading stratagems by suggesting that the boundaries between the active and reactive reader, the passive and self-assertive reader, the individual and community of readers (Wakelin 2010: 452), are difficult to define; implicit in Wakelin's assertion is the notion that a synergistic approach, considering a myriad of different reading strategies and contexts, might be the way to logically evolve the already invaluable scholarship on early modern English reading habits.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Daniel Wakelin, 'Instructing Readers in Fifteenth-Century Poetic Manuscripts' in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 73, No. 3, University of California Press (2010)

<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/hlq.2010.73.3.433> [accessed 5 January 2012], pp. 433-452.

<sup>41</sup> Wakelin envisages two distinct types of reader-cum-note-taker: the 'retrospective' annotator whose notes recount 'an act of reading or reception that had already occurred' (Wakelin 2010: 433) or the 'proleptic' note-maker who makes notes on their reading in order to instruct subsequent readers of that text how to read or to receive it in the future (Wakelin 2010: 433-434):

<sup>42</sup> The most obvious site of reading – the library – has also been subject to study in book historianship. As Andrew Pettegree (2010: 323) has argued, 'the library as a cultural institution struggled to adapt to the new age of print.' Yet this did not seem to deter some library-makers in the period; Sir Thomas Bodley's enterprise to construct a library at Oxford University (instigated in 1598) spanned over fifteen years. By the time librarian Thomas James published his second catalogue of books (1620), the Bodleian contained around 16,000 volumes (2010:320). However, as Pettegree highlights, owing to their great dependency on book benefactions and donations, institutional libraries were often characterised by 'an in-built conservatism' (2010: 321), and likely to contain a series of duplicate titles. Yet institutional libraries were still held in high regard owing to their collections of manuscripts. Pettegree makes an interesting point which chimes with the present doctoral thesis: 'The Renaissance library had been a convivial place; a place for meeting, conversation and display [...]. The Renaissance library performed much the same social function for a slightly different clientele of scholars, diplomats and officials. These libraries offered opportunities for serious political conversation in a space where their host, the Renaissance prince, could display wealth and ownership through books' (2010: 321). Arguably, however, the library of James VI (held within a relatively impoverished renaissance court) was a means by which to cultivate and display learning rather than as a means to peacock his wealth. Andrew Pettegree, *The Book in the Renaissance* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2010).

How do we then bring this scholarship on the history of reading to a Scottish context? Fictive depictions of the ‘reader’ are not difficult to come by in Scottish poetry from the medieval and early modern periods. In the *Kingis Quair* (or ‘The King’s Book’, c.1424),<sup>43</sup> for example, the narrative persona relates being ‘new partit out of slepe’. Alone in bed and desperately craving an aid to sleep, he ‘but toke a boke, to rede apone a quhile’.<sup>44</sup> It is surely not without coincidence that the restive persona of the *Quair* locates within the pages of the book in hand – Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* – a narrative to rival his own. From his late-night perusal of the Boethian text, the *Quair*’s persona is subsequently moved to action; the *Consolation* reminds him (and compels him to retell the story) of his mis-spent youth, and the particular event which led to an eventual spiritual epiphany and his self-improvement. With a reformed hubristic youth at the heart of its narrative, its dream-vision sequence, its explication of a moral lesson, and its ‘recognition’ scene – the *Kingis Quair* represents a very accomplished autobiographical ‘coming-of-age’ tale in which reading is foregrounded as the means by which to apprehend the self.

Later, in the writings of Robert Henryson (*died* c.1500) we find the same heightened emphases placed upon the act of invested reading. Following the model of the *Quair*, we are introduced to a restless narrative persona in *Cresseid* who recounts how having already read Chaucer’s *Troilus and Criseyde*, ‘to brek [his] sleip ane uther quair [he] tuik’ (Henryson 1981: l.71). Whilst in the *Quair*, reading was used in the first instance as a sedative, Henryson’s persona reads in order to stave off fatigue, yet despite the subtle variance what is clearly apparent is the utilitarian deployment of the book in both cases. In reading of *Cresseid*’s demise, the revelation of her fate and her partial-redemption, the narrator comes to a better understanding of the error of his ways and a better understanding of his own self. Elsewhere in Henryson’s *oeuvre*, the poet’s scholarly preference for industrious reading is nowhere better exemplified than in the Prologue to the *Morall*

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<sup>43</sup> A text considered to be the semi-autobiographical ‘testament’ of King James I of Scotland (1396-1437). Matthew P. MacDiarmid

<sup>44</sup> James I, *The Kingis Quair*, Matthew P. MacDiarmid, Ed. (London: Heinemann, 1973), pg. 78, ll. 9-14.



*Fabillis* wherein it is stressed that the ‘the nuttis schell, thocht it be hard and teuch,/haldis the kirnell, and is delectabill’ (Henryson 1981: 3-5). Although the lesson might be difficult to come by, asserts Henryson, the eventual spiritual and moral rewards of the scholarly endeavour will certainly repay the effort.

Katherine McClune, in an article plotting the literary and thematic sites of intersection between text and reader in Scottish literature from the medieval to the early modern, has argued that the rewards reaped by readers who possess already ‘a degree of ethical interpretative ability’<sup>45</sup> will be greater than those who approach the task of reading without being in possession of any skill. We can immediately make a correlation between McClune’s assertion here and King James VI and I’s ‘Reulis and Cautelis’, where he invites those ‘docile bairns of knowledge’<sup>46</sup> to read on and take heed.<sup>47</sup> As McClune notes, an active approach to reading (using previous learning or experience to inform the new text in hand) was considered by authors such as Henryson as an educative process which would lead to a more nuanced understanding of the world, and the role that man played in it. This awareness of the didactic import of reading also manifests itself in Sir David Lyndsay’s *Ane Dialog betuix Experience and ane Courteour* (completed 1553) and John Stewart of Baldynneis’ *Ane Schersing out of Trew Felicitie* (1586?). In the latter poem – described by

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<sup>45</sup> I am grateful to Kate McClune for allowing me access to this article (‘Governing the Self’, publication forthcoming) in early draft form.

<sup>46</sup> Although seemingly straightforward in meaning, this simple phrase repays further investigation. This thesis interprets the term variously to mean ‘the beginnings of poetic skill’, ‘a basic comprehension of rhetoric and humanist reading principles’, and finally ‘some degree of ability to interpret biblical scripture’. This phrase initially appears in James’s *Essayes of a Prentise* (in 1584) as a means of identifying ‘ideal readers’ for the poetry manual encased within the *Essayes*’s covers. Yet, a variant of this phrase recurs in the *Basilikon* as an epigram (‘Sapientiae Initium’ or ‘the beginnings of wisdom’). The English author, Henry Peacham, in a book of emblems based upon the *Basilikon* recreated this epigram in emblematic form as ‘a book (Bible), upon which is a vertical unsheathed sword, pointing skywards. Around the blade is a coiled snake’. Peacham’s ‘translation’ of this epigram is striking: ‘the scaly snake. Signifying your nature, oh Body Politic, gathers itself into a coil around the sword; but if you rely on yourself, you will fall, surrounded by a thousand perils, unless the holy books of God support you’.

<sup>47</sup> McClune’s chapter concludes by making an important claim: ‘Clearly, identification and interrogation of the hazardous tension between reason and passion continued to preoccupy Scots writers. Their tendency to couch their analysis in images of reading, writing, and poetic creativity, and (often) to provide some kind of regal framework for their writings is a feature that differentiates the Scots engagement with that of contemporary English poets. For the authors of the Older Scots works discussed here, self-governance is inextricably linked to ethical reading, and wise interpretation’, (chapter forthcoming 2013).

R.D.S. Jack as a ‘poetic cathedral’<sup>48</sup> - we find ‘the seemingly reliable figure of Experience as a personification of instructive authority’ (2010: 49). That ‘instructive authority’ wielded purposefully by Experience stems from the ability to read, interpret and understand:

the relationship between Experience and his pupils in *Ane Dialog* and *Ane Schersing* typifies the vulnerabilities of literary instruction. He assumes an authorial role, bestowing wisdom upon a pupil in a fashion that is reminiscent of the poet’s attempt to transmit his work to his audience. But he is not the reliable instructor that this reading at first might suggest – he is himself a reader, relating stories to his audience. For example, in *Ane Dialog*, his rewriting of illustrative exempla inevitably challenges accepted interpretations, and these writings are themselves susceptible to query and interpretation, a process of transmission that is depicted within the text, in the responses of his fictional audience, and is also assumed outside the text, in the presumed responses of the actual audience. (2009: 49)

In *Ane Schersing*, the personified Experience’s edifying credentials stem largely from the fact that he is at once both a poet and a reader. This equilibrium allows the figure of Experience to bestow wisdom upon his unenlightened pupil. In the former text, Lyndsay’s *Ane Dialog*, it is Experience’s ability to ‘challenge accepted interpretations’ (49) that has secured his ‘instructive authority’.

In remembering the compositional circumstances of John Stewart’s religious allegory *Ane Schersing*, we are finally brought round to a discussion of James VI and I and his reading praxis. Stewart’s narrative of spiritual enlightenment was included as the third part of a manuscript (1586) dedicated to King James VI with the intention “his heines to delyt”. As Dunnigan (2002) notes, this gift to the king was a ‘literal and symbolic act of devotion [...] a tryptich [...] a symbolic altar raised to James’ by the aspirant poet.<sup>49</sup> In the titular, introductory and dedicatory rubric of John Stewart’s manuscript verbal echoes of King James’s *Essayes* are resonant; the tripartite arrangement of the manuscript (a translation, a series of poems and a moral-religious allegory) is described by its author as

<sup>48</sup> See R.D.S Jack, ‘Obscure Ways to God?: *Ane Schersing Out of trew Felicitie* and *The Cherrie and the Slae*’ in McGinley and Royan 2010: 119-133.

<sup>49</sup> Sarah Dunnigan, *Eros and Poetry at the Court of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2002), pg. 105

ane abbregement of roland/ furiovs translait ovt of/ Ariost. together vith/  
svm rapsodies of the authors/ yovthfull braine, And/ last ane schersing ovt  
of trew felicitie,/ composit in scotis/meitir.

Whether James was ever ‘gifted’ this text in the literal sense of having been presented with the physical book has yet to be proven (see McClune 2005), nonetheless, the stylistic and thematic overlaps between this presentation manuscript and James’s *Essayes* are entirely obvious and suggest a clear correlation between the two works and the ideology of the two aspirant writers. In this painstakingly neat production (which is so stylistically redolent of the king’s *Essayes*) it is clear that James’s ideological ‘prentise’, John Stewart, prized the material artefact almost as highly as his monarch did.

In Stewart’s *Ane Schersing* King James is himself transformed into a fictive persona, the ‘ideal representative of temporal justice’ (McGinley and Royan 2010: 123), but it is the invocation in the prologue to the *Schersing* of Uranie – the spiritual guide and Christian muse of poets promoted by James two years previously in his *Essayes* – that really draws attention to Stewart’s literary motives. The invocation of ‘*la muse chrestienne*’ in the third section is intended to prove Stewart’s ultimate rejection of the ‘earlier, temporal offerings in the manuscript, in favour of a “sacred Subject” (2010: 123). Having already established the primacy of the muse, Stewart makes further concessions to his monarch’s ‘prentise piece’. Firstly, he adopts and maintains the relatively convoluted nine-line stanza promoted by King James in his ‘*Reulis and Cautelis*’ as apt for heroic verse. Secondly, Stewart’s Protestantism is subdued in the *Schersing*, just as James had offered a moderated Protestant voice in his *Essayes*, but as Jack attests, ‘the equation of Faith [in *Ane Schersing*] with biblical evidence certainly reaffirms the terms of the 1560 Protestant Confession of Faith’ (2010: 127). Thirdly, and perhaps the most significant thematic overlap between this text and James’s seminal piece, ‘the *Schersing* [...] teaches that the impossibility of attaining perfection encourages rather than invalidates the value of more modest journeying’ (2010: 128), just as King James had concluded in his *Essayes*

that he would consider himself blessed to ‘only clame/ To touche that crown, though not to weare the fame’ (James VI 1584: sig. g<sup>r</sup>).

Stewart’s presentation manuscript not only dedicates a beautifully neat material object to the king, but also mimetically reflects James’s *Essayes* back at him. If, as McClune argues (above), *Ane Schersing* is a text concerned with attaining instructive authority and experience through active reading, scriptural interpretation, and teaching, and further, if this manuscript was indeed supposed to flatter the king by both depicting him as divine exemplar and his *Essayes* the manifesto underpinning his own work, then we can have no doubt that the *Essayes* must be viewed (and indeed must have been regarded in its own time) as an important document on reading as a means to attain the moral and spiritual acuity needed to live the Christian life.

Van Heijnsbergen and Royan (2002) argue that in the natural evolution of Scottish poetics over the course of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century, writing came to be understood in Scotland as the means by which to scrutinise and regulate the self. With this altered appreciation of writing’s potential came a new type of reader who was expected, ‘from within their own modernity, to approach texts morally and to think allegorically and metonymically rather than associatively and metaphorically’.<sup>50</sup> In so doing, Scottish readers and authors established secularised modes of reading and writing

that provided an alternative to both the all-consuming religious polemics at home as well as to the more metropolitan discourses of self that were developed in contemporary England. In the seventeenth century, the ‘educable Scottish reader’ thus becomes the alternative to the churchman, the (now largely absent) courtier, or the urban wit as the main conduit for secular writing, for a humanist education and the arts “as the only possible route by which a person might acquire both moral self-control and a capacity for effective public action”<sup>51</sup>. (Heijnsbergen and Royan 2002: xxiii)

This thesis concerns itself with one particular humanist reader in that transitory period from, crudely speaking, the ‘sacred’ to the ‘secular’, one whose kingly status confers

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<sup>50</sup> Van Heijnsbergen and Royan, Eds., *Literature, Letters and the Canonical in Early Modern Scotland* (East Lothian: Tuckwell, 2002), pg. xxiii.

special status upon him not only as a reader but also as a public body being inscribed by his subjects.

Closer scrutiny of a selection of writings by King James VI and I confirms how the readerly facet of his character far outweighs the writerly. Moreover, in his attempts to advise his son (*Basilikon Doron* 1598), his subjects and his poets (*Essayes* 1584 and *Workes* 1616), in correcting or critiquing other writers' work (such as Alexander's or Hudson's), by continually poring over books to find inspiration for his own writing, and in tirelessly re-presenting his reading in different ways, James is most certainly the consummate Christian-humanist scholar, a docile bairn of knowledge and the very embodiment of the implied discerning 'reader' to whom the majority of his works are dedicated.

Rickard (2007) has noted how James's 'readers ranged [...] from John Chamberlain to Elizabeth I, from Scottish Catholic earls to the English scholar Gabriel Harvey, from Catholic controversialists on the continent to Scottish and English poets', whilst Jennifer Richards (2008) has engaged with the marginal annotations made by Gabriel Harvey to a 'hot off the press' edition of James's *Essayes* in 1585. More recently, Stilma (2012) has written extensively on the Dutch audience (in the 1580s and 90s, into the first decade of the seventeenth century) who were keenly interested in the views of the Scottish monarch. With this variety in readership, then, any advice imparted by the king on the act of reading had to be greatly considered. There is still evidence within the pages of the *Essayes* to suggest James's interest in the art of poetic composition, but it is certainly another interest which, on closer inspection, takes precedence. The fundamental idea which springs forth from this 1584 collection is that in order to be ready to act – to write, to govern, to live the moral life – man must first have read God's word well and understood the lessons inherent

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<sup>51</sup> Quotation in Heinsbergen and Royan 2002 taken from David Allan, 'Prudence and Patronage: The politics of Culture in Seventeenth Century Scotland', *History of European Ideas* 18 (1994) pp. 476-80: 479.

in the text.<sup>52</sup> James's concern with the reading process goes further than the level of basic comprehension, however; for the Scottish monarch, moral and spiritual principles derived from the reading process must be actively applied and rigorously adhered to. As this thesis will continue to show, James is under no illusion of his authorial remit in the *Essayes* – he is to serve as the teacher (re)instructing his subjects in the art of reading.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> In his *Defense of Poesy* the Protestant poet Sir Philip Sidney had drawn upon Aristotelian maxims to argue that poetry ought to be the *mimesis* of the God's natural world as he created it. Gavin Alexander, *Sidney's 'Defense of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism* (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), pg. 10.

<sup>53</sup> Under these didactic terms, the *Essayes* finds close antecedents in the schoolrooms of the northern renaissance. See Lowell C. Green, 'The Bible in Sixteenth-Century Humanist Education', *Studies in the Renaissance* (University of Chicago Press, 1972), pp. 112-134.

## Chapter 2: Bookish Transaction at the Scottish Court, 1573-1583

As the previous chapter made clear, critical notions of the ‘Castalian Band’ sought to define a ‘socio-cultural community’ surrounding James at the heart of his Edinburgh court, yet the parameters of that literary ‘community’ were deemed, in critical scholarship, to exist by virtue of poetic exchange (ie. based on the rules of patronage, artistic mimesis, flattery) – essentially upon a ‘writing game’. One can certainly appreciate the merits of subscribing to the critical notion of a ‘writing game’ at James’s court, for this narrative provided Scottish literature with a neat cultural ‘equivalent’ to the lauded transactional coterie poetics of Elizabethan England: phrased slightly differently the conception of a poetic game at court provided the means by which to examine a much-neglected period in Scottish literary history. Notwithstanding the initial positive intentions of Jack and Shire, the continual misapplication of the idea of the ‘Castalian band’ has forced the early writings of James VI into a particular narrative which regards the king’s work as a stylistic catalyst, encouraging others to write in the likeness of his own mannered style.

Whilst the concept of a courtly *puy* has fallen out of critical favour, might there yet be a way of continuing to acknowledge the existence of a ‘cultural community’ at court, whilst simultaneously recognising a more diverse membership for this network which has no fixed locus for patronage and which prefers to deal in bookish, rather than poetic, transactions? It is a question which underpins this short contextual chapter, and simultaneously leads on to the contemplation of a second question – offered somewhat more tentatively – which asks whether the royal ‘library’ of James VI might have been viewed both literally, as a space for private contemplation and learning for the king, and figuratively, as a conduit through which a dialogue on contemporary theological, ideological and artistic matters took place between a porous court and a burgeoning class of literati furth of the Castle walls. In a chapter exploring ‘Shifts and Continuities in the Scottish Royal Court, 1580-1603’, Amy L. Juhala notes how

from 1580 onwards [...] and especially after the king's marriage, the intermediary roles and functions at court proliferate into a virtual *curia media*, a medial court between the sphere of the great nobility – the *curia maior* and that of the household servitors. Providing communication at various levels within and beyond the court, this *curia media* – of middle administrators, as well as a diverse group of ambassadors, musicians and spies – becomes a potentially significant locus for cultural change. Such change occurs within familiar structures: the court grows and develops, and yet the core group of courtiers and servitors closest to the king remains constant.<sup>54</sup>

Yet, it was not only the royal library which was adapted as the king's needs changed, but also the royal household itself. Juhala notes that a substantial number of these additions to the household occurred during a period of only two years, between March 1578 (when James personally accepted his governmental role) and October 1580 (with the formal creation of court by the Privy Council). On the whole, these changes indicated a royal household evolving to meet the needs of its adult (and increasingly sophisticated) king:

departments of the wardrobe with a master and valet, goldsmith and seamstress were established. The stable also grew as the king began to ride more frequently. Other staff additions included a *master balladine* [dancing master], a minstrel, and an organist. The king's health required attention, so an apothecary, *mediciner*, and surgeon were added to the household roll [...] Additional appointments in the latter half of 1578 included a *cutler*, painter, *tapisier* [tapestry-maker], hat maker, *couper* [horse dealer] [...] and plumber. (2013, pg.3)

Two further additions to the staff of the royal household highlighted by Juhala – those of the reader and the bookbinder – are of significance to the present chapter, when it is considered that by 1578 (the date of the appointment to the household of the reader and bookbinder) Young's book reclamation project was well-underway. In relation to the role of 'reader' within the royal household, Juhala makes an interesting observation, that there is no evidence to suggest King James V having had at his disposal someone who would read aloud to him. Examination of the Young Copybook – a ledger maintained from 1573-

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<sup>54</sup> 'Shifts and Continuities in the Scottish Royal Court, 1580-1603', Amy L. Juhala in Parkinson, Ed., *James VI and I, Literature and Scotland – Tides of Change, 1567-1625* (Leuven: Peeters, 2013), pg. 1.



1584 by Peter Young (1544–1628),<sup>55</sup> in which is detailed the processes of book procurement, book recovery and bookish transactions at the Scottish court – provides strong evidence in support of Juhala’s assertion that a medial court comprising a diverse membership ought to be re-considered as an important ‘locus for cultural change’ (2013: pg.1) in this period. This current chapter will continue to examine the ways in which the Young Copybook reveals a *curia media* who regularly engaged with the king by means of bookish (rather than compositional) transaction at court.

### *Some beginnings of knowledge: James as pupil*

In overseeing King James VI’s education, Young and George Buchanan<sup>56</sup> were responsible for the transformation of an intellectually gifted child-king into a credible monarch in the international arena, and one proficient in the *lingua franca* of statecraft, culture, theology and philosophies. In this exercise, as in the period more generally, books (both printed and manuscript) were mandatory tools for teaching. Access to a rich and well-stocked library<sup>57</sup> is likely to have instilled in James a deep-rooted and instinctive appreciation of the act of reading (specifically) and the material artefact of the book (more generally), as witnessed by the king’s own engagement with the printing press. It is no small wonder, then, that the assertion that James was a ‘royal paragon of scholarly attainment’ or that he possessed an

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<sup>55</sup> Young was born in August 1544, in Dundee. Although we know that Young attended the grammar school of Dundee as a child, evidence of his university education in Scotland is less concrete. Young’s biographer, Davie Horsburgh (2004), suggests that he matriculated from St Andrews, ‘since [Young] was designated *magister* when admitted a burghess of Dundee’. Young spent six years (from 1562-1568) in Geneva, during which time he forged links with the renowned theologian Theodore Beza, and frequently exchanged communication with the Scottish theologian, university principal and church reformer, Andrew Melville (1545-1622), and the Danish nobleman and astronomer, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601). Young’s appointment to the position of royal tutor was made by the Earl of Moray in 1569, during the Earl’s regency governance of Scotland. At only twenty-five years old at the time of being appointed, Young was very much the youthful foil to the older (63 years old), and far more experienced, George Buchanan. See Davie Horsburgh, ‘Young, Sir Peter (1544–1628)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Online: Oxford University Press, 2004). <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30277>> [accessed 28 March 2013].

<sup>56</sup> Buchanan (1506–1582) was one of the foremost scholars of his generation, and although King James’s fear of the more heavy-handed of his two tutors has been much-mythologised in biographical sketches of both the monarch and the Latinist scholar, James nevertheless admired the learning and intellect of a quite formidable thinker: ‘Buchanan I reckon and rank among poets, not among divines, classical or common. If the man hath burst out here and there into some traces of excess or speech of bad temper, that must be imputed to the violence of his humour and heat of his spirit, not in any wise to the rules of true religion rightly by him conceived before’. D.H. Willson, *King James VI and I*, Jonathan Cape (London, 1971) 21.

excellent memory and learned with ease,<sup>58</sup> have become literary-historical ‘facts’ as ubiquitously cited in biographies of the Scottish monarch as are rhetorics of ‘Castalian bands’ and courtly *puy*s.<sup>59</sup>

Whilst late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century evidence of a self-fashioned and self-contained courtly coterie has proven difficult to come by, omnipresent portrayals of a precocious child-intellect are at least validated by a number of first-hand accounts from the Jacobean period itself. In one such account – written by a contemporary and friend of the king, James Melville – the monarch is described as having been a cerebral youth and confident wit, as a child who was always willing to showcase his learning at any given opportunity within the setting of a porous and transient court. Recounting one particular visit to the king in Stirling in 1574, Melville remembers seeing, with much astonishment,

the King, the sweetest sight in Europe that day for strange and extraordinary gifts of wit, judgment, memory and language. I heard him discourse, walking up and down in the old Lady Mar’s hand, of knowledge and ignorance. (Willson 1971: 23)

There is little correlation between Melville’s character sketch of an exuberant child-prodigy and the historian D.H. Willson’s portrait of the monarch as a young melancholic. Far from constructing an impression of a boy-king who revelled in an enviable academic programme, Willson constructs a picture of a boy drowning under the weight of a rigorous education. In the following extract from Willson’s seemingly acrimonious biography of James VI, the young monarch cuts the most pitiable (and therefore least enviable) solitudinous figure hunched over his books in the schoolroom:

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<sup>57</sup> A modest estimation by historian D.H. Willson suggests that James had ‘at his disposal some six hundred volumes’ during his childhood, a library holding which possibly constituted ‘the largest collection in Scotland at the time’ (Willson 1971: 22).

<sup>58</sup> Willson 1971: 23.

<sup>59</sup> The value of the king having undertaken such an enriched and academically testing schema of learning in his childhood has, however, been questioned in some quarters; the historian D.H. Willson has argued that the worth of James’s tutelage has been grossly over-stated in biographical narratives with the arduous scholarly training imposed upon the young Stuart monarch far more of a curse for the small child, than it ever was a privileged blessing: ‘rarely [...] has a small boy been propelled on a more extended *tour de force* through the many provinces of knowledge, and rarely has more information been pumped prematurely into a youthful mind’ (Willson 1971: 23). Willson’s use of the word ‘prematurely’ is telling and the appreciation for Young and George Buchanan’s methods fleeting.

The long hours, the difficult material, the severe discipline, the absence of love and tenderness so important for a child, were alike misguided and unfortunate. He was a nervous, excitable, overstrung boy, and the hothouse character of his education may well have increased these tendencies. Admirable though his training was, there was something artificial and pedantic about it. (Willson 1971: 25)

Yet whether the young king enjoyed his cursory education from the lectern of two of the most formidable academics of the generation or not is, to some extent, a subsidiary consideration for this present doctoral thesis.

Another account, this time written by Peter Young, partly explains how the monarch's intellect was shaped and moulded. Offering a robust insight into the rigours of the boy-king's daily educational routine, Young describes how

first in the morning [James] sought guidance in prayer, since God Almighty bestows favour and success upon all studies. Being cleansed through prayer and having propitiated the Deity, he devoted himself to Greek, reading either from the New Testament, or Isocrates, or from the apophthegms of Plutarch, with practice in the rules of grammar. After breakfast he read Latin, either from Livy, Justin, Cicero, or from Scottish or foreign history. After dinner he gave some time to composition; and during the rest of the afternoon, if time permitted, he studied arithmetic or cosmography, which included geography and astronomy, or dialectics or rhetoric. But these subjects were taken up in turn, not followed all at the same time. (Willson 1971: 23)

Although critical scholarship has gleaned from Young's sketch valuable insights into the type and variety of texts and titles studied by the monarch during his humanistic training, the vignette, arguably, has still more yet to offer. For Young's account is quite specific in its detail – we not only learn what James read, but we are also given some indication of when he read particular genres or types of texts. Whether consciously or not, Young's description of James's reading programme offers an illuminating insight into the cultural priorities inculcated in the king from an early age by his tutors. For example, educational importance is manifestly placed upon reading (God's word predominantly) for information in the first instance, and only secondly upon writing or composition. The latter pursuit – composition – is interestingly only considered as an after-dinner recreation. Nevertheless, 'literary' endeavour (both in terms of reading and writing) is presented in Young's account

as a somewhat dogmatic and inalienable component of James's education.<sup>60</sup> It is thus worth acknowledging how James is encouraged to read first before being allowed to undertake compositional exercises, and this distinction, subtle though it might here appear, will come into sharp focus in the next chapter of this thesis, when we take into consideration the reading conditions implemented and advocated by James in various constituent texts within his *Essayes*.

Despite his role as the second tutor to the king, and a general *persona grata* amongst courtly circles, it is for his role as royal librarian that literary scholars have been most indebted to Peter Young. Whilst the Copybook serves straightforwardly as an index of titles held within the library, there are extant receipts cataloguing the purchases of some of thirty-one of these books; in the Maitland Club *Miscellany* (1834, vol. I: 13), for example, a bill for books purchased for the king exists under the title of 'The Kingis Maiesties Buikes'. The accompanying warrant for payment (dated 21<sup>st</sup> July 1576) is signed by the Regent Morton. A second bill for books crops up in the same *Miscellany*. As George F. Warner explains, this bill

was submitted to the king by John Gibson, his bookbinder, for binding fifty-nine volumes, the titles of which are separately entered. This is attested by Young himself and is indorsed with an order on the Treasurer signed by James, and dated at Holyrood, 1<sup>st</sup> October 1580. (1898: xviii)

Warner connects the aforementioned bills to an undated letter – what he describes as a 'footnote [...] to the earlier two documents' (1898: xviii) – addressed from the royal tutor and librarian to John Bellenden (Lord Justice Clerk). The matter of this letter is business rather than friendship; Young begs of the Justice Clerk to use his connections with Regent Morton to persuade him to provide Young with the funds necessary for purchasing books for the king. Young writes:

the causis quhairfoir I haue tain the baldnes to trouble your L. heirwith ar sindry, bot chiefly the gret affectioun I am assurit ye beare unto our Maisteris furtherance in lerning, and alsua in caise any person suld say, as

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<sup>60</sup> This facet of James's adolescent training is notably placed in clear contrast to the study of the sciences, a pursuit likely to be undertaken only if time permitted.

the fascioun of the maist part is, quhat neidis his Majesties a mony buikis, hes he not anew alreddy? – that in that caise your L. vald schwa thame their error and persuade my Lordis grace always to graunt.’ (*Miscellany* 1834: xviii)

The rhetoric here employed by Young is noteworthy, making Bellenden equally complicit in the education of his monarch. In a telling insight, Young shows his awareness of a popular conception of the young king as far too ‘bookish’ (‘alsua in caise any person suld say, as the fascioun of the maist part is, quhat neidis his Majestie sa mony buikis’). By posing an almost threat-like parting shot to Bellenden to not fail in his remit, Young shows a disregard for such idle questioning of his methods and the king’s readerly interests by implication. Warner asserts that in the adjunct French marginal notation to this letter (‘Sifaut que le Roy dresse une Bibliothèque peu à peu’ – ‘if the king should compile a library gradually’) we find the Justice Clerk’s reply to Young. Moreover, argues Warner, ‘thanks to Young’s own notes, we have the opportunity of seeing by what means and to what extent this principle was carried into practice’ (1898: xix).

Young’s ledger is by no means a definitive account of the holdings of James’s library, and indeed we cannot be certain of James ever having read all of the weighty tomes listed in the inventory, but it is of huge importance.<sup>61</sup> For Young’s notebook, updated as and when a book was acquired or loaned, tenders a significant measure of information. It is the contention of this chapter that reconsideration of the Young Copybook (the names and books listed therein, the transactional activity noted, the book procurement process detailed, and even the very existence of the copybook itself) does more than merely suggest that the major form of literary exchange at James’s Edinburgh court during the king’s mid- to late-teens was ideological and bibliographic. Critical attention has previously been invested in examining what this slight copybook reveals of James’s relatively commonplace humanist tastes in reading (see Warner 1893); in a separate strand of research into the cultural landscape of Jacobean Scotland, scholarly

excavation has been undertaken of the labyrinthine familial networks of poetic patronage and production which existed in this period (see van Heijnsbergen, unpublished PhD, 2010). Nonetheless, connections have yet to be made between the library cultivated by Young for his royal ward and the wider network of like-minded readers who contributed to, and benefited from, this rich bibliographic collection. This chapter seeks only to make the initial connection between the two areas and to suggest this as a potential avenue for further study in this area; the present discussion offers a tentative and succinct overview of the Young MS solely as a means by which to contextualise the ensuing chapters in this study of James's writing about reading.

In the entirety of the Young MS ninety names are mentioned as either contributors to, or borrowers from, the royal library over a ten year period. It is, however, worth noting at this stage that not all 'donors' to the library did so of their own volition, some having been coerced by Peter Young into returning back to their 'rightful home' a significant number of titles. In 1573, the year in which Young's ledger was instigated, a process was taken out against James Sandilands (known variously as Lord St. John or Lord Torphichen) for having in his possession items belonging to Mary Queen of Scots, including 'ane coffer full of buikis' (Warner 1898: xxxi). Although the latter charge was denied by Sandilands, he did admit to having 'a certane buikis' which witnesses called upon at the time described as bearing the coat of arms of the 'King and Queen of France'. As Warner elucidates:

that active measures were taken in 1573 to reclaim for James the scattered remains of his mother's library is shown in the proceedings against Lord Torphichen [...] and if Young did not actually originate them, we now learn from him how far they met with success, not only in Torphichen's case but in others. (Warner 1893: xvi)

Throughout the copybook, Young makes entries listing the gradual deposit of some of these books, many of which had been given over to the Regent Moray to look after, in light of Mary's fall from power. James's conception of the value of literature, not purely in esoteric or aesthetic terms, but in terms of the value of books as political power, would

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<sup>61</sup> See Finkelstein and McCleery (2002: 47-59) for more on library inventories and the critical ambiguities

have been consolidated by this decade-long process in which Young supervised the return of his mother's books. In addition to recording the titles of those books 'returned' to the library, the Young Copybook also documents the contributions made by a significant number of willing and frequent donors to the library. During the course of this chapter, a few of the names from this list will be foregrounded either as influential 'readers' in their own right, or as having important familial or friendship links with cultural communities.

### ***Bookish transactions***

Young's copybook ledger reveals three things: the names of some of the titles held for and by King James VI over a ten year period; the source for a number of the books procured; and to whom many of these titles were loaned by the king. Although indexing the titles contained within a monarch's library was not a new phenomenon,<sup>62</sup> Young's inventory is notable for the way in which its compiler makes a concerted effort to list the provenance of a great many donations, but more than this, he also documents the movement of books amongst the mercantile classes, giving us a unique map by which to read the socio-literary interconnectedness operating at the heart of a wide network of readers, writers, and book-binders/sellers in this period. Reading the Young Copybook through a prosopographical lens helps reconstruct the web-like familial networks and intellectual culture woven in the Scottish lowlands during the 1570s and 1580s.

As van Heijnsbergen (2010) has suggested, there is, in the first instance, a clear association between the patrons of the Bannatyne Manuscript<sup>63</sup> and James's library through the father and son, John and Lewis Bellenden. In familial terms, Lewis Bellenden was

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that they pose.

<sup>62</sup> For more on how English royal libraries were catalogued and recorded from the Lancastrian period into the Tudor age with Henry VIII, see Jenny Stratford's chapter, 'The Early Royal Collections and the Royal Library to 1461', Janet Backhouse's 'The Royal Library from Edward IV to Henry VII' and James P. Carley's 'The Royal Library under Henry VIII', all found in *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain*, Vol. III (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 255-266, 267-274 and 274-281 respectively. See also *The Libraries of King Henry VIII*, ed. James P. Carley (London: British Library, 2000).

<sup>63</sup> Compiled by George Bannatyne, after whom the anthology takes its name, the manuscript exists as one of the most important storehouses of Scottish verse of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Divided into five sections, the MS includes the work of the Scottish Makars, various anonymous pieces in Scots, as well as verse from medieval English poets. Bannatyne took the liberty of contributing a number of his own verses

godfather to George Bannatyne's nephew, whilst both Lewis and his father are listed in the memorial book which is appended to the Bannatyne MS. In Young's copybook, both men feature yet again, their very presence indicative of their sustained interest in, and involvement with, book culture in and around Edinburgh in the mid- to late-sixteenth century.<sup>64</sup> Two years prior to succeeding his father as Justice Clerk (in 1578), Lewis contributed five French books to the library of James VI. Lewis Bellenden's influence at court solidified over the course of the next decade, as he served time as Lord of Session and Keeper of Linlithgow Palace. He was an integral ambassador for the king in the diplomatic meetings which took place to negotiate the royal marriage between King James and Anne of Denmark, and was witness to the ensuing nuptial ceremony in Denmark in 1589 (van Heijnsbergen 2010: 36). A second connection to the Bannatyne MS exists within the Young Copybook in the form of Alexander Hay (scribe and clerk to the Privy Council between 1563 and 1572); Hay's daughter, Margaret (whose name features in the Bannatyne MS memorial book), was the first wife of James Bannatyne, brother to George Bannatyne, the compiler of the Bannatyne MS. The most notable title donated by Alexander Hay to the royal library was a 1565 Parisian edition of *Les songes drolatiques de pantagruel, où sont continues plusieurs figures de l'invention de Maistre François Rabelais* (Warner 1898 : lxiii). Other neat 'literary' connections and artistic channels emerge throughout the Copybook: for example, John Erskine, first Earl of Mar and the man charged with James's pastoral guardianship, not only contributed books to James's library but had also, importantly, been the poet Alexander Scott's patron. A further link to Scott comes by means of a donation of a psalm book, made by Alexander Scott's own son ('donnez par [gifted by] Alexander Scottis sone'). At a later date, as the Young Copybook records, King James gives this same psalm collection to Magdelene Livingstone, whose sister Mary had been one of Mary Queen of Scots' four 'Maries'. Magdalene's father,

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<sup>64</sup> For a rigorous and comprehensive investigation of this topic see van Heijnsbergen (Unpublished PhD: Glasgow University, 2010).



Alexander, also makes a contribution to the royal library during the period in which Young's ledger was maintained.

Yet another set of interesting literary interconnections arises with the inclusion in the donor list of Alexander Hume. Hume's younger brother, Patrick Hume of Polwarth, is most remembered for his flyting with Alexander Montgomerie.<sup>65</sup> The manuscript of this flyting survives in the family papers of the Earl of Tullibardine, who was himself appointed joint governour (with another Erskine of Mar) of the young king in 1572. In the Young Copybook both Lord and Lady Tullibardine are also listed as contributors to the library and recipients of books from it.

Despite the perceived dearth of female poetic voices in Scotland throughout this period, women are not found sorely lacking as book-donors to the king. As Sarah Dunnigan (2002) has highlighted,

though the inner Jacobean coterie in the 1580s and early 1590s appears to have been composed of male courtier-writers, this sovereign-orchestrated homosocial culture, and its attendant homoeroticism, embraces women in its literary rituals of exchange and dedication. The subject of the Jamesian lyric, 'A dreame on his Mistris Lady Glamis', can be identified as Anne, daughter of Sir John Murray, who became the first earl of Tullibardine, 'a companion of the king's childhood and later master of his household', who married Patrick Lyon, Lord Glamis, in 1595.<sup>66</sup>

Including Mary, Queen of Scots, the total of women featuring as either donors of books to, or recipients of books from, the library in Young's inventory numbers ten. These female names range from the familial, to extended family and friends.<sup>67</sup> Notable benefactions (notable in the sense that this is the most active and closest family member to gift books to James) are received from James's paternal grandmother, Lady Lennox, who donated a number of books, most likely to have been sent, as Warner notes, from London. Other

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<sup>65</sup> See David Parkinson's introduction to Alexander Montgomerie's *Poems*, vol. II (Edinburgh: Scottish Text Society, 2000), pg 6.

<sup>66</sup> Sarah Dunnigan, *Eros and Poetry at the Courts of Mary Queen of Scots and James VI* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002) pg. 80.

<sup>67</sup> These are Mary Beton, Annabella Erskine (Lady Mar), Margaret Fleming (Lady Atholl, Former Lady of Honour to Mary Queen of Scots), Lady Lennox (James's paternal grandmother), Helena Little, Christina Livingstone, Magdalene Livingstone, Janet Murray (second wife of Peter Young), Jane Oliphant and Elizabeth Gib.

donors, such as Margaret Fleming, Lady Atholl (former Lady of Honour to Mary Queen of Scots), implicitly strengthen the bond between Mary and the library collated for her son by Young. In a hugely symbolic gesture, the latter – Lady Atholl – gave to James a copy of his mother’s political science, a book entitled *L’Institution du Prince*.<sup>68</sup>

Helena Little, mentioned earlier in this chapter, provides a familial link with one of the more prolific book collectors of the period – Clement Little. The *ODNB* description of Clement Little as ‘lawyer and benefactor’ does not convey the significant cultural import of this figure. Born into a prosperous Edinburgh mercantile family in 1527, Little enjoyed a rich humanist education, firstly at the burgh’s grammar school, before going on to St Andrew’s University (St Leonard’s College – a college described by Little’s biographer James Kirk as having ‘gained a reputation for Protestant sympathies’). He matriculated from Louvain in 1546, an institution which was ‘favourable towards biblical humanism’.<sup>69</sup> In his professional career, Little served his apprenticeship as a lawyer in the ecclesiastical and secular courts. Within seven years, Little had progressed to the advocacy in Edinburgh, where he interacted with, and acted on behalf of, influential religious figures (Robert Reid, Bishop of Orkney, and Henry Sinclair, Dean of Glasgow). Interestingly, upon the death of Henry Sinclair (1565), Little was the beneficiary of a selection of books bequeathed to him in the will of the aforementioned former Dean of Glasgow. Kirk (2006) dwells on this facet of Little’s biography:

His religious commitment clearly extended beyond the merely conventional. Little seems to have arrived at Protestantism through Erasmian humanism and reformist Catholicism, and his devotion to protestant theology and to the reformed kirk is well illustrated by his extensive collection of theological books, over 270 in all, among which the writings of the leading protestant theologians – Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, Oecolampadius, Bucer, Viret, Pietro martire Vermigli (Peter Martyr), Musculus, Calvin, and Beza – are strongly represented.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>68</sup> More will be said of this treatise in Chapter Four of this thesis.

<sup>69</sup> James Kirk, ‘Little, Clement (c.1527–1580)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* Oxford University Press, Oct 2006) <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/95012>> [accessed 27 March 2013].

<sup>70</sup> James Kirk, ‘Little, Clement (c.1527–1580)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Online: Oxford University Press, Oct 2006). <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/95012>> [accessed 1 April 2013].

It is little wonder to find Little mentioned in the Young MS as a donor to the Royal Library of James VI; he was in his own right a prolific book collector. In his own will, Little bequeathed to the town of Edinburgh his collection of theological books (note, that his books on other subjects were disposed of rather than left to the burgh). In 1583, following the royal charter to establish a university in Edinburgh, the nucleus of Little's personal library was donated to the 'town's college'.

Of the ninety names listed in Young's inventory of donors, Adam Bothwell, Bishop of Orkney, is unquestionably one of the most prolific supporters of James's library. Familial bonds tie him to the aforementioned Bellendens – Bothwell was the son of Francis Bothwell and Katherine Bellenden.<sup>71</sup> Although his ecclesiastical position somewhat permits an obligation to impart spiritual guidance to his adolescent monarch, Bothwell was an ardent book collector in his own right, as the record of his library documented within the Warrender Papers<sup>72</sup> confirms:

it is not known where Bothwell kept his library, which its surviving inventory shows to have been impressively large and wide-ranging. He clearly started buying books in his student days, and acquired works by many classical and patristic authors. He added to his collection at least into the 1580s, for instance in the field of theology, when the writings of Beza joined those of earlier Reformation luminaries such as Calvin, Melancthon, and Bullinger. His purchases indicate that he could read Latin, Hebrew, Greek, French, Italian, and Spanish. His judicial employment, as well as his work as a bishop, probably accounts for his owning large numbers of books on canon and civil law, while his continued ill health (in 1582 he excused himself from obeying the kirk's order to take on a congregational ministry on the grounds of sickness) may explain his many books on medicine and surgery. A typical representative of the Scottish Renaissance, if an unusually widely read one, he was interested in political theory, owning books by Buchanan and Bodin, possessed several works of history, and also concerned himself with such subjects as mathematics, geography, philosophy, astronomy, witchcraft, and cookery. Perhaps it was because he lived so close to the royal court that he had a copy of Castiglione's *The Courtier*. (Shaw 2004)

<sup>71</sup> Duncan Shaw, 'Bothwell, Adam (1529?–1593)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Online: Oxford University Press, 2004). <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2961>> [accessed 28 March 2013].

<sup>72</sup> Annie I Cameron, Ed., *The Warrender Papers*, Scottish History Society (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press by T. and A. Constable Ltd.) 1931-1932. The Warrender Papers are a selection of miscellaneous letters and papers which pertain to happenings during the period between Mary Queen of Scots' accession to the throne in 1542, and the death of James VI and I in 1625.

Bothwell's own library reflected the nature of the royal library to which he contributed, as Shaw outlines above.

As indicated by the ledger, the vast majority of the texts in James's impressive library were acquired either through purchase or by means of a gift to aid the monarch's *studia humanitatis*:

a number of books were presented to him during his infancy, and these gifts tended to increase as his precocity and 'great towardness in learning' became generally known. They included large numbers of the classics, Bibles, Psalters and books of devotion, history, science, magic, hunting, courtly deportment, military science, and many other subjects. (Willson 1971: 22)

We know that the 1576 Parisian edition of Jean Bodin's *La Republique* present within the library catalogue was 'bocht fra Mr Jhon Provend', that one Alexander Hume donated a copy of the 'Psalmes in inglish prose', or that 'Monsieur Buchanan' contributed an edition of Synesius' *Institution of a prince* amongst other works. In editing the copybook for print, Warner (1898: xxiii) notes that

'the acquisitions by gift are not only more numerous and diversified, but possess the additional interest that attaches to the names of the donors. Thus of the eight Bibles that head the 'Index Librorum Regis', no less than seven were obtained in this way.'<sup>73</sup>

Helena Little, 'Maistress Nurrish', developed James's literary interests by donating to the young king a copy of du Bartas's *Le Semaine, ou Cr ation du Monde* (Paris 1578) (Warner 1898: xliii). What is striking about this particular book gift, is that it not only suggests a pre-existing popularity for du Bartas in certain Scottish circles some years before King James got round to publishing his own translation of the Frenchman's *L'Uranie*, but it also suggests that when James's 'Uranie' did reach the printing press (in 1584), there would have been a receptive and knowledgeable Scottish readership primed to receive the ideas inherent in it.

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<sup>73</sup> Those who gave bibles to the king were: Peter Young, the Earl of Argyll, the Laird of Drumquassle, Robert Richardson, Alexander Hay, Alexander Syme and Clement Little.

The ongoing updates given in the margins of Young's ledger offer some lovely insights into the nature of bookish transactions at James's court. Amongst those with whom James willingly shared books from his collection are Esmé Stewart (who received a copy of the New Testament in English),<sup>74</sup> and Lord Tullibardine,<sup>75</sup> whilst the wife of the latter, Lady Tullibardine, receives Ascham's *Schoolmaster* in a gift. At some later stage in the Copybook's existence, the romance text *Palmerin d'Olive* has been struck through by Young, with a note in the margin indicating that the 'L. of Largo hes it' (Warner 1893: xxxvii). This pattern of plotting the whereabouts of books repeats itself throughout the copybook at regular intervals; for example, of the books listed as having been originally procured from George Hopper, the entry of '2 Grammaticæ Clenardi, 8<sup>o</sup>' has again at some point been scored out. The marginal note accompanying the scored out title reads: '*J. Bellenden*' (Warner 1893: xlv), indicating to whom the title has been given. In another example, an 'X' crossed next to the entry *La Fauconnerie de plusieurs autheres*, is accompanied by the note in the margin '*My Lord Chancellor Glamis gat it*' (Warner 1893: lvii). The royal library copy of Terence is recorded as having been 'gevin in a present to my lord of Mar (Warner 1893: iviii). Next to the title *Mappemonde Papistique avec l'histoire de la description* (originally donated by the Bishop of Caithness) we find an 'X' with the accompanying annotation in French: '*Qui fut depuis donné a Monsieur de Lochlevin pour un autre et plus grand volume*' ('which was afterwards given to lord Lochlevin for another and more grand [i.e. bigger] volume', Warner 1893:lix). There are some annotations within the copybook, however, which offer up little in the way of detailed information other than the fact that the title to which the note speaks has been 'gevin' (Warner 1893: lxiii). Towards the end of the copybook, Young deviates from his standardized form for recording. He lists a short inventory of books, as well as a series of

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<sup>74</sup> According to Young's copybook he was given '*Nouum Testamentum Anglicè*' (Warner 1893: lii). This book was procured initially from Captain Cockburn.

<sup>75</sup> Sir John Murray, 1<sup>st</sup> earl of Tullibardine.

other material gifts, which changed hands between the boy king and his social and cultural milieu:

*Donnez a Madame Tullibardine.*

The Schole of Cyrus.

Item, and prayer buik yat was gottin fra my Lord B. Of Cathness.

Item, ane vther prayer buik to Jane Oliphant, and ane vther to Maistress Nurrish.

Item, ane psalme buik to my lord of Mar.

Item, ane litill buik of tablettes coverit with veluet violet to my lady Mar. It was gottin fra my lady Lennox.

Item, ane frenche psalme buik in 8° to Jane Lyoun.

Item, to ye Maister of Athol prieres et oraisons chrestiennes couuertes de vlours violet, 32°.

Item, a table of ye principall maters contained in the scripture to James Elphinstoun.

Terentius of ye. L. Of Tullibardine gevin to my lord of Mar.

Nouveau Testament en latin francoys gevin to Alex<sup>r</sup> Murray.

Psalmes in English gevin to Magdalen Levingston. (1893: lxix-lxx)

In terms of literary exchange, it is notable that the material with which James is so forthcoming and willing to share is either spiritual or corrective in nature. A brief scan of the list above, as well as the aforementioned notations, suggests this to be the case, with eight of the twelve items listed directly related to matters of faith, with two (Terentius and *The Schole of Cyrus*<sup>76</sup>) ticking the humanist box.

Add. MS 34.275 not only leaves a monumental literary bequest to the modern critic as comprehensive a record as we are ever going to get of the texts constituting James's royal library over the ten year period of regency and minority rule in Scotland, but more importantly perhaps, it allows us to establish the literary and artistic networks with which he was interacting as he was training for his kingship. By extension, it also allows us to come to terms with the importance placed on cultural networks by Peter Young. George Buchanan might have been the more prolific tutor, but Add. MS 34.275 shows Peter Young to be the more active in terms of cultivating avenues for cultural communication between

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<sup>76</sup> The title given in the Young Copybook is a redaction of the much longer *The viii bookes of Xenophon, containing the institution, schole, and education of Cyrus, the noble king of Persye: also his civil and principal estate, his expedition into Babilon, Syria, and Egypt, and his exhortation before his death to his children. Translated out of Greek into English*, translated out of Greek by William Barker (London, 1567).

James and his subjects. Young's careful librarianship and insistence on the reclamation and cultivation of a royal library would pay dividends in the future of James's literary career, as this thesis will later show.

### *Reading the Early Modern Library*

Michel Foucault, writing in *Diacritics* (1986), argued that the concept of a library as a place 'of all times, all epochs, all forms, all tastes'<sup>77</sup> is a notion of which modernity might claim ownership. As Foucault continues to acknowledge, the early modern conception of libraries was certainly very different to our own; both the library (and its aesthetic curatorial counterpart, museums) were held up in the early modern period as the 'expression of individual choice' (Foucault 1986: 26), rather than spaces in which to strive towards achieving a totality of reading material under one roof, and in which a universality of knowledge could be amassed. If Foucault's contention needed validation, one might look towards that foremost French essayist, Michel de Montaigne (1533-1592), and his oft-cited axiom: 'tis there that I am in my kingdom, and there I endeavour to make myself an absolute monarch'.<sup>78</sup> In usurping and manipulating political lexicon, Montaigne's portrait of himself as ruler and his books as subjects to be ruled projects the early modern library as a space in which authority, governance, selectivity, order and rigorous maintenance are all enacted. For Montaigne, his library is exactly that – it is his space, and his to control.

As carefully constructed and particularly contrived sites of learning then, early modern libraries might thus be viewed, as Chartier (1992) has previously argued, as 'readable spaces' as well as in the more conventional sense as being spaces for reading.<sup>79</sup> Grafton (1997) takes this notion further, through the contention that the library for which the eminent Italian humanist scholar and Renaissance philosopher, Pico della Mirandola

<sup>77</sup> Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces', in *Diacritics* 16 (1986), pp. 22-27, 26.

<sup>78</sup> Quoted in W. Sherman, 'The Place of Reading in the English Renaissance: John Dee Revisited', in J. Raven, H. Small and N. Tadmor, *The Practice and Representation of Reading in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 62-76, 70.

<sup>79</sup> Roger Chartier, 'Labourers and Voyagers: From the Text to the Reader', *Diacritics* 22 (1992), pp. 49-61 (50-54).

(1463 – 1494), had earlier been famous<sup>80</sup> had always been intended to be ‘something to be shared with a larger community of those he regarded as learned and intelligent’.<sup>81</sup>

Grafton’s line of thought logically extends the ideas in Jardine (1993), wherein Pico’s library is described as the centre ‘of a broad intellectual community of lay scholars’.<sup>82</sup>

There is sufficient evidence to suggest that this continental conception of the library as an ideological ‘community’ (outlined in Jardine 1993 and Grafton 1997) had a counterpart in England during the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean period. In *The Advancement of Learning* (1605) – a text which notably bore an authorial dedication to King James VI and I – the courtier Francis Bacon (1561–1626) wrote at length on the subject of the ‘library’. To Bacon’s mind, libraries were ‘the shrines where all relics of the ancient saints, full of virtue and that without delusion or imposture, are preserved and reposed [...]’.<sup>83</sup> In the particularly chosen lexicon (‘shrines’, ‘relics’), argues Summit (2008:197), Bacon ‘converts [...] medieval forms to serve the new intellectual aims of a Protestant nation’. By the same token, argues Summit, the poet Sir Edmund Spenser, in the second book of his *Faerie Queene*, deliberately sets out to create a fictive description of the ‘Protestant’ library. For Summit, the library of Eumnestes represents ‘an imaginary center of Protestant nationhood’ (2008: 13). There is then, in Summit’s opinion at least, a clearly-defined Protestant conception of how a library space ought to be utilised in the late sixteenth century. In an earlier paper, Summit recognised that within those sites of ‘Protestant nationhood’ a type of ‘Protestant’ reading occurred. Summit argues that there

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<sup>80</sup> Pico’s library held ‘nearly seventeen hundred volumes in a display of [...] “encyclopedic learning” [...]The capaciousness of Pico’s library reflected his larger intellectual aim to reconcile diverse strands of learning – classical and Christian as well as Hebrew and Arabic – in order to establish the “obscure linkage” [...] that, Pico believed, united the entirety of human knowledge’. Summit 2008: 63.

<sup>81</sup> Anthony Grafton, *Commerce with the Classics: Ancient Books and Renaissance Readers* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1997), pg. 104.

<sup>82</sup> Lisa Jardine, *Erasmus, Man of Letters: Construction of Charisma in Print*, Princeton University Press (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), pg. 43-44.

<sup>83</sup> Francis Bacon, *The Major Works*, Ed. Brian Vickers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pg. 170.



emerged ‘a post-Reformation reading practice that aimed to distinguish (Protestant) “plain truth” from (Catholic) “feigned fable”’.<sup>84</sup>

Integral to the present investigation of the Young Copybook and Jamesian conceptions of the library, however, is Summit’s assertion that for post-Reformation readers, the challenge of reconstructional ‘library making is [...] aligned with, and even contingent upon, the act of library breaking’ (Summit 2003: 9), and further, that in ‘reinventing the library, this post-Reformation effort of bibliographical salvage reinvented the production of knowledge and memory’ (Summit 2003: 5). If we are to describe the process undertaken by Peter Young between 1573 and 1583 in simple terms then we might call it a book reclamation project, one associated with the act of royal ‘library-breaking’ which took place on Mary Queen of Scot’s deposition. George F. Warner’s comment that ‘the nucleus of James’s library was formed by the salvage from the wreck of his mother’s’ (1893, pg. xix) is an oft-quoted truism, with around seventy of the books existing in James’s library between 1573 and 1583 thought to have belonged to the deposed Queen.<sup>85</sup> This is, of course, a rough estimate, and we cannot be wholly sure whether many of the books listed as ‘donations’ in Young’s accounts, had not once belonged to Mary.<sup>86</sup>

The salvaged books from Mary’s library made up the skeletal, yet nevertheless impressive, framework of James’s book collection.<sup>87</sup> Young was certainly intent to recoup for his monarch and ward, books which he [Young] believed were rightfully at home at

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<sup>84</sup> Jennifer Summit, ‘Monuments and Ruins: Spenser and the Problem of the English Library’ in *ELH* 70 (The John Hopkins University Press, 2003) 1-34. Chapter Three of this thesis (dealing with *The Essayes* and Thomas Hudson), as well as the discussion of William Alexander’s ‘Anacrisis’ in Chapter Six, will explore this idea in greater detail.

<sup>85</sup> Sharman’s depiction of Mary as a reader (1889: 7) is somewhat sentimental: ‘Seventeen years afterwards [following the sacking and pillaging of Holyrood Castle] the Queen returned. The picture of her sailing gaily over the summer sea to take up the reins of government is the best-remembered of all the moving scenes of Mary’s career. [...] The latter months of her stay in France had been passed with the Cardinal of Lorraine, to whom so much of the personal taste, as well as the after-policy, of the Queen is to be traced. The books were part of her outfit, and it is not straining probability too far to suppose that the great Cardinal acted as her literary adviser in that matter.’

<sup>86</sup> ‘It is not improbable, however, that some of the volumes entered as donations had also been hers, and were presented to James on that account; and it must further be remembered that, besides the Queen’s books catalogued by Young, her Edinburgh Castle library [...] has also to be counted’ (Warner 1893: xix).

<sup>87</sup> Warner credits Mary Queen of Scots with laying ‘the foundations of the national opulence in the direction of books [...] the books in the catalogue were collected by her and for her, and for her alone’ (Sharman 1889: 6).

James's court. Amongst the books retrieved from Mary's library, the volume of romance titles, or texts of a romantic hue, is definitely notable. D.H. Willson (1971) observes that those titles procured from Queen Mary's holdings furnished James's own library with a 'lightness' to contrast 'the ponderous tomes bought by Peter Young and George Buchanan'.<sup>88</sup> Whether the attempt to furnish the library with a poetic 'lightness' to counter the weightier tomes of political science and theology was intentional on Young's part cannot be here proven, yet what we might consider is whether by salvaging books from the wreck of James's mother's, the tutor was keeping the memory of Mary (her troubled reign, her Catholic theology, and artistic temperament) alive for James to learn from. This reclaimed collection of Mary's books thus fits perfectly Summit's epigrammatic description of post-Reformation libraries (characterised by Eumnestes' library in *Faerie Queene*) as being at once both a memory to 'ruin' and a 'monument' to the past – as the means by which to both rebuild and remember. It is in Young's library (re-)building and cataloguing that we find evidence of the belief that James would later come to articulate in his *Basilikon Doron* of the potential of the book to serve as 'counsellour', 'faithfull præceptour' and 'trustie friend'.

As this chapter has suggested, there is a clear sense that a dependency on books and bookish cultures for spiritual and political guidance, alongside an insistence on the importance of bookish learning, had been instilled and cultivated in James VI from a very young age, and there is sufficient anecdotal evidence to suggest that this strong affinity to the 'library' (as a concept) continued into James's 'British' reign. The king was not only a frequent user of libraries but might also be described as being the catalyst for the production of those spaces described as 'readable' by Chartier (1992). On his first royal expedition to the Bodleian Library, Oxford, in 1604, the newly installed king of England, James VI and I, quipped that 'if he were not a king, there would be no greater pleasure than

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<sup>88</sup> Willson 1971: 22.

in being chained to the library'.<sup>89</sup> For all its intended glibness, James's seemingly throwaway comment at the Bodleian revealed far more of the king's bookishness than he perhaps ever intended it to. Indeed James's understanding of the 'library' as a safe haven and pleasurable environment (as evidenced by the aforementioned Bodleian *cameo*) seems only to have solidified alongside the concentration of his self-assurance in his religio-political and monarchical abilities.

In a later episode, we once again find James placed at the heart of a library, only on this occasion the king's role has evolved from the wistful and passive reader of 1604 to the actively engaged reader and catalyst for an important process of cultural curation. In the year 1610, James extended an invitation to the English writer Francis Bacon (a close associate of Sir Thomas Bodley – the man who gave his name to the library at Oxford – and Sir Robert Cotton – an acclaimed author and experienced library user) to supervise the ordering of a body of books in the new Lambeth Palace Library.<sup>90</sup> The creation of this library, instigated by the will of the late Archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft, certainly piqued James's scholarly interests. Appreciating the gargantuan scholarly worth of the 5,600 printed books and 470 manuscripts within the holdings,<sup>91</sup> and realising that 'these bookes should be preserved', the king

did [...] commend the care and consideration hereof unto Sr. Frauncis Bacon knight his Ma<sup>ties</sup> Sollicitor that he should think upon some course, how the custody of the Library may be established [...].<sup>92</sup>

James's willingness to open up, and indeed enter into, a considered dialogue with Bacon about how best to preserve the book collection at Lambeth, not only confirms the significance of the conceptual 'library' for James, but also suggests the king's nuanced appreciation of a properly ordered, well-maintained and useable space. We might go

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<sup>89</sup> Wormald 2011.

<sup>90</sup> In carrying out his role as library overseer, Bacon determined 'that a catalogue of the books should be accurately and exquisitely made'. Account by George Abbot (Archbishop of Canterbury) in 1612. A transcription can be found in a reproduction in A.C.Ducarel, is in *History and Antiquities of the Archiepiscopal Palace of Lambeth* (Repr. New York: Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica, 1986).

<sup>91</sup> Many of which had been procured from the monasteries. See Summit 2008, pg.313n.19.

<sup>92</sup> Ducarel 1986: 48.

further still by tentatively offering a more speculative question: might it be the case that by drawing specifically upon Francis Bacon's bibliophilic expertise to inform the construction of the Lambeth Palace library, James was quite purposefully aligning himself with Bacon's 'Protestant' conception of how a library ought to be utilised?

There is still more evidence to place James at the heart of library-building projects, only this time back in his native land. In 1566, a pregnant and quite isolated Mary Queen of Scots, fearing her own mortality, had drawn up an agreement on the understanding that, should she die in childbirth, her books would be bequeathed to the University of St Andrews to found a library there. It was, however, a further 46 years before St Andrews received this promised consignment of books from Mary Queen of Scots:

On 10 August 1612, three trunks full of books arrived at St Andrews by sea. The arrival of these books, a gift of almost 100 works from Queen Anne and Princess Elizabeth, marks the culmination of a royal donation of books from which we date the founding of the King James Library. Six days earlier, on 4 August 1612, 130 books were received by the University presented by King James VI & I, his elder son Prince Henry and his younger son Prince Charles.<sup>93</sup>

James donated his books 'to bestow ane grite number of the best, most profitable and chosen volumes [...] to such time as the Library of the University comes to some reasonable perfection'.<sup>94</sup> Yet underpinning James's gift to the library was the intention that through the act of reading, more of his subjects would be affected by his gift than merely those matriculated at the University of St Andrews. The 'library' was emblematic of James's belief in the power of books to facilitate the banishing of 'ignorance', the rooting out of 'barbarity' and the advancement of 'virtue' in his Scottish kingdom, as well as to encourage the flourishing of 'gude letters' (1911:8). The library itself was to be divided into two distinct areas – an upper hall wherein all books were to be housed, and a lower hall to be utilised for teaching. Although James made assurances that financial backing

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<sup>93</sup> 'King James Library – A Short History', *University of St Andrews* (Online: School of Divinity), <<http://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/divinity/rt/kjl>> [accessed 26 March 2013].

<sup>94</sup> *Votiva Tabella*; a memorial volume of St. Andrews University in connection with its quincentenary festival (1911) pg. 8.

would be given for the library-building project at St Andrews to go ahead, funding soon became an issue, with construction finally completed 29 years after that initial presentation of books to the university by James, Prince Henry and Prince Charles in 1612.

Notwithstanding the financial set-backs, it is the symbolic gesture of the book-donation that strikes a chord with the present study. The personal donation by the king of books from his own library (and by extension, from his mother's), the 'foundation gift' memorialised by the naming of the library after the king, might at once be interpreted as the ultimate act of deference from a loving and dutiful son to the memory of his persecuted mother (although, further exploration of this idea is needed to allow more definite conclusions to be drawn). Moreover, it is interesting to note how the process of donating books to the St Andrews' library was a familial one – James's wife and daughter, alongside his two male heirs to the throne, are all involved, signifying the continuing importance of the material book and the act of reading (and sharing reading practices with others) to James's mind at least. However, it also symbolically brings to a close the book reclamation project first undertaken by Peter Young in the 1570s, bringing this chapter full circle to the point at which it began.

Whilst the Young Copybook entries end in 1583 (the specific reason why is unclear), it is evident that the momentum which underpinned Young's book reclamation project, and James's association with it, would only intensify in the years to follow, as James matured from apprentice reader to master. Up to and including the year 1583 the east coast of Scotland was being primed to become an important site for book trading, and this fact deserves further consideration in future scholarship. In 1583, Young was still actively transporting books to Edinburgh from Stirling for the now seventeen year old monarch's library: in one of the later entries to the copybook (although ironically positioned near its beginning) Young details this transportation of 45 'buikes brocht furth

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of Sterling to Halyrood House vpon the xi of Nouember 1583' (Warner 1898: xxxv).<sup>95</sup> In the same year, a Royal Charter was issued which called for the establishment of a 'tounis college' in Edinburgh. The burgeoning literary networks (which have been alluded to in the course of this chapter), suggest that by 1580 at least, conditions and readers were in place to support the extension of the printing press. In July 1580, the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland brought forward for the attention of the king an article highlighting the need for further developments within the printing trade:

Because ther is great necessitie of a printer within this country, and ther is a stranger banishit for religioun, callit Vautrolier, quho offers to imploy his labour in the said vocation, for the weill of the country, it will please your Grace and Counsell to take ordour heirin as your Grace thinks meit; and to give licence and priuledge to him for that effect, if it salbe thocht expedient be your Grace and Counsell. (Peterkin 1839: 200-201)

As Corbett notes, this article brought by the Church was borne out of frustration that pre-existing printers (Arbuthnot and Bassandyne) had failed to produce an edition of the Bible in the vernacular. Nevertheless, Vautrollier's rapid promotion from controversial book trader to darling of the establishment signals an important moment, and one which works to facilitate the later transformation of James's interests in reading from the classroom to the printed page, as Chapter Three of this thesis will go on to determine. When all is therefore considered, James's first foray into publishing in 1584 (the matter of the following chapter) begins to seem less like the anomalous event on the literary landscape that it has previously been considered, and more like a publication which logically concludes a period of activity in which the act of reading is foregrounded.

The title of of the commemorative exhibition marking the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the King James Library at St Andrews in 2010 – 'A Royal Foundation' – is therefore an apposite title to describe the bookish transactions at court during the period in which Peter Young's book ledger was maintained, for it is during this period that James's foundations

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<sup>95</sup> This shipment of books included two books of Ronsard's poetry, works by Virgil, Homer, Beza, and Demosthenes, Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Buchanan's *De Iure Regni*. It is interesting to note that residual traces of these aforementioned books can be found within the pages of James's 1584 collection, *Essayes of a Prentise*.

in the book 'trade' are tangibly laid. Writing on the library of James's contemporary and fellow-bibliophile William Drummond of Hawthornden<sup>96</sup>, Rod Lyall argues that Drummond's 'library window, as it were, gave him a prespective on the world, which included, but was not contained by, developments in London' (2006: pg.99). Lyall's assessment is certainly applicable to James VI and his relationship to books between 1573 and 1583 for when King James eventually did come to pick up the pen to write, in 1584, his nuanced understanding of the book trade, his connections to the high quality printing press of the exiled 'outsider' Vautrollier, alongside the king's appreciation of the way in which ideas inherent in texts could circulate and be shared, ensured that his first publication was something utterly original (in the modern understanding of the word). James's education in the art of discriminate reading ensured that as a writer he was not beholden to the literary tastes of a more metropolitan London in the south, or even France in the south-east, but was, rather, able to produce a corpus of writing in which he could engage with his reading, enter into dialogue with and about it, and confront that 'certain bookishness' (Corbett in McGinley and Royan 2010: 93) which had so characterised his education, and for which he gained acclaim at home and abroad during his own lifetime. Chapter Three will consider the ways in which the act of reading thematically and ideologically manifests itself in James's *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie* (1584).

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<sup>96</sup> Drummond was a voracious book collector and librarian, and it is worth dwelling for a time on the contents of his library. In his study *The Library of William Drummond of Hawthornden* (1971), R.H. MacDonald succeeds in identifying the quite astonishing figure of approximately 1,300 titles of books belonging to Drummond. Of this figure, according to MacDonald, a collection in the region of 800 exists within the University of Edinburgh library. For example, time spent in England and France (studying law at the University of Bourges) between 1606 and 1608 gave Drummond ample opportunity to increase his book collection at Hawthornden. MacDonald estimates that by the time Drummond returned to Scotland following his French sojourn, he had purchased almost 400 volumes. Drummond's interests were far-reaching and all-encompassing. He collected books in Greek, Latin, Italian and French, as well as in English and Scots. He avidly consumed theology, philosophy, poetry, prose and politics.

### Chapter 3: *The Essayes of a Prentise* and the cultural significance of 1584

In 1578, following the forced deposition of the Earl of Morton,<sup>97</sup> King James VI was officially declared ‘of age’ to govern his kingdom, but importantly was not yet deemed monarchically ‘fit’ to rule on his own. The continuing ‘apprenticeship’ which followed his ‘acceptatioun’ of the government of Scotland in 1578 was, however, riddled with disruptions, as Julian Goodare notes:

there were still seven more years before he finally emerged from tutelage. These were years of constant factional turmoil, with at least six palace coups, five of which were successful. (Goodare and Lynch 2000: 35)

The most infamous of these ‘coups’ is arguably the Ruthven Raid of 1582, which saw the Scottish monarch kidnapped by a group of nobles harbouring pro-English political sensibilities.<sup>98</sup> On escaping his captors, James issued a proclamation at Perth, in which he made clear his intentions to take personal control of his nation, having now reached his seventeenth year. Notwithstanding the notional concession to his role, as Goodare and Lynch note,

there were few other signs of a ‘king in a hurry’. The bird which had flown from its cage, to use the poet-king’s own metaphor, continued to spend more time on the pleasures of the court than the business of government. (Goodare and Lynch 2000: 2)

There is no question that James was ‘politically aware’ throughout his minority, but this does not presuppose that he was politically ‘active’; he is generally perceived as relatively inert until at least the mid-1580s.

For Goodare, active participation in politics ‘is about seeking power, about winning power and about using power’ (Goodare and Lynch 2000: 32) but until the 1580s King James VI of Scotland was doing nothing of the sort. James’s overt antipathy towards confrontational politics, his reluctance to actively seek out the necessary powers vested in him by his crown to be enabled to become more than just a nominal figurehead, cast him as

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<sup>97</sup> For more on the Earl of Morton see G. R. Hewitt, ‘Douglas, James, fourth earl of Morton (c.1516–1581)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/7893>> [accessed 10 June 2013].

<sup>98</sup> For a more detailed account of the coup, see Wormald 2011.



an ineffectual and disaffected young monarch, who was far more content, and comfortable, pursuing his ‘hobbies’ of poetic composition, reading, and hunting.<sup>99</sup> The conscious decision by those regency governments ruling in James’s stead to shield the king from the political limelight exacerbated his alienation from kingly duties, and led ultimately to the creation of a political understudy who was exceedingly reluctant to step out from the wings as the lead actor in the quite astonishing Scottish dynastic theatrics.

This political glossophobe and initially reluctant king was, however, certainly eager to fashion himself as a figurehead in another sense, as he presented himself as the epitome of culture and intellect. Previous monarchs had composed verse and prose works, nevertheless ‘no monarch before James’, as Peter C. Herman observes, ‘had their verses printed in a book for circulation as a commodity in the marketplace’.<sup>100</sup> What is more, as Jane Rickard attests,<sup>101</sup> James not only saw his own works to completion in print, but was also actively involved throughout the publication process. James’s keen understanding, and explicit appreciation, of the way in which the printing press operated - a comprehension which only increased with his continued experience in power and through his concerted attempts at writing – thus sets him apart in monarchical terms.

So important a place in James’s heart did scholarly pursuits occupy that in 1584 he put together a sampler of his early writings (prose and poetry) and published them in an unassuming quarto edition from the Edinburgh printing press of Thomas Vautrollier.<sup>102</sup> The

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<sup>99</sup> By 1591, James had decimated the number of deer in the forestry surrounding Falkland. See Goodare and Lynch 2000: 11.

<sup>100</sup> Peter C. Herman, ‘“Best of Poets, Best of Kings”: King James and the Scene of Monarchic Verse’, in Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 61-103.

<sup>101</sup> Rickard 2007: 33.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas Vautrollier (d.1587) was a French immigrant, who settled in London in the nascent years of Elizabethan rule. Vautrollier found employment within the growing London print and book trade, first as a bookbinder and then as a bookseller (in partnership with a fellow French immigrant). Although having obtained associate membership status of the Stationers' Company on 2 October 1564, it was not until 1570 that he established himself as a successful printer in his own right. Yet, as Pettegree acknowledges, Vautrollier ran into difficulties: ‘the growth of Vautrollier's business caused predictable tensions with competitors in the London publishing trade. In 1578 he was fined 10s. for printing the *Special and Chosen Sermons of Dr Martin Luther* without licence, the first of a number of bruising encounters with the regulatory authorities. One such clash led to his temporarily withdrawing from London and settling in Scotland during the 1580s after he had incurred the displeasure of the privy council for printing the work of the visionary Italian philosopher Giordano Bruno’ Andrew Pettegree, ‘Vautrollier, Thomas (d. 1587)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press (2004)

king's overt interests in the minutiae of literary composition and the incidentals of publishing (alluded to in the previous chapter of this present study) manifest themselves early, and are evident in the king's seminal publication, his *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie*, a piece published anonymously but bearing the imprint 'cum privilegio regali'.<sup>103</sup> Continuously read and acclaimed in its contemporary context by esteemed writers and professional readers in Scotland, England, and the Continent, the *Essayes* continues to this day to attract scholarly attention. Whilst this collection has been recognised as being the king's 'most significant achievement' (Goodare and Lynch 2002: 2) up until 1584, and further as a work which stops just short of being 'revolutionary'<sup>104</sup> in cultural terms, there are nevertheless problems with many modern readings of the *Essayes*.

### ***The Essayes – a critical history***

As Chapter one of this thesis made clear, from the 1960s to the early 2000s, a majority of literary critics were content to view the *Essayes* as important purely because it served as a literary hothouse for the poetic treatise which came to be recognised as the minifesto for the 'Castalian band', which was included towards the 1584 collection's end. Bawcutt's revisionist article of 2001 (see Chapter One) was welcomed in the main by literary critics and historians alike, but despite the critical acceptance of Bawcutt's rebuttal there is evidence to suggest that there still remains hesitancy towards altogether abandoning the outmoded lexicon and idea of a courtly band of poets governed by a set of poetic

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<<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/28158>, accessed> [accessed 7 June 2009]. That Vautrollier's name might have been known to the Scottish king, as both printer and bookseller, even before 1580, is evident from transactions in the Treasurer's Accounts of that year, which record purchases [of books] made to the value of £100 between 1578 and 1579; and entry for November 1581 records "To Thomas Vautrollier for buikis resavit be Mr Peter Young, his hienes Preceptour, to his maiesties awin use be his hienes special command £31. 18s 4d", John Corbett in McGinley and Royan (2010: 82).

<sup>103</sup> As Joseph Loewenstein notes, when employed in a publication, the stamp 'cum privilegio regali' was 'straitened as a license for printing only – that is, it is not to be understood as an endorsement of the ideas in the book'. Loewenstein, *The Author's Due: Printing and Prehistory of Copyright* (London: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

<sup>104</sup> See Roderick Lyall's 'James VI and the Sixteenth-Century Cultural Crisis' in Goodare and Lynch 2000: 56-70. Lyall argues that this publication is 'an ambitious work, both in reflection of the king's own literary aspirations and in its articulation of a programme which aims at radical change, little short of a cultural revolution' (56).

strictures. In a 2006 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* entry specifically on the ‘Castalian Band’, R.D.S. Jack posits that the

*Essayes* offer both specific rules and general guidelines to would-be ‘members’ depending on status [...]. This circumspect strategy was also necessary because James had several aims in mind when advertising his views as poet-critic-king to the outside world. Firstly, he wished to forge a distinctive role for Scottish verse in Europe [...] Secondly, he hoped that Edinburgh might become a cultural home for English and European writers. A third consideration may also have influenced him. Soon he might lead a British court. Could he ease the way for the major cultural and political changes this would imply for the Castalians? The *Reulis* as his single contribution to Renaissance criticism, are the obvious starting point for deeper enquiry into these questions. That work may be an introductory handbook for versifiers, but it also serves as the vehicle for proposing a specifically Scottish Renaissance.<sup>105</sup>

The employment of ‘Castalian Band’ lexicon has been most pronounced in general literary surveys such as Roderick Watson’s *The Literature of Scotland* (second edition, 2007) and Gifford *et al.*’s *Scottish Literature* (2002).<sup>106</sup> In critical interpretations such as those offered by Gifford *et al.* (2000), Jack (2006) and Watson (1984, 2007), the ‘*Reulis* and *Cautelis*’ is presented as the backbone of a ‘Castalian’ project, and as a text wherein aspirant writers could easily source instruction on how to secure the literary favour of the king. Moreover, the ‘*Reulis* and *Cautelis*’ not only offers precepts on how to compose verse, but also provides many of examples of what his poetic ‘ideal’ looks like.

In Fischlin and Fortier’s timely collected edition, *Royal Subjects* (2002), the scholarly avowal that the ‘*Reulis* and *Cautelis*’ be regarded as a poetic manifesto for latent poets is curiously almost absent, although the critical insistence on ranking this poetic treatise above all other texts in the *Essayes* continues to be a dominant trait. Nonetheless,

<sup>105</sup> R.D.S Jack, ‘Castalian Band (act. 1584-1603)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press (Oct 2006), <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/theme/95583>> [accessed 15 October 2008].

<sup>106</sup> Roderick Watson writes: ‘The *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie* [...] was prefaced by the ‘*Reulis* and *Cautelis* [...]’ which set out precepts for good practice in technique [...] the king came to call his circle ‘brothers of the Castalian band’, after the fountain of Castalia [...]’. See Watson, *The Literature of Scotland*, Volume I, second Edition (Basingstoke; Hampshire: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007), pg. 103. In Gifford *et al.* the ‘*Reulis* and *Cautelis*’ is firstly disembodied from the work in which it was first published, and secondly is described as ‘a manual of versifying for apprentice poets’ before its author is described as having felt compelled to write this advice manual in order to ‘play an appropriately kingly or magisterial role’. Gifford *et al.*, *Scottish Literature* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press: 2002), pg. 48.

what we must recognise is that a seismic shift occurs; where previously the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ had been studied in order to decipher which poets exactly constituted the ‘band’ and which rules they actively adhered to or dismissed, the contributors in Fischlin and Fortier’s edition use the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ as a yardstick against which to measure James’s own poetic writings.<sup>107</sup>

Yet by deeming ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ as the one text most worthy of scholarly interest, critics continued to do a disservice to the *Essayes*. In these interpretations, importance is not placed upon the whole, but rather diminutively on one part in order to present *Essayes* as a manifesto for latent poets (James himself included). In 2000, Rod Lyall began to ask imperative questions of the other texts within the 1584 publication; despite maintaining the significance of the poetic manifesto, Lyall worked to suggest that the epic tragedy, ‘The Phoenix’, should also be considered worthy of attention for the way in which it consciously interacts with and against continental cultural traditions and crises. Furthermore, argued Lyall, ‘The Phoenix’ – or its subject matter more specifically – represents a pivotal point in James’s early literary career, for it is the death of a favourite, Esmé Stuart in 1583, that spurred James on to pick up the pen and write. His earliest poetic works all stem from this period.<sup>108</sup> Lyall’s study of the *Essayes* is concerned with its mannerist qualities, and with the king’s ‘ambition to break down or dissolve the boundary between art and reality’, and by exploring this avenue of critical thinking Lyall comes to a decisive realisation:

if this composite structure is one typically mannerist in feature, the preoccupation with style, even with stylishness, is evidently another: the

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<sup>107</sup> For evidence of this emergent pattern, see Morna Fleming’s ‘The *Amatoria* of James VI: Loving by the *Reulis*’, and Sarah Dunnigan’s ‘Discovering Desire in the *Amatoria* of James VI’, in Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 124-48 and 149-81.

<sup>108</sup> ‘The abrupt separation of James, who was now sixteen, from the attractive, exotic Lennox seems to have been directly connected with the beginning of the king’s literary career. That, at least, is the conclusion we can piece together from two pieces of manuscript evidence: the copy of the three stanzras beginning, ‘Since thought is free’ in BL MS Addit. 24195, a manuscript written in the early seventeenth century and in James’s own family circle, is entitled ‘the first verses that euer the King made’, while another copy, preserved among fragments [...] states flatly that ‘Thir made anno 1583, at ye duik of obiynnie his putting out of Scotland’. Whatever public ambitions for his own verse and that of his courtiers may subsequently have developed, it was in the intensely private experience of his loss of Lennox that James found his vernacular poetic voice’. Roderick Lyall in Goodare and Lynch 2000: 59-60.

self-absorption we have already noted, then, is not merely a reflection of James's egocentrism, or of his sense of the creation of a new poetic, but is inherent in the project itself, the development of a poetry in which the way things are stated is at least as important, sometimes perhaps more important, than what is said. (2000: 64)

The latter contention is worth further examination; for Lyall, James's concern with poetics is not an outright attempt on the king's part to stimulate, create or define a new poetic aesthetic for his nation, but rather is proof that James was concerned with the manner in which a theme, point or narrative could be set out and explored. The realisation is an important one, although Lyall does not afford himself space to fully elaborate upon it. Lyall continues to make the important assertion, that the 'central position in the *Essayes* is assigned, both literally and metaphorically, to a rather different figure, the Protestant poet Guillaume de Salluste du Bartas, whose *Uranie* in James's Scots translation is strategically placed between the opening sonnet-sequence and the *Phœnix*' (2000: 64). In Lyall's opinion, there can be no mistaking James's logic for using du Bartas as a literary model: in the Frenchman's work a Protestant ideology complements an orotund style. Once again, this interpretation, having set up interesting connections, fails to fully tease them apart. Yet, in momentarily side-lining the 'Schort Treatise' on poetics in order to promote the worth of 'other' texts within the *Essayes*, and, further, by foregrounding the literary and spiritual import of the work of Salluste du Bartas for King James VI, Lyall implicitly suggests the necessity of a careful re-examination of the 1584 collection.

Carolyn Ives and David Parkinson's protean chapter entitled "'The Fountain and Very Being of Truth": James VI, Poetic Invention, and National Identity',<sup>109</sup> begins to unpick the various layers of complexity inherent in the *Essayes*. Touching upon issues of gender, nationhood, authorial and monarchical identity, and faith, this particular essay makes great headway in forging connections and associations between many of the poetic texts incorporated within the *Essayes*, their literary influences, and James's later prose writings in a conscious attempt to highlight fluidity in the king's *oeuvre*. Once again,

however, this chapter does not place much emphasis on the cohesion of the *Essayes* as a literary unit.

Most recently, John Corbett (2010: 80-93), Nicola Royan (2010: 94-104) and Jane Rickard (2007) have set to work exploring both the publication context of the *Essayes* and the literary associations forged between the king in the 1580s and those writers he attempted to emulate in an authorial guise. This scholarship has also sought to gauge the literary impact of the *Essayes*. In so doing, a critical narrative has emerged which suggests the 1584 work as being worthy of real study in its entirety and as being an integral component of a cultural programme which is very much distinct from those notions of ‘Castalian’ projects and bands. What is more, these three critics have significantly advanced the study of Thomas Hudson’s *Judith* as a key text in relation to the *Essayes*.

Considerable effort has certainly been made in the last decade to reconcile the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ thematically with the *Essayes* as a whole,<sup>109</sup> and indeed with the literary context in which it first appeared. However, without undertaking a rigorous re-examination of the *Essayes*, the aforementioned scholarship has been either too focused in its approach to certain texts or too general in its reading of the collection as a whole. This chapter will consequently attempt to strike a theoretical balance between the scholarship which views the *Essayes* as a cultural manifesto for a defined community, and recent scholarship which has opened up connections between James VI, du Bartas and England. The *Essayes* will firstly be presented as a thematically coherent whole<sup>111</sup> in which James outlines a blueprint for reading in the Christian humanist vanguard.

### ***Re-examining the Essayes***

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<sup>109</sup> Ives and Parkinson in Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 104-23.

<sup>110</sup> I am grateful to Sebastiaan Verweij for allowing me access to an article (in draft form) on the immediate reception of James’s *Essayes* on their first publication (‘“The Phoenix poems of Phoenix king”: New Poems of Praise for James VI/I’s *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesie*’).

<sup>111</sup> In her 2007 monograph on James VI and I, Rickard dedicates one chapter to the ‘early poetry’, moving neatly and with pace from the *Essayes* to the *Lepanto*, and the biblical exegeses. In this comprehensive examination of the earlier works, Rickard correctly identifies the significance of Du Bartas, but without recourse to many of the textual intricacies of the *Essayes*, Rickard’s reading suggests that although the *Essayes* is an important collection containing some thematically similar texts, the thematically contradictory texts within the collection render it a work in which the king grapples with his authority.

As Rickard has noted, ‘when the Scottish King published his quarto volume [in 1584] he was doing something very new’ (2007: 33) in monarchic terms. James’s education at the hands of Buchanan and Young (outlined in the previous chapter), alongside the aforementioned expansion of his private library, and the royal charter which he himself granted in 1583 to set up a ‘tounis college’ in Edinburgh, meant that by the time he came to write his *Essayes* he had a sound awareness of developments in the book trade. This awareness of the trade had led him, however, to become personally involved in contemporary issues of press censorship. The parliament of 1584 passed a series of statutes (known as the ‘Black Acts’ to the statutes’ critics) which, as well as reinforcing the power of the crown over the church, prohibited the publication and circulation of defamatory speeches against the king and his council. More specifically, this unprecedented additional caveat to the ‘Black Acts’ was particularly intended to limit the influence of the lately deceased George Buchanan’s political theory as outlined in his *De Iure regni apud Scotos* (1579) and *Rerum Scotticarum historia* (1582). In Rickard’s estimation, ‘James thus had a strong sense of the importance of print as a medium to be controlled and exploited’ and also appreciated ‘poetry as a genre in which political debates were being played out in Scotland in this period’ (2007: 36). Corbett (2010: 80) adds to the picture of King James as one knowledgeable in the ways the printing press could be utilised for political gain, asserting that the *Essayes* inverts the long tradition in Scotland of poets playing ‘licensed advisor’ to the monarch by using the poetic medium as the vehicle through which to impart counsel to their king/queen. Nonetheless, Corbett fails to ask the most fundamental questions related to James’s apparent literary sedition – what might a teenage king have sought to gain in taking up the mantle of sage advisor to his subjects at this particular point and why publish a small compendium of texts rather than circulate ‘ane schort treatise’ on the art of Scottish poesis in pamphlet form? Asking these questions forces us to re-evaluate the volume and quality of texts within the 1584 collection, and to consider whether it was

more than just a straightforward desire to see his words circulate in print that drove James to first publish his writings.

The seven titles listed in the *Essayes*' table of contents (the 'Catalogve of the workis herein contened') is far from comprehensive, and merely hints at the many-faceted nature of the 1584 publication. To this list of seven titles,<sup>112</sup> we might add a further seven (para)texts: a ten-line verse in Latin, an 'Achrostichon', an epigramme, a 'Quadrain of Alexandrin Verse', a 'Table of Obscure Wordis', a sonnet 'of the author', and a short extract from Plini 'for the filling ovt of thir vacand pageis'. With such a multifarious generic sweep of texts, critics might be forgiven for thinking it a miscellany of boyish exercises. The *Essayes* certainly bear witness to James's intense educational programme at the hands of Young and Buchanan, and also hint at the higher literary ambition of the king; each distinct inclusion is either directly translated from scriptural, classical or continental works, or else heavily influenced by books consumed and enjoyed by the king in his humanist education. Amidst the generic hybridity, however, one clear abiding impulse becomes apparent - the reaffirmation of God's word. What on first glance seems a miscellany of works soon proves, on closer inspection, to be a thematically unified publication; what remains for the reader to work out is how exactly James will utilise his own book to interrogate the theme of scriptural reaffirmation.

### *'The Uranie'*

Just as Mary Queen of Scots favoured the culture of France, so, too, James prefers to turn towards French literature in order to source models for both poetic composition and reading. In particular, James discovers for himself the work of Guillaume Salluste du Bartas, the Huguenot poet for whom James expresses a deep affinity and poetic debt throughout his literary career. Specifically within this poet's work James found a theologically inflected humanism, containing a moderate but robust form of Protestantism

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<sup>112</sup> These are: 'Twelf Sonnets of Inuocations to the Goddis', 'Uranie', 'Phœnix', 'Paraphrasticall translation out of the Poëte Lucane', 'A treatise on the airt of Scottis Poësie', 'CIII. Psalme of Dauid, translated out of Tremellius' and 'A Poeme of Tyme'.



which could be readily translatable to the Scottish scene, and it is with the Frenchman's *Uranie* that James's publication of poetic writings truly begins. It is also here, that James's insistence on reading for moral investment becomes very apparent.

In the preface to 'The Uranie', du Bartas is conferred a heightened spiritual significance by James – he is at once both divine and illustrious. In the process of the prefatory address to the 'fauorable reader' the king affirms for his subjects not only the importance of reading du Bartas's writing but also the self-defining value of the very act of reading itself:

having oft reuolued, and red ouer (fauourable Reader) the booke and Poems of the deuine and Illuster Poëte, *Salust du Bartas*, I was moued by the oft reading and perusing of them, with a restles and lofty desire, to preas to attaine to the like vertue. But sen (alas) God, by nature hathe refused me the like lofty and quick ingyne, and that my dull *Muse*, age, and Fortune, had refused me the lyke skill and learning, I was constrained to haue refuge to the second, which was, to doe what lay in me, to set forth his praise, sen I could not merite the lyke my self. [...] But knowing my self to vnskillfull and grosse, to translate any of his heauenly & learned works, I almost left it of, and was ashamed of that opinion also. Whill at the last, preferring foolehardines and a good intention, to an vtter dispaire and sleuth, I resolued vnadusedly to assay the translating in my Language of the easiest and shortest of all his difficile and prolixed Poems: to wit: the *Vranie*.<sup>113</sup>

Continued recourse to the writing of du Bartas has encouraged a literary restlessness in the king, and kindled a desire within him to emulate the poetic and theological craft of the French poet. Yet, interestingly, James is, by his own admission, more adept a reader than he is a maker of poetry. In critical studies of the *Essayes*, this frank admission has yet to be picked up on, but, arguably, it is crucial to a deeper and far more profound understanding of what is to follow in the 1584 collection. Here, in a straightforward comparison between his own abilities and those of du Bartas the king maintains that he is himself severely lacking in the 'lyke skill and learning' of his literary muse, and at once reminds those reading his anonymously published work that James is yet a 'prentise' in poetic composition. James continues to mask his novice attempts behind a shield of scholarly

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<sup>113</sup> James VI, *The Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie*, Thomas Vautrollier (Edinburgh: Thomas Vautrollier, 1584), Sig. Ciir.

diffidence, by pre-empting readers' criticisms of a poorly rendered work. He admits to having almost abandoned the translation project for fear of doing a disservice to the original, yet through continued consultation of du Bartas's writing he was spurred on to reconsider his decision. Instead of harsh criticisms of the superficiality of his technique, the monarch asks of the reader that they look to commend his 'good intention' in conveying the text's important sentiments, dissuading readers from prizing aesthetic and artistic worth over the author's aim or ambition to present a seemingly important message in an accessible way.

In such an approach the king simultaneously suggests the humanist theme of the 'Uranie' specifically (and the *Essayes* more generally), as he also admits his poetic limitations. He might be a poor poet but he is certainly an efficient reader, in his own humble opinion. Thus, what the king immediately succeeds in doing in the preface to the 'Uranie' is presenting himself as exemplar of the 'fauourable Reader' on whom the ensuing translation is bestowed. Furthermore, it might be reasonable to infer from this seemingly candid authorial confession that James's proficiency as a reader and humanist scholar is a constant reminder of his own compositional inadequacies. At the point of the preface's composition, it is well to remember, James's abilities as published author were entirely unproven.

There is yet more evidence within the 'Preface' to confirm James's anxiety about the various interpretational levels inherent in the reading process:

hope I, ye will excuse me (fauourable Reader) sen I neither ordained it, nor auowes it for a iust translation: but onely set it forth, to the end, that, albeit the Prouerb saith, that foolehardines proceeds of ignoraunce, yet some quick sprited man of this yle, borne vnder the same, or as happie a Planet, as *Du Bartas* was, might by the reading of it, bee moued to translate it well, and best, where I haue both euill, and worst broyled<sup>114</sup> it. (1584: sig. Ciiiv)

It is James's express desire that another reader, having 'oft reuolued and red ouer' the king's imperfect (but well intentioned) translation might feel compelled to better it

aesthetically. This preface alone is a determined argument for an actively engaged reading strategy that James himself can be seen to practice throughout the entirety of the 1584 publication.<sup>115</sup>

In order to facilitate readerly interaction with his ‘Uranie’, James has chosen to ‘put in [...] the French on the one side of the leif, and [his] blocking on the other’ (Sig. Ciiiv), thus willing the reader to come to the same interpretation as he himself has attempted to articulate in his ‘blocking’. By referring to both versions as ‘blockings’<sup>116</sup> James once again suggests the rough-hewn nature of his working (the definition of the noun is ‘draft’) in order perhaps to confirm for the reader potential snares of translation work. Thus the reader is to appreciate that the king has managed to correctly identify these authorial ‘dangers’, but has been unable to completely avoid them.<sup>117</sup>

James continues in his short preface by requesting two things of his reader; firstly, that they bear with the text, that they do not give up on the work but rather that they read it in its entirety,<sup>118</sup> and, secondly, that they might ‘appardone’ him for all his ‘intolerable’ authorial faults. The king’s preface concludes with a brief preview of his own poetic stricture (which which will feature in its own right much later on in the *Essayes*, in the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’), a self-reflexive critique and one final opportunity to justify his translation of du Bartas:

Because that translations are limitat, and restrained in some things, more than free inuentiones are, Therefore reason would, that it had more libertie in others. Secoundlie, because I made nocht my treatise of that intention, that eyther I, or any others behoued astricktly to follow it: but that onely it

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<sup>114</sup> The *Dictionary of the Scots Language* cites James’s *Essayes* as the singular example of this word’s usage in the Scots language. The word ‘broyle’ stems from the French word ‘brouiller’. The *DSL* define the word as meaning ‘to confuse’ or ‘disorder’.

<sup>115</sup> The verb ‘preas’ is here noteworthy for the way in which it connotes a certain degree of effort, endeavour, or investiture in the reading process. This verb is favoured by James in a later text, *Basilikon Doron*, and will be given further consideration in Chapter Five.

<sup>116</sup> This word also has architectural connotations. In the second instance, the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (Online) defines the verb as meaning ‘bargaining’ or ‘trading’.

<sup>117</sup> James claims that the blocking is given ‘nocht thereby to giue prooffe of my iust translating, but by the contrair, to let appeare more plainly to the foresaid reader, wherein I haue erred, to the effect, that with lesse difficulty he may escape those snares wherein I haue fallen’. James VI, 1 584, Sig. Ciiij.

<sup>118</sup> ‘I must also desire you to bear with it, albeit it be replete with innumerable and intolerable faultes [...]’. James VI 1584: sig. ciiij.

should shew the perfection of Poesie, whereunto fewe or none can attaine.  
Thirdly [...] I avow it not for a iust translation. (1584: sig. Ciiiiiv)

This is an important consideration to offer for his readership – James’s poetic advice manual (lauded by modern critics and historians alike as being the rule book for a courtly ‘writing game’) was never intended by its author to serve as a strict blueprint for all aspiring poets to adhere to. By stating this point at the very beginning of his collection proper, James cunningly manipulates the way in which his readers will approach every poetic composition to follow, which is to say that he excuses himself from having to adhere closely to the poetic parameters of the advice he has imparted to others whilst subtly prohibiting readers from using the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ as the index by which to assess his authorial worth. Reading further into James’s purported intentions here for his advice manual, it might be possible to argue that by moderating the significance of one component element of the publication, the king immediately (and quite intentionally) heightens the import of the various other components of the 1584 collection. We are to evaluate the collection – and its author – based on the sum of all of its parts, and not just one of them.

James’s concerns with interpretational procedure and discernment in reading receive further articulation in the narrative proper of ‘Uranie’. Lily B. Campbell (1959) has described du Bartas’s *L’Uranie* as a ‘poetical plea for and a defence of divine poetry’.<sup>119</sup> Moreover, *L’Uranie* ‘not only provided a muse for Christian poetry; it gave unity and direction to the whole movement in which many had taken part’ (1959: 80). This unity of purpose was geared towards reclaiming poetry from the base usages to which it had lately been put, to create a Christian aesthetic that would ‘give profit with its pleasure’ (1959: 80), educate as well as entertain. It is possible to see the evolution of this idea of a theologically-inflected poetics in Philip Sidney’s *Defence of Poesy* (c.1580, printed 1595):

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<sup>119</sup> Lily B. Campbell, ‘Du Bartas and King James and the Christian Muse’ in *Divine Poetry and Drama in Sixteenth Century England* (New York; Berkeley: Cambridge University Press, 1959), pp. 74-107, 75.

Among the Romans a poet was called *vates*, which is as much as a diviner, forseer or prophet, as by his conjoined words *vaticinium* and *vaticinari* is manifest – so heavenly a title did that excellent people bestow upon this heart-ravishing knowledge [...] and may I not presume a little farther, to show the reasonableness of this word *vates*, and say that the holy David's Psalms are a divine poem? If I do, I shall not be without the testimony of great learned men both ancient and modern.<sup>120</sup>

For Sidney, as for du Bartas,<sup>121</sup> a poet's remit is to build scripture into their work in order to 'see God coming in his majesty' (Alexander 2004: 7). Du Bartas's rendering of Urania as the Christian Muse had certainly bedded into the late sixteenth century Protestant imagination on the Continent by the time James came to undertake his translation, yet the 1584 Bartasian translation projects sustained and supported by the king (both his 'Uranie' and Hudson's *Judith*) are credited by Campbell (1959) with introducing the 'Christian Muse' Urania, and its author, to Britain. The work of Joshua Sylvester best exemplifies the rapid ascension and confirmation of the muse Urania in English literary consciousness; ten years after the king had brought the Christian muse to the British isles with his translation, Sylvester produces in translation '*Urania or, The Heavenly Muse*'.

Aside from the king himself,<sup>122</sup> Sylvester is the most prolific imitator and translator of the work of du Bartas.<sup>123</sup> Anne Lake Prescott (1968), writing on the reception of du

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<sup>120</sup> Sir Philip Sidney, *Sidney's 'The Defence of Poesy' and Selected Renaissance Literary Criticism*, Gavin Alexander, ed. (London: Penguin Classics, 2004), pp. 5-6

<sup>121</sup> For more on the textual relationship between the English poet and his French inspiration, see Alan Sinfield's article 'Sidney and Du Bartas', in *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 27, No.1 (Winter 1975), pp. 8-20.

<sup>122</sup> We might reasonably add James's *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) as another member of the Jamesian-Bartasian cohort: Roger Mason (1998: 218) makes a fleeting correlation between *Trew Law* and the writing of Du Bartas, but does not investigate its potential significance, as he claims that 'the author [James] cites no source other than the Bible in support of his theory on kingship'. Despite the laconic execution of the treatise (by which is meant that very little is revealed of the literary models informing the tract) James affords himself one quite significant exception as he brings into play the writing of a particular author: 'And so the olde opinion of the Philosophers proves trew, That better it is to live in a Common-wealth, where nothing is lawfull, than where all things are lawfull to all men; the Common-wealth at that time resembling as an undaunted young horse that hath casten his rider: For as the divine Poet DU BARTAS sayeth, Better it were to suffer some disorder in the estate, and some spots in the Common-wealth, than in pretending to reforme, utterly to overthrow the Republicke (Rhodes, Richards and Marshall 2003: 275). Here it is the seemingly ubiquitous Du Bartas who once again provides the ideological buttress for James's wider religio-political point. Textual validation is found within *La Seconde Sepmaine*, yet it must be remembered that Du Bartas' text had not itself reached the printing press at the time of the *Trew Law*'s composition and publication. It was only published posthumously, in 1603. For Rhodes et al. (2003) this is enough evidence to suggest that the king might 'have seen this part of the poem [*La Secone Sepmaine*] in manuscript when Du Bartas visited him'. (Rhodes, Richards and Marshall 2003: 275 n.19).

Bartas in England, notes that Sylvester's 'many translations first began to appear in 1590 and were completed by 1608, [and] shared James's admiration for 'smooth Salust's stile'.<sup>124</sup> Whilst Sylvester's direct translations of du Bartas's writings might have been 'completed' by 1608, his interest in the ideas of the French poet had certainly not dwindled. It might also be argued that du Bartas's cultural cachet had not decreased in currency either. In the 'Corona Dedicatoria'<sup>125</sup> prefacing Sylvester's complete translated works of du Bartas (posthumously published in 1641),<sup>126</sup> the muse Urania is appealed to in a passage in which King James and his royal heir (and heir apparent of the Protestant realm) are glorified.<sup>127</sup> That Christian Muse once exalted by King James in his *Essayes* is here used to exalt his majesty. Elsewhere in the body of Sylvester's work we find a text which is not merely a straightforward translation of du Bartas, but rather a channelling of his poetic spirit. This text, dedicated 'to the most royall Lady Elizabeth infanta of England; Princesse Palatine of Rhine' and King James's eldest daughter, is entitled *Little Bartas* and was possibly written

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<sup>123</sup> Bartasian translation projects undertaken by Joshua Sylvester would occupy the best part of twenty years, beginning in 1590 with the translation out of French of du Bartas's *Cantique* (1590). Sylvester's *Canticle of the Victorie* (1590) was followed by the first two parts of du Bartas's *Les septmaines* in 1592 and six parts of *The Second Week* in 1598. In 1603, seeking the patronage of his new monarch, Sylvester appealed to the Scottish king's well-established literary penchant for du Bartas by offering in manuscript form 'a sample of his work' out of du Bartas – 'The colonies'. Snyder (2004) comprehensively documents Sylvester's Bartasian enterprise in the wake of the Union of the Crowns: 'In 1605 Humfrey Lownes printed [Sylvester's] *Bartas his Devine Weekes and Workes*, comprising all of *Les septmaines* published in du Bartas's lifetime—the *First Week* and the first two days of the *Second Week*—as well as the *Urania*. An elaborate apparatus of sonnets in three languages dedicates the whole to King James [...]. In 1606 and 1607 followed translations of the remaining parts of *La seconde septmaine* which had been published after the Huguenot poet's death: *I Posthumus Bartas* (the third day of the second week) and *II Posthumus Bartas* (the first two parts of the fourth day). One part of each was dedicated to James, and the second part of the 1607 volume to Henry. With the 1608 *Devine Weekes* Sylvester completed, with the remaining parts of the fourth day, his rendering of du Bartas's massive though unfinished work (the fourth day of *La seconde septmaine* ends with Nebuchadnezzar's conquest of Jerusalem (2 Kings); the last three days, which would have brought history up to the last judgment, were never written). By this time his appeals to Henry, if not those to James, had been successful, and the prince granted him a pension of £20 a year'. Susan Snyder, 'Sylvester, Josuah (1562/3–1618)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/26873>> [accessed 15 March 2013]

<sup>124</sup> Anne Lake Prescott, 'The Reception of Du Bartas in England', in *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 15 (1968), pp.144-173, 149.

<sup>125</sup> In this prefatory sequence there are twelve verses (in which each of the nine muses are invoked alongside the Christian Muse Urania, and Sylvester himself) typographically set out on the page in the shape of roman architectural columns.

<sup>126</sup> Joshua Sylvester, *The Complete Works*, Vol II, Alexander B Grosart, Ed., Vol. II (Hildesheim: George Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1969).

<sup>127</sup> For more on the 'Corona Dedicatoria' see James Doelman, *King James I and the Religious Culture of England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell and Brewer, 2000), pp.25-7.

by Sylvester to celebrate the birth of Elizabeth's first son, Henry, on 14<sup>th</sup> January 1614.<sup>128</sup> In *Little Bartas* the English poet essays to play the 'limner's' part to sketch for the princess all of 'the goodly Labour's glorious excellence' as set out 'by My Bartas in his weeks devine' (1969: 85). That du Bartas is here used by Sylvester as the currency by which to buy into the affections of King James's progeny, Princess Elizabeth, suggests to a degree the sustained significance of du Bartas within the royal House of Stuart during the course of James's lifetime.

Campbell (1959) is in no doubt that what King James recognised in du Bartas's poetics was a prophetic voice, the French author himself 'the agent through whom a new message came' (1959: 81). Acknowledging the value of the message inherent in du Bartas's writing, James and Hudson endeavour to set it forth (1959: 81). Translation projects might seem at odds with the lesson imparted in the 'Reulis and Cautelis',<sup>129</sup> but on this particular occasion the promulgation of the notion of a Christian-humanist message supersedes aesthetic preference. James concludes his preface with a reminder to his 'fauourable Reader' to 'accept [his] intention and trauellis in good parte' (1584: sig. Ciii).

'The Uranie' begins with a retrospective account of adolescent folly of the would-be poet 'in springtyme of [his] years' (1584: sig. D<sup>r</sup>, l.1), immediately furnishing the narrative persona with an authority by which to impart his lesson.<sup>130</sup> With the benefit of

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<sup>128</sup> The work is prefaced by a fourteen-line sonnet in which Sylvester writes: 'Here, to your Highnes (with all Good-Presage,/Congratulating Your little Palatine)/I Consecrate This Little-one of mine,/To serve Your Self first; then Your Son, for page'. Furthermore, the sequence of four short stanzas which follow (one addressed to the king, one to Prince Charles (the heir to the throne), one to the Princess Palatine and one to the people of England and Germany) suggest that this poem was composed after the death of Prince Henry Frederick Stuart (November 1612) and the marriage of Elizabeth to Frederick (14 February 1613). Elizabeth had three children – Henry, Charles Lewis (b.1618) and Eliza (1619).

<sup>129</sup> In Chapter VII of James's 'Reulis and Cautelis' he turns his attention to translation and writes: 'Bot sen *Inuention*, is ane of the chief vertewis in a Poete, it is best that ze inuent zour awin subiect, zour self, and not to compose of sene subiectis. Especially translating any thing out of vther language, quhilk doing, ze not onely essay not zour awin ingyne of *Inuention*, bot be the same meanes ze are bound, as to a staik, to follow that buikis phrasis, quhilk ze translate'. In this chapter of the 'Reulis and Cautelis' James seemingly warns those writers wishing to undertake translation work that they must carefully consider the processes involved before they begin. It is not enough, in James's opinion, to simply translate the ideas inherent in the original text. Translators, he implies, are also bound to present their new text in a way that is sympathetic to the original text.

<sup>130</sup> Although adult retrospection is a key Petrarchan motif, it is not unique to Petrarch's work. It can be found, closer to home, in the *Kingis Quair* (attributed to James I), which would most likely have been influenced by Boethius' application of the motif. In the introductory stanzas of the *Kingis Quair* the

aged hindsight, the now mature poet describes his once ardent desire for literary exultation ‘about my pears’ (1584: l.2), implying that his quest for poetic perfection was a misguided exercise. Having sought perfection in versifying, the narrative persona was able only to cultivate a modest poetic ability. His frustration at his inability to progress as a successful poet is described in terms of the storm-tossed lover of Petrarchan narratives:

But as the *Pilgrim*, who for lack of light,  
Cums on the parting of two wayes at night,  
He stayes assone, and in his mynde doeth cast,  
What way to take while Moonlight yet doth last. (1584: sig. D<sup>r</sup>, ll. 5-8)

He depicts himself, in terms of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, as being incapable of rational thought and action.<sup>131</sup> There is a second comparison embedded in this passage, wherein the persona parallels himself to a religious pilgrim consequently implying that the narrative which is about to unfold is one in which spiritual enlightenment will be reached. In his pursuit of poetic acclaim, the persona’s false confidence and naive ambition led to a hubristic state of inaction and indecision. At the deepest point of the persona’s un-enlightenment, knowing nothing of the route he must take to attain his dreams, spiritual help appears to guide him on his way.

In drawing upon the aforementioned established Italian literary convention, du Bartas (in the original) and James VI (in his translation) prime the reader to expect a visitation

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literary motif is instantly recognisable: ‘Thou sely youth, of nature indegest,/Vnrypit fruyte with windis variable [...] Ryght as the schip that saileth sterëles/ Vpon the rokkis most to harmes hye,/For lak of it that suld bene hir supplye,/So standis thou here in this warldis rage/ And wantis that suld gyde all thy visage [...] the rypënesse of resoune lakkit I/ To governe with my will, so lyte I couth./ Quehen sterëles to trauaile I begouth’ (McDiarmid 1973: 80, stanzas 14-16). The narrative overlap of ‘Uranie’ and ‘Phoenix’ with the *Quair* is worth mentioning. The *Quair* opens with a persona reflecting on his past experiences in order to share with his reader the lessons learned from his various tribulations. Following a dream sequence (wherein the persona receives divine counsel from Venus and Minerva, before meeting with Fortune at her ever-turning wheel) the persona wakes to a heavenly visitation from a turtle dove which seems to confirm that his torments thus far have been divinely directed.

<sup>131</sup> It is not difficult, for example, to find allusions to Petrarch’s *Canzoniere*, particularly in the wistful tone of the opening sequence. Compare the opening lines of Sonnet 1 of the *Canzoniere* ‘O you who hear within these scattered verses/the sound of sighs with which I fed my heart/in my first errant youthful days when I/in part was not the man I am today’ (Musa 1999, ll.1-4), with a passage early in the ‘Uranie’: ‘And whyles I thought to sing the fickle boy/Of cypris soft, and loues to-swete anoy,/To lofty sprits that are therewith made blynd,/To which discours my nature and age inclynd./But whill I was in doubt what way to go,/With wind ambitious tossed to and fro:/A holy beuty did to mee appeare’ (1584: ll. 25-31). Whilst allusions to the *Canzoniere* are certainly important for the original, one must consider how these are not James’s inclusions per se. The refraction of Petrarch’s *Canzoniere* is the doing of Du Bartas (and indeed many other writings), not James. In his ‘Uranie’ the king merely transcreates du Bartas’s text, making it better suited for his readership.



from a female figure. The anticipated visitation ensues, but in a subtle manipulation of literary custom, the female who appears before the eyes of the persona is described as a ‘holy beuty’ (1584: Sig. Dij<sup>r</sup>, l.31), immediately differentiating her from the female ideal of courtly love and imbuing her with a heightened spirituality. Like the gazed-upon female of the *Canzoniere*, the ‘divine’ figure’s appearance is described in great detail by the narrative persona but her description is adjectivally consolidated by theological terminology,<sup>132</sup> serving to reinforce the titular qualification of the text, *La Muse Chrestienne*.

In a further contravention of the Petrarchan type, the female figure is given a voice through which to impart information. She expediently announces that she is

learned VRANIE,  
 That to the Starres transports humanitie,  
 And maks men see and twiche with hands and ene  
 It that the heauenly court contemplating bene.  
 I quint-essence the Poets soule so well [...]  
 Take me for guyde, lyft vp to heauen thy wing  
 [...]Gods immortal honour sing:  
 And bending higher Dauids Lute in tone,  
 With courage seke yon endless crowne abone. (1584: sig. diij<sup>r</sup>, ll. 53-7, 65-8)

Urania’s remit as the Christian Muse<sup>133</sup> is to educate and guide poets to create a poetry which, through its alignment with God’s word, is – as it were – consecrated. As ‘all art is learned by art’ – in other words, poetry, art and music are nothing more than mimetic reflections of God’s natural world – no-one will ever attain poetic ‘perfection’: as Urania explains, ‘no flesh nor bone/Can preis the honnie we from Pinde distill/Except with holy fyre his breest we fill’ (1584: sig. D.iiij<sup>r</sup>, ll. 85-88). Nonetheless, all is not without hope for the troubled narrative persona. The best anyone can hope for, implies Urania, is a thorough infusion of the spirit and letter of God’s word in their own writing:

<sup>132</sup> ‘A holy beuty did to mee appeare,/The *Thunders* daughter seeming as she weare./ Her porte was Angellike with Angels face,/With comely shape and tounge of heauenly grace;/ Her nynevoiced mouth resembled into sound/The daunce harmonious making heauen resound [...]’ (1584: Sig. [Dij], ll. 31-6).

<sup>133</sup> For more on du Bartas’s creation of the Christian Muse see Kurt Reichenberger’s study, ‘L’Uranie ou la muse celeste. Eine Dichtungslehre aus der zweiten Hälfte des 16 Jahrhunderts’, in *Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur*, vol. 71 (1961), pp. 39-48.

[...] man from man must wholly parted be,  
 If with his age, his verse do well agree.  
 Amongst our hands, he must his witts resing,  
 A holy trance to highest heauen him bring.  
 For euen as humane fury maks the man.  
 Les the man: So heauenly fury can  
 Make man pas man, and wander in holy mist,  
 Vpon the fyrie heauen to walk at list.  
 Within that place the heauenly Poëts sought  
 Their learning, syne to vs heare downe it brought,  
 With verse that ought to *Atropos* no dewe,  
 Dame *Naturs* trunchmen, heauens interprets trewe  
 [...] Sen verse did then in heauen first bud and blume. (1584: sig. E<sup>r</sup>, ll. 113-29)

Owing to his adolescent folly, the youthful persona was enslaved to his earthly passions. Somewhat ironically the fervent display of unfettered emotion in his previous poetic attempts served only to prolong the troubled persona's incarceration and poetic inertia in his everyday life (by his own admission he was unable to ascend Mount Parnassus, home of the Muses). Yet, in this section of *L'Uranie*, the Muse Urania affords the persona a fleeting glimpse of the poetic arcadia towards which he is to aspire, as she transports the attentively listening persona from his temporal jail to 'that place [where] the heauenly Poëts sought/Their learning' (1584: sig. E<sup>r</sup>, ll. 121-22). The role of a poet, according to the Christian Muse, is not to entertain but rather to instruct people in the ways of God as she herself is doing. Since God in his omnipotence is the Creator, Urania continues, true and virtuous art is a 'heauenly gift' (1584: sig. E<sup>r</sup>, l. 86). As 'Dame Naturs trunchmen [translators], heauens interprets trewe' (1584: sig. E<sup>r</sup>, l. 124), poets must transmit God's word through their work.

Until now, Urania's spiritual lesson has been directed towards aspirant poets more generally. Here, however, her attention turns to a smaller grouping, a band of writers who have in some way mis-used their art:

If ye be heauenly, how dar ye presume  
 A verse prophane, and mocking for to sing  
 Gainst him that leads of starrie heauense the ring?  
 Will ye then so ingrately make your pen,  
 A slaue to sinne, and serue but fleshly men?

Shall still your brains be busied then to fill  
 With dreames, ô dreamers, euery booke and bill?  
 Shall Satan still be God for your behoue?  
 Still will ye riue the aire with cryes of loue?  
 And shall there neuer into your works appeare,  
 The praise of God, resounding loud and cleare? (1584: sig. E<sup>r</sup>, ll. 130-140)

A litany of emotive language, alongside abundant use of the personal pronouns “ye” and “your”, and a series of rhetorical questions (regarding a number of writers, but addressed directly to the attentive onlooker on this occasion) seem to thoroughly incriminate the persona in some form of artistic prophanity. The meditative tone of Urania’s spiritual didacticism up until this point is transformed into an accusatory one, as the spirit guide rounds on those poets who have underpinned their work with nothing more than their own temporal desires and dreams. Implicitly attempting to guilt the youthful persona into a form of artistic submission, Urania continues to question those who have chosen a life of artistic servitude enthralled to earthly passions. Although at this stage Urania is addressing the multitude, her final rhetorical question (‘And shall there neuer into your works appeare,/ The praise of God, resounding loud and cleare?’) appears to speak directly to the youthful persona, offering him a solution to his problematic poetic pretensions. He is to channel his affections toward God, using poetry as the means by which to articulate the strength and extent of his faith. The implication in this section of the poem is that poets ought not to seek out acclaim for works which may be aesthetically beautiful but which are morally base (as, presumably, the narrative persona of the ‘Uranie’ had previously done). On the contrary, argues Urania, ‘better it is without renoune to be,/ Then be renowned for vyle iniquitie’ (1584: sig. F<sup>r</sup>, ll 232-33).

The persuasive rhetoric is developed by Urania as she outlines for the troubled persona the dangers inherent in creating poetry which is a long way removed from the ideal of which she has lately spoken. Having delivered in the first half of her lesson the precept, she now continues to offer the literary exemplar. Just as ‘the wax the seals imprint/ Is lyke a seale’ (1584: sig. E.ij<sup>r</sup>, ll. 153-54), so too written verse may act as the

stamp which permanently seals in the public domain the articulated private ‘passions strange’ (1584: Eijr, l. 155) of the poet. The composition of verse sated with emotion is not in itself entirely problematic, but rather it is the combination of writing and reading this type of verse which perpetuates the cycle. The muse’s disdain for unperceptive readers is abundantly clear in her description of them as having ‘fickle maners’ in reading – where they actively enjoy the poetic aestheticism of ‘nomber tone and song’ (1584: sig. [Eij], l. 149) above the moral weight of the theme or intentions underpinning the work. The focus on the reading process continues as Urania argues that the reading of poetry which is overly impassioned has the potential to bring about a transformation in the reader (‘maks the reader, halfe in author change’, 1584: sig. Eijr, l. 156). As

[...] verses force is sic, that softly slydes  
 Throw secret poris, and in our sences bydes,  
 As makes them haue both good and euill imprinted. (1584: sig. Eijr, ll.157-8)

Poetry, argues Urania, can have the effect of an intoxicating liquid which seeps slowly through the pores of the unassuming and emotionally irresponsible reader who seeks out in their reading of a poem nothing more than an overt disclosure of the writer’s passions. Good writing stems from the apposite reading (or understanding) of scripture, implies Uranie. David is held up as the epitome of the perfect reader-poet to whom Urania has thus far only alluded, for ‘David on the trembling strings/ Of heauenly harps, Gods only praise he sings’ (1584: sig. Eijr, ll. 189-90).

Having reached the crux of her argument, Urania suggests ways in which a poem should be crafted in order to be able to bear the weight of its theological remit:

To please the Reader is the ones whole cair,  
 The vther for to proffite mair and mair:  
 But only he of *Laurell* is conding,  
 Who wisely can with proffit, pleasure ming.  
 The fairest walking on the Sea coast bene,  
 And suirest swimming where the braes are grene:  
 So, wyse is he, who in his verse can haue  
 Skill mixt with pleasure, sports with doctrine graue.  
 In singing kepe this order showen you heir,  
 Then ye your self, in teaching men shall leir

The rule of liuing well, and happely shall  
 Your songs make, as your themes immortall all. (1584: sig. Fijj<sup>r</sup>, ll.278-89)

The best poets will be able to combine doctrinal teaching with a lighter subject, in order that, on subsequent readings of the text, the reader might source profit and pleasure within its pages. Most importantly for the young scholarly king translating *L'Uranie*, Urania explains to the narrative persona that one can learn to live discerningly by means of educating others.

At the conclusion of 'Uranie' it is clear that the narrative persona had immediately absorbed the lesson imparted by Urania, and in so doing equipped himself with the tools necessary to continue on his path to success as a Christian poet. In his enlightened state the persona has an altered perspective on life:

So drew to her my heart, so farr transported,  
 And with swete grace, so swetely she exhorted:  
 As since that loue into my braines did brew,  
 And since that only wind my shipsailles blew,  
 I though me blest, if I might only clame  
 To touche that crown, though not to weare the same. (1584: sig. G<sup>r</sup>, ll.332-337)

He claims that he would consider himself blessed if he could only come near the standard of poetic perfection as lately outlined by Urania, though he qualifies his claim by stressing that he is not keen 'to wear the same' (1584: sig. G<sup>r</sup>, ll. 327), as he had once wished to do. In providing a retrospective account of his adolescent journey to poetic and spiritual enlightenment, the persona has thus delivered an exact poetic embodiment of the teachings of Urania. If du Bartas can be viewed as an 'apostle of divine poetry'<sup>134</sup> for bringing to the fore the Christian Muse, then we might also read King James's authorial role along similar lines. In his poetic ability at this point in 1584 the king is easily aligned (and perhaps consciously aligns himself) with the poetic apprentice of *L'Uranie*'s narrative.

Having avidly re-read *L'Uranie* and provided for his subjects a vernacular mirror to the French original, King James also arguably presents himself as a suitably qualified

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<sup>134</sup> Campbell 1959: 79.

theological apostle. If, as Urania informs us, ‘all art is learned by art, this art alone/It is a heauenly gift’ (1584: sig. diiiij<sup>r</sup>, ll.85-6), then it is clear that James understands that learning process, having taken the time to learn the principles of a godly poetics from his artistic mentor. The preface to ‘Uranie’ had already made the principle of reading discerningly imperative, and the poem itself confirmed it; the text by which the ‘Uranie’ is succeeded in the *Essayes* is once again concerned with notions of interpretation and understanding.

### **‘The Phœnix’**

In traditional critical interpretations, this ‘Metaphoricall Invention of a Tragedie’ has been read by both critics and historians as an ode to Esmé Stuart, the king’s cousin,<sup>135</sup> and as a ‘familiar letter’ which takes us ‘into the king’s private space through allegory, and gives voice to James’ [homoerotic] desire’.<sup>136</sup> David Bergeron has written at length on the latter subject of homoeroticism in the ‘Phoenix’. In his chapter ‘Writing King James’s Sexuality’ (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 344-68) Bergeron provides a focused reading of ‘The Phœnix’ as a pseudo-love poem to Esmé:

the poem bristles with homoerotic desire as the poet admires unceasingly the bird’s beauty and accomplishments as the bird, under attack, takes refuge between the narrator’s legs [...] The poem forever links the two cousins in a fiction that adumbrates their personal lives [...]. (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 361)

Whilst Bergeron draws attention to the sexual imagery inherent in James’s ‘Phoenix’ in order to read ‘Phoenix’ as a praise poem, other critics have attempted to read further into the motives underpinning the composition of this poem. In *Great Britain’s Solomon: James VI and I and His Three Kingdoms*, Maurice Lee Jr considers the potential benefits James sought to gain from writing this poem in memory of his French cousin. For Lee, Esmé provided for James ‘a task for poetry, argument and flattery and encouraged him to

<sup>135</sup> See Rosalind K. Marshall, ‘Esmé Stuart’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press <<http://oxforddnb.com/view/article/26702>> [accessed 4 September 2009].

<sup>136</sup> David Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), pg. 33. See also Bergeron’s ‘Writing King James’s Sexuality’ in Fischlin and Fortier 2002, pp. 344-68, where he provides a very focused reading of ‘The Phœnix’: ‘The poem bristles with homoerotic desire as the poet admires unceasingly the bird’s beauty and accomplishments as the bird, under attack,

believe that he was more gifted than other men' (Lee 1990: 45-46). In this reading, Lee argues that Esmé's death spurred James to articulate his feelings through poetry. Whilst Simon Wortham (Fischlin and Fortier 2002) reads the 'Phoenix' in broadly similar terms, he is also keen to examine the ways in which this poem works as a 'gift'. Wortham offers an interesting theoretical reading of the 'Phoenix' alongside James's 'royal gift' to his son Henry, the *Basilikon Doron*. Underpinning his reading of James's work with Marcel Maus's *The Gift* (1594), Wortham argues that

giving, expenditure, expense, even death, can be viewed *as from the ouset* an unsharing expression of Stuart ownership, possessive force, retention, renewal, reserve, establishing itself *without* recourse to the acknowledgement offered by the donee (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 201, fn. 8)

For Wortham, the duke of Lennox brought to Edinburgh the 'ideas and style of the Valois court' (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 195) and through keeping company with the king, instilled in James a sense of self-belief that he was not only gifted (in poetic terms), but that he was a gifted Renaissance monarch. Esmé's gifts to the Stuart king were therefore manifest:

in line with the self-reflexive patterns of exchange characterising James's rulership, what Esmé gave the king was a sense of his royal gift, his kingly power to render through poetry. (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 195)

Wortham argues that in the 'Phoenix' the self-sacrificing but also self-renewing mythical bird becomes the epitome of the 'royal gift'. Implicit in Wortham's argument is the notion that in writing of the unfortunate and untimely demise of Esmé Stuart through the figure of the phoenix, James simultaneously brings him (or the memory of him) back to life. The king's 'gift' to the person credited with bringing the essence of the Valois Renaissance court to Scotland is the gift of rebirth itself.

Elsewhere in Fischlin and Fortier's collection, Ives and Parkinson argue that the 'Phoenix', above all other texts within the *Essayes*, is the place where James develops a

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takes refuge between the narrator's legs [...] The poem forever links the two cousins in a fiction that adumbrates their personal lives [...]', pg. 361.

discussion on the concepts of vulnerability and loss. For Ives and Parkinson, James is not only concerned with the precarious nature of his own kingship (naturally, in light of the Ruthven Raid), but he is also anxious about the vulnerability of poetics in his native land. In the ‘Phoenix’, argue Ives and Parkinson, ‘[James] begins to develop an iconography of invention and eloquence that situates and addresses vulnerability in both kinds’ (2002:116).

In yet another interpretation of this poem, Roderick Lyall recognises that in ‘literary terms [...] ‘The Phoenix’ is less convincing’ than it is in thematic or narratological terms, but he maintains nevertheless that there are literary components of the work worth studying, for example, the poem as ‘a kind of poetic sampler, a demonstration of [James’s] command of a variety of subjects and styles’ (Goodare and Lynch 2000: 63). For Lyall, the most significant facet of James’s authorial portfolio is the way in which the king uses his writing to ‘dissolve the boundary between art and reality’ (2000: 64). Such concerted effort to achieve the dissolution of boundaries manifests itself accordingly in a mannerist style of poetics, in Lyall’s opinion:

James is engaged in the construction of a mosaic, each element of which is almost, but not quite, complete in itself, as the conjunctions which begin seven of the sonnets serve to emphasise. If this composite structure is one typically mannerist feature, the preoccupation with style, even with stylishness, is evidently another: the self-absorption [...] is not merely a reflection of James’s egocentricism, or of his sense of the creation of a new poetic, but is inherent in the project itself, the development of a poetry in which the way things are stated is at least as important, sometimes perhaps more important, than what is said.<sup>137</sup> (2000: 64)

Lyall’s assertion that it is sometimes not what is said but the way in which it is said that matters is crucially important in the *Essayes* and is a contention which is specifically applicable to the ‘Phoenix’, a poem which experiments with the formulaic setting of the narrative on the page in order to satisfy the wider aim of facilitating and directing readers’ interpretation.

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<sup>137</sup> Goodare and Lynch 2000: 64. See also Lyall’s chapter “‘Thrie truer Hairts’: Alexander Montgomerie, Henry Constable, Henry Keir and Cultural Politics in Renaissance Britain’, in *The Innes Review* 54, Vol. 2 (Autumn 2003), pp. 186-215.



The message of the ‘Uranie’ (the poem and its Jamesian preface) is to create a poetics based around well-studied scripture – one should compare, contrast and examine the word in order to seek out the truth. Only when biblical truth has been found (and that truth understood) can it be transformed into a poem. The ‘Phœnix’ is tonally similar to the ‘Uranie’, developing the latter’s didactic tutelary voice. Moreover, the king uses this tragedy to continue to explore issues of understanding, misunderstanding and interpretation, setting out to salvage something of Esmé Stuart’s posthumous reputation. Drawing upon the tools of his scholarly education and the lessons gleaned from his reading of du Bartas, James is intent on giving his readers a lesson. At this stage it is worth remembering that the king’s preferred audience is not the ‘ignorants obdurde’, ‘curious folks’ or ‘learned men’, but rather ‘the docile bairns of knowledge’ (‘A Qvadrain of Alexandrin Verse, Declaring to Qvhome the Authour hes directit his labour’, 1584 Sig. [Kj]) who possess ‘already some beginning of knowledge, with ane earnest desire to atteyne to farther’ (‘Reulis and Cautelis’, sig. Kij). Such readers are expected to be able to heed the indicators of genre, willingly play along with the paratextual games, understand the king’s literary methodology, and adapt their reading strategies accordingly.

For instance, James delimits the literary parameters of the ‘Phœnix’ in the title as he describes the poem as a ‘metaphoricall invention of a tragedie’. This title immediately gives the reader a tripartite break-down of the work; the ‘Phœnix’ is firstly allegorical in nature, is secondly an original composition (as opposed to a translation or ‘transcreation’<sup>138</sup> as witnessed in ‘Uranie’), and, thirdly, will adhere to the generic constraints of tragedy. This literary signposting works in much the same way as the lengthy preface to the ‘Uranie’ does, in that it immediately primes the reader to take up a certain position for the reading experience to follow. James skilfully leads his reader to the text by means of a staged opening, introducing the ‘Phoenix’ through titles, subtitles and alternate settings.

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<sup>138</sup> J. Derrick McClure, ‘Translation and Transcreation in the Castalian Period’, in *Studies in Scottish Literature*, Ed. G. Ross Roy, Vol. 26, pp. 185-198.

The aforementioned title is the first step, whilst the liminary process is developed by the subtitle which heralds ‘a Colomne of 18 lynes seruing for a Preface to the Tragedie ensuing’ (1584 sig. Giiv<sup>r</sup>). The 18-line poem follows: it is typographically set on the page in the likeness of a funeral urn with the authorial directions of the title serving as a lid on top of a diamond-shaped body and a base that includes the lines with which the poem ends in the final abortive, resonant phrase ‘in deid’. The deliberate pun on death allows the reader to surmise the outcome of the tragic tale before it gets underway. Each of the twenty-six lines in this shape poem is framed with numerals to indicate the syllabic count of that line. Those numbers would be immediately recognisable to the reader with some ‘beginnings of knowledge’ in Latin scholarship, as the preoccupation with line length and metricity were fundamental idiosyncrasies in the composition and study of Latin poetry.

The poem is repeated once more on the facing page. On this occasion the shape poem gives way for an expansion rendered more explicitly as a ‘double acrostic’ (it is both an acrostic and a telestich), that, when interpreted vertically, reads ESMÉ STEWART DWIKE.<sup>139</sup> Traditionally employed as a mnemonic in the oral transmission of literature, the acrostic framework acts here as an epitaphic memory aid for James’s readership. The thematic conceit of the prefatory poem itself is less than extraordinary; a narrative persona appeals to a number of figures from classical mythology (a conventional literary technique) for help in the verbalization in a shared catharsis of an intense grief. The invocation of characters from Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* in the prefatory poem sets up a solid foundation for the allegoresis which is to follow in the body of the ‘Tragedie’ itself.<sup>140</sup> Whilst thematically somewhat commonplace, ‘The Phœnix’ nevertheless remains a rhetorically

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<sup>139</sup> The decision to name Esmé Stuart here is entirely at odds with the attempt to preserve the anonymity of the *Essayes*’ author. Although clues to the authorial identity are scattered throughout the collection, nowhere is it made explicit.

<sup>140</sup> Initially Echo, a traditionally mute nymph, is asked by James to join with him in his expression of grief, and to ameliorate the king’s pain. Unable to speak, Echo cannot verbally articulate anxiety on her own, but by hearing the narrator’s wounded voice she enters into a dialogic relationship with him through a process of mimesis. Reflecting the persona’s actions they will together ‘lament with tearis’. The invocation of Medusa is slightly more complex; with her hair formed of snakes, Medusa is pejoratively regarded in mythological lore as dangerous, having the capacity to turn onlookers to stone, and as

skilled poem, with James continually shifting between the role of the poem's author, its narrator, and its subject.

Having been informed in the title of the generic categorisation of the poem as a tragedy, those 'docile bairns of knowledge' would expect in their reading of the 'Phoenix' to find a tale which is no less than moralising in tone and didactic in purpose. Working within the parameters of Christian-humanist models, James uses this poetic space to synergise a religiously-infused poetics with classical literary sensibilities.<sup>141</sup> The Aristotelian definition of tragedy underpins the structure of James's Christian allegory; according to Aristotle in his *Poetics* [c.335 BC] a tragic narrative requires a protagonist of high social standing as the poem begins, but one who will lose his position over the course of the narrative due to an inherent character flaw, weakness or hubris. The sudden demise should be met by a recovery equally as rapid following in the wake of a 'recognition' scene in which the tragic hero realises his misdemeanours. In the Aristotelian definition, a tragedy ought to culminate in catharsis with the audience implicitly taught a lesson by watching it. The marriage, therefore, between the established generic principles of tragedy and the biographical sketch of Esmé Stewart is a happy one in literary terms. The rapid ascent and descent in Esmé's political fortunes is certainly a particularly apt choice of subject for a tragic poem, but its choice becomes even more significant when we consider that James is asking his subjects (more so than his 'readers' at this stage) to read with him the political truth underneath the muddled misunderstandings and misconceptions.

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exciting jealousy amongst potential suitors. It is the latter excitement of jealousy which directly relates to both the Phoenix' and Esmé's stories.

<sup>141</sup> Arthur F. Kinney has written extensively on the humanist agenda as manifest in the works of the Italian and northern Renaissances. For Kinney the phenomenal appetite for learning which is characteristic of the period, the 'contagious desire to know and apply antique thought to their own culture' exhibits a 'drive to study – for personal advancement, for service to a civilization they reinvigorated and were reshaping, for its own sake', Arthur F. Kinney, *Continental Humanist Poetics: Studies in Erasmus, Castiglione, Marguerite of Navarre, Rabelais and Cervantes*, University of Massachusetts (Amherst, Massachusetts, and London, 1989), pg. 3.

Whilst in ‘The Phoenix’ James is keen to show off his training in continental humanism<sup>142</sup> he is also quick to interleave his tragic poem with a particularly Scottish literary narrative. There is an overt intertextual connection set up between the king’s poem and Sir David Lyndsay’s *The Testament and Complaint of the Papyngo* (completed 1530), forged not only through the choice of a bird as the main protagonist in both, but also through the direct textual reference within the fourth stanza of ‘Phoenix’:

Then, fra I saw (as I already told)  
How men complained for things whilk might amend,  
How David Lyndsay did complaine of old  
His Papingo, her death, and sudden end,  
Ane common foule, whose kinde be all is kend. (1584: sig. Gv<sup>r</sup>, ll. 22-26)

Tellingly, James wants his readers to be alert to the pathos/tragic element – if in reading Uranie the reader was not to measure James by his own poetic stricture but rather against the well-meaning intent driving the translation, then here, the reader is to evaluate James’s attempts at tragedy against criteria (Scottish literary context, thematic concerns) that has been clearly set out in the opening of the ‘Phoenix’. But more than this, James subtly implores the reader to rank James’s novice attempts higher than Lyndsay’s (‘All these hes moved me presently to tell/Ane Tragedie, in griefs thir to excel’, 1584: sig. Gv<sup>v</sup>, ll.27-28).

The allusion to Lyndsay offers James’s readership an instantly recognisable Scottish literary model. The Papingo of Lyndsay’s poem is described by James as a ‘common foule, whose kinde be all is kend’, and this allusion confirms the continued popularity of Lyndsay’s work well into the Jacobean period in Scotland.<sup>143</sup> The reference to Lyndsay should also be recognised as being more than a subsidiary reference to popular culture. By creating a scenario in which a fictive narrative persona discourses on the act of reading, James taps into a rich metafictional vein of work from writers such as Boethius, Aesop and

<sup>142</sup> The opening stanzas of ‘Phoenix’ (‘The dyuers falls, that Fortune geuis to men’, 1584: sig. giiir, 1.1) also signals an overt correlation with the *de casibus* tradition.

<sup>143</sup> Lyndsay’s work was widely disseminated in Scotland throughout James’s reign, and went through several editions. See H.G. Aldis’ comprehensive overview of the printing works within Scotland from 1505-1640, the updated catalogue ‘Scottish Books 1505-1603’, *National Library of Scotland*, <<http://www.nls.uk/catalogues/scottish-books-1505-1640>> [accessed 29 October 2009]. The STS edition of Lyndsay by Hamer (1936) also has a detailed list of early prints and manuscripts.

Chaucer, and, importantly, into Scottish texts including Henryson's *Testament of Cresseid* and the *Kingis Quair*.

The *Papyngo* also offers James a strong nucleus for his own political science. Lyndsay stresses how God, and not the people, will be the ultimate judge of a monarch's actions. In Lyndsay's definition a 'just' ruler is one who is neither negligent nor lazy, nor unfair in their execution of laws. The conclusion that one must learn to be a king (a phrase used by both Lyndsay, in the *Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*, and Alexander Montgomerie) is imperative for James VI and one that he refracts in his own instructions to his son Henry in the later *Basilikon Doron* of 1598. Owing to his relative inexperience as a monarch who ruled in his own right (as opposed to having someone rule in his stead) James's appreciation of complex political theory in 1584, and perhaps more importantly its practical application, would only have been rudimentary. There is, therefore, something uniquely intuitive about the manner in which James deals with this dearth in his monarchic artillery: having never known stable monarchy in his own country in his own lifetime, he thus turns to literature, to the books that he has consumed in his own reading, to find a moral compass and spiritual guidance.

One final literary convention worth mentioning in relation to the 'Phoenix', and one which would be easily recognisable to the late sixteenth-century readership of the *Essayes*, is the bestiary tradition. This convention works within both the written word and the visual arts, and deploys as its protagonists animals (both real and imagined, such as the unicorn and phoenix). As Hassig (2009) explains, 'in a very practical sense, moral lessons were the *raison d'être* of the bestiaries'<sup>144</sup> and consequently the purpose of a text written in the bestiary tradition was high didacticism. The best Scottish example of the bestiary tradition can be witnessed in Henryson's *Morall Fabillis*. Given that the protagonist of the 'metaphorical invention' is the eponymous phoenix, and given also that the text's remit is

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<sup>144</sup> Debra Hassig, *The Mark of the Beast: The Medieval Bestiary in Art, Life and Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pg. xiv.

to enlighten the readership with the truth about Esmé, there can be no denying the literary dependency on the bestiary tradition by James and the educational remit of the epic tragedy.

The utilisation of the bestiary tradition also allows James to confer a number of spiritual qualities upon the bird; in traditional bestiary depictions the Phoenix is deep crimson in colour with a tail blueish-purple in hue. James adapts this established depiction, describing the bird's body as an opulent purple. This subtle alteration brings with it connotations of kings, Christ, divinity and wisdom, and inextricably affiliates the mythical bird with both the royal earthly court and a celestial monarchy. In that sense, the tragic protagonist of this poem provides a neat complement to the ethereal guide of the 'Uranie'. Whilst the character of the Phoenix does not act as a literal 'guide' for the narrative persona in the same way as Urania had done in the previous poem, the narrative persona of the epic tragedy is guided from his melancholic state of grief towards a better understanding of the events which cause the bird's (Esmé's) demise, simply by re-telling its narrative:

Ilk man did maruell at her forme most rare.  
[...] Fra I her gat, yet none could gess what sort  
Of foule she was, nor from what country cum:  
Nor I my self: except that be her port,  
And glistening hewes I knew that she was sum  
Rare stranger foule, which oft had vsde to scum  
Through diuers lands, delyting in her flight;  
Which made vs see, so strange and rare a sight.

Whill at the last, I chanced to call to minde  
How that her nature, did resemble near  
To that of *Phoenix* which I red. Her kinde,  
Her hewe, her shape, did mak it plaine appear,  
She was the same, which now was lighted heir.  
This made me to esteem of her the more,  
Her name and rareness did her so decore. (1584: sig. Hi<sup>v</sup>, stanzas 11-12)

In re-presenting his kinsman's tale, James is also keen to help his readers better understand more about the controversial figure of Esmé Stuart. In these terms, discerning reading is promoted as the means by which to secure understanding and enlightenment. It is, for James, the means to attain moral acuity. James's constructed authorial identities

throughout the *Essayes* exhibit a willing embrace of Urania's literary ethos of underpinning poetic work with God's word. Later in the collection, James will himself attune 'higher David's lute'<sup>145</sup> with his inclusion of 'The CIII. Psalme, Translated Ovt of Tremellivs' (1584: sig. Niiij).

This thesis has thus far sought to example King James acting in a tutelary capacity within the 'Phoenix'. In this poem, the combination of literary models drawn from a rich vein of didactic literature (such as bestiary, the fables and 'advice to princes'<sup>146</sup> tradition) works to confirm James as an instructor. Yet it is also possible to present him in a readerly capacity. By inserting references to his own reading - of the classics, of continental, English and Scottish texts, and of texts working within the Christian-humanist model - and actively incorporating, manipulating and questioning in his own writing what he has himself read, James presents himself as the model of the 'favourable reader' to whom his seminal collection is addressed. It would seem that, having been taught the rules on how to create 'good art' by the 'oft re-reading' of *L'Uranie*, James attempts to employ them to better effect in the 'Phoenix', to example for his readership how Urania's advice for a Christian poetics might find practical application in a native Scottish tradition.

Thus far the collection has moved seamlessly from the general, with the sonnet sequence invoking the gods, to the more particular, with the worship of God through the adherence to his word in 'Uranie'. The 'Phoenix' continues the collection's movement towards specificity and the narrowing of its focus as it represents the most obviously self-referential poem in the *Essayes* and shifts readers' attention from God to his closest servant

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<sup>145</sup> James VI 1584: Sig. Diii, l. 67.

<sup>146</sup> The 'Phoenix' is a poem which exhibits an in-depth knowledge of the advice manual genre generally, and the 'advice to princes' literary tradition more specifically. Niccolo Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (written c. 1512, and translated in part into Scots by William Fowler, c. 1587) is perhaps the best example of the 'advice to princes' tradition. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that James owned a hard copy of this text, it might have been the case that he was at least aware of the text and the ideas inherent. Other texts which might fall under the generic banner are Plato's *Republic* (c. 380 BC), Guillaume Budé's *L'Institution du Prince* (1547) and George Buchanan's *De Iure Regni apud Scotos* (1579). The latter text was a contentious one for King James - it was written by his own tutor and dedicated to the young king for his instruction, yet contained a targeted defamation of Mary Queen of Scots (Buchanan's portrayal sets her up as a religious traitor and political tyrant). Buchanan's 'advice' culminates in the assertion that the source of a monarch's power is in the people.

on earth, the king himself. The ‘Paraphrasticall translation out of the Poët Lucane’ which follows the ‘Phœnix’ bolsters the connections set up between God and his divinely-installed king on earth. In this translation of Lucan we are told that the great chain of being within God’s kingdom cannot be upset by elemental recalcitrance:

If all the floods amongst them wold conclude  
To stay their course from running in the see:  
And by that means wold thinke for to delude  
The *Ocean*, who sould impaired be,  
As they supposde, beleuing if that he  
Did lack their floods, he should decresse him sell:  
Yet if we like the veritie to wye,  
It pairs him nothing: as I shall you tell. (1584: sig. Iiiij<sup>r</sup>, ll. 1-8)

It would make no difference, in this interpretation, whether small rivers – the subordinates of the magisterial sea – conspire to redirect their course or not, for their power and influence is as slight as the proverbial drop in the ocean. Furthermore, through a natural cycle, everything must return to its source. This elemental hierarchy finds a microcosmic parallel in the temporal world, where potential threats to the realm are at once recognised and extinguished:

Though subiects do coniure  
For to rebell against their Prince and King:  
By leauing him although they hope to smure  
That grace, wherewith God maks him for to ring,  
Though by his gifts he shaw him selfe bening,  
To help their need, and make them thereby gaine.  
Yet lack of them no harme to him doth bring,  
When they to rewe their folie shalbe faine. (1584: sig. Kv<sup>v</sup>, ll. 25-32)

Lucan’s poem is an apt choice for inclusion within James’s ‘prentise’ piece, concisely explaining his political science and adherence to the principle of the divine right of kings, and confirms his belief that he has been chosen to act as God’s closest servant. In literary terms it is worth noting that James’s use of Lucan is not merely a straightforward line-by-line vernacular rendering, but is rather a transcreative amplification of one single simile over a span of five verse stanzas. Whatever Lucan’s import might become in the early seventeenth century (as a text seen to contain royalist sympathies for example), the ‘Paraphrasticall translation’ is here more relevantly read as an early indication of James’s



conception of the divine right of kings.

There is much in the remaining content of the *Essayes* to suggest that the preoccupation with Christian humanism which colours its first two texts also permeates the collection as a whole. The inclusion of Immanuel Tremellius's<sup>147</sup> version of Psalm 103 is testament to this assertion. Hamilton (2004) has noted how Tremellius's Old Testament translation was 'much admired in the protestant world'.<sup>148</sup> Clearly, then, succeeding the moderated religious stance of the 'Uranie' and the insistence on religious toleration in the 'Phœnix', this Psalm translation provides further evidence of James's theological self-alignment with the temperate Protestantism by which both Tremellius and du Bartas come to be allied. Just as in 'Uranie', Psalm 103 exalts God as an omniscient patron of all things. Poetry should, in the eyes of the Scottish king, be a direct mirror of nature; the Christian poet should also be a Christian reader who reads the natural world, and God's written word, and successfully interprets it in their poetry. The opening line of the psalm, wherein the Lord is implored to 'inspire my spreit and pen, to praise / Thy name' (1584: sig. N.iii, l. 1) provides a telling insight into the kind of author James wishes himself to be.

So caught up with the very act of correctly interpreting the written word is this collection that its royal author continues to provide for his subjects tools by which to accurately interpret his written words. Included towards the end of the *Essayes* is glossary containing a selection of names and places mentioned throughout the collection, and organised as 'A Table of Some Obscvre Wordis with Their Significations, efter the ordour of the Alphabet' (1584: sig. oiiij<sup>r</sup>). It is interesting to note that a formulaically similar glossary can be found appended to Thomas Hudson's *Historie of Judith* (1584), a text with which this chapter will later engage. Remembering the admission of James in his preface

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<sup>147</sup> Tremellius (c. 1510-1580) was a religious migrant who over the course of his lifetime converted from Judaism to a branch of conciliatory Catholicism and finally towards a Protestant ideology. His working career is testament to this migration, beginning his career as a teacher of Hebrew at the monastic school in Lucca, before stints in Strasbourg, Canterbury and Cambridge. Tremellius' final religious conversion took him to Calvinist Heidelberg.

<sup>148</sup> The Catholic universities of Douai and Louvain also sanctioned Tremellius' translation with modifications. See Alastair Hamilton, 'Tremellius, (Joannes) Immanuel (1510–1580)', *Oxford Dictionary*

to ‘Uranie’ that it was through the oft perusing of du Bartas that he was moved to make his vernacular rendering of *L’Uranie*, the glossary of the closing stages of the *Essayes* subtly invites the reader to return to the texts that they have just read and to re-read them with the benefit of the additional information derived from this paratextual gloss. Any number of entries could be highlighted here to example the pedagogical counsel given in the glossary. The entry for ‘*Semele*’, for example, shows James’s educational urge at play as he succinctly describes Semele as the ‘Mother of *Bacchus*, who being deceived by *Iuno*, made *Jupiter* come to her in his least thunder, which neuertheless consumed her’ (1584: sig. Pi<sup>v</sup>). There is one further functional remit of the glossary; if the *Essayes* has thus far failed to convince readers of the monarch’s acumen in reading, then the insertion of a ‘table of Obscure Wordis’ provides James with one more opportunity in which to categorically teach and persuade them.

Somewhat tellingly, the glossary contains no references to specifically literary or rhetorical terms – words which we naturally might expect to find in a ‘manifesto’ for aspiring poets. The definitions which James decides to include in his table are given in order to facilitate his readers’ thematic comprehension of the collection as whole and his religio-political and cultural ideals more generally. The focus upon interpretation here, rather than on poetic composition, certainly does little to suggest the *Essayes* is a document which instigates a proliferation of a poetic output from the courtly *puy*, or ‘Castalian Band’. Rather, it points towards a considered re-evaluation of the activity of reading (whether that be of God’s word, the king’s word, or the king himself), a consideration which realises reading as an act of moral investment.

The self-consciously modest title of the 1584 publication would certainly have the reader believe that King James VI is as yet a mere *prentise* in the ‘divine art’ of poetic composition, yet a closer examination of the *Essayes* and the thematic thread which binds

it together suggests that it is in reading that the king is to be found more than an accomplished artist. In the final entry to the glossary the reader is given an opportune reminder of the collection's impetus; culminating with the letter 'V' and the single entry 'Uranie'. It is surely no coincidence that a collection which has begun emphatically with the 'heavenly muse', should conclude with an equally emphatic reaffirmation of that muse's import. For James, authority (artistic and monarchic) begins and ends with God. His *Essayes* are being used as a compass by which to orient his readers towards spiritual enlightenment.

Having migrated from studying his own thinking in the preface to the 'Uranie', through a shared reading experience in the glossary, the focus of James's attention in the 'Sonnet of the Author' (which directly follows the glossary) is firmly placed upon the reader in a subtle power shift which sees James ask the reader to take on some responsibility:

The facound Greke, *Demosthenes* by name,  
 His tounge was ones into his youth so slow,  
 As evin that airt, which flourish made his fame,  
 He scarce could name it for a tyme, ze know.  
 So of small seidis the *Liban Cedres* grow:  
 So of an Egg the *Egle* doeth proceed:  
 From fountains small great *Nilus* flood doeth flow:  
 Evin so of rawnis do mightie fishes breid.  
 Therefore, good Reader, when as thow dois reid  
 These my first fructis, dispuse them not at all.  
 Who watts, bot thes may able be indeid  
 Of fyner Poemis the beginning small.  
 Then, rather loave my meaning and my pains,  
 Than lak my dull ingyne and blunted brains. (1584: sig. [Pii])

The reader has been closely guided by James throughout the *Essayes*. At times we are primed by an authoritative author-figure to arrive at quite definitive understandings of the texts within the *Essayes* (such as 'Revlis and Cautelis' and 'Phœnix'). Yet in this poem, James subjugates his authorial power to that of the reader. Drawing upon his own interpretative ability, James is no less than keenly aware of the possibility for erroneous readings of his intentions and makes a direct plea to his 'good Reader'. The well-conceived

balance of the final couplet ('to loae' and 'lak' – ie. to praise and find fault with)<sup>149</sup> finds a proverbial antecedent in *Rauf Coilyear* (printed 1572; l. 87). The sentiment (to read searchingly and only then to develop opinions) provides a neat link to the prefatory dedication of the 'Uranie' which was to appreciate the intention underpinning the aesthetics.

At the beginning of this chapter it was noted how the reading of the *Essayes* was unequivocally intended to be an 'experience'. Every leaf of the publication has thus far been filled by James, with each turn of the page bringing with it yet more instruction. There is nothing unusual in this use of space in such a small quarto edition, yet it is made to seem so. Having absorbed the Demosthenes sonnet, the reader is then informed by James that 'I have insert for the filling ovt of thir vacand pageis, the verie wordis of *Plinius* vpon the *Phoenix*, as followis'.<sup>150</sup> A clarificatory colophon is added to the ensuing passage from Book X of Pliny's *Natural History*:

I helped my self also in my Tragedie thairof, with the Phoenix of Lactantius Firmianus, with Gesnerus de Auibus, & dyuers vthers, bot I haue onely insert thir foresaid words of Plinius, Because I follow him maist in my tragedie. Fareweill. (1584: sig. Piiii<sup>r</sup>)

If, as has been argued above, the glossary encourages the reader to re-read the *Essayes* as a whole, then with this particular information James subtly incites the reader to reassess his 'metaphorical invention of a tragedy'. The king explains how he was inspired in the first instance by Conrad Gesner's variation of the Phoenix myth in both his *De avibus* (1555) and the third book of his four-volume *Historia animalium* (1551-1558). In the second instance, it is claimed that Pliny's rendering of the Phoenix legend in his *Natural History* was the direct influence on James's 'Phoenix'. Whilst references to Gesner's *De avibus*, Lactantius and Pliny might seem a fleeting diversion, taken as the final words in a compendium driven by a Christian-humanist impulse, they work to cement James's status as a discriminating reader, one who is more than qualified to write within and for a wider

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<sup>149</sup> 'First to love and then to lack is a shame.' See Whiting and Whiting, *Proverbs, Sentences, and Proverbial*

community (both real and perceived) of European humanists. It is a pointed (if initially seemingly random) conclusion to a thematically coherent collection in which a moderate and non-insular Protestantism as well as the practical and appropriate application of God's word have taken precedence from the start.

Initially approaching the *Essayes* with the attitude that it has been put together in order to 'present' a poetic manifesto will lead modern readers to the conclusion that this collection is the vanity project of a precocious and audacious prince trying on various authorial identities. It is common in critical parlance to describe King James as the locus of artistic patronage or the driving force behind poetic creativity in Scotland and further afield, but as this present study suggests the king must also be viewed as an astute reader. If the *Essayes*' unpolished lines and rough-hewn verse confirm the king as the novice poetical apprentice of the title, then conversely the scope and complex intertextual layering of the same text uncovers James as an impassioned advocate of the value of reading in the process of cultural advancement in a well-ordered realm. Whilst this chapter has thus far offered an isolated reading of the *Essayes* in its entirety, there is also evidence to suggest that the collection of 1584 could also be read in collaboration with another text. This second text not only shares the same publication date and printer as the king's first work, but chimes thematically with the abiding impulses of the *Essayes*, as outlined above.

#### ***Thomas Hudson's Historie of Judith***

In 1584, the court musician, Thomas Hudson, saw his 'englishing' of du Bartas's *La Judit* into print (in an octavo format). This text was significantly the only text from a poet other than James VI to be both patronised and printed in 1584, and crucially appeared from the Edinburgh press of the Huguenot printer, Vautrollier, who also printed the *Essayes*. The scarcity of information on Thomas Hudson makes a definitive biographical account of his life difficult. James Craigie avows that the dearth of information on the English court musician leaves one with no option but to conclude that Hudson 'belonged to that large

class which makes little stir in the world while it is alive and which is promptly forgotten as soon as it is dead' (Craigie 1941: viii). Scholarship has yet to find a reference to either Hudson's birth or death; without this information one cannot know what age he was when he came to the court of James VI nor indeed what age he was when he came to write his *Judith*. Craigie speculatively dates his birth 'before 1550 and perhaps even before 1545' (1941: xii). Most critics are in agreement that Hudson did not live to see the Union of Crowns in 1603, however, Maley (revised *ODNB* entry, 2006) has recently argued for a date of death of 1605, owing to the installation of John Gib as Master of the Chapel Royal in February of that year, as successor to Thomas Hudson. Latin documents of the *Exchequer Rolls* provide evidence of his English nationality ('anglis histrionibus dictis violaris', Irving 1861: 463), whilst a mortgage contract held within the *Register of Deeds* provisionally places the Hudson family in the north of England, at York. A sonnet penned by King James in praise of his musician claims that 'though a stranger yet he loued so dere' (Craigie 1941: 6). The *Register of Deeds* provides valuable (if minimal) information of his time at court, while the *Exchequer Rolls* place him at the Scottish court of James VI as the recipient of an annual wage between 1579 and 1595. Having had his position salaried and as the recipient of the largest wage of all his brothers working at the Scottish court, it is possible to surmise that Thomas was a most prolific musician. In June 1586, marking the pinnacle of Hudson's career, the violar was appointed master of the Chapel Royal. This latter appointment seems a clear sign of James's 'favouritism' of Thomas Hudson, quite likely linked to the musician positioning himself as James's 'ideal reader' through his translation of du Bartas's *La Judit* in 1584.

The artistic influence wielded by du Bartas in James's cultural manifesto is comprehensively and overtly magnified in the *Judith*. Hudson's translation is an often overlooked text, even within the scholarship relating to the 'Castalian Band'. However, recently, *The Apparelling of Truth* (2010) witnessed a change in critical fortune for

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<sup>150</sup> James VI 1584: Sig. P4<sup>r</sup>.

Hudson's translation, with two chapters closely concerned with the literary output of 1584. Despite the exclusivity implied in its chapter title ('The Prentise and the Printer: James VI and Thomas Vautrollier') John Corbett's examination of the relationship between the monarch and the Huguenot printer is far more inclusive, foregrounding the importance not only of the aforementioned literary partnership, but also defining an ideological community which notionally has four members (Vautrollier, King James, du Bartas and Thomas Hudson) rather than two.

Nicola Royan takes the study of Hudson's *Judith* further in the chapter which immediately follows Corbett's study, re-examining the thematic significance of *La Judit* in its historical context. Royan asserts that a narrative which seeks to affirm 'a "strong centralized authority" against those who conspire "against the lives of placed princes" was still relevant to the situation of James VI, newly released from his minority, after the Ruthven Raid of 1582-83' (2010: 95, quoting du Bartas). Royan asks bigger questions of the text, however; she acknowledges that the story of Judith is certainly problematic<sup>151</sup> given its openness to dangerous allegorical readings and that the eponymous heroine defies categorisation – Judith is at once both 'holy and lethal, humble and yet violent' – whilst in a Scottish context, writes Royan, 'it is very tempting to assume that Hudson's poem contains some coded references to Mary [Queen of Scots]' (2010: 97). Nonetheless, for Royan 'it is not so much Judith's womanhood which is threatening, but rather the centrality of history and reading in her narrative' (2010: 95). This recognition that the thematic underpinning of *La Judit* is the act of discerning reading is hugely significant, and one which the remaining part of this thesis chapter seeks to explore.

Although making substantial scholarly inroads into the study of Hudson's *Judith*, neither Corbett nor Royan makes the critical connection between the religio-political and cultural concerns of the *Judith* and the self-same concerns that are articulated in the king's

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<sup>151</sup> For two comprehensive studies on the literary configuration of Judith throughout the centuries see Edna Purdie, *The Story of Judith in German and English Literature* (Paris: H. Champion, 1927) and Margarita

*Essayes*. It is my contention that these texts are mutually reinforcing. That the king's 'manifesto' on reading drives the creation and interpretation of Hudson's epic is a fairly reasonable conclusion to reach, but that Hudson's *Judith* provides the tools to unlocking the king's *Essayes* is a contention which has not been posited before. Longstanding critical neglect belittles the cultural importance of Hudson's text – which on closer inspection seems to reflect the reading directives apparently defined by King James in his *Essayes*. As such, like the *Essayes*, this first larger-scale piece by Hudson seems also to be an 'apprentice' piece but, nevertheless, it is still another means through which to impart a royal lesson, namely one on how to read, and, furthermore, to apply those reading lessons in political practice.

*La Judit* renders one particular episode in Jewish lore in the form of an epic. This interpretation of the a-historical parable of the Apocrypha narrates the Assyrian attack on the Jewish nation, and its eventual salvation at the hand of a child of Israel, Judith.<sup>152</sup> Having witnessed the unlawful siege of her city, Bethulia, Judith enacts God's will by slaying Holophernes, leader of the Assyrian army, thus restoring her country to its own people. In the fulfilment of her divine quest, she is projected and sanctified as a justified sinner. Throughout, Judith turns to the Bible, finding inspirational narratives of triumph in the face of religio-political adversity. The predominant focus is, then, upon accurate interpretation of scripture, with Judith exalted as an exemplar of the increasingly literate reader who should procure inspiration from the Bible.

In his preface to *Judith* Hudson replicates the authorial modesty of his king's preface to 'Uranie', but also noticeably mimics the stance of du Bartas in the French original. Hudson explains how his patron, the king, suggested he translate *La Judit*, just as

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Stocker's *Judith – Sexual Warrior: Woman and Power in Western Culture* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 2002).

<sup>152</sup> 'In the sixteenth century another major shift took place in Germany. In his 'preface to the Book of Judith' (1534) Martin Luther expressed strong doubts about the authenticity of the tale and relegated it to the Apocrypha. He argued that the story was not so much a moral *exemplum* as, rather, an allegorical literary composition ('geistlich schöne Geticht'), Theodore Ziolkowski, 'Re-Visions, Fictionalizations, and



Princess Jeanne, Queen of Navarre encouraged du Bartas in his composing the French original.<sup>153</sup> Nevertheless, Hudson differentiates himself from the author of his source material; where du Bartas had been keen to distance himself in his preface from authorial responsibility and any criticism which could potentially ensue from the reading of *La Judit*,<sup>154</sup> Hudson takes an alternative approach, asking that any praise for his translation be dedicated towards the king for his suggesting the subject matter, and any faults to be attributed to the translator himself:

If I haue done well, let the praise redound to your Maiest. whose censure I have vnderlyen. If otherwise, let my default of skill, bee imputed to my selfe, or at the least my good entention allowed, whereby others may haue occasion to do better. (1941: 5, ll. 55-59)

The semantic and stylistic overlap between the sentiments articulated above and those expressed by James in his preface to ‘Uranie’ are overt and striking. Whilst claiming to be receptive to criticism, however, Hudson simultaneously portrays himself as unwilling to accept all the blame for errors that might come his way, as he attempts to distance himself from critical feedback.

For the English poet, the translation is neither ‘complete’ (in the sense of being a definitive or comprehensive or indeed aesthetically praiseworthy piece), nor was the idea to translate the work his. King James suggests *La Judit* to Hudson, in a conversation over dinner, as a text with which the courtier should engage and provide an interpretation for the king’s enjoyment:

Rashly I alledged that it was nothing impossible euen to followe the footsteppes of the same great Poet SALVST, and to translate his vearse [...] Whereupon, it pleased your Maiestie [...] to assigne me, *The Historie of Judith*, as an agreeable Subiect [...]. (1941: 4)

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Postfigurations: The Myth of Judith in the Twentieth Century’ in *Modern Language Review* Vol. 104 (April 2009), pp. 311-332: 315.

<sup>153</sup> Du Bartas writes: ‘Beloued Reader, it is about fourtene years past since I was commanded by the late Illustrate and most vertuous Princesse Iean, Queene of Navarre, to reduce the Historie of Judith, in forme of a Poeme Epique’ (Craigie 1941: 8).

<sup>154</sup> ‘If the effect hath not answered to my desire, I beseech thee to laye the fault upon her who proposed to me so meane a Theame of subject, and not on mee who could not honestly disobeye’. See Craigie 1941: 8.

By assigning this text to another to translate, the king thinks of, and begins to shape, an excellent reader in Hudson. This idea is galvanised by the fact that the *Judith* is an admittedly collaborative venture, penned by the English courtier but corrected by the king:

I suppose your Maiest. shall find litl of my Authors meaning pretermitted. Wherefore if thus much be done by me, who am of an other profession, and of so simple littrature, I leaue it to be cosidered by your Maiest. what such as ar cõsummat in letters & knowes the weightie words, the pithie sentences, the polished tearmes, and full efficacie of the English tounge would haue done. Receiue then Sir, of your owne Seruant, this litle worke at your owne commandement enterprised, corrected by your Maiest. owne hand, and dedicated to your owne highnesse. (1941: 4-5)

Having given over his ‘litle worke’ to his patron to amend in any way he sees fit, Hudson’s complete trust in his king’s skill as a proficient reader and biblical scholar is implicit. If du Bartas is the author of the work, and Hudson is the translator, then James enacts an editorial power over the final work.<sup>155</sup> Whereas James in his translation of ‘Uranie’ had inserted the French blocking of the original on the left hand page for his readers to assess for themselves the king’s accuracy in his translation efforts, Hudson chooses not to offer a comparative textual example. Hudson looks only to King James for his literary authority, with the ‘godly Poeme’ dedicated to his ‘Christian King,/To him who God in goodnesse hath erect/ For Princely Pillar, to his owne elect’ (Craigie 1941: 14, ll.13-20). The end result is a translation project which is collaborative, the project’s members interdependent from its composition to its completion.

The poem itself begins *in medias res*, describing the epic nature of the struggle between a valiant heroine and a male infidel. Although Judith is alluded to as a spiritual heroine in the early stages of the text, she is only given a proper introduction in the final stages of the ‘Thirde Booke’, when drought blights Bethulia.<sup>156</sup> With eyes like ‘fountains two’ (pg. 46) Judith is immediately distinct from her fellow Bethulians, having the reserve to generate tears when people are dying of thirst. The weeping female (the tears are

<sup>155</sup> More on James as an editor can be found in the final chapter of this thesis.

<sup>156</sup> ‘O wretched folke, who felt so hard a strife,/Drink, or not drink, both ways must lose their life./ For he that drank, and he that did refraine,/ Had of their enmies both an equall paine’. Craigie 1941: 49, ll. 277-80.

themselves symbolic of purification) turns to the Bible for sustenance and spiritual nourishment:

Right sad in sound th' *Almightie* she besought,  
 And on the sacred scriptures fed her thoughts.  
 Her prayers much auailde to raise her spreete  
 About the skye & so, the scriptures sweete:  
 A holy garden was where she might finde,  
 the medcyne meete for her molested minde [...]  
 The more she red, the more she wonder had  
 of *Ahuds* act, and hote desire her lad  
 t'ensue his virtue: yet her feeble kinde  
 Empeached oft the purpose of her minde  
 Proposing oft the horroure of the deed,  
 The feare of death, the danger to succede,  
 with haszard of her name, and more than that,  
 Though she likewise the peoples freedome gat:  
 yet for a man, this act more seemly weare,  
 than for a wife to handle sword or speare. (1941: 53, ll. 415-437)

The more avidly she reads the bible, the more inflamed her mind becomes towards action. Judith is, however, more than just a zealous reader of the Bible; the Bartasian Judith (as distinct from the Apocryphal figure) is constructed as a humanist reader. Reading is the means by which Judith's body, mind and spirit develop into something far stronger.<sup>157</sup>

Whilst searching for help within the Bible, and becoming ever more frenetic with despair, Nature intervenes on our heroine's behalf, generating a gusty breeze to unsettle Judith's reading practice:

While *Iudith* thus with *Iudith* did debate,  
 A puft of winde blew downe that leafe by fate:  
 Discovering vp the storie of *Iaell* how  
 she droue a naile into *Sisaras* brow,  
 And slew that Pagan sleeping on her bed  
 Who from the *Hebrewes* furious hoste was fled.  
 In teaching vs albeit a tyrant flee,  
 yet can he not auoyde the lords decree. (Hudson 1584: 47, ll. 437-440)

It is possible to find in this godly intervention a viable comparison with the 'Mount Ventoux' moment of Petrarch (outlined in the introductory chapter of this thesis). In the

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<sup>157</sup> When we first encounter Judith she has not yet learnt how to use scripture. Her prayers and devout faith serve to 'raise her spreete/Above the skye' (Craigie 1941: 53, ll. 17-18), but her physicality binds her to the earth. She is described at the outset as being 'feeble', and shown to be indecisive. These characteristics are wholly attributed to her femininity. See Royan's chapter in McGinley and Royan (2010: pp. 94-104) for a more detailed discussion of gender politics in *The Historie of Judith*.

case of Hudson's text, the moment of biblical revelation is unquestionably the pivotal scene: it provides Judith with the means by which to eventually secure some form of (re)resolution to her moral dilemma. Not only does she find during the course of her zealous and pointed reading of scripture the biblical precept for the task she will soon enact, but crucially she also finds an abundance of exemplars to guide her in that task's execution.

As the wind subsides, the pages of the Bible settle on the story of Jael. This particular biblical narrative offers Judith a parallel for her own dilemma. In this narrative, found in the Book of Judges, Jael delivers Israel from the attacks of King Jabin, and does so by slaying the tyrant as he sleeps. Jael's task is foretold in a prophecy by the prophetess Deborah, and thus her undertaking (and her exercise of the capacity to interpret), like Judith's, is divinely ordained. Having upset Judith's reading, nature's intervention has, paradoxically, forced the Bethulian to become more focussed in her interpretation of scripture, as she is directed towards passages of real spiritual significance. In compelling Judith's attention towards the story of Jael, God has willed that she read it and act upon her learning. The devout heroine does exactly this, slaying the leader of the Assyrian army, Holophernes, as he sleeps, in what is almost a carbon copy of Jael's slaying of Sisera. In this respect it is clear to see an articulation with the message promulgated by James VI to the implied reader of his *Essayes*, namely to learn to read correctly, and more particularly, to recognise God's image reflected in the text and in the act of reading, of contemplating creation.

Judith occupies the central position of this text, yet conversely she does not articulate her piety, either verbally or through the written word. Her body becomes a parchment or canvas *by proxy*. She scripts herself as a pastiche of those victorious biblical heroines of whom she has read, adorning herself for the inevitable meeting with the tyrant Holophernes.<sup>158</sup> Additionally, she is also scripted as a spiritual guide and moral compass by

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<sup>158</sup> Conforming to the many conventions of epic, Judith is seen to protect herself with the – in this case cosmetic – weapons of war. Previously regarded as a hindrance, Judith here employs her femininity to better effect: 'A *Carbuncle* on her Christall brow she pight,/ whose firie gleames expeld the shadie night./

other characters within the poem. Seeing Judith exit the city gates to meet her fate with Holophernes, the watchman Achior is compelled to narrate the story of her life thus far to his companion on the watch, Carmis. This narrative is delivered in a tripartite structure (her maidenhood, her married years and her widowhood), hinting at the didactic intent of the text as a whole. We are told that during her youth Judith's father had controlled her studies, directing her towards the Bible as the only truly inerrant text, and as the one through which to live well:

So wise *Merari* all his studie tilde,  
to facion well the maners of this childe,  
that in his age he might of her retire,  
Both honour & confort to his harts desire:  
For looke how soone her childish tounge could chat  
as children do, of this thing or of that.  
He taught her not to read inuentions vaine,  
As fathers dayly do that are prophaine:  
But in the holy scriptures made her reade [...]. (Hudson 1584: 54, ll.99-107)

As the recipient of a wholly prescriptive education at the hands of the prolific George Buchanan, James VI undoubtedly would have found in Judith a likeness of himself. Indeed, Merari's imperative to his daughter not to read 'inuentions vaine' finds articulation within James's own 'Reulis and Cautelis'<sup>159</sup> (although somewhat refracted, as the king argues that poets should focus upon the composition of a poetics founded upon scriptural doctrine). Having willingly embraced the educational directives of her father, we might reasonably argue that Judith is the epitome of the 'favourable reader' towards whom his *Essayes* is directed. Although not knowing Judith's reasons for leaving camp that night, Achior is convinced that, having lived a pious existence all her life, Judith's intentions are good and that her actions that evening will be conducive to God's work ('I can nought/ tell wher she goes, much les whats in her thought./ But if we may of passed things collect/ the things to come: then may we well aspect/ Great good of her', Craigie 1941: 65, ll. 311-319).

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Vpon her head a siluer crisp she pind,/ Lose wauing on her shoulders with the wind./ Gold, band her golden haire: her yvrie neck,/ the Rubies rich, and Saphirs blew did deck./ And at her eare, a Pearle of greater vallew/ ther hong[...]', Hudson 1584: 52, ll.21-30.

If we accept the critical narrative offered by this thesis (that James's *Essayes* were the vehicle through which he promoted an ideology for reading) then we might also be willing to accept that Hudson's *Judith* offers the epitome of the "Jamesian" reader in the figure of the eponymous heroine. More than this, however, Judith might also reasonably be acknowledged as the archetypal female of the European age of Reformations. Proving herself religio-politically active, Judith then engages in leisure pursuits typical of a sixteenth-century European self-educating female. Whilst her Bethulian counterparts are seen to entertain men through dance, Judith opts for a more reserved activity in needlework<sup>160</sup> with which to lengthen her days and through which to give voice to her religio-political ideals.<sup>161</sup> Unable to verbally articulate her views, Judith represents her understanding of scripture pictorially, sewing rich tapestries of the stories she has consumed.<sup>162</sup> This heroine does not undertake poetic composition but digests and reproduces her learning in various ways. Her spiritual journey witnesses the evolution of her creative impulses so that she may read and channel her interpretive skills in an alternative way, presciently foreshadowing the literary scholarship of Thomas Hudson and King James VI in 1584.

*La Judit* was revived for an English audience in 1614 by the aforementioned English Bartasian acolyte, Joshua Sylvester. Where Hudson's 'Englising' had been dedicated to his king and sponsor, Sylvester's translation of 1614 was dedicated to Queen Anne, 'The Sovereign of Women'. Although Sylvester's title, *Bethulia's Rescue*, implied a subtle shift in focus from the original (rather than the eponymous heroine of both du

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<sup>159</sup> James VI 1584, Cap. VI., Sig. [Mij].

<sup>160</sup> For an illuminating study of this topic in a Scottish context, see Margaret Swain, *The Needlework of Mary Queen of Scots*, Reinhold (New York and London, 1973).

<sup>161</sup> 'This prudent Dame deltyed not in daunce,/Nor sitting vp nor did her selfe aduance:/ In publicke place, where playes & banquets beene [...]/ But rather vnderstanding such a trade,/ Had bene the wrak of many- a modest mayd [...]/ she kept at home her fathers habitation,/ Both day and night in godly conuersation', Hudson 1584: 55, ll. 133-142.

<sup>162</sup> Judith's behaviour is also hugely reminiscent of the story of Philomela, rendered in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In the mythological narrative, Philomela, having been raped by Tereus (her sister's husband) has her tongue removed by her assailant. As a consequence, Philomela is prevented from recounting the harrowing details of her ordeal. Unable to verbally articulate what she has encountered,

Bartas's and Hudson's treatment of the Apocryphal tale, Sylvester opts to foreground the consequences of Judith's actions), the opening sequence of *Bethulia's Rescue* is a closer semantic antecedent to du Bartas's *La Judit* than Hudson's *Historie*:

I sing the *Vertues* and the valiant Deed  
 Of *th'Hebrew Widow*, that so bravely freed  
*Bethulian-Doors* from *Babylonian-Dread* [...]  
 And You, *great Comfort of Great Britain's King*,  
*Whose Vertues here I under JUDITH sing*:  
*Thrice-royal ANNE, vouchsafe auspicious Rayes*  
*Of Princely Favour on these Pious Layes*  
*(Composed first upon a Queen's Command*  
*Disposed next into a Queen's own hand,*  
*Transposed now to a more Queen's protection:*  
*As most peculiar to all Queens Perfection.)* (1969: 47, ll. 1-11)

Whilst Sylvester's rendering of du Bartas's text is far more aesthetically meritorious than Hudson's, we must recognise and give credit to Hudson's often-overlooked translation of this apocryphal text; in the first instance the 1584 publication (like James's *Essayes*) inspired further writers in the British Isles to engage with the work of du Bartas. Yet, more importantly, perhaps Hudson's translation interacts with (on a number of levels) the conceit developed by his king in the *The Essayes* that apposite reading practice must inform the writing process throughout. It is reading, and therefore not writing or composition, which is given thematic precedence in both Hudson's *Judith*, and James's *Essayes*.

### ***Textual Reciprocity***

In a letter from James VI to du Bartas – following on from the relative literary success of the *Essayes* – the French poet and courtier is warmly invited to take residence at James's Edinburgh court in the summer of the following year:

Je vous pries [*sic*] donques tréaffectueusement de prendre tant de peine que de venir icy au commencement de l'esté prochain, et mesmé en May s'il est possible. Le voyage n'est point long; vous pouvés passer par terre, demeurer icy aussi peu de temps que vous voudrés. Non obstant les troubles je m'assure que le Roy de Navarre le trouvera bon, pour si peu de temps, car

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Philomela weaves a tapestry for her sister, Procne, in which she visually conveys the betrayal enacted by Tereus.

je luy ay aussi escrit pour ce mesme effect, et je m'asseure que vous viendrez le plus volontiers puis que nous avons *communes deos*.<sup>163</sup>

Ignoring for the moment the incidentals and logistics of the trip, the most immediately striking contention is that the king believes that du Bartas will be moved to visit the Scottish court because it is home to one with whom he shares a religious affiliation (*communes deos*). There is a subtle alteration in the authoritative position inhabited by King James in this letter from the humble authorial space inhabited in the *Essayes*. Although he continues to lavish praise upon his favourite French poet,<sup>164</sup> James is no longer the subordinate poetic 'prentise' of du Bartas. In this envoi, James is at once both the monarch of his own small kingdom and a well-qualified disciple in God's spiritual kingdom.

Adhering almost to the letter of his invitation, du Bartas arrived on the shores of Scotland in c.May 1587 to enjoy the hospitality of a great admirer. Whilst James had purposely endeavoured to have du Bartas spend time at the Scottish court discussing the finer intricacies of their shared faith, it seems that the poet (and his patron, the king of Navarre) missed the official memorandum. For rather than cultural and spiritual exchange being at the forefront of du Bartas's consciousness, the French poet came charged with a very political remit to instigate negotiations for marital union between James and the sister of Henry of Navarre.<sup>165</sup> Notwithstanding his own (and his realm's) relative financial impoverishment, James drew upon every monetary reserve he could source within his

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<sup>163</sup> The letter reads: 'I beg of you most affectionately that you will take the trouble to come here at the beginning of next summer, even in May, if it is at all possible. The trip is not long, you can come by land, and stay here for as little time as you wish. Notwithstanding the trouble, I re-assure myself that the King of Navarre will agree to this, for such a short space of time, because I have also written to him to the same effect, and I re-assure myself that you will come most willingly, because we have *communes deos*'. The French original is appended to Holmes *et al.*, Vol I., 1977: 203-204.

<sup>164</sup> He continues to say 'N'estimes, OSalluste, qu'en usant de ces epithetes envers vous je me veuille servir de la faulse flatterire, ains de deue et vraye louange de la vertu, la haulte louange de laquelle ne doyt estre passee en silence, habitante en personne quelquonque'. Paraphrased in English, James writes 'Please do not assume that by using such epithets towards yourself that I wish to suggest false flattery, as true adoration of vhttp://archive.org/stream/extractfromdes2200belluoft#page/80/mode/2upirtue cannot be offered in silence'. Letter appended to Holmes *et al.* 1977: 203-204

<sup>165</sup> Du Bartas was ultimately unsuccessful in this latter charge.



kingdom to ensure that his Scottish hospitality did not leave the French delegation wanting. The warm reception made an indelible impression:

The Gascons enjoyed themselves greatly in Scotland, particularly with the pleasures of the chase. The poet wrote on July 16, 1587, to Josias Mercier in London that the muse Calliope had been transformed into a Diana, so busy were they with hunting deer and hares. (Holmes *et al.* 1977: 21)

On his departure from Scotland, as the French ambassador at the Scottish court noted, du Bartas took with him a royally-bestowed knighthood, valuable gifts including a gold chain,<sup>166</sup> a velvet riding saddle<sup>167</sup> and the galvanised literary adulation of the Scottish monarch.

In 1591, in his second major publication, James continues to stress the importance of du Bartas as a ‘Christian Muse’, but more importantly, it is a text which witnesses a concerted continuation of the readerly objectives articulated by the literary developments of 1584. Like the *Essayes*, the multivalent nature of *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at vacant Houres* (1591) initially suggests that this collection is a gathering of unrelated texts, or topical one-off pieces, important in themselves and at the point of original composition. The title conferred upon the collection does little to alleviate the interpretational problem. By loudly proclaiming itself the work of King James VI (as opposed to concealing his authorial identity as he had done in the *Essayes*), the 1591 publication seems to proudly announce itself and its import on the literary stage. Nevertheless, the magnanimity of the royally-authored text is fleeting, diminished somewhat by the titular qualifications firstly describing the works contained within as ‘poeticall exercises’ – suggesting their ephemeral

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<sup>166</sup> ‘The Kinge, besides all his costs which he deffraied, gratefyed Du Bartas at his departure, with a chaine of 1000<sup>s</sup> and as much money, made him knight, and accompanyed him to the sea side, wher he made him promise to retourn againe.’

<sup>167</sup> The opulent gift of a velvet saddle is recorded in the Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, on 6 September 1587: ‘Comperet Jhonn Carmichaell of that ilk and productet ane lettre fra the Kings Maiestie, quhairin his Grace airnestly desyres to borrow of the towne ane hundreth crownis for avanceing of his Graces honorabill effaires, as namelie to be bestowet on the preparatioun of certane veluott saidills to be propynet be his Grace to Sir William Salust of Bartes, knight, Frayncheman, and counsalour to the King of Navar, as at mair lenth is contenit in the said lettre subscriyuet be the Kings Grace, with the quhilk the said provest, baillies, counsall and deykins beand avyset thay willingly accordet and agreit thairto, and ordanet the samyn to be tayne vpoun thair commoun guid for annuell at ten of the hundredth [...]’, from ‘Extracts from the Records: 1587, Jul-Sept’, Extracts from the Records of

significance – and secondly claiming that they have been composed ‘at vacand heures’, only when the matters of statecraft have presumably been addressed.<sup>168</sup>

The consciously contrived like-for-like literary gifting between du Bartas and King James in *Vacand Houres*<sup>169</sup> leads Campbell to assert that ‘the whole work constitutes a most admirable record of literary reciprocity.’<sup>170</sup> For example, the prefatory note to his translation of the king’s ‘Lepanto’ provides ample evidence of the French poet’s literary gratitude towards the Scottish monarch:

He! fusse-je vrayment, o Phoenix escossois,  
 Ou l’ombre de ton corps, ou l’echo de ta voix,  
 Si je n’avoy l’azur, l’or, et l’argent encore  
 Dont ton plumage astre brillamment s’honore,  
 Au moins j’auroy ta forme ; et si mon rude vers  
 N’exprimoit la douceur de tant d’accords divers,  
 Il retiendrait quelque air de tes voix plus qu’humaines,  
 Mais, pies, taisez-vous pour ouyr les Camoenes. (McClure 1990: 97)

Du Bartas’s poem exhibits an identical air of flattery as displayed in the king’s preface to the ‘Uranie’. Self-deprecating in his approach, du Bartas signals his desire to emulate the poetic accomplishment of James VI. Cleverly evoking the memory of the king’s ‘Phoenix’, the French poet expresses his wish to step out of the shadow of James’s physical magnificence to echo his poetic voice. McClure (1990) argues that in returning the favour, du Bartas – who died a year before the *Poeticall Exercises* were published – shows a genuine admiration for the king, a sentiment which might perhaps be exaggerated or feigned by Scottish courtiers of aspiring poets seeking artistic benefaction. Minus the pressure of writing for patronage, du Bartas’s ‘dignified compliment is surely a genuine

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the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1573-1589 (1882) <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=58632>> [Accessed 10 June 2013], pp. 494-502.

<sup>168</sup> The greatly embellished title page of *Vacant Houres* heightens the confusion – stylistically it is closer to the much later and infinitely grand 1616 *Workes* than it is the *Essayes*. This can be explained by the fact that it is firstly clearly a self-admittedly royal work, and secondly by the change in printer from the *Essayes* to the *Vacand Houres*. By 1591, Thomas Vautrollier had given way to Robert Waldegrave as the official printer to the king.

<sup>169</sup> A tri-partite structure is home to James’s translation of the Preface to the Second Week of Du Bartas, and a vernacular rendering of the Frenchman’s *The Furies*, and Du Bartas’ French translation of the king’s own ‘Lepanto’ replete with sycophantic poem from the translator to the author.

<sup>170</sup> Campbell 1959: 82.

expression of regard'.<sup>171</sup> McClure's assertion is justified through du Bartas' invocation of Camoens' *Lusiads*<sup>172</sup> in the final line, which places the 'Lepanto' of James VI in a distinguished trajectory of European epic poetry.

Whilst respectfully acknowledging the king's competency in poetic composition, du Bartas also exhibits an overriding gratitude towards the man who has revived his work for a new audience, James VI. Like the Scottish phoenix that the French poet glorifies in the dedication to his translation of 'Lepanto', the work of du Bartas and its projected theodicy are imbued with fresh purpose. James is here sanctified by the French poet as 'plus qu'humaines', whilst comparison of James with the Phoenix (a bird who dies and is reborn) brings the king into symbolic alignment with Christ. In this reading, du Bartas is thus the divine apostle, and James the God-like king. Regardless of the political ambiguity of the key text within the 1591 publication – its *Lepanto*<sup>173</sup> – the concentration of reciprocal poetics in this second publication is crucial to our understanding of the way in which James engages with reading in this period. There is, then, the sense that James knew and appreciated the ways in which a reciprocal poetics emanating from a clearly-defined ideological community could strengthen both his position as a 'godly' monarch, in the eyes of his subjects and those interested onlookers.

Comprehensive studies into the literary transaction between King James, du Bartas and their literary acolytes in England – Campbell (1959), Prescott (1968),<sup>174</sup> Richards

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<sup>171</sup> J. Derrick McClure, 'O Phoenix Escossois': James VI as Poet', in *A Day Estivall – Essays on the Music, Poetry and History of Scotland and England and Poems Previously Unpublished*, Eds. Gardner-Medwin and Williams (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1990), pg. 97.

<sup>172</sup> Camoens' *Lusiads* (first published in 1572), a poem commemorating the pioneering voyages of discovery by the Portuguese, is regarded by many as one of the greatest Renaissance epics. The *Lusiads* is considered to be predominantly concerned with the concept of nationhood, and more specifically with the potential threats to national stability, threats posed both from external enemies and also from a fundamental lack of insight and integrity from those within the country. All of these topics would have been of great interest to James VI.

<sup>173</sup> For a fairly comprehensive study of *Lepanto* see Peter C. Herman, "'Best of Poets, best of Kings": King James VI and I and the Scene of Monarchic Verse' in Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 62-103. Daniel Fischlin has elsewhere called *Lepanto* 'an empowering literary response to the contingencies of sovereign rule by a monarch struggling to achieve a modicum of internal political stability'. See Daniel Fischlin, "Like a Mercenary Poet': The Politics and Poetics of James VI's *Lepanto*." In Sally Mapstone, Ed., *Older Scots Literature* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2005), pp. 540-59, 555.

<sup>174</sup> Anne Lake Prescott, 'The reception of Du Bartas in England', *Studies in the Renaissance*, Vol. 15 (1968), pp. 144-73, 144-5.

(2008)<sup>175</sup> and Grafton and Jardine (1990)<sup>176</sup> – have identified and consolidated through research the abiding influence and continued transmission of du Bartas in England. As Anne Lake Prescott has asserted

‘to many Englishmen from the 1580s until the shift of taste in the 1660s du Bartas was the very type of the “divine poet” [...] du Bartas was a ‘Christian Homer’, said the learned Gabriel Harvey [...] such an estimate now seems peculiar, but among those who would have agreed that [he] was a great poet were Spenser, Sidney, Daniel, Drayton, Walton, and probably Milton, who borrowed some phrases for *Paradise Lost*’. (1968: 144)

Within his compendious first publication, the king certainly constructs himself as a multivalent text to be read by his subjects, but more importantly than this perhaps, he pieces together a carefully constructed paradigm of discerning reading practices. Although this collection might initially be presented as the work of a mere ‘prentise’, it is nevertheless far from novice in its scope. More often than not it is the case that the young monarch adopts a tutelary stance from which to impart invaluable information on how to read well, a lesson to which his readers presumably ought to subscribe. From start to finish, James adheres to a moderate and nuanced version of Protestantism, specifically in his belief that discriminate reading leads to the comprehension of God’s word and doctrine in scripture. In the ‘Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poet’, James himself suggests that the very best of poets ought to know the importance of reading, the value of re-reading and crucially the worth of remembering the lessons imparted from each text – it should be the objective of every man ‘with memorie to keip quhat he dois reid’ (1584: sig [kiiij], l. 8).

James’ Protestant (in both theological and political terms) understanding of the bible as it related to kingship is apparent in his authorial stance in the *Essayes*, which is craftily poised between the tutelary and the inexpert, but remains, at all times, predicated upon theological tenets. Hudson’s *Judith* is, on the other hand, a complete embodiment of James’ preferred poetics, a poem infused with a fundamental Christian-humanist impetus.

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<sup>175</sup> Jennifer Richards, ‘Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry’, *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 71 (2008), pp. 303-321.

<sup>176</sup> Grafton and Jardine 1990: 30-78.

Critical re-evaluation of both the *Essayes of a Prentise* and *Judith* reveal a complimentary relationship between both, where an intimate understanding of one repays a qualitative reading of the other. Furthermore, regardless of authorial status, it is arguably the case that neither one of these works should take complete precedence over the other. A comparative analysis lays bare a clear readerly agenda lying at the heart of the 1584 publication activity. It is here, rather than in any ‘Castalian Band’ poetics, that the Jamesian-inspired cultural shift finds its first, and arguably most enduring, articulation. The following chapter will suggest avenues through which these readerly impulses were evolved by James as he moved from poetry to prose, and from the King of Scotland to the King of Scotland, England, Wales, and Ireland.

## Chapter 4: Diligent and Earnest Readers - The *Basilikon Doron* (c.1598)

‘Be diligent and earnest in your studies, that [...] I may praise you for your progress in learning’<sup>177</sup>

### *Introduction*

Modern literary-critical and historicist approaches towards the interpretation of *Basilikon Doron* and *Trew Law* have been surprisingly concurrent, acquiescent in the estimation that the two major prose works of James VI (written in or around 1598 and published in 1599) are notional companions and ought to be scrutinised accordingly as a pair.<sup>178</sup> Whilst it has long been accepted that *Trew Law* theoretically underpinned the *Basilikon Doron*, the stylistic divergence of the latter text from the former at once suggests that, although sharing thematic similarities, these prose works are not one and the same thing and, more specifically, were originally produced (and then subsequently reproduced<sup>179</sup>) to serve quite different purposes.<sup>180</sup> Even the most superficially aesthetic comparison makes a number of ostensible differences apparent. Each individual text warrants further reconsideration; when a revisionist close interpretation is carried out on the *Basilikon* (as this chapter will

<sup>177</sup> Letter from King James VI to Prince Henry, in Akrigg 1984: 219.

<sup>178</sup> ‘*Basilikon Doron* is a book of practical advice rather than abstract theory. It assumed the principles of the *Trew Law* without bothering to prove them’ (Sommerville 2006: xix). See also Jenny Wormald’s chapter, ‘James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and the English Translation’, in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, edited by L.L. Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 36-54.

<sup>179</sup> James Doelman has described the readerly furore surrounding the re-edition of James’s *Basilikon* in 1603: ‘James Stewart was declared the new King of England on the morning of March 24 1603: according to the Venetian Agent Scaramelli, the London presses began printing a new edition of his book *Basilikon Doron* within an hour of the Queen’s death’, and by March 28 copies were available. James’s English subjects seized upon *Basilikon* as a guide to their largely unknown and foreign king [...] The work was a tremendous publishing success: the first edition was printed by a number of different printers to meet the intense demand, and by April 13, up to 16,000 copies had probably been printed. The work went through eight English editions in the Spring of 1603, and Latin and Welsh translations were also published in London’. James Doelman, ‘“A King of thine own Heart”: The English reception of King James VI and I’s *Basilikon Doron*’ in *The Seventeenth Century* 9.1 (Spring 1994), pp.1-9, 1. In an amusing analogy, Jenny Wormald has described the clamour to own a copy of *Basilikon* as being akin to the contemporary snapping up of a souvenir coronation mug. See Wormald 1991: 51-52.

<sup>180</sup> *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* first appeared in print in 1598, published by the Edinburgh-based printer to the king, Robert Waldegrave. Like the *Essayes*, printed by Thomas Vautrollier fourteen years previously, this text purposely did not bear the monarch’s name on first publication. Yet the authorial anonymity is not impenetrable for the reader of the *Trew Law* (just as the authorship of the *Essayes* had been an open secret) as James offers a number of textual clues to his identity, not least the Greek signature, φιλοπατρις (‘A Lover of his Country’) by which he ends his Address to the Reader. As J.H. Burns outlines, the *Trew Law* has been called an ‘academic treatise’ by historians, yet Burns himself finds it ‘difficult to accept that designation’, owing to the fact that James himself twice employs the assignation ‘pamphlet’ in his ‘Advert to the Reader’ to describe his prose work. This notion is afforded validity when the physical make-up of the first edition of this ‘treatise’ is closely scrutinised. The lavish typescript and gold-leaf embellishments of the first edition of the *Basilikon Doron* are nowhere to be found in the ascetic first edition of the *Trew Law*.

come to do), a distinct authorial agenda and clearly defined set of literary concerns are brought into sharp focus, more so, one might reasonably posit, than has been wholly visible in the critical elision of the difference between political pamphlet and advice manual.

A seemingly specious connection has also been made between the poetic ‘rule book’ ensconced within the *Essayes*, and the later manual of fatherly advice composed by James in 1598. Jack and Rozendaal (1997) assert that the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ and *Basilikon Doron* could, potentially, be bracketed together and considered complementary works. For those readers primed by a generation of modern critical discourse to (dis)regard James’s later prose works as arid landscapes inhabited by sterile political philosophy, divine right theories and aspirational politics, and as spaces where the precocious poetic ambition of the 1580s is absent, Jack and Rozendaal’s reading is perhaps not the most congruent, nor indeed obvious, one to apply. It is, however, certainly worth further consideration. In the estimations of Jack and Rozendaal *Basilikon* exemplifies the monarch at his best - not as a politician but as a ‘creative writer’, in the same manner (we might infer) as the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ exemplified a scholarly monarch most interested in the trappings of poetic creativity. Jack and Rozendaal imply that the *Basilikon* is the ultimate realisation of the creativity hinted at in the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ – the king finds his literary comfort zone in prose for it is there that his ‘analytical and logical mind can express itself directly’.<sup>181</sup>

Jack and Rozendaal’s conclusion is predicated on a comparative reading of a very slight poetic treatise (constituting a minimal section of a much wider collection), and the far more comprehensive kingly advice manual published in 1599. Yet, rigorous scrutiny of the *Essayes* (as a whole) and *Basilikon* serves to validate the pairing of James’s seminal publication with his more mature ‘royal gift’. Taking as its starting point the conceit that the *Basilikon* exists as a consolidation (or progression, even) of James’s literary ideas as

set out in his *Essayes*, this chapter seeks to interrogate the ‘literary’ impulses driving James in the composition of a didactic and physical bequest to his son. This chapter will also attempt to document patterns of literary continuity and sites of intersection between James’s ‘prentise’ piece, the ‘readerly’ agenda contained therein, and the greatly matured tutelary voice of the *Basilikon*. It will suggest the ways in which James can be seen not only enacting the rules imparted by Urania in *Essayes*, but also working as a guide, and literally giving life to the ‘Muse Chrestiene’. The discussion will predominantly centre on the 1598 edition of the *Basilikon*<sup>182</sup> in order to show how this text initially represented a concerted effort on James’s part to gift his son a stylised educational textbook and a highly ornate material object to cherish, towards which Henry could turn time and again for continued spiritual consultation and sobering monarchical lessons to boot.

### ***Composition and revelation***

Aside from the authorised Bible bearing the king’s name, the *Basilikon Doron* is perhaps the single text for which James VI and I is best known. Notwithstanding the staggered publication dates of the *Trew Law* and the *Basilikon*, it is accepted in literary-critical and historical narratives that both texts were written in 1598, when James’s heir, Henry, was only four years of age. As the Stewart dynastic successions had proven, and as James would have no doubt been painfully aware from his own experience,<sup>183</sup> it was never too early for a prospective monarch to be educated in the laws of kingship. In a pseudo-subversion of the ‘advice to princes’ literary tradition, King James picks up his pen and

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<sup>181</sup> Jack and Rozendaal 1997: 460.

<sup>182</sup> This is not, however, to deny the importance of the subsequent editions of the *Basilikon*, which are in themselves important. The 1598 *Basilikon* projects an undiluted kingly manifesto, as opposed to a modified edition catering for a much larger and diverse audience of subjects and stakeholders.

<sup>183</sup> The dynastic succession pattern in Scotland, from James IV to James VI, was marked by prolonged periods of regency rule as the result of the premature ascension to the throne of four consecutive monarchs. At the moment of ascension, these royals ranged from infancy (in the worst case) to mid-adolescence (in the best). James IV’s crown was conferred at the age of fifteen, following the political demise of his father at the hands of a Scottish rebel faction. James IV’s successor, James V, was a tender seventeen months old when his father died at the Battle of Flodden (1513). The death of James V (1542) prolonged the accursed dynastic luck of the Stewarts; his sole surviving child, Mary, was a mere six days old when her father died, leaving Mary’s mother, Mary of Guise, to rule Scotland in her stead until she came of age. James VI might seem the exception to the rule, in that his mother was still alive - not to mention a real political threat - at the point of his accession. Yet, Mary’s forced abdication in 1567 meant that James VI was no more than thirteen months old on his coronation.



writes in anticipation of his heir's coronation (in the event of James's enforced deposition, or, more realistically, upon James's natural death). As Craigie (1950) explicates, a relatively serious illness, contracted in the winter of 1598 (and lasting into the early months of 1599) left King James seriously contemplating his own mortality. Believing that he was close to death, James had two major regrets; firstly, that should he die now, he would miss succeeding Elizabeth as England's sovereign and secondly that he would leave behind a successor who had yet to embark upon his monarchical training, and who, 'lacking a father's care, might never receive it'.<sup>184</sup> This is clearly a pre-emptive strike, ensuring that Henry (or, in the event of James's premature death, those who may be called to rule in the infant's stead) were well advised.<sup>185</sup>

Despite the autograph hand of the original (penned in Middle Scots), some critics have been convinced that the *Basilikon* is a work of literary collaboration. Finding James's apparent over-dependency on *amanuenses* too obvious to ignore, D.H. Willson concludes that 'in preparing the *Basilikon Doron*, [James] had the assistance of Sir James Sempill,<sup>186</sup> a writer of some learning and dialectic skill whom James had known from boyhood'.<sup>187</sup> Perhaps the caveat ought to be included here that James Sempill is now thought to have

<sup>184</sup> James Craigie, 'The *Basilikon Doron* of King James I', *The Library* (1948), pp. 22-31. <<http://library.oxfordjournals.org/>> [accessed February 16 2012].

<sup>185</sup> The concerted attempts to thoroughly prepare Henry for his kingly duties only served to reinforce the burdensome weight of expectation resting already on the young prince's shoulders. This hope had been partially witnessed in the outlandish baptismal celebrations for Henry which had taken place at Stirling Castle on 23 August 1594. Palpable excitement for the future sovereign potential of Prince Henry had also been evident in both Scotland and England following James's accession to his southern throne. Whilst the outpouring of grief in the numerous prose and poetry pieces which met his death in 1613 overwhelmingly supports this notion, it is perhaps the various illustrations and portraits produced throughout Henry's short lifetime that best evidence the collective hope in some circles for the future success of a Protestant Britain, with Henry at the helm. For one of the most skilled painterly depictions of a lithe, handsome, and athletic Prince Henry, see Oliver Isaac's miniature of 1612, in the British Galleries, room 56e, case 6.

<sup>186</sup> 'Courtier and religious controversialist', Sempill's parents had been favourites of Mary Queen of Scots during her reign. James Stuart and James Sempill were classmates under the tutelage of Buchanan, and later Sempill would write of his childhood friend and monarch in nothing but glowing terms. To Sempill, King James was 'the king of my birth, the master of my service, the father of my name, framer of my nature, and the Gamaliel of my education, at whose feet (no, at whose elbow and from whose mouth) I confess I have suckt the best of whatsoever may be thought good in me. (Sempill, sig. A2v)'. Stephen Wright, "Sempill, Sir James (1566?-1626)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Online ed. Ed. Lawrence Goldman. Oxford: Oxford University Press <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25073>> [accessed 6 March 2012]

<sup>187</sup> D.H. Willson, 'James I and his Literary Assistants', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 8, No. 1, University of California Press (Nov. 1994) pp. 35-97, 38. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3815864>.

helped the king prepare his text for print, rather than helped compose it. Sempill's assistance was apparently rewarded by James, in the form of the gift of one of the coveted 'limited editions' of the *Basilikon*. Jack (1970) speculatively nominated a second assistant in the composition of the *Basilikon*. Accordingly, the poet (and later Secretary of State to Queen Anne), William Fowler, was James's

most active associate in compiling his literary treatise [...] Fowler may well have used his literary talents to retain James's favour at a time when he [Fowler] could well have sunk into obscurity.<sup>188</sup>

This connection, 'triggered by the presence among the Fowler manuscripts now preserved in the NLS of a number of sheets titled 'Noates for basilikon doron'',<sup>189</sup> has been refuted recently by Petrina (2009), who claims that Jack's assertions are founded on a 'hasty perusal' (2009: 98) of the material.<sup>190</sup> As Petrina makes clear, the 'notes' do contain 'a number of corrections or variant readings to the *Basilikon Doron*'. Often, however, the 'word, phrase or sentence' of these corrections correspond 'not to the text as we find it in the 1599 edition, but to the 1603 edition, also printed by Waldegrave' (2009: 98).

Whatever the compositional circumstances of the first edition, only seven copies were printed in 1599. These first quartos, of eight unnumbered and 160 numbered pages, far from austere, with lavish italic script, printer's embellishments, and liberal margins imitating the topography of the finest manuscripts of the period, had been intended (as the very title of the work suggests) as a gift from King James to his first-born son. Where vacant space was incredibly difficult to source in the first edition of the *Trew Law* (the margins are slender, the type runs on to the very end of the page, whilst the paper is of poor quality to the point of pellucidity), the same cannot be said of the spaciouly

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<sup>188</sup> R.D.S. Jack, 'William Fowler and Italian Literature', *Modern Language Review* 65 (1970), pp.481-92, 490.

<sup>189</sup> Alessandra Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Modern Translations of The Prince* (Farnam; Surrey: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 98.

<sup>190</sup> As Petrina (2009: 98 n.42) notes, Jack (1970) goes further; in bringing the two authors together as a seeming editorial partnership, Jack suggests that the nature of the literary relationship between king and poet was of 'mutual correction' (1970: 98, n.42). The implication of this assertion is that King James might well have aided Fowler's translation of Machiavelli's *Il Principe* to the same extent that William Fowler (purportedly, in Jack's reading) aided James with the composition of the *Basilikon* in 1598. The

uncluttered ‘Royal Gift’, where the text is (without exception) centred on the page, and wider line-spaced than the political pamphlet.<sup>191</sup>

As James clarified in later editions, the fact that only seven copies<sup>192</sup> were produced was due to the fact that he had only ever intended this prose work to be circulated amongst a select band of trusted court familiars.<sup>193</sup> In a re-edition of the *Basilikon Doron*<sup>194</sup> the king is keen to reiterate the importance of the initial minimal print run. A new addition to the work – the lengthy address to the ‘charitable’ reader – allows James to reiterate his motives:

I thought it no waies conuenient, nor comelie, that either it should to all be proclaimed, which to one onely appertained [...] And therefore [...] I onely permitted seaven of them to be printed, the printer being first sworn for secrecie: and these seaven I dispersed amongst some of my trustiest seruands, to be kepted closelie by them.<sup>195</sup>

Indeed in this introduction of 1603, we find no less than nine references to the word ‘secret’ (and that word’s derivatives) in what might be construed as a concerted attempt by James to convince his ‘new’ readership of his initial desire for the *Basilikon* (and its inherent lessons) to be read only by his son and a choice few amongst the royal *milieu*. James begins his address to the 1603 readership by invoking Christian rhetoric in order to justify his subsequent claim that ‘there is nothing so couered, that shall not be reuealed [...] and that whiche they had spoken in the eare in secret place, should be publicklie preached’.<sup>196</sup> He continues by stressing how ‘all godlie and honest men [...] be very warie in all their secretest actions’, before suggesting that ‘the deepest of our secrets, can not be

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critical legacy of this assertion is notable (See Corbett 1999: 71, Dunnigan 2002: 98, and Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 54).

<sup>191</sup> See Appendix 2 for images exemplifying the typographical differences between both texts.

<sup>192</sup> G.P.V. Akrigg has this total at ‘nine secret copies’ (Akrigg 1984: 163).

<sup>193</sup> The British Library in London currently houses the only extant draft copy of the *Basilikon Doron* written in James’s hand. See British Library, Royal MS 18. B15. Jennifer M. Brown notes that of the seven copies, the first was intended for his heir, a second for his wife, Anne of Denmark, with three copies earmarked for the earls of Huntly, Erroll and Angus. See Brown’s chapter, ‘Scottish Politics 1567-1625’ in Alan G.R. Smith, Ed., *The Reign of James VI and I* (London: MacMillan, 1973), pp. 22-39, 22.

<sup>194</sup> Waldegrave 1603. This edition differed in length from the 1599 edition, consisting of an octavo of 176 pages, of which the first forty pages are unnumbered. As Craigie notes, ‘the pages of sig. L, the last in the book, are wrongly numbered 149-54; the correct numbering would have been 129-34. The last leaf is blank. The book was printed in roman, all except the newly added ‘Preface to the Reader’, which is in italic’ (Craigie 1944: 24).

<sup>195</sup> Craigie 1944: 13.

hid from that al-seeing eye' (Waldegrave 1603: sig.B), the omniscient God. James makes the point that Kings, as public figures, cannot but have their 'secretest driftes' (Waldegrave 1603: sig. B) – a phrase which he repeats a few lines on – scrutinized.

He makes a seemingly valid point that kings ought not to harbour 'the secretest thought in their minde, but suche as in their owne time they shall not be ashamed openlie to avouche' (Waldegrave 1603: sig. B) it. The royal gift to his son contains a number of his 'secret actios' (Waldegrave 1603: sig. Bii) whilst he intended his kingly maxims to be employed as a 'secret counsellor and faithfull admonisher' (Waldegrave 1603: sig. Bii) to his son. In James's informed opinion, it would have been better that his teachings on kingship had remained between himself and those he had initially invited to read the book wherein those teachings were laid out. As though to labour this point, the aforementioned references to 'secrecy' appear in the first two pages of this additional address to the reader.

Despite later protestations concerning the intentions for the first editions of his text, some critics find James's claims disingenuous. Johann P. Sommerville (1994) argues that James might have been drawing upon other literary models by desperately attempting to deny his intention to circulate his text to a wider audience. Sommerville notes that 'it was a commonplace in James' day for authors to allege that they had been forced reluctantly into publication – and so to indicate that they were not motivated by love of fame or lucre'.<sup>197</sup> It is a credible assertion – James's literature is, after all, replete with unconcealed and often insincere usages of the *modesty topos*, suggesting that whilst James overtly promotes ideological transparency in his works, he was also more than familiar with literary 'smoke and mirror' techniques. Rickard (2007) draws upon alternative evidence to make the point that the painstaking attention to detail in, and self-indulgence of, the original template for the *Basilikon Doron* evidences the king's 'ultimate intention to publish the work for public consumption, but it may also reveal something of his attitude towards – even fascination

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<sup>196</sup> Waldegrave 1603: sig. B, in Craigie 1944 : 12.

<sup>197</sup> J. P. Sommerville, *King James VI and I: Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pg. xix.

with – print’.<sup>198</sup> It is well to remember that one of the major conceits of James’s advice manual to his son makes much of the former trope, the kingly preparedness for revelation and the revelation of God’s word, as this chapter will later show. It is not entirely inconceivable therefore that James always had in mind the future ‘revelation’, if not exactly future publication, of the ideas ensconced in this exclusive advice manual to his son.

*The Basilikon Doron – textual evolution*

James’s ascent to the English throne in 1603 provided valid justification for the king’s sanctioning a new and extended print run of the *Basilikon*. Much like the *Essayes*, the textual legacy of the *Basilikon* is quite remarkable. Wormald (1981) describes the publication activity surrounding the king’s works which took place in the first eighteen or nineteen days of the Scottish monarch’s reign of England as ‘frenzied’, and conservatively estimated that a total in the region of between 13,000 and 16,000 of the *Basilikon* alone (not counting the various new editions of pre-existing poetical works) were reprinted.

James Doelman offers more evidence of the runaway publishing success that was the ‘new and improved’ *Basilikon*:

the first edition [in 1603] was published by a number of different printers to meet the intense demand, and by April 13, up to 16,000 copies had probably been printed. The work went through eight English editions in the spring of 1603, and Latin and Welsh translations were also published in London.<sup>199</sup>

As both Wormald and Doelman point out, there was fervent interest amongst the readership in gaining access to the king but what is more noteworthy, perhaps, is the urgency on the part of the king to present this text as a ‘book’, or physical artefact, and to cultivate the reading sensibilities of its readers.

The month before the king’s departure south, Robert Waldegrave published a second edition. A copy of this revised edition was sent to England on the 28 March (the

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<sup>198</sup> Rickard 2007: 98.

<sup>199</sup> James Doelman, ‘‘A King of Thine Own Heart’’: The English Reception of King James VI and I’s *Basilikon Doron*’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 9.1 (Spring 1994), pp.1-9: 1.

very day on which James received the news that Elizabeth was dead and that he was King of England), *Basilikon Doron* was entered on the Stationer's Register to a syndicate of booksellers. Two days after the revised edition was sent to England copies were available in London, giving James's new subjects a means of access to the king, and his apparent ideals of rule, before they had the opportunity to see him in person. James's new English subjects seized upon the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the Scottish king's political theory. In addition, quite apart from the seven authorised editions of the *Basilikon* (two Edinburgh editions of 1599 and 1603, and five London editions of 1603), a fragment of the 'Royal Gift' can be found translated into Welsh. This Welsh edition was prepared by Richard Holland and published in Cardiff in 1604. As well as in the British Isles, the king's advice manual enjoyed a healthy and prolonged publication run on the Continent. Including the five editions published in the Scottish and English capitals, total editions of the *Basilikon* number thirty.

French translations of the king's text far outnumber any other non-British vernacular rendering; Paris is the locus for six editions in French<sup>200</sup>, Rouen for four (between 1603 and 1604), whilst one edition of the *Basilikon Doron* in French was produced in both Lyons and Hanau (1603 and 1604 respectively). The French edition of 1604 (Paris), deserves further consideration, owing to its attempts not only to replicate the espoused theories of James VI and I in the French vernacular, but also for the way in which the publishers of this edition go to lengths to counterfeit the appearance of the Waldegrave 1599 edition.<sup>201</sup> The fevered interest in the political science of James VI and I also saw Dutch (Amsterdam 1603), German (Spire – Speyer - 1604) and Swedish (Stockholm 1606) renderings published in rapid succession from the Scottish and English editions of 1603. Six editions appear in Latin translation, published in London (1604), Hanau (1604/1607) and Frankfurt-on-Oder (1679/1682). A further translation of James's advice manual into

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<sup>200</sup> These editions appeared in 1603, 1604, 1616, 1617, and 1646.

<sup>201</sup> A copy of this edition can be found in the National Library of Scotland. There are a number of 'additions' to this edition. See appendix x and y.

Italian was undertaken by Queen Anne's private secretary, John Florio, but this edition did not make it into print. An extant copy survives in the British Library.<sup>202</sup> In a discussion of the various continental translations of the *Basilikon Doron*, Astrid Stilma notes how through the appearance of a multitude of translated editions of the *Basilikon* (in French, Dutch, German, Swedish and Hungarian), James's word 'made its way across Protestant Northern Europe'.<sup>203</sup>

James Doelman (1994) has taken issue with Wormald's assertion (1991, pp. 51-52) that such a high volume of extant copies of the *Basilikon* suggests that it was largely unread in its day and treated as an artefact (as opposed to being used as an operative learning tool) by the vast majority of its owners. For Doelman,

that it [*Basilikon*] is so often quoted in poems, tracts and sermons greeting his new reign, shows that it was not only bought, but also read and taken seriously. Its high survival rate may be due to the fact that as the King's book it was more likely to be bound, and more carefully handled.<sup>204</sup>

The aforementioned editions of the *Basilikon* are merely some of the many *translations* of James's advice manual and this list does not take into account the widespread instances of conscious literary *interpretation* and *imitation* of James's word.<sup>205</sup> In literary terms, the most obvious replication of the king's ideas in the *Basilikon* comes in the form of literary and artistic *mimesis*,<sup>206</sup> with further instances of flattery through quotation in the work of James's contemporaries.

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<sup>202</sup> BL Royal MS 14 AV.

<sup>203</sup> Stilma 2012: 128. In Chapter 4 of the monograph *A King Translated*, Stilma suggests that 'Dutch readers would have found a great deal to admire in the book: no one could have objected to the virtuous and above all Protestant king that James describes, who is modest and moderate, reads the Bible diligently, rules justly and ensures that his poorer subjects are not oppressed' (Stilma 2012: 181).

<sup>204</sup> Doelman 1994: 1-2.

<sup>205</sup> One example of a book which taps into the same vein as the *Basilikon Doron* is Joshua Sylvester's *Tetrastics or The Quadrains of Guy de Fau, Lord of Pibrac*, a text (like James's 'royal gift') dedicated to Prince Henry. Within Sylvester's translation we find the maxim 'cease not to learne until thou cease to live: 'Think that Day lost, wherein thou draw'st no Letter,/No gain'st no Lesson, that new grace may give,/To make thy Selfe Learned, Wiser, Better'. *Joshua Sylvester – The Complete Works*, Alexander B. Grosart, Ed. (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung 1969), pg. 26.

<sup>206</sup> Doelman's study provides a fairly comprehensive picture of how James's *Basilikon* was used artistically in the sixteenth century. Amongst those utilising the *Basilikon* are John Florio (see Giuliano Pellegrini, ed. 1961), Henry Peacham (a number of MS variants, produced between 1603 and 1610, survive: BL MS Harl. 6855, art. 13, BL MS Royal 12°.LXVI, and Bodleian MS Rawlinson Poetry 146), W. Willymat (*A Princes Looking Glasse*), and Samuel Daniel (*A Panegyric Congratulatorie*).

Of the various ‘adaptations’ of King James’s *Basilikon*, it is Henry Peacham’s offering which is arguably the most original attempt from within the period itself to reflect the king’s word back at him. During his time as a schoolmaster, Henry Peacham was recognised as possessing a fine accomplishment in the arts of drawing and poetic composition. In an interesting literary connection, the man who encouraged Peacham in his ambitious attempt at transforming the *Basilikon Doron* into a book of emblems was James Montague, Master of Sidney Sussex College, who would later come, in 1616, to edit King James’s *magnum opus* - *The Workes*.<sup>207</sup> Adhering to the structural division of the *Basilikon*, Peacham produced a book of fifty-six emblems (based on the litany of epigrams included by James in his advice manual) displayed in three clearly defined sections. According to Alan R. Young (2008), Peacham’s decision to use emblems as the vehicle through which to flatter his new monarch, was an apposite one:

James himself as a young man had been a composer of emblems and had taken considerable pleasure in the art. In the Preface ‘To the Reader’ in *Minerva Britannia*, Peacham was later to recall some of the emblems of James’s Scottish forebears but then remarked: ‘many excellent have I seene of his *Maiesties* owne Invention, who hath taken therein in his younger years great delight, and pleasure [...]’ Furthermore, *Basilikon Doron* itself is coloured by numerous verbal illustrations of an emblematic nature. We also know that as a young man in Scotland, James had in his library copies of emblem books by Alciato, Giovio, Montanus, and Paradin.<sup>208</sup>

Whilst the form adopted by Peacham was in itself appealing to James, Peacham’s nuanced rendering of the emblems would certainly have captured the attention of the Scottish monarch. Of particular interest to the present thesis are those visual emblems of Peacham’s which interact with James’s reading directives as set out verbally in the *Basilikon*. Two emblems are strikingly effective, not only for the manner in which they represent the advice of the *Basilikon*, but also for the way in which they seem to perfectly epitomise the thematic thread of James’s reading directives as thus far highlighted in this doctoral thesis. The Latin motto ‘Sapientiae Initium’ – the beginning of wisdom – is visually represented

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<sup>207</sup> More will be said of Montague in Chapter Five.

<sup>208</sup> Alan R. Young, *The English Emblem Tradition: 5. Henry Peacham’s Manuscript Emblem Books* (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 1998), xiii.



by Peacham as ‘A book (Bible), upon which is a vertical unsheathed sword, pointing skywards. Around the blade is a coiled snake’ (Young 1998: 4). The translation of the epigram<sup>209</sup> reads:

the scaly snake, signifying in your nature, oh Body Politic, gathers itself into a coil around the sword; but, if you rely on yourself, you will fall, surrounded by a thousand perils, unless the holy books of God support you. (Young 1998:4)

Here once again we find evidence of James’s directive to his son (by extension to his subjects also) to use scripture as the basis for knowledge of both the world and the self. Verbal echoes between the Latin motto ‘Sapientiae Initium’ and the phrase employed by James in his seminal *Essayes* to describe his dedicatees (those with ‘some beginnings of knowledge’) resound. A second emblem, based on the given Latin motto ‘His praemunitus’ (‘prepared by these means’) depicts a tree branch growing out from a large book (the Bible); a dove sits atop the branch of leaves. The impetus for the emblem is the exhortation given by James to his subjects to read scripture with a sanctified and chaste heart (see discussion above). Peacham dedicates his reincarnation of the *Basilikon* to the heir to the throne:

If Peacham originally intended to dedicate his manuscript emblem book to the King, it appears that he very soon changed his mind, recognizing that as potential patron, the nine-year old Prince Henry, who travelled south from Scotland to England in the summer of 1603, was possibly a better choice. Very soon after the Prince arrived in England, many English men of letters were quick to seek the Prince’s patronage, and, during the few remaining years of the Prince’s life, a host of works were dedicated to him by those vying for the favour of the man they believed would one day be king. (Young 1998: xiii)

However, given the unfinished state of the extant manuscript, it would appear that Peacham did not present his emblem book to its dedicatee.

#### *Re-considering the Basilikon*

The contrived secrecy surrounding the first edition of the text was not enough to prevent James’s detractors being intimately familiar with the work. Before the king had seen his

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<sup>209</sup> The epigram reads: Squammiger in gyros gladio se colligit anguis/ Naturam signans O politeia tuam/ Sed

work to print, one of his fiercest critics knew of the book's contents. King James's trust in James Sempill was apparently misplaced; it is thought that Sempill revealed the contents of his gifted first edition to the Presbyterian minister, Andrew Melville, who in turn raised a great number of personal criticisms of the king's text. For Melville, and his party, James's *Basilikon* signalled loudly the monarch's discontent with the radical Presbyterian faction. Melville resented some of the king's remarks about the Scottish Presbyterian clergy, and disagreed with James's claim that monarchs are empowered to supervise the affairs of the church within their realms. Melville drew up a list of eighteen objections and these criticisms were presented in written form to the ecclesiastical synod of Fife in September 1599 by John Dykes.<sup>210</sup> Before the synod could formally censure *Basilikon*, James intervened, ordering the arrest of Dykes – who fled into exile, and remained there (with his ecclesiastical career in tatters) for well over a year.<sup>211</sup>

Interestingly, James did not rescind his book from the public domain nor did he censure the book's more 'controversial' ideas. Rather, the king took active steps to denounce the views of those who had the audacity to question his own (as evidenced in his intervention for the arrest of Dykes). Whilst this suggests that the monarch was relatively comfortable with having his ideas circulate in the public domain, it also shows James's discontent with the way in which his ideas were being received in the wider religio-political sphere.<sup>212</sup> Indeed, in the subsequent re-editions of the *Basilikon Doron*, James does not actually alter his ideas all that radically. Instead, what we find is a more nuanced

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tibi fisa cadis cicundata mille periclis/ Haec nisi sustenant Biblia sacra Dei' (Young 1998: 4).

<sup>210</sup> According to Thomas McCrie in his *Life of Melville* (1819), vol II, Dykes' intimate awareness of the contents of the *Basilikon* had been filtered through a networking distillation process; Sempill had revealed the work to Andrew Melville, who had then passed it on to his nephew, James Melville, before the younger Melville donated it to John Dykes for his perusal (1819: 161). For more on John Dykes (who was himself a clerical poet) see Jamie Reid Baxter, 'The Nyne Muses: An Unknown Renaissance Sonnet Sequence. John Dykes and the Gowrie Conspiracy', in K. Dekker and A.A. MacDonald, eds., *Rhetoric, Royalty and Reality: Essays on the Literary Culture of Medieval and Early Modern Scotland* (Leuven: Peeters, 2005) pp. 197-218.

<sup>211</sup> Sommerville 1994: xviii.

<sup>212</sup> Rickard has written persuasively on this topic and suggests that James VI and I exploits print 'in an effort to construct and disseminate the idea of the King as author and authority' (2007: 96).

phraseology, in which the king is concerned with the intricacies of the interpretational process.

By the time of publication of the Waldegrave edition of 1603 James is no longer just the author of the piece, but is far more pronounced as an editor, taking it upon himself to self-edit, and to remove any ambiguities which might affect the intended reception of his ideas. ‘Contrarie to his will’,<sup>213</sup> James sets forth his book to ‘the publicke viewe of the worlde’, ‘subiect to euery mans censure’; his purpose ‘to publishe and spred the true copies thereof, for defacing of the fals copies that are already spred’ (sig. B2b). There is nothing unorthodox in James asking for his subjects to censure his work. Authorial humility was a key facet of his ‘prentise piece’, but it is important to recognise the king not only as an author (ie. a writer) but as an editor (a critical reader of his own works). The ideas of the first edition certainly underpin the second and any amendments to the wording of the text are made only in order to make the king’s sentiments clearer. There are semantic and thematic echoes of *Dæmonologie* (‘On Witchcraft’, 1597) to be found, particularly when we reconsider Philomathes’ (‘lover of learning’ – presumably James in a fictive guise) request to Epistemon (wisdom/prudence) to better ‘resolue [him] of some thing, whereof [he stood] in doubt’.<sup>214</sup>

Each edition of the *Basilikon* carries a prefatory epistle from the king to his dedicatee, Henry.<sup>215</sup> In the epistle, James routinely describes the child-prince as his ‘dearest sonne’, ‘naturall and lawfull successor’, and ‘the first fruits of God’s blessing’ on him.<sup>216</sup> Further, the king writes that as both a monarch and a father it is James’s sole duty to educate his heir in the trappings of sovereignty:

<sup>213</sup> Waldegrave 1603: sig. B2b, in Craigie 1944.

<sup>214</sup> James VI, *Dæmonologie* (Edinburgh: Waldegrave 1597), sig. 1.

<sup>215</sup> It should be noted that each of the three editions consulted in this thesis (MS Royal 18. B.xv, Waldegrave 1599 and Waldegrave 1603) contain variant prefatory letters. The differences between each of the three prefaces are largely linguistic – the spelling is standardised from the autograph edition of 1598, to the printed 1599 edition, and continues to be anglicised in the edition of 1603. For consistency, this chapter has concentrated on the variant prefaced to MS Royal 18. B.xv.

<sup>216</sup> James VI, MS.Royal 18. B. Xv. Fol. 1a.

Since I, the authoure thairof as youre naturall Father man be cairfull for youre godlie and uertuous education [...] And (as a King) man tymouslie prouyde for youre training vp in all the pointis of a kings office, sen ye are my naturall & lauffull successoure thairin, that being richtlie informed heir bye of the uecht of youre burthen, ye maye in tyme beginne to considder, that being borne to be a king, ye are rather borne to onus than honos, not excelleng all youre people sa farre in ranke and honoure as in daylie caire & hazairdouse paines taking for the duetifull administration of that greate office that god hes layed upon youre shoulderis.<sup>217</sup>

In this book of instruction for his heir, James dons the literary apparel of a schoolmaster, imitating the tutelary stance he precociously adopted in the *Essayes*, only this time delivering his son an earnest lesson in life skills. Just as James had to learn for himself the trappings of kingship, so the Scottish monarch intends his son to work hard to obtain his own bespoke lesson. From the dedicatory epistle, one thing is for certain – the *Basilikon* requires close attention, continual consultation and discerning re-reading from its owner. Henry ought to be aware, implies James VI, that the ‘nuttis schell, thocht it be hard and teuch,/ Haldis the Kirnell’.<sup>218</sup>

There is documentary evidence to suggest that James’s interest in his son’s education was much greater than a passing one, and extended far beyond Henry’s monarchic training. In a later letter of fatherly advice (dated c.1603), a direct reply to a letter which he has lately received from Henry, the king writes:

My son,

I am glad that by your letter I may perceive that ye make some progress in learning, although I suspect ye have rather written than indited it. For I confess I long to receive a letter from you that may be wholly yours, as well matter as form, as well formed by your mind as drawn by your fingers. For ye may remember that in my book to you, I warn you to be wary with that kind of wit that may fly out at the end of your fingers.<sup>219</sup>

In an intimate exchange, James articulates his concern that although the letter might have been penned by Henry it has not been composed (in the sense of the putting together of

<sup>217</sup> James VI, MS Royal, 18. B. Xv. Fol. 1a.

<sup>218</sup> ‘Prologue to the Morall Fabillis’, excerpted in Jack and Rozendaal 1997: 280.

<sup>219</sup> British Library, Harl. 6986, f.67. Reproduced in Akrigg 1984: 219-220, 219. In the warning to be wary of what private thoughts you made public in the process of writing them down, clear echoes of an early poem penned by James VI reverberate. In ‘Song. the first verses that euer the King made’, James writes

elements) by him. It is the king's desire that Henry should, 'make [...] progress' and continue to develop his writing abilities in order that he might one day be able to conceive, compose and execute correspondence on his own. James makes reference to the first edition of the *Basilikon* reiterating the importance of the practical advice offered by his 'royal gift', and in so doing, inserts (or re-inserts) the *Basilikon* into the educational programme of his son. This letter concludes with James's express desire for Henry to continue working towards academic achievement, with the *Basilikon* to be used as a learning aid:

And as there can nothing happen unto you whereof ye will not find general ground therein (if not the very particular point touched), so maun ye level every man's opinions or advices unto you as ye find them agree or discord with the rules there set down, allowing and following their advices that agrees with the same, mistrusting and frowning upon them that advises you to the contrary. Be diligent and earnest in your studies, that at your meeting with me I may praise you for your progress in learning. Be obedient to your master for your own weal and to procure my thanks, for in reverencing him ye obey me and honour yourself.<sup>220</sup>

This letter of 1603 typifies how James was not only crucially aware of the rules of kingship, but was also keenly aware of, and deeply interested in, education and methods of teaching more specifically. This had been evident in the *Essayes*, with numerous metatextual apparatuses incorporated at every twist and turn of the collection to aid the reading process.<sup>221</sup>

As the king himself acknowledges, careful consideration had been given to the manner in which the rules of kingship might be taught, and, moreover, how a student might retain his teachings. Here, James determines that the most accessible literary device for memory is structure:

I haue thairfore for the greater ease to youre memorie, & that ye maye at the first caste up any pairt that ye haue to doe uith, deuydit this hail booke in three pairtis: the first teaches you youre deutie touardis god as a christiane; the next youre deutie in youre office; & the thridde teaches you hou to

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<sup>220</sup> 'Since thought is free, thinke what thou will/ O troubled hart to ease thy paine/ Thought vnreuealed can doe no euill/ Bot words past out, cummes not againe' (British Library, Add. Ms 24195, fol. 51r-v).

<sup>220</sup> Akrigg 1984: 219.

<sup>221</sup> Mnemonic devices had already been deployed to good effect in James's work, particularly in the dedicatory sonnet to his 'Phœnix'. See Chapter 3.

behaue youre self in indifferent things, quhilke of thame selfis are nather right nor urong but according as thay are richtlie or urong usid, and yet uill serue according to youre behaioure thairin to augmente or impaire youre fame and autoritie at the handis of youre people.<sup>222</sup>

As to the purpose of this treatise, James has, inevitably, covered all bases. Prince Henry is to consider his gift in terms of its material worth, but also in terms of the spiritual cachet that it will wield if used correctly. Henry is to ‘ressaue & uellcome this booke [...] as a faithfull præceptoure & counsailloure’ (fol. 1*b*) when his father is no longer alive to guide him.

In this work, James explores the potential of his three roles of monarch, father and *fidei defensor*; it is with a weighty solemnity that James ‘ordains’ (fol. 1*b*) his text to be a ‘faithfull admonisher’ (fol. 1*b*), whilst bequeathing it to Henry as a religio-political emissary, and also as the King’s will and testament. James invokes his ‘fatherlie authoritie’ ‘in the presence of God’ (fol. 1*b*) in order to clearly define the ways in which the ‘royal gift’ is to be utilised. The *Basilikon* will be a ‘just and impartial counsellor’, ‘nather flattering [...] in any uyce nor importuning [...] unseasonable at unmeit tymes’ (fol. 1*b*). The *Basilikon* is, then, more than a piece of political polemic; it is a votive donation to his son, created as a multifaceted work of political, personal and social guidance, as well as a work which —when read properly— might lead to spiritual edification. As it is first conceived by James VI, the *Basilikon* is to be Henry’s own ‘bible’ on good kingship and governance. Indeed, as the epistolary dedication of the *Basilikon* draws to its conclusion, the implicit suggestion that moral and spiritual acuity is inherent in this textual gift becomes a far more prominent idea. Just as for many centuries readers had consulted God’s written word (the Bible) in quiet solitude, so the *Basilikon*, according to its royal author, ought to be consulted in similar circumstances, for

conferring with it quhen ye are quyett ye sall saye with scipio that ye are numquam minus solus quam cum solus [‘Never less alone than when alone’, Cicero]. (fol. 1*b*)

<sup>222</sup> James VI, MS Royal 18. B. Xv., fol. 1a.

Here the message is clear: peaceful seclusion facilitates a heightened engagement with the text. We might draw parallels here to Hudson's *Judith*, where the eponymous heroine also retreats to a private space in which to connect with God's word and to find moral guidance.

There is no question that James's faith underpins this *envoi* to his son, as indeed it does the body of his literary *oeuvre* (especially in his later productions). Indeed, the King consciously concludes his dedicatory letter in the spirit of a preacher bringing to its conclusion a sermon:

I chaarge you as euer ye [...] to follou & putte in practice [...] the præceptis herafter following, & gif ye follou the contraire course I take the greate godd to recorde that this booke sall ane daye be a uitness betuixt me & you, & sall procure to be ratifiid in heauin, the curse that in that cace heir I giue you [...] euen promeising unto my self that god quha in his greate blessing sent you unto me sall [...] make him a good & a godlie sonne [...] I end this præface uith my earnest prayer to godd to uorke effectuellie into you [...].  
(fol. 1*b*)

Even within his closing remarks, James finds space and time to offer one final remit for this seemingly omnipotent and indispensable literary gift; it will serve as a contractual bond between father and son, and between one Scottish ruler and the next hereditary successor, with the finer details of the missive to be 'ratifiid in heauin' (fol. 1*b*). Here, we find that certain thematic and generic overlap which inextricably binds together in the critical mindset the *Basilikon Doron* and the *Trew Law*, the latter text having been designed specifically to galvanise the relationship between sovereign and state.

### ***Conceptions of reading in the Basilikon***

Over the course of a protracted publication series, James employs numerous metatextual devices to manipulate or instruct the reader(s) on how to approach the variant editions of *Basilikon Doron*. These instructive prefaces show an interest in the interpretational process, and a heightened consideration for the way in which a king might present himself in accessible formats to his subjects. A concerted reiteration of the importance of the Christian faith, and moderate Protestantism (the King's faith) more specifically, follows the prefatory address. From the outset of the first book, this literary space is clearly

demarcated a forum in which to discuss ‘A King’s Christian Duetie Towards God’. The abiding objective of this book of the *Basilikon* is to make the undertaking of a godly education imperative, and the opening lines immediately reflect and confirm this intention:

remember [...] that this glistering uarldlie glorie of kingis is geuin thame be god to teache thame to prease sa to glister and shyne before thaire people in all uorks of sanctification & richteousness, that their personnes as bricht lampis of godlinesse & uertue may, going in & out before thaire peopill, giue licht to all thaire steppis [...] be the richt knaledge & feare of god quhilke is the beginning of uisdome [...]. (fol. 2*b*)

There is nothing particularly ‘poetic’ or indeed ‘original’ in James’s phraseology or lexicon here; once more we find James merely assimilating and imbricating the mannered style of pre-existing literary models to suit his own ends. With a litany of biblical references and the entreaty to Solomon, James clearly aligns his own word with God’s. Subsequently, however, despite the familiar tropes of the opening (the invocation of God’s omnipotence and word for example), Book Two continues to develop into something much more than just a simple regurgitation of the Bible as a means to ratifying the principles of a political belief in the principles of the divine right of kings. What we are given, rather, is an intricately woven exploration of a particularly mannered reading process, and one which has been identified by James as constituting an integral component of a Christian king’s day to day learning, practice and policy making.

Despite its concision, the first book of the *Basilikon* is rich in allusion to reading and is predicated upon one abiding contention. According to James, the monarch who does not exercise both fear and love towards the ‘Diuine Maiestie’ should not (indeed cannot) be thought worthy to ‘gouerne a christiane people’.<sup>223</sup> Thus the first rule of practical kingship is to ‘learne to knau and loue that God’ (fol. 2*a*) to whom every monarch has a dual obligation — for their creation and their divinely bestowed kingdom. Having a knowledge and fear of God, it is suggested, is not innate, but it is something which can be

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<sup>223</sup> MS Royal 18. B.xv. fol 2*a*, in Craigie 1944: 24.



learned. The king, however, is adamant in his belief that there is only one means by which to secure this spiritual enlightenment:

the onlie uaye [to be brought] to this knaledge is diligentlie to reid his uorde & earnestlie to praye for the richt understanding thair of, searche the scriptures sayes chryste for thay uill beare testimonie of me, & the scriptures says paull are able to admonishe, exhorte, rebuke, & instructe the man of god making him perfyte to euerie goode uarke. (fol 2*b*)

To gain knowledge of God, one must read ‘diligentlie’, but more than this one must understand what one has read. Henry is encouraged to read searchingly, and in so doing apply reasoned analytical and evaluative tools in order to reach a sound understanding. As though compelled to show his son how this rule might be practically realised, James fills his polemic with biblical examples or quotations from scripture to show his own familiarity and thorough comprehension of God’s word.

Marchitello (2003) posits that in King James’s command to his son in Book One to ‘prease to be a goode textuarie’,<sup>224</sup> we find the royal imperative for ‘proper education’ underpinned by the principle of ‘proper reading’.<sup>225</sup> Marchitello’s assertion is correct, but it does nothing to explore the intricate nuances inherent in this particularly well-chosen, and theologically loaded, phrase. Arguably, in James’s avowal that Henry ought to ‘preasse to bee a good textuarie’ we find the most pronounced and explicit evidence yet of James’s desire for his readers to recognise, and strive towards, moral and spiritual acuity in a reading process which ought to be nothing less than active and engaged. The term ‘textuarie’ itself certainly implies practical application, but more than this perhaps, it is interesting to note the weight of specificity carried by this French-loan word. The *Dictionary of the Scots Language* attributes James VI with the first employment of this word in the written vernacular,<sup>226</sup> and defines the word (and its spelling variants) firstly as a

<sup>224</sup> MS Royal 18. B. xv., fol. 3*b*.

<sup>225</sup> Howard Marchitello, ‘*Pater patriae*: James I and the imprint of prerogative’ in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, Douglas A. Brooks, Ed. (Aldershot and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2003), pp. 303-324, 313.

<sup>226</sup> See entry for the noun ‘Textuare’, in the *Dictionary of the Scots Language* (Online). <<http://www.dsl.ac.uk/>> [accessed 04/12/12]. The *OED* cites ‘Bp. J. King *Serm. St Maries Oxf.* 28’ from 1608 as the first occasion on which this word is used in English, and in this sermon the word ‘textuary’ is

noun describing ‘an interpreter or scholar of the text of the scriptures and secondly (in its adjectival form) as meaning ‘authoritative’.<sup>227</sup> As James is working towards a model of precept and example for his son (as touched upon earlier in this chapter) he exhibits himself as an able scriptural ‘textuarie’ (*n.*), whilst setting up his *Basilikon Doron* as an authoritative ‘textuary’ (‘textuary’ here in the contemporary sense of ‘textbook’).<sup>228</sup>

A considered re-reading of the *Basilikon Doron*, alongside his *Essayes*, reveals James operating successfully as a facilitator of spiritual and philosophic knowledge rather than as a supercilious and precocious interpreter of God’s word. This is nowhere better exemplified than in the first book of the *Basilikon*. James argues that the skills amassed through discerning reading should be galvanized by the ‘cairfull hearing of the doctrine with attendance & reuerence, for faith commis be hearing’ (fol. 2a). Like a well-informed librarian able to skilfully negotiate his bibliographic terrain, James adroitly directs his reader (his royal reader, in the first instance) to certain passages of spiritual worth within the Bible:

the grounde [...] of the law of grace, is contained in the foure histories of the birth, lyfe, death, resurrection of christe. The lairger interpretation of this law is conteind in the epistles of the apostles, & the practise in the faithfull or unfaithfull, together with thaire reuairde or punishment according thairto, is contained in the actis of the apostles, ualde ye then knau youre sinne be the lau, reid the books of moses conteining it, ualde ye haue a comentaire thairupon reid the propheitis, ualde ye see hou goode men are reuardit & uikked punishit looke the histories of genesis, exodus, iosue, the iudges, iob

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specifically employed as a noun for someone who is learned in the text of the Bible: ‘a textual critic, scholar, or expounder; also, one well acquainted with and ready at quoting texts. Notably, it is here used in the same specifically mannered way that it is employed in the *Basilikon* of 1598. See entry for ‘textuary’, *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online).

<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200026?redirectedFrom=Textuary#eid>> [Accessed 04/12/12].

<sup>227</sup> The textual evolution of this word is interesting; following on from James VI’s employment of the word in *Basilikon* it can be located within John Spottiswoode’s *History of the Church and State of Scotland from the year of Our Lord 203 to the end of the Reign of King James VI, 1625*, (a text commissioned by James himself, but presented to Charles I, by John Maxwell, Bishop of Ross, in the immediate wake of Archbishop Spottiswood’s death in 1639). As A.S. Wayne Pearce has noted, Spottiswoode’s title is somewhat of a misnomer ‘since its spotlight is largely focused on the reign of the ‘British Solomon’, James VI and I’ (Pearce, *ODNB* 2004). In this respect we find Spottiswoode describing James in terms he himself would readily have recognised. The third example given by the *DSL* is taken from William Lithgow’s *Travels* (1632, revised edition). Here, is yet another example of a Scottish Jacobean contemporary drawing on Jamesian vocabulary and it is noteworthy that both Spottiswoode and Lithgow were looking to James for patronage as well as ‘instruction’ in how and what to write.

<sup>228</sup> This now obsolete variant of the word is here employed in the same manner as William Lithgow uses it in his *Travels* to denote a text-book. See *Oxford English Dictionary* (Online)  
<<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/200026?redirectedFrom=Textuary#eid>> [Accessed 03/12/12].

& ester, but specialle the books of the kings & chronikles quhairuith ye aucht to be familiarlie aquentid [...].(fol. 3*b*)

This excerpt offers an excellent example of James as spiritual director for his son; if faith is a dangerous terrain to be negotiated then the *Basilikon Doron* is the textual map and spiritual compass by which Henry is to negotiate it. The Bible can also be utilised by Henry - as James himself presumably had done – in the formulation of political policy as a source to inform his law-making and jurisprudence. The Old Testament is described as containing the cornerstones of divine law and justice, whilst evidence of pardon and grace can be found in the New Testament. James presents to his son a sample of a selective reading list, showing what he believes a divinely bestowed law-maker ought to be reading.

Yet, Henry is not obliged, nor should he feel compelled, to adhere strictly to the reading agenda defined in this book by his father. Instead, as James himself makes clear, he has only shown his son a viable pattern for reading, in order that he might ‘maire readilie make choyce of any pairt thaireof...for [his] instruction or conforte’ (fol. 3*a*). The only qualification to this liberal approach, and the only directive that Henry must strive to adhere to, is the advice given by his father to particularly remember the reading method that James has set out for him in this treatise. Here, as elsewhere in his literary and political corpus, James does not regulate *what* is to be read, or indeed what should be the outcome of that reading. Rather, he stipulates *how* one should read. In both the autograph MS and printed 1599 edition, for example, James instructs Henry to read Scripture ‘with a sanctified & chaste eare’(fol. 3*b*), but the meaning of this phrase is subtly altered, in 1603, as the reader is instructed to read with a ‘sanctified and chaste hart’.<sup>229</sup> We might suggest that the intention of the first directive is to promote attentive reading – to listen well to the messages inherent in the text in order to ‘knau that hee [God] reuiled thair’ (fol. 3*b*), whereas the 1603 rendering asks a more general audience to emotionally and spiritually invest in scripture.

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<sup>229</sup> Waldegrave 1603: 14, in Craigie 1944: 37.

As James continues to define the terms of his manifesto on how one ought to appropriately utilise the Bible, Henry is to ‘admire reuerently sicc obscure placis’<sup>230</sup> that he does not understand in the text, and further, should blame only his ‘awin incapacitie’ (fol. 3*b*) in interpretative skills. Henry ought to ‘reid uith delyte the plaine placis & studdie carefullie to understande thaise that are sumquhat difficill’ (fol. 3*a*). Further, the young prince is encouraged to ‘prease to be a goode textuaire for the scripture is euer the best interpretere of it self, bot prease not curiouslie to seike out farther nor is contened thairin’ (fol. 3*a*). According to the king, Christianity is the concerted worship of God according to his revealed will as it appears in scripture. With one eye firmly fixed on his political adversaries (in 1598 and later in the 1603 revision) and one eye on the instruction of his son, James makes clear the futility of believing in, or searching for, hidden meaning in the Bible, ‘for that uaire misnurterid præsumption to stryue to be farther upon godis secreitis nor he hes uill ye be’ (fol. 3*a*). James’s list of important scriptural passages is not as programmatic as one might initially suspect; offering helpful suggestions as opposed to a strictly defined reading agenda James entreats his son to wilfully engage in reading God’s word, to ‘delyte maist in reiding sicc pairtis of scripture as maye best serue [his] instruction in [his] calling’ (fol. 3*a*).

Whilst the case has been made for James the ‘liberal arts co-ordinator’, we must not overlook, however, the many instances in James’s writing where he quite consciously and determinedly steers his reader towards definitive interpretations of meaning,<sup>231</sup> and there are certain areas which are ‘off-limits’ to the Protestant reader. For example, in James’s conception of ‘a king’s Christian Dvetie towards God’, he finds no room for the close study of the books of the *Apocrypha*, assertively positing here his belief that the contents of these particular ‘additions’ to the Bible are incongruous with the teachings of the Protestant faith he professes as his own:

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<sup>230</sup> James VI, Ms Royal 18 B.xv, fol. 3*b*.

<sup>231</sup> Rickard (2007) presents a comprehensive study of the correlation between James’s kingship and the various authorial positions he inhabits in his prose, poetry and political pamphlets.

as to the apocrife bookes I omitte thame because I ame na papist as I said before & indeid sum of thaim are als lyke the dytement of the spriet of god as ane egg is to ane oster. (fol. 3b)

In James's opinion, many of the apocryphal teachings are discordant with the 'spirit of God' as it is understood amongst his Protestant brethren. He implies that this particular sub-set of biblical texts (the *Apocrypha*) still continues to find an audience, as it is favourably received amongst Catholic circles. Although James's decision to omit the *Apocrypha* in its entirety here implies that the king looks unfavourably upon each text therein contained, the qualifying statement ('sum of thaim are als lyke the dytement of the spriet of god as ane egg is to ane oster') tells quite a different story; James places enough distance between himself and the *Apocrypha* in order to prevent himself being directly accused of, or associated with, Catholicism. Simultaneously, however, James does just enough in this passage to ensure that some aspects of this biblical sub-set of texts retain their theological (and literary) value. For James's own literary reputation, this was vitally important. As Chapter 3 of this thesis has already outlined, it was James's express desire to see a vernacular rendering of du Bartas's *La Judit*, a narrative originally sourced by the Frenchman from within the pages of the *Apocrypha*. In 1584, James was unremitting in his support of Hudson's endeavour to bring du Bartas's *La Judit* to public attention because a narrative exploring the validity of a legitimate and just deposition of a barbaric tyrant complemented his cultural agenda at that particular moment, an agenda which manifestly sought to win back ideological ground from his detractors. In the case of his promotion of du Bartas's *La Judit*, the artistic merit of the French poet, multiplied by an original dedicatory preface in which du Bartas categorically denies siding with Catholic martyrs, in addition to the nuanced moderate-Protestant inflections throughout the piece, lends this particular *Apocryphal* tale of Judith some degree of Protestant authority. The king's selectivity exhibits his literary pragmatism at its most concentrated.

Despite having made a strong case in favour of Henry reading both the Bible and his *Basilikon* in a discriminating and therefore authoritative manner, James is keen to point

out that the physical book has its limitations. Having made allusion to this earlier (by adding the caveat that Henry ought to listen well to scripture as well as read the words on the page, as outlined above), James continues by reinforcing how simple regurgitation of biblical psalms and scripture in personal prayers might not be as beneficial to his son as one might initially think:

Use oft to praye quhen ye are quyetest especiallie in youre bed, for public prayer seruis maire for exemple (for the maist pairt) then for any particulaire conforte to the suplicante: in youre prayer be nather our straingie uith god lyke the ignorant commoune sort that prayes nothing bot out of bookis, nor yet our hamelie uith him lyke sum of oure uaine proude puritanis that thinkis thay reule him upon thaire fingers. (fol. 4a)

Importantly, James insists that Henry pray in solitude – public prayer, as the king makes clear, serves rather as a tokenistic show of faith for the flock to follow. Prayer conducted in private, it is implied, is worth more to a king, bringing with it comfort to the supplicant. It is telling that in his discussion of how a Prince ought to pray and how a prince ought to utilise prayer books, James is at pains to differentiate Henry from the ‘ignorant commoune sort’ who cannot interpret scripture for themselves and from the ‘Pharisaicall puritans’ who take liberties with God’s written word.

Whilst the vast majority of the lengthy second book of the *Basilikon* gets to grips with the real minutiae of Scottish governance – an issue that James demarcates as being ‘Of A Kings Duetie in His Office’ – there is nevertheless some thematic continuity with the first book and indeed with the book that is to follow. Having negotiated the treacherous ideological terrain of the Scottish kirk and clergy, discoursed informatively on the type of person Henry should seek to employ in his royal household and courtly circles, and having broached the subject of marriage, James returns – in the later stages of the second book – to discussing the various ways in which continuous learning and auto-didacticism could, and ought to, inform Henry’s policy-making whilst in office. There is a subtle, but nevertheless demonstrable, alteration in the literary approach taken by James in this section. Whereas the first book of the *Basilikon* serves as a biblical athenaeum, the second is a commonplace book of philosophical and practical maxims.

In *Printed Commonplace Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought*, Ann Moss presented a rigorous exploration of the various manifestations of the commonplace book in Early Modern Europe, from its humble medieval beginnings to the form's demise in the seventeenth century. For Moss, the study of these key humanist learning tools could provide a window onto the cultural and moral soul of the Renaissance period. Taking the work of Moss as a starting point for her study, Rebecca Bushnell (1996) elaborates by describing commonplace books as the key component in the educational life of the average humanist student who would compile

their own commonplace books when they perused their authors. When the students read, they were meant to take notes, recording “a story, a fable, an *exemplum*, an *unusual* event, a *sententia*, an elegant point, or some other admirable saying.” This activity did not serve the purpose of providing a reading of the whole but rather the compilation of items that they could use themselves in composition.<sup>232</sup>

The skeletal framework of James's practical advice in this section is fleshed out in somewhat contrived fashion by a plethora of Latin aphorisms, quotations directly lifted from texts of classical antiquity and (to a lesser degree) biblical proverbs. Despite its determined focus and confident delivery, James's political theory is here nothing more than a patchwork-quilt of ideas, appropriated from a great multitude of sources. Amongst others, Plato's *Republic* (c.380BC), Aristotle's *Politics* (335-323 BC), Cicero's *De republica* (51 BC), and the work of Isocrates are woven together by James and passed off as his own. However artificial this approach might seem to a modern reader, it would have been wholly ordinary for writers of the period to show as well as actively evolve their learning in this way.<sup>233</sup>

It is possibly the case that there is a more genuinely didactic reason for James to openly appropriate maxims and quotations in this way. The *Basilikon* might, in many

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<sup>232</sup> Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of Teaching – Early Modern Humanism in Theory and Practice* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1996), pp. 132-133.

<sup>233</sup> In an original composition, the ‘Sonnet Decifring the Perfyte Poete’, which prefaces the ‘Revlis and Cautelis’, James makes perfectly clear that the overt display of one's learning is an admirable quality in a poet. He suggest the ‘perfect’ poet should possess ‘ane rype ingyne, ane quick and walkand witt,/With

ways, be conceived as a royal teacher's book of pre-packaged *loci communes* for his monarchical protégé to learn from. For Hebron (2008), the 'mosaic-like quality of many Renaissance texts, in which quotations and allusions are drawn together to make new works',<sup>234</sup> is the palpable result of the commonplace book method of learning. If at times the *Basilikon* reads as a contrived montage of Biblical or classical 'best bits', then that is perhaps because it is a humanist commonplace textbook on kingship, compiled by a humanistically trained monarch.

The key text to mention in this context is Erasmus' *Institutio principis christiani* ('The Education of Christian Prince', 1516). Erasmus' conduct book was written for the instruction of Prince Charles (the future Emperor Charles V) and quarried the work of the ancients – Plato, Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch – in order to provide a model for Charles of the 'ideal' prince. The image of princely perfection was, for Erasmus, a Prince who was suitably educated, who actively sought peace whilst in office, and who could distinguish the flatterers and sycophants from the more genuine courtiers. Like James's *Basilikon*, Erasmus' *The Education of a Christian Prince* provides a framework for the royal student and courtly *milieu* as well as for the teacher. There are a number of similarities between what Erasmus does with this treatise and what James attempts to say in his advice manual.<sup>235</sup> As well as providing for his student a list of recommended readings, and stipulating that a good education should include all of the liberal arts (see later in this chapter for more on James's opinions on 'indifferent things'), the Christian prince should not aim to unquestioningly imitate ideas stemming from his tutelage, but should learn to question virtues by testing them against the spirit of Christ, or *Philosophia Christi*.<sup>236</sup>

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sommail reasons, suddenlie applyit, / For euery purpose vsing reasons fit,/ With skilfulnesse, where learning may be spyit' (1584, sig. Kiiii, ll. 1-4).

<sup>234</sup> Hebron 2008: 61.

<sup>235</sup> It is difficult to ascertain whether James is implicitly moulding himself in the likeness of the Erasmian tutor. However, what ought to be noted is that Erasmus and his works were held in the utmost regard in Scotland, particularly in the first half of the sixteenth century. It is even the case that James VI's great-grandfather, James IV of Scotland, sent two of his sons to be educated by the Dutch humanist.

<sup>236</sup> T.T.A. Dorey and M. Mann Phillips, *Erasmus* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1970), pg. 108.



According to the pre-eminent Spanish humanist (and one-time acquaintance of Erasmus) Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540), the commonplace book ought to be regarded as being ‘like nests’, each divided up into separate parts, wherein would be noted down

words of everyday use: of the mind, body, our duties, games, clothes, times, dwellings, food, in another [part] rare or exquisite words; in another idioms and ways of speaking;...in another *sententiae*, in another humorous and witty sayings; in another proverbs; in another difficult passages, and whatever other things seem noteworthy to you or your teacher.<sup>237</sup>

It is not difficult to see how this formula applies to James’s *Basilikon*. Each of Vives’ criteria for the humanist commonplace book is met (whether consciously or not) by James in his kingly advice manual to Henry, especially in the third component of the *Basilikon*, ‘Of A King’s Behaviour in Indifferent Things’. If the general educational objectives of the commonplace book were to teach ‘Latin in short “sentences”’ and to indoctrinate ‘moral or “sententious” principles in the impressionable child’ (Bushnell 1996, pg. 132), then we must agree that similar didactic habits are observable in James’s treatise, only on a microcosmic level, as a smaller part of a much wider educational remit for Henry. By aligning himself with the pedagogy of the pre-eminent theorist, Vives, James is able to present himself in similar terms to Vives, whilst intricately weaving together scholarly humanist rhetoric with educational thinking to present a fresh and relevant advice manual for his own son (and subjects).

According to James VI, as ‘people are naturallie enclined to counterfytte lyke apes thaire princes’,<sup>238</sup> an astute and careful king must set a prototypical example for his subjects to mimic. James conceives that an efficacious monarch should, in all aspects of his royal remit (be that cultural, religious or political), adhere to the formulaic principles of precept and example. In Book One, where he instructs Henry to intimately familiarise himself with the teachings of the Bible, James continues to show how this precept might be

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<sup>237</sup> Juan Luis Vives, *De ratione studii puerils* (1523), in *Opera Omnia*, vol. I, pg. 272. Quoted in Bushnell 1996: 133. As a further point to note, the tract from whence this quotation is originally taken, *De ratione studii puerils*, was written for Henry VII’s daughter, Princess Mary, and published in 1523. This publication was followed by his *De Institutione feminae Christianae*. This book on the education of girls, was dedicated to Mary’s mother and Spanish wife of Henry VIII, Catherine of Aragon.

practically applied, by including in the first book notable excerpts drawn from his own spiritual education. Subsequently, in book two is to be found a similar sequence of kingly precept and example, only on this occasion, pre-existing political theory and works of moral philosophy are at once foregrounded and then practically administered by James. Henry is ‘aboue all’ to ‘studdie to knau ueill [his] crafte’ (fol. 21*b*) of monarchy.

Having attained a thorough knowledge of the trappings of government the prince ought never to rest on his royal laurels when he believes himself to have reached the apex in his governance. Rather, Henry should strive to continuously learn, to know all crafts:

for except ye knau euerie ane hou can ye controlle euerie ane, quhilke is youre propre office, thairefore besydis youre education, it is necessaire ye delyte in reiding & seiking the knaulege of all lauffull things, bot uith thir tua restrictions, first that ye choose ydle houris for it not interrupting thairuith the dischairge of youre office, & next that ye studdie not for knaulege naketlie, but that your principall ende be to make you able thairby to use youre office, practising according to youre knaulege in all pointiss of youre calling. (fol. 22*a*)

In this particular exhortation to his son, there is a continuation of the idea broached by James in his *Vacant Houres* (1591), where he implicitly suggests that literature is an activity with which to engage only as a leisurely pursuit. James insists that extra-curricular learning on a king’s part should not interrupt ‘the dischairge of [...] office’ (fol. 22*a*). A king must not read purely for reading’s sake, but instead should carefully consider his reading material, so that the act of reading might lead to enhanced learning and the expansion of knowledge. By extension, this storehouse of memorised facts and knowledge (like the lessons to be learned in the process of reading the *Basilikon*) might one day be retrieved and implemented to great effect for political or spiritual gain.

The tripartite structure of the *Basilikon Doron* allows James three distinct forums in which to discuss the importance of reading, and more specifically of reading diverse material. Arguably, the three subject matters set out by James in his *Basilikon* are each in their own way as important as the next, for varying reasons and in certain circumstances.

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<sup>238</sup> James VI, Ms Royal B.xv., fol. 6*a*.

In Book One, the king foregrounds the importance of reading Bible and scripture, whilst in the second book James turns his attentions to the study of laws and processes. The overt utilisation of material drawn from the works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle and Isocrates (all can be found in Book Two) once again reveals James as epitomising and embodying the rules he himself carves out; what his son is to draw from this second book, we must presume, is the impression of his father as a dexterous political theorist, who as well as being supremely confident in his own knowledge and cultural and political manipulation of scripture, is a monarch well-versed in temporal law-making and moral philosophy and can purposefully make these two areas of enquiry and practice inform one another. In the final book James turns his attentions to outlining how literature (closer to our modern conception of the art-form) can serve as an important admonisher and spiritual guide for a monarch.

Craigie (1948) argues that for the modern scholar approaching the *Basilikon Doron*, the ‘freshest and most interesting pages are those in which James examines the state of Scotland as it appeared to its ruler at the close of the sixteenth century’ (Craigie 1948: 22). The *Basilikon* certainly bears the weighty solemnity and retrospective character of a *fin de siècle* political overview, but for Craigie

it was none of these things that gave *Basilikon Doron* the reputation in which it was held [...] what it was valued for then was those parts – and they constitute the greater part of the book – which the modern reader is apt to regard as platitudinous or commonplace.<sup>239</sup>

That is to say, James’s contemporaries found the sections of the book wherein lay advice on how a prince ought to conduct himself in manners the passages of most interest:

when the book was written the conception of a gentleman in the modern sense of the word was still only in the process of formation, and *Basilikon Doron* did not a little to commend that ideal both to the king’s own generation and to that which succeeded it. In this way the king’s book was a link between two kinds of writing which have both now been long out of fashion. On the one hand, it was one of the last of the long line of works composed for the instruction of princes in the duties of their high office. On the other hand, it was almost the first of the numerous ‘courtesy’ books

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<sup>239</sup> James Craigie 1948: 22.

which were an important but now neglected form of writing in seventeenth-century England. (Craigie 1948: 22-23)

In the somewhat vaguely entitled ‘Of A King’s Behaviour in Indifferent Things’, James delivers his most detailed blue-print of sovereign cultural patronage to date. Whilst the abiding objective of James’s ‘royal gift’ is to impart governmental advice to his son, it is only in the final third of the treatise that we find a concerted attempt at providing a book for the behaviour of the budding courtier, along a similar model to Erasmus’ *Institutio principis christiani* (1516), Baldassare Castiglione’s best-selling *Il Cortegiano* (1528), the latter’s translation, Sir Thomas Elyot’s *The Governour* (1531), Machiavelli’s *Il Principe* (written and distributed c. 1513, printed 1532), or the anonymously penned *Institution of a Gentleman* (1555).<sup>240</sup>

In a neat hint towards the ‘indifferent things to come’, James opens Book Three by stating that a king ought to regard himself as one performing upon a ‘skaffolde’, ‘quhase smallest actions & gestures all the people gazinglie do behoulde’.<sup>241</sup> A king should thus cultivate both his public policies and private hobbies in the same manner, never conducting himself in private in a way deemed inappropriate, should his actions be known publically. James inverts the maxim ‘never judge a book by its cover’ as he concludes that ‘the people, quha sees but the outuarde pairt’ of a king’s actions ‘uill euer iudge of the substance be the circumstances, & according to the outuarde appearance [...] uill conceaue

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<sup>240</sup> There is one text from the English tradition of ‘advice’ literature that is certainly worth mentioning in the present context. In 1581, Richard Mulcaster’s *Positions concerning the Training up of Children* appeared in print, an ‘original if rather windy set of proposals to reform Tudor education’ (Wheale 1990: 50). Despite its dedication to Queen Elizabeth, and its London imprint, two particular details mark this text as potentially interesting, or at least in some way relevant to, King James. Firstly, *Positions* come from the publishing house of Thomas Vautrollier, the man who would become the official printer to King James within three years of the publication of Mulcaster’s book on education. At the point of publication of *Positions*, Vautrollier was already operating, and also a recognised face, within the Scottish book trade (See Corbett 2010: 85). The second point worth noting is that Mulcaster himself was headteacher at Merchant Taylors, the largest Grammar school in London. Former pupils of Mulcaster’s included ‘Edmund Spenser, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Lodge, Lancelot Andrewes, and no less than seven of the forty-seven clerics who revised the 1611 “King James” Bible’ (Wheale 1999: 50). The most obvious connection between James’s advice manual and Mulcaster’s comes with the thematic overlap. *Positions* is divided up into 45 chapters, with chapters 6 to 35 dedicated to ‘exercises and training the body’. Subjects covered in these particular chapters include ‘fensing, or the use of the weapon’, ‘riding’, ‘swimming’, and ‘circumstances, which are to be considered in exercise’. According to Mulcaster, the education of a child ought to consider both the mental and physical capacities, and in his advice to his own son, James VI certainly seems to share Mulcaster’s sentiments. See Richard Mulcaster, *Positions* (London 1581: sig.ij).

præoccupied conceatis of the kings inuaird intention' (fol. 25a). In essence, James suggests that the king must present himself as an open book to be read by his subjects.

According to James 'the indifferente actions and behaiouere of a man' can be divided into two: 'things necessary' and 'things not necessary' (fol. 25a). To example the former, James denotes sleep, food and clothing as indispensable (as one would expect) alongside the physical actions of 'speaking, writing, and gesture'. Further elucidation of each 'necessary' principle follows. At the dinner table, Henry is to eschew gluttony, partaking only in the simplest of fare 'uithout composition or saulces, quhilke are lyker medecines then meate' (fol. 25b). The prince is to exert a modicum of self-restraint in his relationship to alcohol, and ought never to enthrall himself to excessive drunkenness, which is a 'beastlie uyce'(fol. 26b). Having already stipulated what sort of food a prince should enjoy, James goes one step further, instructing his son on how to conduct himself at the table:

in the forme of youre meate eating be nather unciuill lyke a grosse Cinike, nor affectatlie mignarde lyke a dentie dame, but eate in a manlie, rounde, & honest facon, it is in nauayes cumlie to dispatche affaires, or be pansiue at meate, but keep then ane oppin & cheirfull countenance, garring them reide pleasant histories unto you that proffeit maye be mixed uith pleasure, & quhen ye are euill disposed interteine pleasant, quicke, bot honest discoursis. (fol. 25b)

Politics is an unseemly and inappropriate discussion topic for the dinner table, argues James.<sup>242</sup> Neither, he continues, is it wholesome for a king's mind to be entirely absorbed by the contemplation of matters of statecraft whilst eating. For King James, a prince might use that time to 'reade pleasant histories', to use his time wisely so that learning ('profit') might be melded with the 'pleasure' of the feast. Learning (and by extension reading), then, is a durable activity, one to be undertaken at vacant hours, in isolation or in the presence of company.

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<sup>241</sup> James VI, MS Royal B.xv, fol. 25a.

<sup>242</sup> If more evidence is needed of the king's dislike of political discourse at the dinner table, one need only look towards James and Thomas Hudson's supper-time discussion of poetic translation and Du Bartas (as outlined in Chapter 3 of this thesis) which led to the creation of Hudson's *Judith* in 1584, although this does not necessarily prove that politics *were not* discussed as well.

A number of decorous rules follow James's conception of dining etiquette. Henry is told to 'be [...] delicate in youre sleepe', to 'lett not youre chalmer be thrang & commoune the tyme of [...] rest', to 'behaue youre self sa in youre greatest secreatis as ye neid not be ashamed suppose thay uaire [...] proclaimed', and to 'take na heade to any of your dreames' (fol. 26a). Like Castiglione's conception of how a courtier should present himself, James too provides his son with a picture of how a monarch should dress. In *habiliment* a king should be 'nather ouer superfluouse lyke a deboshed uaistoure', nor 'lyke a miserabill pedder' (fol. 26a). A vivid imagination (unquestionably fuelled by James's own reading) informs his ideas on appropriate kingly apparel, and there is more than a trace of the protagonists of romance literature visible here as he argues that a king ought not to be

artificiallie trimmed & dekkid lyke a courtizane, nor yett ouer sluggishelie cledd lyke a cuntree cloune, not ouer lichtlie lyke a candie soldat or a uaine young courteoure, nor yett ouer grauelie lyke a minister [...] let youre self & all youre court ueare na ordinarie armoure uith your claithis, bot sicc as is knichtlie & honorable I meane rapper-suordis & daiggeris-swords. (fol. 27a)

A king should always seek to match his language and diction to his appearance, 'for as the tongue speakis to the eares sa dois the gesture speake to the eyes of the auditoure' (fol. 26a). Fifteen years have elapsed since the composition and publication of James's *Essayes*, as James writes his *Basilikon*, yet his 'Reulis and Cautelis' still resonates in this later advice manual, especially as regards linguistic decorum in public oration. The language of a king (and by extension a politician and successful orator) must be

plaine, honest naturall, cumlie, clene, shorte & sententious escheuing baith the extremeties alsueill in not using a rusticall corrupt leid, nor yet booke langage & penn & inkerne termes, & least of all mignarde & aeffeminate termis, but let the greatest part of youre eloquence consist in a naturall, cleir, & sensibill forme of the deliuerie of youre mynde, beildit aye upon certaine & goode groundis tempering it uith grauitie, quikenes, or mirrienes according to the subiect & occasion of the tyme, not taunting in theologie, nor alleadging scripture in drinking purposis, as ouer many dois. (fol. 27b)

This directly correlates with the counsel delivered by James in chapter viii of his 'Reulis and Cautelis' relating to the decorous marriage of appropriate verse with subject matter in

poetic composition. There is, writes James, ‘ryme quhilk seruis onely for lang historeis, and zit are nocht verse’,<sup>243</sup> verse ‘for the descriptioun of Heroique actis, martiall and knichtly faittis of armes’, rhyme schemes fit only for ‘heich and graue subiectis, specially drawin out of learnit authoris’, for ‘materis of loue’, and so forth’ (1584: sig. M4). Writing as both a monarch and an author, there is nothing strange in James’s collapsing of the roles of public orator and writer – writing is, after all, nothing else ‘bot a forme of enregistrate speache’.<sup>244</sup>

There is a superficial encouragement offered by James to Henry to take up the pen and write, but it must also be noted that this encouragement to write is tempered. If, during the course of his reign, the prince’s ‘engyne’ ‘spurre [him on to] uryte any uorkes ather in uerse or prose’, it would be hypocritical of James to warn him against it, and ‘can not bot allou [him] to practise it’ (fol. 28a). However, the prince must not endeavour to take ‘langsum uorkis in hande’ (fol. 28a), for works of this nature will only serve to distract him from his calling. This advice chimes at once with the notion suggested by the title of his 1591 poetic collection, *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres*, where poetry is something to engage with only when matters of office have been put to bed. Presuming his son will have ‘some beginnings of knowledge’ in composition, James is compelled to provide a potted version of his ‘Revlis and Cautelis’:

flatter not youre self in youre labouris, bot before thaye be sett furth lett thaim first be preuile censored be sum of the best skilled men in that craft that in these uorkis ye mell uith [...] lett thaim be free of all uncomelines and unhonestie [...] choose subiects uorthie of you that be not full of uanitie but of uertu, escheuing obscuritie & delyting euer to be plaine & sensibill [...] remember that it is not the principall part of a poeme to ryme richt, & flou ueill uith monie prettie uordis [...] I ualde also aduyse you to urite in youre awin language for [...] it best becumis a king to purifie & make famouse his awin language [...]. (fols. 28a-28b)

In James’s opinion, a poem ought to be deemed praiseworthy if it is able to withstand continuous re-reading as well as if it is rich in ‘quike inuentions & poeticke flouris’,

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<sup>243</sup> James VI 1584: sig. [Miii].

<sup>244</sup> MS Royal B.xv., fol.28a.

immediately recalling for a knowing reader the preface to his translation of ‘The Uranie’, wherein James argues that a poem ought to be judged for the sense and sentiment contained therein as opposed to being ranked solely on aesthetic grounds. There is one final noteworthy nod to the *Essayes* and the abiding influence of Christian-humanist reading impulses in the *Basilikon*. James’s evergreen literary hero, du Bartas, is once more name-checked by the king. Having drawn upon the work of the Frenchman to provide a French aphorism, James implores Henry to regard fondly the work of his favourite literary acquaintance, du Bartas (fol. 30a). Indeed, in the 1603 edition, James writes that du Bartas’s works are ‘all most worthie to be red by any Prince, or other good Christian; so would I especially wish you to be well versed in them’.<sup>245</sup>

Throughout this treatise on kingly conduct, James pays careful attention to the rhetoric used to impart his experiential wisdom. Whilst the conduct books of Vives and Erasmus were penned for the expediency of a royal, for the court, or from within a courtly *milieu*, James’s advice manual on kingship is unique in the period in the sense that it offers an invaluable insight of a serving royal ‘insider’. As the treatise draws to its logical conclusion, James turns from matters of exercising the mind to affairs relating to the exercise of the body. Physical sports (hunting and horseriding) and games which test mental agility (chess, card and dice games) are promoted by James as activities to enable successful and spirited government.

In this sweeping but nevertheless comprehensive study on the conduct of a Christian king, James does not really leave any room for misinterpretation, in terms of the nature and details of the activities that Henry is to undertake and the manner in which he has to undertake them. James’s literary *oeuvre* had thus far shown him as a writer who would eagerly anticipate his readers’ input, but more than this, not only could he anticipate it but also actively took steps to facilitate it. With the *Basilikon* (or rather the multiple renderings of it) we find an evolution in the king’s ideals on reading. In 1598 he has a

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<sup>245</sup> James VI, Waldegrave 1603, p.128.



clear objective in mind, an intended reader and small print run organised to boot, and seems intent on imparting only what he thinks his ideal reader needs to know. Yet by 1603, with a new realm and a potentially bigger literate audience to reach, James is far more preoccupied in defining how his text is to be understood – or, more plainly, he is compelled to once again reconsider the tutelary stance in order to re-educate his new readership so that they might be able to read his royal maxims in the way he intended.

Craigie has noted how in its textual evolution the *Basilikon Doron* ‘passed through at least three phases’.<sup>246</sup> In the first cycle, during the lifetime of its author, the *Basilikon* was held in high literary esteem and political worth, only coming in for criticism, ‘under the charge of pedantry’ in the second phase (as outlined by Craigie), until the present day where its (the *Basilikon*’s but we might also argue James’s) ‘reputation has again been rising’ (Craigie 1944: 39). In his notes to the STS edition of the *Basilikon*, Craigie makes a very valid point – ‘that the author of *Basilikon Doron* himself thought highly of his work is shown by the numerous occasions on which he cited it in support of the point he wished to make’ (Craigie 1944: 39). It is surprising, for a king who regarded himself as a credible author-poet, that very little reference is made in his own letters or speeches to any work other than his *Basilikon*.<sup>247</sup>

This chapter, like the thesis more generally, has sought to highlight James’s continuous preoccupation with the reading process, and his being a facilitator of knowledge for those literate subjects willing to engage with him in his literary dialogues. This contention is presented not to diminish in any way the significance and craft of the king as an author, poet, translator and polemicist in his own right, but to supplement it, to show the rich complexity in the king’s authorial persona. Taking the form of a text of spiritual edification and commonplace book of practical maxims, whilst simultaneously inserting itself into the landscape of contemporary political science, quarrying the

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<sup>246</sup> Craigie 1944: 39.

<sup>247</sup> See Craigie 1944: 39-62 for a comprehensive list of texts, tracts and speeches in which James cites (or at least appears to cite) himself.

mannered substance of the Renaissance conduct books, whilst, moreover, re-energising texts from a pre-existing Jamesian literary corpus, this text presents itself as a clearly defined set of practical rules on Scottish kingship. As such, James's 'royal gift' might well be better served by the titular designation 'His Maiesties Revlis and Cautelis in the Divine Arte and Trew Law of Kingship, to be Observit and Eschewit Especially at Vacant Houres'.

## Chapter 5 - Preassing to be a Good ‘Textuarie’?: *The Workes* (1616)

### *Scholarship on the Workes to date*

A vast body of historical scholarship exists on the subject of James VI and I, his politics, his reign and personal relationships, whilst in literary-critical circles there continues to be an ever-expanding scholarly interest in James’s writings and his overall cultural significance. Yet, of this latter literary category, only a small percentage of critical mass is given over to an examination of the atypically grandiose 1616 folio *Workes*. This discrepancy is all the more noteworthy when we consider, as Joseph Marshall (2006) has done previously, that the 1616 folio is ‘arguably the first instance of a Scottish-born writer having a collection of ‘works’ published during his lifetime’.<sup>248</sup> Prior to Marshall (2006), the critical imbalance had been partially recognised in *Royal Subjects* (Fischlin and Fortier 2002). In his scholarly ‘Foreword’ to this volume, Kevin Sharpe begins by tackling the *Workes* (and the critical apathy by which it is met) head-on, arguing that the prolonged academic neglect of the king’s showpiece collection over the last century has much to do with the critical selectivity exercised in the process of re-presenting James’s ‘political’ works in new scholarly editions. For Sharpe, Charles McIlwain’s *Political Works of James I* (1918), has much to answer for in this respect:

McIlwain’s selection of “political” writings was determined by his own notion of what constituted politics. The edition therefore detaches the treatises and speeches from the large body of James’s *Workes*, removing them from the contexts in which contemporaries read them and viewed the king. Since 1918 James’s other writings gathered in his *Workes* – paraphrases of Scripture, defences of the oath of allegiance, interventions in European controversy, and his diatribe against tobacco – have been largely ignored [...] presumably because it was assumed that they had nothing to offer the historian of politics.<sup>249</sup>

Sharpe contends that by selecting and promoting the printed speeches to Parliament as stand-alone pieces, and further, by presenting those as the only ones of ‘political’ worth, McIlwain inadvertently denies the political (and otherwise) significance of the texts

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<sup>248</sup> Joseph Marshall, ‘The *Workes* of King James VI & I and its Revolutionary Readers, 1617-1689’, in *Journal of the Edinburgh Bibliographical Society* (2006), pp. 88-108, 88.

preceding the speeches in the *Workes*. As Sharpe realises, the impact of this deliberate ‘political’ foregrounding on generations of ‘historians of politics’ was sizeable. As an ‘important and original volume’ (2002: 15), *Royal Subjects* therefore gave itself an interdisciplinary agenda; in widening the scope of study (taking James’s writings beyond the domain of the historian by examining more than just the speeches to Parliament and treatises), and re-contextualising James’s writings (prose, poetical, and political), this collection of critical essays attempted to open ‘myriad insights into the central issues of historiographical and critical debate’ (2002: 17).

*Royal Subjects*, according to the author of its ‘Foreword’, offers two ‘incisive but undeveloped, and interestingly contradictory, observations’ (2002: 17) on the cultural and monarchical magnitude of the 1616 *Workes*:

James’s 1616 *Workes* [...] marked “a major moment in the history of English authorship” – a moment when the authority of the text resided in the name of the creator. By assisting that development, James furthered the claims of other authors to property, notably Ben Jonson, who gathered his folio works in the same year. Thus he may have helped to disperse cultural authority – that is, authority itself – to all writers: writers who were to emerge by the end of the seventeenth century as powerful political agents, not all in the service of the king. Curtis Perry extends the observation about authorship and collaborative writing to politics, stating that “the public persona of a monarch is always produced collaboratively.” (2002: 17-18)

The two points are worth reiterating; firstly, that the *Workes* comes to represent an important shift in perspective towards original authorship and cultural ownership of intellectual property, and secondly (if somewhat contradictorily), that the king’s authority is always produced in collaboration with some other agent. Having suggested in the ‘Foreword’ of Fischlin and Fortier (2002) the importance of this later publication, it is therefore disappointing to note that only one chapter within the edited collection of critical essays pays any real attention to the *Workes* (1616).

In “’To Eate the Flesh of Kings’: James VI and I, Apocalypse, Nation, and Sovereignty’, Daniel Fischlin provides a close-reading of what he calls the ‘apocalyptic’

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<sup>249</sup> Kevin Sharpe, ‘Foreword’, in Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 15-36.

texts, ‘Paraphrase Vpon the Revelation of the Apostle St. John’ (1588?) and ‘A Fruitfull Meditation’. In Fischlin’s opinion, these neglected texts written and first published in the late 1580’s,

articulate a nascent sense of James’s emergent position in the political economy of Europe. Perhaps more importantly, the apocalyptic texts figure his emergent relation to the problematic form of absolute power he was to embody both in his political and literary actions over the next forty-odd years (2002: 389).

Fischlin’s reading astutely examines these texts for the value they wielded in their original compositional circumstances (in recontextualising the individual texts within the *Workes* as a whole whilst closely analysing their literary worth, he immediately differentiates himself from the methodology of McIlwain) and also considers the value subsequently placed on these biblical exegeses by the editor of the 1616 edition, James Montague. Whilst his approach to these texts is stimulating – Fischlin robustly argues that these ‘lesser’ literary inclusions in the *Workes* are not merely unsophisticated juvenalia or exercises unrelated to his kingship – and whilst his argument that the prominent positioning of the apocalyptic texts at the beginning of the *Workes* shows the king’s concern with ‘textual self-presencing’ and ‘sovereign relations to the nation’ (2002: 392) is a strong one, Fischlin’s study of the *Worke* ultimately leaves the reader with a number of questions which will be addressed later in this thesis chapter.

In 2005, Maria Wakely and Graham Rees published the findings of a quite significant study into the workings of the King’s Printers in London over the period 1616-1620, when the printing house stood at the apex of the London printing trade.<sup>250</sup> The most significant ‘find’ of their probe into the printing house records was that in that four-year period the publishing house put out ‘a spate of special folios that was as unprecedented as it was brief’ (2005: 467):

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<sup>250</sup> Maria Wakely and Graham Rees, ‘Folios Fit for a King: James I, John Bill, and the King’s Printers, 1616-1620’, in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, Vol. 68, No. 3, pp. 467-495, University of California Press (2005).

a set of nine editions<sup>251</sup> – all in folio, all enormous, and all written, or (in one case) edited, by one or another of just five *contemporary* authors who happened to have been associated with the most exalted levels of Jacobean government and the highest reaches of European intellectual life. Just as unexpected was another discovery: that this cluster of folios occupied an island in time. No other folio edition by a living author was printed officially or privately by any King's Printer from James's accession until after the king's death and well beyond. (2002: 467)

Amongst this set number of 'special editions' was James's 1616 folio. Wakely and Rees evolve scholarship on the *Workes* by appreciating the literary and cultural context into which this collected edition of James's prose writing was born. It is the contention of Wakely and Rees that in the first instance the 1616 folio is 'to be taken as a whole, for a legacy to the future and as a memory of the king's Word that will not perish' (2005: 475). In the second instance, we are asked to consider the *Workes*, not only as a thematic and coherent unit to be read as a whole, but also as one text in a royally-driven movement. Wakely and Rees argue that the affairs of the King's Printers in this four-year period were geared towards carrying out 'a royal politico-religious program'; ultimately, their article asserts that, working as a sequence of inter-related texts, the 'elite folios promoted an "official" idea of a national culture – an idea that was eventually to prove as durable as it was influential' (2005: 468). This last idea is particularly pertinent to the hypothesis of this thesis – that throughout his literary career James was determined to use his writings to promote his literary, religious and political ideals, in a purposefully contrived collaborative process.

Despite asking for the *Workes* to be regarded as a whole, Wakely and Rees' reading of the 1616 folio is necessarily curtailed by their self-imposed remit to explore the activities of the publishing house itself, rather than the individual texts which make up the 'unanticipated and possibly unique' (2005: 467) residual grouping. Consequently, their discussion of the *Workes* considers only the book's stylistics, briefly hovering over the

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<sup>251</sup> As for the elite folios, they are as follows: the collected works of James I in English (1616; that is, 1617) and Latin (1619); the first two parts of Marc' Antonio de Dominis' *De republica ecclesiastica* (1617 and 1620); the Italian (1619), Latin (1620), and English (1620) versions of Paolo Sarpi's celebrated *Historia*

paratext which accompanies the prose writings in the folio. Nevertheless, their study is crucial in cultivating (but not sustaining within the confines of the article) further avenues for future research into the *Workes* as being an integral part of an important moment in publication history.

Joseph Marshall (2006) returns the *Workes* to a political context, by foregrounding the monarchical remit of this opulent text, before discussing in more detail the reception of James's *magnum opus* over a protracted length of time (from 1617 to 1689). Expatiating upon the celebratory remit of the folio publication, Marshall argues that this collection of James's 'best bits'

is not just about words, about some text that its author has given to the world; this is the presence of a living writer. But not just any writer: James does not put on the mask of anonymous scholarship, as he had done in issuing works like *Essayes of a Prentise* or the *Apologie for the Oath of Allegiance*. This is the king, on his throne, with crown, orb and sceptre, in robes for state, ready to rule and judge. On the shelf at James's right hand is the rod of Justice, which rests on a book bearing the legend 'verbum dei'. It might mean the Bible, but it also serves to deepen the aura of authority around this particular book. (2006: 91)

Adding to the commemorative impression exuded by this lavish edition, argues Marshall, is the visual composition of the engraved frontispiece and embellished title page. For Marshall, the architectural columns suggest 'the setting for a pageant or a masque, like the designs for James's triumphal entry into London in 1604' (2006: 92). In this interpretation James is seen to indulge in the proverbial self-congratulatory back-slapping: denying the more contentious aspects of his reign, James identifies his 'blessed peacemaking' as the part of his kingship of which he is most proud. Whilst Marshall's invocation of the theatrical masque has distinct connotations of marriage feasts or a coronation spectacle, he subverts the imagery by suggesting that the 1616 folio of King James has far more sombre undertones:

Over everything else is the starry crown of eternal life which angels are lowering into position. All the secular and sacred guarantees of authority are

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*del Concilio Tridentino*; Henry Savile's edition of Thomas Bradwardine's *De Causa Dei* (1618); and Francis Bacon's *Instauratio magna* (1620).

in place. The overall effect tends to suggest a very pompous funeral monument, and in a certain way this book did, indeed, bury James. There is no question about the quality of these engravings and the claims that they are making. The question is whether James and his publishers were wise to make those claims. (2006: 92)

As mentioned in the opening to this thesis chapter, Marshall's reading also promotes the compilation as a work of real literary import, not only within James's own literary *oeuvre*, but also within the trajectory of Scottish literary endeavour in the Early Modern period. Most recently, Jane Rickard (2007) has evolved critical thinking on the *Workes*; in her assertion that it ought to be studied as a complete entity<sup>252</sup> as it is 'in many ways the most significant of James's publications' (138), and in dedicating a complete chapter of her monograph to such a task,<sup>253</sup> Rickard forces a scholarly reconsideration of the 1616 publication. In 'Monumentalising the Royal Author', the chapter tends to diminish the complexity or subtlety by which the king bids to finally seal his divinely-authorized monarchical word – in an uncharacteristically grand format by James's standards – for posterity. Marshall's conception of the folio as a funereal monument to a still-living monarch resonates with Rickard's reading in this respect. Rickard's concern in this chapter with the authorial and authoritative power-struggles inherent in the *Workes* is in keeping with the objectives of her monograph more generally:

This chapter first locates the *Workes* in its literary and political contexts, and suggests that the associations developing around collected editions of literary works accorded with, and may have helped to shape, James's authorial ambition. It then examines what texts he chose to include and how these texts were altered from earlier editions. This reveals that the collection attempts not only to strengthen his image as author and authority in the book's present but retrospectively to reshape his political and literary career to date, through various suppressions and elisions. (2007: 139)

Yet, the task of pinning James's literary and political intentions down is far from easy, and as Rickard admits, her scholarly reading of the *Workes* cannot fully overcome or 'suppress [the] internal contradictions' (2007: 139) at play in the 1616 publication. In this reading, the myriad authorial contradictions and authoritative shape-shifting, coupled with a



consideration of the editorial decontextualisation (with the concealing of publication dates, and the removal of instructive prefaces and marginalia which had adorned the originals) leaves Rickard convinced that the *Workes* had been put together to serve as a political bargaining tool – but, as she admits herself, she is unable to resolve some key contradictions.

This present thesis chapter seeks to evolve the aforementioned scholarship, by interrogating James's collected edition from a slightly different angle. Rather than re-examining the myriad ways in which the *Workes* 'monumentalise' (Rickard 2007: 138-74) the royal author, or view it as a literary platform on which the king could 'self-fashion', this chapter will present the *Workes* as the logical culmination of a protracted series of publications in which the king both explores and promotes an apposite methodology for the reading of scripture. The chapter will notionally align itself with Wakely and Rees's assertion that the folio was a smaller part of a wider cultural and religio-political agenda. However, it will attempt to renegotiate the terms of the 'agenda' as defined by Wakely and Rees, and additionally will argue the case for the timeline in which this agenda was enacted to be extended much further back, to the 1580's and James's Scottish reign. James's use of literary creativity in order to pass on a model, ideology or (self-) government that was based on, and serviceable to, royal example began, and ended, with a brief 'Castalian moment' in the 1580's, for it is not a 'call to arms' for his poetic brethren that we find in James's collected prose *Workes*, but an articulation of the same fundamental principles set out in his apprentice piece of 1584.

Space prevents an exhaustive study of the *Workes* from being undertaken. This chapter will consequently consider the editorial decisions underpinning the presentation of the prose *Workes*, and in an attempt to limit overlap with previous chapters, will examine in greater detail only a few works from the entirety of the compendium. Starting with a

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<sup>252</sup> 'It is not merely a collection of individual writings but a book that is carefully introduced and organised, and that attempts to function as a single and coherent entity'. Rickard 2007: 138-139.

<sup>253</sup> Rickard 2007: 138-173.

look at the paratextual apparatus employed in the *Workes*, the chapter will subsequently address the primary text (the rather lengthy ‘Paraphrase Vpon Reuelation’) before moving on to discuss the purpose and value of the ‘meditation’ as a genre.

In Rickard’s opinion, James’s return, in 1616, to his favoured medium – print – was a move intended to reassert his ‘piety and authority’(2007:140), whilst providing a ‘timely reminder of happier days’. It was a concerted attempt to defuse anti-monarchical sentiment towards James and increasing disillusionment with those with whom he surrounded himself. Dire handling of crown finances had resulted in the court being viewed by many subjects as profligate and spendthrift. Further exacerbating the negative images emanating from court was the fact that the make-up of the English courtly *milieu* at this time was typified by the stratospheric rise and equally rapid fall of Jamesian male ‘favourites’.<sup>254</sup> Rickard interprets the *Workes* as a politically nostalgic enterprise on James’s part, geared to remind his subjects of his expertise in statecraft, but this sense of wistful professional retrospection on the king’s part also seems to chime with historian Charles H. Willson’s biographical sketch of a man whose personal, physical and mental peak had long since been reached by the time of the *Workes*’ going to press. James, it seems, was himself in desperate need of a reminder of his own ‘happier’ days:

by 1616 [James] was already beginning to grow old. Henceforth there was a slow but steady deterioration not only in his physical powers but also in his strength of will and in his character. Business became more burdensome, decisions more difficult, fears more acute, emotions more overpowering, temptations more irresistible. Slowly the British Solomon sank into physical decay and into premature senility.<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> His Scottish reign had seen its share of political and amatory ‘favouritism’ with the promotion of figures like Esmé Stuart and the Earl of Huntly, but not on the scale witnessed at James’s English court. James’s relationship with George Villiers, for example, has been documented in a number of historical accounts. Yet, favouritism could sour as quickly as it manifested itself, as is the case with Sir Robert Carr. In the period immediately pre-dating the publication of the *Workes*, one of the major courtly ‘scandals’ took place between Robert Carr, his wife, Lady Frances Howard and Sir Thomas Overbury, with the former two being implicated in the latter courtier’s murder. For more on this incident and the political favouritism of James VI and I, see Jenny Wormald, ‘James VI and I (1566–1625)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2011. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/14592>, website accessed 19 July 2012].

<sup>255</sup> D.H. Willson 1971: 378.

When we consider that by 1616 James's health was in deterioration, and also bear in mind that the king had already survived a number of health scares (as well as a number of treasonous conspirings against his throne and attempts upon his life),<sup>256</sup> it is understandable that pronounced fears over his own mortality might have plagued James during the second decade of his English reign.

We have already seen in this thesis how a prolonged period of illness (in 1598 and into early 1599) served as a likely catalyst in the decision process informing the production of his *Basilikon Doron* for Prince Henry. More so than *Basilikon*, however, the *Workes* seems unambiguously to carry all the weight and import of a retrospective, detailing a long (and sometimes illustrious) political career, a monarchical vocation which would perhaps be drawing, in James's mind at least, to its natural end. In uniting Scotland and England by diplomatic means, James had already managed to do what none of his predecessors (Scottish or English) had managed to do by force. In outliving his own son and first heir (Henry), and in outlasting in terms of age his mother (and the entirety of the Stewart monarchical body to date), James succeeds not only in enjoying a longer and more distinguished reign than his Scottish forebears, but has had the time to put pen to paper to provide the necessary educational tools by which his successor must learn the ropes of 'good' (in James's conception of the word) governance. It is therefore the contention of this chapter that whilst the *Workes* does reveal a king deeply concerned with the potential of the book as a marketing aide and an instrument of assessment by which to prove his faith (as Fischlin and Rickard, amongst numerous others, have examined), it also exists as the logical culmination of a royally-authored corpus in which discriminating reading is promoted with a view to securing spiritual, moral and political perspicacity.

### ***Paratextual Activity in the Workes***

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<sup>256</sup> The Gunpowder Plot is by far the most infamous episode in James's English reign. For a concise chapter on the subject of James's relationship with English Catholics see John Bossy's 'The English Catholic Community 1603-1625' in Alan G.R. Smith, ed., *Reign of James VI and I*, Macmillan (London and Basingstoke 1973), pp. 91-105. See also 'Friction Across the Religious Divide' in Diana Newton's *The*

In its appearance, editorial composition, and, importantly, in its overt and uninhibited acknowledgement of its author (and author's status), the lavish 1616 folio of *The Workes of the Most High and Mighty Prince* could not be aesthetically further from the modestly unassuming *Essayes of a Prentise in the Divine Arte of Poesie*, as it first appeared in 1584; the intrepid literary 'prentise' of the *Essayes* is certainly nowhere to be found in the opening paraphernalia, nor indeed are the writings of that 'prentise' period (c.1584-8) easily located or identified in *The Workes*. The title page of the 1616 folio heralds the arrival (through the use of the definite article, and the term '*Workes*' itself) of an implicitly complete storehouse of all of the king's royal writings. Yet one glance at the table of contents quickly establishes that exercises of a 'poetic' bent do not feature. Included in this category of missing texts are representative pieces from the *Essayes* and *Exercises at Vacant Houres*. By this omission, the *Workes* is not categorically definitive, but rather exists as an evocative selection of prose writings, sculpted and manipulated to portray a certain narrative.

The *Workes* is certainly (as Fischlin, Wakely and Rees, and Rickard intimate) a presentation piece in which the king presents himself to his subjects as both a divinely-ordained and divinely-inspired monarch of three realms; James's name proudly emblazons the title page, with the bold type confirming his God-given monarchical duties as 'King of Great Britaine, France and Ireland' and as 'Defender of the Faith'. The latter remit is perhaps the one role to which James's *Workes* directly speaks, for within the covers he reminds both himself, and his son Charles – to whom the folio is dedicated – of the narrative of the reign. It presents a clear trajectory of James's acquisition of the wisdom that pertains to kings in order to be astute political leaders, from the 1580s to 1616. James reminds himself and his subjects of all that he has achieved both as a monarch and as an

author, and in such a strong reminder of his achievements the *Workes* brings into sharp focus how politics and religion are inextricably yoked.

Sitting next to the book of ‘Verbum dei’ in the Van de Passe frontispiece, James is pictorially presented to the world as a reader of God’s word, and consequently, as a reader and interpreter exuding a resilience and strength of leadership; the concepts – James as astute reader and as astute leader – are mutually reinforcing. Although the overt artistic expression of wisdom and strength might be familiar to other world monarchs in this period, it is the intensity with which King James pursues this particular juxtaposition within this publication which is truly noteworthy; for the king, it is not simply an empty formula, but a rule by which to live as a monarch. As one who understands the spiritual law on which his divinely-conferred throne is predicated, and who has led his realms based largely upon the articles of his faith and scriptural interpretation,<sup>257</sup> the king appears as one who can sit proudly (justifiably even) under the banner of ‘beati pacifici’. To further promote this folio as a work of didactic import, and advocate the studious nature by which the text (whether that be the Book or James’s *Workes*) is pored over, the Van de Passe image is married to four lines of verse,<sup>258</sup> which culminate in the very clear sentiment that it is knowledge, above all else, which ‘makes the King most like his maker’.<sup>259</sup> If a temporal king can move closer to his celestial god through knowledge, then the implication of this maxim might also be extended by James to his subjects.

However we interpret the subtext or intentions underpinning the creation of this collected prose edition, there can be little doubt that the reading or studying of this book is intended by those involved in its composition to be a demanding or challenging

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<sup>257</sup> Often these interpretations are presently deemed inaccurate or over-zealous in temperament, but whether or not these interpretations are accurate is of lesser relevance than the fact that he values the process of reading scripture, and then acting upon such reading, as integral facets of his statecraft.

<sup>258</sup> ‘Crounes haue their compasse, length of days their date,/ Triumphes their tombes, felicitie her fate:/ Of more then earth, can earth make none partaker,/ But knowledge makes the KING most like his maker.’

<sup>259</sup> The four lines of verse read: ‘Crounes haue their compasse, length of days their date,/ Triumphes their tombes, felicitie her fate:/ Of more then earth, can earth make none partaker,/ But knowledge makes the KING most like his maker’.

experience. The profusion of paratextual apparatus wrapped up in the folio edition makes this abundantly clear:

no fewer than seven items precede the works proper. The first, an engraved portrait of the king, faces the second, the engraved title [...] both engravings are sumptuous. The portrait, by Simon van de Passe [...] depicts the king seated in majesty with the symbols of his rule [...] James's portrait (or view from the throne) faces Renold Elstrack's fantastic engraved title page, with its multitude of allegorical emblems and classical and religious figures [...] the title page and its symbolism further assert the king's still novel union of the crowns. He is, "*By the grace of God*", not only defender of the faith but also "*King of Great Brittain France & Ireland*" [...] the engraved title is followed by five other preliminaries: a letterpress title page, a magnificent page-length royal arms, dedication, preface, and a table of contents.<sup>260</sup>

The race to reach the 'texts' themselves within the *Workes* is a proverbial marathon. There is such a wealth of symbolic connotation and inference to be sourced within this paratextual material, that no inclusion (of the seven that King James, John Bill and Montague give us) seems entirely frivolous, with each layer furnishing the *Workes* with a heightened sense of purpose, both spiritual and scholarly.

Gerard Genette, in *Paratexts: Thresholds to Interpretation* (1997), identifies the complexities inherent in 'reading' paratext. For Genette, a text very rarely comes to the reader 'unadorned [...], unreinforced and unaccompanied', and whilst this might lead to anxieties in the reader with regards exactly what to do with this supplementary material (is it an inalienable component of the text, for instance?), Genette argues that it always belongs to the text, 'in any case they surround it and extend it, precisely in order to *present* it'.<sup>261</sup> This presentational remit of paratext is twofold; in the 'usual' sense it must offer the text up to be read, and secondly, it must work in what Genette terms the 'strongest' sense 'to make present, to ensure the text's presence in the world, its 'reception' and consumption in the form [...] of a book' (1997:1). In delineating paratext as a liminal space in which transition and transaction occurs, Genette views paratext as 'a privileged place of a pragmatics and a strategy, of an influence on the public, an influence that [...] is at the service of a better reception for the text and a more pertinent reading of it' (1997: 2).

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<sup>260</sup> Wakely and Rees 2005: 472-474.

This latter contention is one which resonates against the paratextual devices employed throughout the body of James VI and I's writing, but particularly against this 1616 showcase selection. The dependency on paratext in the *Workes* is evident, and whilst some critics are keen to see the introductory paratext as the means through which to monumentalise its author, it is the contention of this chapter that the sequence of verbal and imagistic 'extras' preceding the prose texts themselves are included not as aids by which to glorify the role of 'king', or even the throne on which James sits in the frontispiece, but rather are included as vital instruments, prologues or instructions on how to read this particular king more carefully, actively and with discernment. Only with a more nuanced understanding of this monarch can the reader move closer to the king ideologically. In the same manner, by reading scripture and living through it, James moved closer to his God and served as his temporal vice-regent. Although other monarchs were certainly represented visually on the page by means of idealised paratextual images, very few monarchs continued to write the texts which these paratexts introduced, as did King James VI and I. Knowledge, we have been told in the aforementioned lines of verse married to the frontispiece image, makes the king most like his maker, and so we must presume that it is knowledge that will bring the subjects of his realm ideologically into line.

Whilst in their study of the *Workes*' supporting materials, Wakely and Rees acknowledge the importance of contents tables in books as having 'important paratextual functions',<sup>262</sup> they do not feel compelled to provide a comment on exactly what function might be served by the one included in the 1616 *Workes*. Understandably, it is perhaps not the most obviously notable aspect of the collected prose edition to analyse or to find significance in. Arguably, however, the contents pages are included in this publication for

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<sup>261</sup> Gerard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds to Interpretation*, Cambridge University Press (Cambridge, 1997), Introduction, pg. 1.

<sup>262</sup> Wakely and Rees 2005: 474.

a specific reason, and do have something to contribute to the overall remit of the publication.

At its most fundamental, the *Workes* is simplistically predicated upon a chronological structure – almost every text appears in the order in which it was published – with the odd variance from sequential order. Both Fischlin (2002) and Rickard (2007) accept this basic ordering system, and both have realised the neat link offered between the opening of the *Workes* and the conclusion of the lately authorized King James Bible. Rickard (2007) is the first critic to lend the *Workes* substantial consideration as an important part of James's literary *oeuvre*, and in her comprehensive study of the king's 1616 *magnum opus*,<sup>263</sup> Rickard writes at length on the conscious literary aggregation of the *King James Bible* and the *Workes*:

James not only draws on the divine as an external source of authority [...] but also implies the proximity, and even comparability, of the royal and the divine. The prefatory materials to his *Workes* both extend and prepare for these claims. These introductory pages draw in particular on the Book of Revelation [...] to establish, through analogy, association, implication, and assertion a series of related identifications: divine authority and the divine word; the divine and the royal; royal authority and the royal word.<sup>264</sup>

There is no escaping or denying this somewhat forced association by the king, especially when we consider the visual means (the frontispiece and title page) by which he attempts to reinforce the connection.<sup>265</sup> Nonetheless, just as the *Essayes* is more than just the encasing for the 'Reulis and Cautelis', so too, the *Workes* must be seen as more than just the means by which James consolidated his self-image in the eyes of his subjects as their temporal God-king.

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<sup>263</sup> 'Monumentalising the royal author: *The Workes*' in Rickard 2007:138-173.

<sup>264</sup> Rickard 2007: 149-150.

<sup>265</sup> 'The frontispiece implies a parallel: God is here represented through the book, as James is representing himself through this book. This paralleling of royal and divine is intensified by the relationship of James on a throne with the Bible at his right to the Book of Revelation: as Fischlin points out, the image recalls Revelation 5:1, 'And I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals'. This prepares the reader for the implication that James's paraphrase contains privileged access to divine truth. The relationship between the visual image and the paraphrase which is to follow also serves to emphasise that James represents the Bible in two ways: in his person he is a realisation of the kingly power described in the Bible and in his writing he reproduces biblical truths.' Rickard 2007: 150.



Fischlin argues that by opening his collected prose *Workes* with a series of paraphrases upon the Book of Revelation, what James effectively achieves is a fetishization<sup>266</sup> of his own book more generally. Fischlin's observation implies that in re-constructing his prose canon in the *Workes*, James was deeply concerned with, and actively engaged in, the transfiguration of his own written word into something resembling the divine word as authorized in 1611. Beginning at the authorized Bible's end would certainly suggest this, but how do we overcome the fact that the 'Paraphrase' by which the *Workes* opens, was composed within the first five years of his majority rule of Scotland? With the conscious omission of works from the *Essayes*, the Paraphrase thus represents the genesis of the king's prose portfolio. To begin with the 'Paraphrase' is not to begin at the end, nor to continue on from the end, but rather to begin at the beginning.

Whilst Fischlin's reading might thus err towards the anachronistic, Marshall and Rickard's attempts to explain the odd variance in structure is problematic as well; Rickard argues that the placing of the *Basilikon Doron* before the earlier *Trew Law* was 'presumably to make [the latter] more palatable' (pg. 157). This seems too reductive an assertion, as it critically denigrates the *Trew Law* as turgid or dry, whilst simultaneously suggesting a lack of scholarly depth to the *Basilikon*. Marshall, however, is of the opinion that the overall effect of the structure of this folio edition is to 'emphasise the authority of James as an imperial British ruler, the scholar-king and the religious leader' (2006: 94). A closer examination of the contents page, arguably, gives a clearer indication as to how the texts are arranged within the book binding.

Like the contents page contained in the *Essayes*, the contents page of the *Workes* is far from a definitive list of the texts included in a vast array of titles. The length of the contents page, sprawling over two pages, belies the lack of information that is actually

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<sup>266</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines 'fetishisation' as the worship of an inanimate object 'for its supposed magical powers or because it is concerned to be inhabited by a spirit'. Fischlin writes: 'James's paraphrases of Revelation [...] effectively fetishize the book and, by consequence, bookish culture and the power of writing, thus contributing in critical ways to how James enacts his sovereignty in relation to literary culture'. Fischlin and Fortier 2002:390.

imparted here. For the expediency of the reader, the collections' contents are laid bare under a clarificatory banner title, 'The Severall Treatises According to the Time wherein they were Written, and Their Place in this Collection'. For a collection of such length and breadth, the contents pages are important aids to reading namely for the way in which page numbers are given for each text. Yet they have an additional function; like the pictorial opening sequence of engravings, the contents pages also function as an important aesthetic tool, as a visual map of the textual terrain as James sees it.

One glance at the contents page serves as testament to this assertion, and shows some degree of textual ring-fencing and categorisation:

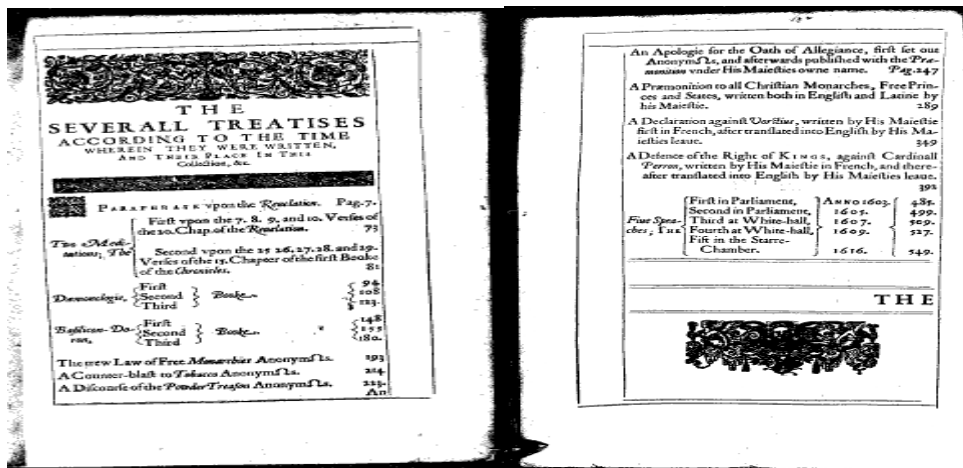


Figure 1: *The Workes* 1616: e4<sup>r</sup>

Figure 2: *The Workes* 1616: e5<sup>r</sup>

There are nine distinct generic groupings highlighted, with each grouping variously distinguished on the page by typological features ranging from capitalisation, brackets, and informational glosses, to tabular organisation. The two meditations are literally bracketed together on the first page whilst at the end of the second James does the same to his English parliamentary speeches. Here, on the stylised page, James invites his readers to approach the texts as he has partnered them up, and clearly arranged them. A retraction of this tabular format to a list would reveal that the *Workes* contain:

1. A 'Paraphrase'
2. 2 'Meditations'
3. 2 'Books'
4. 3 'Anonymous' Works

5. An 'Apology'
6. A 'Premonition'
7. A 'Declaration'
8. A 'Defence'
9. 5 'Speeches'

Whilst we are given pagination details for every text, and informed of which texts were originally published anonymously, the only group to be allowed any more detail is the final one, in which the five speeches are contained. In this subset, presented as though in a table, the year in which each speech was delivered is provided in a bracketed column on the right of its title. The grouped-together titles of speeches afford the only real chronological contextualisation for James's reader. Neither one of the five speeches listed reveals any indication as to its subject or theme. However, in existing as part of a group on the contents page, it is implied that each distinct speech constitutes an important component of a thematically coherent set of speeches, as though James had always intended each one of the speeches here included in the set to be read in conjunction with the others. In this overlooked contents page we find exactly that privileged liminal space of pragmatics and reading strategies as outlined by Gerard Genette, above.

There is perhaps one further piece of paratext that we might add to the list of seven clearly-defined literary embellishments (see above). The critical theorist, Henri-Jean Martin, argues that the way in which a literary volume was arranged on the page could itself reflect its 'symbolic value and hint at its prospective public'.<sup>267</sup> There is already evidence in James's *oeuvre* to suggest that he could manipulate literary mode to suit both genre and audience. For the most obvious examples of this, we might look back to the strikingly unvarnished presentation of the contractual *Trew Law* on cheaper paper, and compare this sparse aesthetic presentation to the very different aesthetics of the first edition of the *Basilikon Doron*, with its lavish typeset, costly paper, binding, and nominal print-run of seven. These choices in the editorial and publication processes, all suggest that a certain

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<sup>267</sup> Henri-Jean Martin, *The History and Power of Writing*, trans. Lydia Cochrane (Chicago and London, 1988), pg. 310.

calibre of reader (or indeed a certain environment for reading) was envisaged for each distinct text.

Whilst acknowledging the political pragmatics underpinning the *Workes*, Rickard importantly places more emphasis on the literary impulses and precedents informing the creation of a prose folio at that particular point. She argues that ‘ever since the sixteenth century’ the folio format

has played a central role in the construction of authorial identity, literary reputation, and the canon of individual authors, as well as the literary canon as a whole. While authors can never have complete control over their own reputations, producing a collected edition is a way of attempting to shape how posterity will view an author and their work. (2007:140)

There was no shortage of literary models for James, his editors and publishers to work from in putting together the king’s folio. The publication of Sidney’s work in 1598 had increased the popularity of the format amongst Elizabethan writers, whilst collected editions of writers James admired, Gascoigne (1587) and Daniel (1601),<sup>268</sup> had been in circulation (and gone through a number of editions) for decades. Posthumous folio editions of the works of the ancients, Seneca (prepared by Thomas Lodge, 1614), and Homer (translated by George Chapman, 1616?) were also produced in the period immediately predating the publication of James’s *Workes*, and, importantly with regards James’s collected edition, were presented to the literate reader as ‘having a didactic dimension’.<sup>269</sup> As Rickard makes clear, ‘by the 1610’s [...] the collected edition had emerged as a genre that resonated with James’s aspirations’ (2007: 143).

By purposely opting for the folio format, James immediately inserts himself into a pre-existing canon. Yet in opting to produce a prose collection in folio (as opposed to a poetical/dramatic collection in either quarto or folio), and by attempting to imbue it with thematic coherence, James changes the face of the sixteenth-century collected edition and

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<sup>268</sup> Whilst the collected edition (predominantly of poetry, and printed in quarto) was steadily growing in popularity, its stature in folio was only cemented by Daniel’s 1601 edition.

<sup>269</sup> Rickard 2007: 142.

widens the format's potential and its educational and spiritual remit. To Wakely and Rees's mind, James was doing something truly original with his interpretation of the folio edition, 'forging a link between the folio form, the printed word, and himself as a prime mover in the genesis of epoch-making editions'.<sup>270</sup> Indeed, so important a place in James's mind did the collected edition come to occupy, that in June 1616 he prohibited the Stationer's Company from sanctioning new print runs of his earlier works, demanding that only those texts "wee haue Caused [...] to be reduced into one volume' be allowed to go to press (2005: 475-476).

***James Montague's 'Epistle to Prince Charles' and 'Preface to the Reader'***

As this chapter has thus far sought to document, critical scholarship on the *Workes* has viewed it as a monolithic monument to King James's belief in the divine right of kings. This present theoretically inflected discussion of the collected works has attempted to read the 1616 folio by different terms, highlighting the many educational aids to reading incorporated into the opening paraphernalia. There is still yet more paratextual evidence to suggest that this *magnum opus* ought to be regarded as a contract for readerly reciprocity, and that the directions and clarifications (implicit and explicit) throughout the seven prefatory additions prove that the imperative to 'read well, and understand' is still very much at the forefront of the scholarly king's mind in the compilation of his prose collection.

It is interesting to find that in such an epically self-obsessed collection, roughly six per cent of the total page number is given over to prefatory writing donated by someone other than King James - James Winton, Bishop Montague (1568-1618). Of the thirty-one pages over which this prefatory material spans, three pages contain an epistolary dedication to Prince Charles, whilst the remaining twenty-eight pages constitute a 'Preface to the Reader'. Both are in themselves very different in tone and purpose. The former, is a concise and courteous envoi, pitched perfectly between instruction, celebration and

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<sup>270</sup> Wakely and Rees 2005: 475.

sychophantism; the latter is a protracted defence and/or justification of kingly writings, sermon-like and purposeful in tenor, and directed to a much wider audience than Prince Charles. The decision to have Montague introduce the *Workes* is one which shows the king's literary and religio-political nous and emphasises once more – how better to validate your credentials as a divinely-installed monarch and theologically knowledgeable mind than by inviting a man of the cloth to provide your reference? A later biographer of Bishop Montague, P.E. McCullough, notes that 'the long panegyric preface [to the 1616 *Workes*] is his [Montague's] only surviving original work'.<sup>271</sup>

In the introductory epistle to the *Workes*, the editor takes it upon himself to dedicate, on the king's behalf, this collection of the monarch's most enduring prose works to the 'thrice illvstrious and most excellent Prince, Charles, the onely sonne' of the sovereign lord, James. Montague's dedication – sandwiched between Simon van de Passe's iconoclastic engraving, the overtly pretentious title page, and James's 'Paraphrase Vpon Revelation' – is a thematic incongruity in the visual-to-verbal sequence (as highlighted by Rickard and Fischlin) and does not, realistically, provide a seamless link between the image of an apparently omnipotent king, and his 'authoritative' word; it is not the king who is here responsible for orchestrating readerly interpretation but the editor, Montague. In a strange reminder of Montague's Protestant faith, and the power which that faith purports to still have over the crown, the editor uses the epistolary space to audaciously rebuke the authorial laxity, and familial negligence, of James, in taking so long to provide his 'onely sonne' Charles with a princely advice manual. Whilst James expediently responded to the birth of his first son and heir, Henry, with the *Basilikon Doron*, the very absence of an advice manual specifically devised for Charles's guidance, it is here implied, shows a certain degree of fatherly disinterest towards Charles's education.

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<sup>271</sup> P. E. McCullough, 'Montagu, James (1568–1618)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/19021>, accessed 26 May 2013].

Montague's dedication, wherein he acts as a *paterfamilias by proxy* for James, thus reclaims from the body of the king's literary *oeuvre* some form of spiritual, educational and moral mandate to be used explicitly for the direction of Prince Charles. As the opening lines of this epistle dedicatory suggest, it was Montague's idea to present the *Workes*' to Prince Charles ('I haue humbly sought leaue of his most Excellent Maiestie, to present your Highnesse with this Volume'), and from the lines which follow it is obvious that Montague has his own agenda to fulfil:

I will not say, that it had beene a peece of *Iniustice* in the KING to haue denied you this right: But I dare say, it had beene a point of *Sacriledge* in a *Churchman* to haue stolne from you such a portion of your Inheritance, which consists as much in the *WORKES* of his Royall *Uertues*, as in the wealth of his mighty *Kingdomes*. (1616, 'Epistle')

In these terms, Montague implies the absence of a written schema, dedicated from King James to his second-born (but now only) son Charles, is akin to theft. He argues that Prince Charles's entitlement as heir to the British throne includes not only lands and titles, but a sufficient education, and access to his father's written word.

Montague contextualises the *Workes* for its dedicatee, and suggests that the transaction of the written word between father and son is well-established: just as '*Basilius* wrote *De Institutione Principis* to his Sonne *Leo*', and '*Constantinus* to his Sonne *Romanus*', '*Manuell* to his Sonne *Iohannes*', and '*Charles* the fift, to his Sonne *Philip*' (1616, 'Epistle'), so too His Majesty James VI had written the *Basilikon Doron* for his son Henry. Into this loosely-defined canon, Montague attempts to insert the *Workes*, presenting it as yet another Jamesian contribution to the 'advice to princes' literary tradition, only this time as one which has been created purely for Charles's benefit.

Notwithstanding the heavily recycled material which constitutes the great majority of this carefully orchestrated collected *Workes*, Montague is keen for this publication to be presented to Charles as containing many of the attributes of an original piece:

May it please your *Highnesse* to vnderstand, that of these *Workes*, some were out before; some other of them neuer saw light before; and others were

almost lost and gone, or at least abused by false copies, to their owne disgrace and his *Maiesties* great dishonour. (1616, 'Epistle')

It might be well to note here how the suggestion that the 1616 *Workes* exists in response to erroneous interpretations of the king's word reveals Montague in his own editorial work adhering firmly to the Jamesian self-editorial policy of ongoing correction and modification for the purposes of readerly clarity. In these terms, verbal echoes of King James's address 'To the Reader' which prefaced the anglicised 1603 edition of the *Basilikon* can clearly be found to resonate. Of more significance than this verbal reverberation, is the intention (on both the king's part and the part of his editor) to bring to light many previously unshowcased texts, and to 'preserue in one body, what might easily haue been lost in parts' (1616, 'Epistle'). It is under this criterion that Montague attempts to market the collated prose works of James VI and I as something 'fresh', and as an entity expressly constructed for the instruction of Prince Charles, the 'trew Heire and Inheritor' (1616, 'Epistle') of the texts therein contained and the throne he would eventually ascend.

Montague's conception of how this material book of princely guidance ought to be utilised is strikingly analogous to James's articulated conception of how Prince Henry ought to wield his *Basilikon*, as set down by the king in that book's 1599 dedication.

Montague craves of his Highness

not to be mistaken in the trew meaning and maner of it: For these *Workes* come not to you, as visually Bookes doe to men of great *Dignitie*, for *Patronage* and *Protection* [...] But to you they come partly for preseruati<sup>272</sup>, and for that the Disposition of Nature hath made you more apt, and more principally for a Patterne, and that not vnfitly; since the Samplar is euer more ancient than the Exemplification. (1616, 'Epistle')

Accordingly, Prince Charles is to read this collection discerningly and find within its pages a lesson, based upon the model of precept and example, teaching him how to imitate 'the good *Presidents*<sup>273</sup> of a good *Father*'. In so learning the lessons of 'good' kingship,

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<sup>272</sup> A modern English gloss of the word 'preseruati<sup>272</sup>' might be 'self-preservation' or 'spiritual growth'.

<sup>273</sup> The modern gloss of this word would be 'precedents'.



Charles cannot come farre short of [his] Patterne, nor yet any of his predecesors that euer went before [him]' in terms of his 'Religion, *Learning* and *Vertue*' (1616, Epistle).

Whilst we definitely must appreciate (as both Rickard 2007, and Fischlin 2002 do) the overwhelmingly self-conscious parallels between the lately authorized King James Bible, and the eponymous king's 1616 *magnum opus*, we must also recognise that the pedagogical imperatives operating below the surface level of the *Workes* are not only the thematic glue which bind a multifarious set of texts together between this particular book's covers, but are also the ties by which a lifetime's diverse literary opus are brought together to form a more coherent shape. If, as Montague suggests 'the encomium of good *Kings* is that they walked in the ways of their Fathers' (1616, 'Epistle'), then we must presume that what this text offers the royal reader of its dedication is the opportunity to develop spiritual, moral and monarchical acuity by reading in the ways of his father – and of THE father. Similarly, the collected *Workes* sees the king attempt to prescribe the same readerly agenda for his subjects.

There is a tonal shift and a gear change between the short epistle and the lengthy 'Preface to the Reader'. It is also clear to see that the function of Montague alters tremendously in the latter text. In the 'Preface' Montague moves effortlessly from the epistle's Master of Ceremonies role, to a more familiar stance from which to comfortably operate as a prelate to the 'British' public. From the offset, Montague is on the offensive, attacking those who have previously dared to question whether writing is an apposite pursuit for kings, and we might be forgiven for thinking that the opening discussion of monarchical writing will lead to a deeper exploration of this theme. Yet, by the end of 29 pages, what Montague offers is a comprehensive list of why a king's texts ought to be read, and remembered, by his subjects. It is, in essence, yet another manifesto for reading.

On the somewhat strange decision on the king's part to publish a collected edition, Montague argues that it should be considered a sensible choice. His logic is straightforward: there are firstly an infinite number of great works in existence, few of

which were written all at once. ‘Writings as they consist of sundry natures’ writes Montague, ‘will beare a divers maner of edition’; by implication books talk of a number of different lived experiences, so great narratives take time to evolve and be brought forth by writers. One needs look only to God, and the revelation of his works, to validate the assertion:

the different maner of GOD his setting foorth of his owne Workes, may instruct us in his point. His diuine Wisedome held one course in his Naturall Workes, an other in his Ceremonialls, Politicalls and Moralls. In his Naturalls he made a masse at once, which speedily be diuersified into diuers formes. Hee gaue a kinde of potentiall delineation of all things in that vniversall matter, which presently hee distinguished into diuers Species in perfection. (1616, ‘Epistle’)

In his ‘ceremonials’, the reader is instructed, God brought together the multitudinous species ‘into a masse’ – from the various parts, he makes a whole body. God’s practice must always be regarded as a precedent for authors, argues the Bishop. Since God’s books were not all revealed at once, no other author should thus be brought to account for following that standard set by the deity, not least King James.

In defending the decision to publish a collected works, Montague also implicitly pre-empts criticisms regarding the revision of pre-existing texts for the 1616 edition. To this, Montague answers that ‘Workes of deliberation and Art, haue their foundation from without us, and giue us occasion to worke upon them, as our phantasies thinke fittest for the present time’ (1616: b1). By implication, then, what Montague is suggesting is that there is a pressing need, whether political or personal, for a collected edition of James’s work, and that those works ought to undergo editorial revision in order to make them speak to a contemporary audience.

Countering criticisms that a king should not publish (for writing has apparently grown into a mercantile trade, 1616: b3), Montague argues that he ‘could neuer reade, that there was any Law against it; and where we haue no Law, the best is to follow good Examples’ (1616: b3). The good examples extend well beyond God’s, asserts Montague, as he continues to outline numerous monarchical forays into writing over the centuries.

This sweeping survey extends from Nimrod to the Persian, Greek, and Anglo-Saxon kings, before Montague deals with the Scottish precedent for James's kingly writing:

Achaius King of the Scots, writ of the Acts of all his predecessors. And Kenethus King of the Scots, writ a huge Volume of all the Scottish Lawes, and like an other Iustinian, reduced them into a compendium.

James the first writ diuers Bookes both in English and Latine Verse: He writ also, as Baleus saith, De vxore futura. ('Preface', 1616: c5)

In England, literary models are also easy to find in the Tudor line: Henry VIII was proactive in his writerly pursuits, as was Edward VI (in his short life), and James's late predecessor, Queen Elizabeth. The king's own mother and father are also importantly credited as writers, in order, presumably, to suggest that the scholarly impetus to write is in some way genetic within monarchs. Darnley translates Valerius Maximus into English, whilst Mary, Queen of Scots, wrote a book in French verse, on the 'Institution of a Prince, all with her owne hand, wrought the Couer of it with her needle, and is now of his Maiestie esteemed as a most pretious jewell' (1616: 'Preface').

Montague brings his defence of monarchic writing to a head by drawing the reader into a dialogue, rhetorically asking the audience why it seems strange to them that King James, a man who believes himself to have been blessed with 'many rare perfections of Nature and Art' by God, should want to share his knowledge, by lending 'the world a few leaves out of the large Volumes of his Learning' (1616, 'Preface'). The accusations which Montague has thus far sought to counter are directed straight back at the critics, making the reader complicit in the dialogue and guilty of misunderstanding the kingly imperative to write. No matter whether it befits a king to write or not, implies the Bishop, no one can deny the qualifications held by James:

his Maiesties singular vnderstanding in all points of good Learning is not vnknowne: But yet aboue all other things, God hath giuen him an vnderstanding Heart in the Interpretation of that Booke, beyond the measure of other men [...]. (1616, 'Preface')

In justification of the king's writings, Montague argues that James has a deep-seated understanding of God's word which allows him to interpret godly writings better than

other men can. Here, then, we find the suggestion that James is a gifted reader of scripture. With the reader now primed (after no less than seven paratextual add-ons) to view the *Workes* as seminal, as justified, as explanatory, and as educational, all that remains is for the ‘works’ themselves to begin.

***‘Paraphrase Upon Revelation’: the dedicatory epistle***

The ‘Epistle to the Whole Church Militant’ is the transformative catalyst by which the transition of the *Workes* from the highly visual and imagistic opening, towards the verbal and didactic, is instigated. Characteristically unable to loosen the authorial reins and allow the merit of the work to speak for itself, James awards the ‘Paraphrase’ two prologues by way of a formal introduction; the first of these takes the form of an epistle, in which is outlined the text’s intended audience, the king’s paraphrastic remit and his editorial policy, whilst the second metatext allows James to outline the argument of the whole Book of Revelation, issues of original authorship and matters regarding interpretation.

As argued earlier by Fischlin, the decision to begin his definitive collection of prose writings with the text by which the lately authorised King James Bible had been concluded suggests, in the first instance, a king keen to align his word with God’s. By ‘setting up linkages of literary and rhetorical contexts of the *Paraphrase*’ argues Fischlin, ‘James insures his association with both divine and vatic empowerment’ (Fischlin and Fortier 2007: 391). James goes further than alignment, however. In usurping the voice of the apostle Saint. John – employing the rhetorical convention of prosopopoeia – in the *Paraphrase Upon Revelation*, James elides his authorial voice with biblical ones. He not only uses the Bible, but becomes a part of it, and it is not easy for the reader of the *Workes* to differentiate between the various roles inhabited by James as an author, speaker, editor and monarch in the *Paraphrase*.

From the epistolary dedication ‘to the whole Church militant, in whatsoever part of the Earth’, it is clear that in composing this work King James set high standards for his paraphrasis. Not content to present his argument only to his own subjects, James feels

compelled to disregard national boundaries in order to speak directly to a wider Protestant flock, and in so doing implicitly promotes the importance and universality of the message which he is about to impart. There are none more worthy to receive this Jamesian paraphrase and the inherent messages, writes James, than ‘Christian Readers’.

Prosopographical delineation of a defined reader ‘set’ suggests that the ‘ideal’ reader for this *Paraphrase* will be one who has a sound and shared understanding of God’s word, but more than this, it implies that those readers will have a commonality of reading habits.

Although this tokenistic nod to the ‘Christian Reader’ might be seen as a warm invitation to begin reading the *Workes*, the gesture simultaneously (and, arguably, consciously) alienates a significant body of ‘other’ readers. The clear separation of one type of reader from another is brought into sharp focus during the course of the ‘Epistle to the Church Militant’, as James singles out previous interpretations of Revelation by ‘Papist’ readers (or ‘common adversaries’ as James labels them) as being questionable. James’s opinion is founded on the belief that Catholic interpretations have been based upon their personal conjecture rather than predicated upon the actual words of scripture. By singling out Catholic readers who have previously provided what to James’s mind represent erroneous renderings (or mis-readings) of the Book of Revelation, the king promotes the reputation of his own abilities as a reader of scripture. In presenting his paraphrases to a diverse audience, James’s concern lies not with his readers’ understanding of the messages inherent in the text, but rather resides in the worry that readers will not fully appreciate the quality of James’s interpretation, nor indeed be able to assess whether James’s interpretation is accurate.

James leaves us in no doubt as to whom the dedicatees of his paraphrase are, but nevertheless, he continues to set up a rather complex relationship between those ‘Christian Readers’, his own *Paraphrase* and the Bible. In strikingly genealogical phraseology, James asserts that his ideal Christian reader exists as the ‘very and true posteritie of those Churches, to whom the Booke it self was dedicated’, implying that those Jacobean readers

approaching the biblical précis are themselves the products of, and quasi-genealogically related to, God. Furthermore, the ‘booke’ to which James here refers is surely intended to be the Bible, yet the lack of authorial clarity (further distorted later in the ‘Paraphrase’ by James’s affectation of John’s voice) expedites a subtle semantic shift, so that for ‘the booke it self’ we might also viably read the ‘booke’ as James’s *Workes*.

In the opening passages of the Epistle, James acknowledges the role of John the Apostle in the authorship of Revelation, a text which the king wholeheartedly believes to have been ‘endited by the Holy Spirit’. The apostle, John, is described by the king as ‘that great Theologue [...] whom our Master beloued deerely’. Employment of the personal pronoun ‘our’ immediately projects James himself as being empathetic towards that community of ‘Christian Readers’ to whom this prefatory address is directed. Returning to his task in hand – the instruction of ‘Christian Readers – James explains ‘that it is for the making of the Discourse more short and facile, that [he] made IOHN to be the Speaker in all this Paraphrase’ (1616: 2). Read as the introductory text in the 1616 folio (a text dedicated to Prince Charles), this clarificatory memorandum immediately recalls the explanatory note provided in the prefatory epistle to the 1598 *Basilikon Doron*, wherein James makes clear that his structural division of the *Basilikon* into ‘books’ was expressly for the expediency of his son’s learning. If this collection is for Charles’s continued spiritual learning and kingly education, then we might also see the educational value and purpose in opening the *Workes* in this way.

The king is more than aware of his own artistic limitations, and more specifically, he is eminently aware of the potential political criticisms which might be levelled at him from certain quarters on reading his *Paraphrase*. He writes,

I doubt not but it will seeme strange to many, that any of my aage, calling, and literature, should have meddled with so obscure, Theologicall, and high a subject [...]. (1616, ‘Epistle’)

In this short extract, James implies that there exist very precise prerequisites and optimum conditions for writers to be able to engage successfully with certain subjects in a literary

medium, at once echoing the decorous poetic maxims levelled towards aspirant readers ‘with some beginnings of knauledge’ on Scottish poetry in his earlier ‘Reulis and Cautelis’. By envisaging his readers’ response, and further, by determining exactly which elements of the *Paraphrase* will be denigrated, James again presents himself as one who both understands, and indeed writes from within, that virtual network of Christian readers to whom the *Paraphrase* is addressed. James foresees that his readers will be unable to reconcile his relatively young age,<sup>274</sup> sovereign status and limited literary pedigree<sup>275</sup> with the ‘obscure, Theologicall, and high’ subject matter of Revelation. Thus, we are left with a rather reductive equation for the writing process and writerly decorum as James (seemingly) understands it in the late 1580s: age + social status + literary pedigree < or > subject matter.

Had the ‘Paraphrase’ been published at the point of its original composition, the avowed modesty of its author would have been more than justified. However, the insertion of this as-yet-unpublished ‘Paraphrase’ at the beginning of the 1616 folio, serves to dislocate the text from historical, cultural and political circumstance. As Rickard has argued, the removal of prefatory information succeeds in masking literary provenance; the texts themselves (as presented in the *Workes*) ‘do not even give their original dates of publication [and] are no longer presented as what indeed they were – as texts written in a specific political and religious context’ (2007:147). Appearing at the head of a successful (by any monarchical standards) literary career spanning the best part of four decades, two reigns and two continents, the blurring of contextual boundaries would certainly have made it difficult for the seventeenth century recipient of the *Workes* to concur with James’s assessment of his ‘ill-fitting’ literary credentials. To regard the ‘Paraphrase’ (as we are encouraged to do in the 1616 folio) as the beginning of a ‘new’ collection, leads us to read the first person narration and present tense of the ‘Epistle to the Whole Church Militant’ as

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<sup>274</sup> We must remember that at the point of the *Paraphrase*’s composition – Daniel Fischlin hazards an educated guess at 1588 (Fischlin and Fortier 2002: 389) – James would have been 22 years of age and four years into his majority rule of Scotland.

<sup>275</sup> Again, we must consider that when the *Paraphrase* was undertaken in the late 1580’s, the *Essayes of a Prentise* constituted the entirety of his printed portfolio.

though the sentiments expressed therein were wholly new or contemporary, when in fact the ‘Paraphrase Vpon Revelation’ and the inherent points of view, are older than its young author was when he first conceived it in 1588.

In examining the *Workes*, one wonders whether in the deliberate removal of this para-text, James was consciously testing his readers. In the *Basilikon Doron*, James beseeched his son, Henry, not to seek out more from scripture (biblical words which are themselves continually removed from their original context) than was contained within. In this respect, might it be reasonable to argue that James could have been looking to his reader to only read and understand the moral lessons inherent in the text (as opposed to the reader being led towards making inferences based on the paratextual apparatus and contextual clues of the originals)? Perhaps in even positing this consideration, however, we endow James with undeserving literary clout. It should also be noted that without any authorial intervention to explain away the editorial policy underpinning the *Workes*, there is no certain way to prove what lay behind James’s decision to distance his works from their original context.

No amount of self-aware protestations of authorial limitation can serve to hide the fact that the king carried on regardless with his literary and theological exercise, and saw fit to include it as the figurehead piece of his collected works in 1616. In a bid to excuse his precocious and apparently ill-judged foray into biblical exegeses, the king uses the epistle to counterpoint his protestations of humility with a lucid exposition of the rationale underpinning the ‘Paraphrase’. Just as he had done in the preface to his translation of du Bartas’s ‘Uranie’, James here asks his readers to recognise his ‘earnest desire (by manifesting the Treuth)’ and to let this objective ‘serue for excuse’. His reasons for engaging with revelation are didactic, as he claims that the Paraphrase is intended ‘as well to teach my selfe as others’ (1616, ‘Epistle’). Calling to account those ‘divers others’ who have ‘meddled with the interpretation of this Booke [...] to wrest and conforme the



meaning thereof to their particular and private passions' (1616, 'Epistle') the king immediately differentiates himself from those who have previously 'meddled':

I [...] protest, that all my trauailes tend to square and conforme my opinions to the trew and sincere meaning thereof: Which causes mooued me to undertake this worke; not thereby to despise infinite others, who to the glory of God, and great comfort of his Church, hath given it a great light already, but rather that by oft perusing and dew considering therof, whereto this worke hath led mee, I might be better acquainted with the meaning of this Booke, which I esteeme a special cannon against the hereticall wall of our common aduersaries the Papists.

His intention is not to 'despise' the efforts of 'infinite others' who have presented their own take on Revelation, but rather it is to reveal 'whereto this worke hath led' him, having 'oft perused' and methodically considered it.

The semantic symmetry between this preface and the preface to the 'Uranie' is noticeable; where the 'oft perusing' of Revelation leads him to understand the book's meaning, it is his having 'oft reuolued' the pages of du Bartas's *L'Uranie* that admittedly moves him to translate the latter for himself and his subjects (as Chapter 3 of this thesis explains). On both occasions, the process of readerly scrutiny has resulted in writerly imitation, and in these terms we can clearly see the monarch using reading as a vehicle through which to move towards a certain place, be that place understanding, moral acuity or a writing desk. As James continues to inform his reader, and convince himself, the continual re-visiting of Revelation has led him straight to the heart of the text's meaning. Rightly or wrongly, James's scholarly scrutiny leads him to believe that the book of Revelation exists as a tool to be wielded 'against the hereticall wall of our common aduersaries the Papists'. The belief in his own interpretational abilities might understandably be construed as presumptive or over-confident, but if we can ignore the precocious self-belief of the 1580s (at least for a moment), we note the careful methodological approach adopted by James in his studies. To read, and read again, implies James, is the way to find truth in the written word. Only when truth has been found, can the lessons learnt be practically applied.

In his epistle to ‘Christian readers’, Catholics do not escape James’s address.

Towards them he directs this authorial confession:

I have used nothing of my owne coniecture, or of the authoritie of others, but onely haue interpreted it, in that sense which may best agree with the method of the Epistle, and not bee contradictorie to itself... therefore this one thing I must craue of our Aduersaries, that they will not refute any part of my Interpretation, till they finde out a more probable themselues, agreeing with the whole context, & cum ferie temporum; and where their consciences beare them witnesse that I speake the Trueth, that they will yeeld unto it, and glorifie God therein, and this is all the reward I craue for my paines. (1616: 2)

Whilst his *Essayes* had been brought anonymously to the attention of his subjects, James seems all too eager to suggest that the ‘Paraphrase’ (especially its 1616 incarnation) is entirely his own work, although he is certain to make clear that his adaptation is not founded on his own conjecture or hypotheses. His ‘aduersaries’ are not to ‘refute any part of [his] interpretation’ until they can provide an alternative interpretation which is similarly unfounded on supposition, but grounded in the written word. The king suggests that by reading his ‘Paraphrase’ discerningly, Catholics might be moved to see the ‘truth’ as James presents it, to ‘yeeld unto it, and glorifie God therein’, in an act, we might say, of pseudo-conversion.

The reductive equation of the opening lines (as identified above: age + social status + literary pedigree < or > subject matter), is superceded by a more complex calculation, later in the ‘Epistle’:

I condemne not others, but rather allow them to interpret it diuersly, so being, it agree with the analogie of faith, with the methode of the Text, & cum ferie temporum, as I said before: for those three being observed, it may fall out that diuers, diuersly expound one place, and yet all be according to the trueth, and very meaning of the Spirit of God, as may easily be proued by the text it selfe. (1616: 2)

James invites his readers to ‘interpret it diuersly’, yet conditions are still conferred upon those who do wish to turn their hand to the exegetical sport. Those who are contemplating engaging in exegesis are explicitly warned (in the quotation above) that they must endeavour to neatly match their interpretation thematically with the analogy of faith,

structurally with the method of the text, and to capture the spirit of the age in the essence of their writing. When all three of these conditions are observed, the textual production should prove the ‘very meaning of the Spirit of God’. The over-complexity of the formula here (method + structure + tone = revelation of meaning) detracts from the simplicity underpinning the ‘Epistle’ (and, as will be later argued, the *Workes* in general) which is that to read well, is to truly understand.

After all his authorial bluster and the brimming confidence in his own work, James concludes his ‘Epistle to the Whole Church Militant’ under the terms by which his envoi opened, safely back under the authorial parapet, postulating as the literary and theological *faux naïf*:

It rests then that what ye finde amisse in this Paraphrase, yee impute it to my lacke of yeeres and learning; and what ye find worthy to be allowed in it, that yee attribute the full praise thereof to GOD, to whom onely all praise appertaineth. (1616: 3)

The reversion to modesty topos type here might appear to signal a degree of religio-political cowardice on the king’s part, yet when this seeming retraction is considered in the wider context of the ‘Epistle’ and ‘Paraphrase’ (and in relation to the discussion within this thesis chapter), it is perhaps possible to see not a disavowal of the advice to his ‘Christian Reader’, but rather a confirmation of his ingrained readerly and spiritual values. If any part of the ‘Paraphrase’ is to be found praiseworthy, asserts James, let God take the credit. The implication here is that ‘good’ reading (ie. continuous poring over the text) will lead directly to the revelation of God’s spirit.

Whilst the king’s systematic deviation from his own poetic rules has invariably been read by critical scholarship as yet more evidence of his belligerent character, it might be possible to uncover something more subtle at work in his writing. As we have seen in previous chapters of this thesis, James’s prefatory address in the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ is directed towards readers who have already ‘some beginnings of knaledge’ in Scottish poesie. The specific phraseology is telling. In 1584, the young king does not dedicate his

poetic manifesto to those ‘well-versed’ in Scottish *poesis* – it is not an author such as Alexander Montgomerie, for example, to whom James speaks. In assigning the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ a place amongst a much larger collection of instructive writings, James’s clearly-defined poetic rubric and cautions to eschew in Scottish writing, are levelled towards those Scottish subjects currently in the process of actively acquiring a rhetorical understanding for themselves. By the very nature of the work, James’s poetic treatise exists merely as admonitory notes on how best to approach writing – he offers mild cautions without prohibiting. By warning those with limited knowledge against working with or within certain subjects and genres, James (by implication) might be seen to suggest that only those with a more considered understanding of Scottish religio-political and cultural concerns would be able to successfully engage with them. The example of Thomas Hudson (see chapter 3) is an important case study in point. Only at the culmination of a discussion with the king (where a finer understanding of the text’s message and concerns was achieved) could Hudson finally engage, and do so with assurance, with the text, *La Judit*.

How might this logic be applied to the ‘Paraphrase Vpon Revelation’? Despite the obligatory (and deliberately misleading) employment of the modesty topos in the opening passages of the dedication, the ‘Epistle to the Church Militant’ works assiduously to prove James’s credentials for undertaking this exegetical reading of Revelation. In the process of the ‘Epistle’ James implies that only when he had taken the time to diligently study the material within the pages of the Book of Revelation, did he turn to the making of his ‘Paraphrase’. The continual re-reading of Revelation gives the king more than just a superficial knowledge of the ideas and messages of the text. At the point of writing his ‘Paraphrase’, James might have been young, and involved with statecraft, but he was nevertheless an avid learner and reader of literature. Under these terms, the young king justifies the ‘Paraphrase’ to follow by projecting himself as one more than prepared to carry out interpretations of scripture. Whether we, as modern critics, approach the ‘Paraphrase Vpon Revelation’ as the tentative exercise of a ‘prentise’ cutting his

monarchical teeth through literature, or whether we approach the text as the opening gambit to the 1616 *Workes*, the same theory – that of James advocating his subjects’ investment in reading – can be seen to apply.

On first inspection, the placing of the ‘Paraphrase Vpon Reuelation’ at the beginning of the collection certainly gives the impression of its being nothing more than a functional exercise, a token gesture in which the lately authorized *King James Bible* is aligned thematically, and elided semantically, with the king’s own word, in order to show a powerful correlation between the celestial God and the temporal pseudo-deity. Yet, when the metatext preceding the ‘Paraphrase’ is surveyed as logical and important steps in a coherent narrative, we begin to realise that the insertion of this early paraphrase at the beginning of the *Workes* owes a lot to the didactic remit of the collection as a whole. James is not merely telling his subjects who he believes he is, what role he plays in their kingdom, and what his beliefs are, but is also educating his subjects and his heir, in the processes by which he came to be the composed and assured ‘blessed peacemaker’ of the Van de Passe frontispiece. Principally, James’s *Workes* reveals to the world, the educational means by which he learnt to be a good and godly king.

To a degree, Rickard (2007) is correct in her assertion that in the *Workes* the image reinforces the written word – which itself fortifies the image – but for Rickard, as with Fischlin (2002), this mutually reinforcing relationship is interpreted only as a consciously contrived schema through which the theological symmetries between the King James Bible and the *Workes* are made apparent. Where this chapter has diverged from critical interpretation, however, is in moving away from reading the *Workes* as purely an exercise in theological and monarchical self-representation, towards a reading which suggests that there are very didactic impulses underpinning the 1616 publication and the frequency and nature of these impulses are linked to a considerable degree, if not exclusively, to James’s Scottish beginnings. In its very essence, the *Workes* is a literary instrument of revelation, a publication designed to reveal, uncover, demystify, and consolidate the importance of the

king's word, and his world, for his subjects and not least for his heir, Charles. The Book of Revelation, the text by which the *Workes* properly opens, single-handedly touches upon these very concerns. In this work, James is not the author, *per se*, but is in fact a reader; what he provides for his own subjects is a straightforward 'reading' of 'Revelation', one which suggests itself as being an interpretational blueprint for subsequent generations of readers to follow.

Whilst in the 'Epistle to the Whole Church Militant' James attempted to legitimise his undertaking by proving his literary credentials, the 'Argument of the Whole Epistle' is given over to providing a concise synopsis of the text, but more importantly, perhaps, it is a space in which James presents himself as the physical embodiment of one of the more abstract obligations of his monarchical role, that of *défenseur de la foi*. 'Reuelation', writes James, 'was called in doubt, aswell for the incertaintie of the Author, as also for the canonicalnesse of the Booke it selfe, by sundrie of the ancients' (1616: 4), implying that the 'Paraphrase' will act as his defence of the values and messages inherent in the scriptural text. The king's challenge is to counter the reservations of those who believe the Book of Revelation to be 'so obscure and allegorique, that it is a maner unprofitable to be taught or interpreted'. He thus has a point to prove; in rendering his paraphrasis clearly and accessibly, James attempts to show its contemporary relevance, further, that it can be taught to his subjects, and importantly, correctly interpreted.

From the beginning of what might be described as a dizzying biblical dream sequence, it is very clear to see evidence of Book 'fetishization' in action, where a concerted effort is made to describe the 'Booke, the Writer, and the Inditer' of Revelation. Yet the parameters of Fischlin's conception (outlined at the beginning of this thesis chapter) ought to be pushed, to include not only James's worship of the Bible, but also to consider his fixation with the reading of Scripture, as it unfolds in the 'Paraphrase'. The first person narration – in the affected voice of Saint John the Divine – lends immediacy to James's paraphrase and with the boundaries blurred between narrator and 'paraphraser'

there is a subtle implication that the events of Revelation could (potentially) have happened directly to the king himself.

The affected persona of John the Apostle is thus not such an opaque guise, that we cannot easily penetrate it to find James's own voice. Saint John's spiritual and didactic journey is thus James's own journey (as a young biblical and humanist scholar and novice king), learning to know his own God better. As early as the first page of Chapter I, the message to the reader is unmistakable: 'Happy are they that read and vnderstand'(pg. 7), and arguably, this maxim could be viewed as the epitome of all that the 'Paraphrase' stands for. Indeed, it may viably stand as the tag-line for the body of James's writings, because the royal imperative to 'read and understand' underpins the vast majority of his literary *oeuvre*.

In Chapter V, the 'Booke' materializes in sharp focus, from being an abstract concept to a physical item, and what is particularly striking about this passage is not the 'description of the Booke' as John the Apostle sees it. Rather, it is the manner in which the material Book is handled (both figuratively and literally) throughout the scene, passed from God to the Lamb of God, before having its seal removed and pages opened. In this respect, the act of reading God's word is portrayed as being an extremely engaging experience. At the outset of the Apostle's vision, the Book is seen 'in the Right hand of him that sate on the Throne', 'written vpon, aswell on the backe as within' (1616: 16). It is a closed and sealed book, but one which is explained to contain

[...] the plaine exposition, and the very proper names of all things which these Visions did represent, which are inclosed there, to signifie that the Lord hath not permitted [...] to manifest [...] to the world, for the time thereof is not come yet; which Booke was sealed with seuen seals, aswell to keepe euery part thereof vnreuealed to any, as also to giue the greater certaintie, that these things shall come to passe, which are prophesied therein. (1616: 16)

As events of the first Chapter unfold, the concern of the Apostle (and the Christian reader, by extension) quickly shifts from what can be seen written on the outer covers of the spiritual book, to what is unable to be seen within the closed book. The appearance of 'a

strong Angel', who proclaims the need to find one 'worthy to open this Booke, and loose the Seales', signifies the development of what is to become a central fascination with uncovering and viewing the spiritual text within. Yet it is with much anxiety that the narrative persona explains the complications inherent in reading the book:

[...]there could none be found worthy to doe it [open the book], neither in heauen nor in earth, nor beneath the earth, no not to looke on it, much lesse to open it: for neither Angel nor deuil either knows or dare meddle with the high mysteries of God, and things future, except so farre as pleaseth him to commit and reuele vnto them: then wept I very sore that none could be found worthy to open and read that Booke, no not to looke vpon the same: for I was very sorrowfull that I could not haue it reuealed vnto me. (1616: 16)

As part of the unworthy there gathered, the Apostle John cannot yet be party to the contents of the book, and must wait for the godly revelation of the word. This is an important passage, in which the Apostle John is depicted as one who thirsts for knowledge, weeping sorely for both himself and for mankind, that there is no temporal or spiritual being present who is suitably qualified to study the matter of the book.

It is at the point of feeling abject dismay at his own spiritual ignorance, that the persona eventually notices one who is authorized to break open the seal and lay bare the word of God:

[...] and behold, I did see in the midst of the Throne, and the foure beasts, a second person of the Trinitie sitting with God, and in the midst of the Elders, as a man and our brother, a Lambe standing like as hee had bene slaine, to signifie that once indeed he was slaine, but had risen againe, and had seven Hornes and Seuen Eyes, representing the innumerable times, mighty and holy Spirit of God, which after his Resurrection he sent out through the whole earth to direct, instruct, and rule the same by his guidance and power: This Lambe then came and tooke the Booke out of the Right hand of him that did sit on the Throne: And so soone as he had taken the Booke in his hand, these foure beasts, and these foure and twentie Elders fell vpon their faces before the Lambe. (1616: 6-17)

The sacrificial lamb is the allegorical incarnation of the son of God, Christ, who 'was slaine, but had risen againe' to 'direct, instruct, and rule the same by his guidance and power'. In a closer inspection of this 'Paraphrase', there is no mistaking the allure of the Book of Revelation for a monarch so keenly caught up in the complexities of self-



representation. At any given time in Chapter V, there are numerous literary and authorial roles which might be comfortably inhabited by the king; he is at once the onlooker and reporter (Saint John), the divine monarch on the throne (God), and the spiritual guide and facilitator (Christ), although it is perhaps with the latter that James would be most appropriately aligned, given the terms of the bookish remit (to be instructor, director and guide) and in the way that he is the recipient of lavish attention by the crowd. Crucially, by providing an accessible paraphrasis for the education of the reader, King James arrogates for himself the role of spiritual facilitator, and intimates that he has the divinely-bestowed power to reveal the truth of the contents of the Book of Revelation to his congregation.

Chapter V of the 'Paraphrasis' culminates with the exhortative pleas from the flock for Christ to receive the word of God and for him to lay bare the narrative for all to see. Subsequently, in James's paraphrastic rendering of an iconic passage of Revelation, Chapters VI-IX, John the Apostle outlines how the seals restricting access to the scriptural texts were broken, and once opened, what nightmarish projections of apocalypse ensued. Having thus described all that the book contains within its covers, Chapter X exists as a parenthetical vision bearing witness to what is written on the back of the book. In this passage, the persona is encouraged to touch the book, taking it in his hands:

then that voice which I heard, spake to me from heauen, *to wit*, the voice of God the Father, spake againe vnto me, and said, Goe and take that open booke which is in the hand of the Angel, who stands on the sea and the earth: And so I went vnto the Angel, and desired him to giue me the booke: and hee answered, take and swallow it, and it shall bring a bitternesse vnto thy belly, but in thy mouth it shall be as sweete as honie. Then I tooke the booke, and found that which he said to me of it to be true; for indeed I thought it delightfull vnto me, to know the mysteries of God, by swallowing the booke, and so it was sweet in my mouth; but so soon as by the digestion hereof I must preach it to the world [...]. (1616: 32)

His instructions from the Angel are clear: John is to consume the book, in what serves as a metaphor for the assimilation of knowledge.

Whilst the book thus represents heavenly sustenance for the Christian reader, the persona is warned that the actual bodily processing of the text will not be easy. Rather, it

shall be both bitter in the belly and ‘sweete as honie’ in the mouth. To counter this bittersweetness, John must do something with what he has consumed, to actively preach the word of God, as opposed to merely passively ingesting it. It might reasonably be argued that this passage offers us a neat link (back or forwards, depending on the context in which we view the ‘Paraphrase’) to the *Basilikon Doron*, where James instructs his son Henry that it is not enough for the man of Christian faith to regurgitate scripture, he must hear the words and digest them. Here, in the opening of the *Workes*, is further proof of King James promoting an actively engaged reading programme for his subjects, one through which they become the ‘good textuarie’, and importantly, gain spiritual acumen for themselves.

By the time we reach Chapter XX, containing ‘the summe and recapitulation of all the former visions’, the message of the opening (‘happy are they that read and understand this Prophecie’, 1616: 7) has a renewed impetus, one which is re-rendered in the closing passages of the Paraphrase (Chapter XXII) as ‘happy is hee therefore that obserueth and obeyeth the words of the Prophecie in this Booke’ (1616: 72). The implicit passivity of the first statement is replaced in the second by a more engaged understanding of how one ought to read. This implies that it is not merely enough to learn the lessons inherent in James’s book(s). Rather, it is important to live vicariously through The Book (the Bible), to actively observe the lessons and abide by God’s word. In the *Basilikon Doron*, James had encouraged his son to ‘preasse to be a good textuarie’, and as the previous chapter of this thesis argued, the word ‘textuarie’ was purposely imported into the vernacular from French by James, and intended to have a very specific definition.

Arguably, the ‘Paraphrase Vpon Revelation’ is exactly the type of exercise that the king would advocate his son to undertake in his training to become an adept biblical scholar. Remembering the didactic mandate highlighted by Bishop Montague in the dedication to the *Workes*, we might viably suggest that the placing of the ‘Paraphrase’ as the first text in the 1616 sequence suggests a concerted reiteration of James’s belief that

king ought to be discerningly reading scripture for moral investment, spiritual acuity and, ultimately, for monarchical nous.

Just as in the best medieval and early modern dream sequences the persona's journey culminates in relative spiritual enlightenment, so too in the Book of Revelation John the Apostle's journey through an apocalyptic dreamscape culminates in a heightened appreciation of scripture. Furthermore, the narratorial frustration of the opening sequence (wherein the persona cannot find a reader qualified to open the book and reveal its contents) makes way for the expression of profuse gratitude and appreciation. Yet, whilst the persona's mood has altered significantly, he is still in need of some guidance, evident as he attempts to incorrectly channel his thankfulness towards the wrong heavenly body:

I fell at the Angles feet that shewed me them, with mind to haue adored him: But he said vnto me, *See thou doe it not*, I am thy fellow-seruant [...] adore thou therefore God [...] (1616: 71)

If we remember James's introductory 'Epistle to the Whole Church Militant', and his confident admission therein that what was to be found at the heart of the Book of Revelation was a 'speciall cannon against the Hereticall wall of our common adversaries the Papists', then we can see how the misguided iconoclasm of Saint John, would fit James's assertion.

Imparting final instructions for John, the Angel informs him that he is to 'Seale not the words of the Prophecie of this Booke, for the time is at hand' (1616: 71). Reading the 'Paraphrase' as the first text proper of the 1616 *Workes*, this instruction can be variously interpreted, but there is more than a suggestion implicit in this final instruction that the 'time is at hand' for the contents of James's literary prose *oeuvre* to also be revealed. When we consider that many of the texts encompassed within the pages of the *Workes* were originally published under the veil of anonymity, or never published at all – as with the 'Paraphrase' – then this implication is lent greater potency.

In dedicating space to a close reading of the 'Paraphrase Vpon Revelation', this thesis chapter has sought to present it as a text which has an important role to play within

the 1616 *Workes*, and attributes it with more thematic significance (in terms of both the specific publication and James's wider literary portfolio) than previous scholarship has thus far credited it with. This chapter accepts that on the one hand, the 'Paraphrase' does exist (as Fischlin and Rickard have both argued) as a form of umbilical chord binding together the lately authorized King James Bible, the imagistic depictions of divine and temporal monarchy with which the *Workes* open, and the textual presentation of his kingship which is to follow in the 1616 publication. On the other hand, however, this chapter also recognises that the original composition date (the best part of three decades prior to its publication in 1616) makes it difficult to view the paraphrastic rendering of scripture wholly as a straightforward extension of the authorized 1611 bible. Whilst acknowledging that the date of composition makes the 'paraphrase' the first text in the chronological sequence of chosen prose works, this chapter argues that it is a heightened thematic concern with the spiritual and intellectual (which includes the right use of reason, and reason includes morals/ethics) education of his subjects – alongside the thematic concern with presenting himself to his kingdoms as the spiritually meritorious and privileged king – that underpins the editorial placement of the paraphrasis at the collection's beginning.

Fischlin (2002) asserts that the 'Paraphrase Upon Revelation' evidences how in the 1580's James 'had already formulated, or perhaps was in the process of formulating, the kind of political animus he would articulate throughout his life' (2002: 391). More than this, however, the 'Paraphrase' clearly articulates that James already had a strongly defined sense of his theological, cultural and didactic disposition as early as the 1580s. The publication of this early exercise for the first time in the 1616 *magnum opus* goes some way towards proving that the king's reading agenda had remained stable (whilst around him religio-political conditions fluctuated), since the outset of his reign of Scotland. In these terms, lines of continuity can be charted from James's translation of 'Uranie' in the *Essayes* (1584), through the 'Paraphrase Vpon Revelation' and *Basilikon* (1598), into the

later storehouse for the ‘Paraphrase’, the *Workes* (1616). There is further evidence to be found in the *Workes* to justify this assertion, which will be documented in the remaining part of this chapter.

### *The Meditations*

Nestled behind the ‘Paraphrase’, the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ takes on a more educational remit in the *Workes* than it had done on its first publication. Whilst the ‘Paraphrase’ is just that – a version of the story of Revelation – the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ describes itself in the titular qualification as ‘containing a plaine and easie exposition, or laying open of the VII. VIII.IX and X. verses of the 20. Chapter of Revelation’. The two texts, despite their varying publication histories, are here presented to the readership as literary partners, with the meditation presumably designed to act as a gloss on the ‘Paraphrase’. Like the old chicken-and-egg adage, we are left contemplating why the ‘meditation’ appeared in print long before the ‘Paraphrase’ to which it speaks ever saw light in the 1616 edition.

The texts which follow the ‘Paraphrase’ (chronologically, structurally and thematically) – meditational exegeses - underscore further interpretational obstacles for the modern critic of the 1616 *Workes*: where the ‘Paraphrase’ hitherto had never been published, it was a very different case for the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ and the ‘Meditation Vpon the Booke of Chronicles of the Kings’, just two of a number of previously published texts to be incorporated in the *Workes*. The first of these, the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’, had seen its way to print in 1588 and in its particularly Scottish context the scriptural exegesis existed as a piece responsive to two major diplomatic incidents, both domestic and foreign: firstly the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots in 1587, and, secondly the recent English defeat of the Spanish Armada.

Epistolary correspondence between King James and his English cousin, Elizabeth,<sup>276</sup> provides a fascinating insight into the power struggles inherent in the process of securing the English succession rights for the Scottish monarch. As an integral means by which to

attain Elizabeth's word on this matter, James was compelled to commit himself, and his kingdom (without the full support of his subjects, it ought to be stressed), to politically supporting the Queen in her attempts to safeguard her English realm. As Julian Goodare explains,

the issue of international allegiance was settled [...] in 1586, when James signed a treaty with England and accepted a regular subsidy from Elizabeth. This was not universally popular, but it ended with the destabilization of the kind that had damaged Arran. The price was the acceptance of Scotland as a satellite state: although still independent, it had to defer to English wishes on important matters. This fitted with James's personal interests: he had a good claim to succeed Queen Elizabeth on the English throne, so he had to stay on good terms with her while she lived. If he occasionally negotiated with her enemies, this was largely a gesture to increase his value to her. (Goodare and Lynch 2000: 38)

As this final sentiment suggests, in privately committing to Elizabeth, but publically showing himself to be open to international diplomacy with European (and more often than not Catholic) monarchies, James continued to fashion himself as a political peacemaker, and in so doing, heightened his monarchical cache, both with Elizabeth and furth of the British Isles.

Until the publication of 'Ane Fruitfull Meditation' in 1588, one would thus be forgiven for thinking James moderate in his Protestant theology, and at least tolerant (if not exactly supportive) of the practice of Catholicism within his country. After all, his mother had refused to renounce her Catholic faith, upholding it to the moment of her death the year prior to this work's publication. Furthermore, for James to take a strident approach to Catholicism whilst his mother was still alive and in English captivity, would be to undermine the deposed Mary's pleas of innocence in a case incriminating her in a treasonous plot against Elizabeth. In addition to having familial justifications for adopting and sustaining a tentative theological approach towards Catholicism, James also listed a number of Catholics (such as Esmé Stuart, who was a late convert to Protestantism, and the

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<sup>276</sup> See Akrigg 1984.

Earl of Huntly<sup>277</sup>) amongst his courtly acquaintances during the first years of his Scottish majority rule. The overt declaration (articulated both verbally and textually – see his *Essayes*) of his Protestant faith in the political arena at this point is questionable when we consider that in this same period, the politically ambiguous epic poem *Lepanto*<sup>278</sup> was written (c. 1585, although published much later in 1591, within the *Exercises at Vacant Houres*), suggests a real hesitancy to alienate the European Catholic community. Yet on first publication, ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ immediately evidences a concerted break away from the conciliatory political stance he had worked hard to perfect. Instead, of reasoned argument, what the 1588 audience is subjected to is inflammatory polemic. It is the vehicle through which James posits that the Pope is the Antichrist.

Simply, it is an emphatic rejection of Catholicism, but more curious perhaps than the straightforward denunciation is the manner in which

James’s opposing interpretation of Revelation implicitly rescues Elizabeth from the consequences of her treatment of Mary [...] James did not make a clearer statement of support for England until after the battle was well under way, and this meditation was not published until at least two months after that. The meditation is thus able retrospectively to rewrite the King’s conduct during the summer of 1588 [...] (Rickard 2007: 76-77)

There is certainly no denying that in its original 1588 context the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ could clearly be seen as a literary manifestation of James’s political opportunism. As this chapter has already made clear, the decision to make this meditation serve as an abject rejection of Catholicism might seem uncharacteristically determined, but we might also note that to make headway in the dynastic succession talks, the call to ‘British’ arms would necessarily have been the next logical step.

If, as Rickard suggests, the ‘Fruitfull Meditation’ ought to be viewed as ‘an important, and ultimately duplicitous, tool in [...] international diplomacy’, then how is that

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<sup>277</sup> In the only foray into drama by James that we are aware of, the king penned a masque in honour of Huntly’s wedding in 1588.

<sup>278</sup> Rickard describes the *Lepanto* as being ‘amenable to both Protestants and Catholics’. She continues: ‘in the same way his scriptural exegeses serve a diplomatic function, reinforcing and echoing this letter by making a public statement of his complete support for Elizabeth only when it suited him to do so’ (2000: 76).

same text to be read in the context of the 1616 *Workes*? This chapter contends that in the context of the 1616 *Workes* the ‘duplicitious’ motives of the ‘Meditation’ are muted due to its new context in the *Workes*, just as with the removal (or rather massaging) of compositional context the potency of many other texts included in the collection is either reduced, enhanced or otherwise affected. The *Workes* is overwhelmingly still a very ‘political’ publication, yet in the first instance it is a greatly considered literary showpiece. Many of the texts comprising the *Workes* might individually be considered as reactive, or at least as having been written to engage in, and interact with, particular events or contemporaneous partisan dialogues. Yet when they are threaded together in one binding, we might feasibly begin to look for thematic consistencies and intersections from one text to another. These particular prose writings are important to James for a reason. We must remember that although purporting to be a definitive collection of writings, the king could not see fit to accommodate in his *Workes* any of the writings or translations from his *Essayes* or *Vacant Houres*. It is therefore certainly the case with James and his *Workes* that they have a clearly-defined story to tell, and a particular monarchical journey to plot. Whilst the political potency of the text might be reduced in the 1616 version of the *Meditations*, their import as instructive tools increases.

In the ‘Paraphrase’ James’s authorial and monarchical voice was disguised behind the voice of Saint John, but the narrative voice of the ‘Meditation’ is quite definitely King James’s. Interestingly, the role in which the king quite assuredly casts himself is that of the church elder, for he claims that the ‘Meditation’ will be given in the ‘forme and maner of a Sermon’, giving credence to his own publicity that he is a ‘most Christian King [...] sincere Professour of the trewth [...] by the grace of God [...] Defender of the faith’.<sup>279</sup> From the beginning of ‘Ane Fruitfull Meditation’, James stresses his belief that the Book of

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<sup>279</sup> The meditational genre itself suggests religious connotations. In writing in this genre, James was tapping into a pre-existing tradition for churchmen. Slightly later than James’s ‘Meditations’ we find an English example, with neat publishing ties to James. In 1600, the ‘Professor of Divinite, and Maister of Vniuersitie Colledge’ in London, George Abbot published ‘An Exposition Vpon the Prophet Ionah’ in



Revelation is the one ‘most meete’ to instruct a Christian of ‘latter times’. Therefore, the theme of these particular texts are almost rendered subsidiary to the method of instruction.

The ‘Paraphrase’ itself merely provides an extended version of the terse scriptural text, for the expediency of readers’ understanding (and to exhibit James’s understanding). The ‘Meditations’ show James at his best as a ‘textuarie’, as he practically works into the text, analysing and annotating it for his reader. The etymological definition of ‘meditation’ is ‘a thinking over’ (we are here reminded of Montague’s ‘Preface’ to the reader) and this reading and writing strategy is clearly demarcated in the structural breakdown of both ‘meditations’. A textual map is given to the reader:

knowing the summe [...] we would come to the exposition or meaning of the Verses; and first expound or lay open by way of a paraphrase the hardness of the words, next declare the meaning of them, and thirdly note what we should learn of all. (1616: 74)

The strategy is clear – open up the text, examine the words and then pronounce the meaning. The structure of the second meditation is almost the same, but there is the inclusion of an additional box in which is specifically outlined the ‘method’. In this segment, James stresses that ‘for better vnderstanding whereof, these heads [...] to be opened vp in order, and applied’ (1616: 82). This need to reveal truth and then apply lessons is a deeply imbedded idea in James’s own religio-literary mandate.

### ***Further proof within the Workes***

This chapter has spent a great deal of time focussing on the written paratext, and the ensuing first three texts, of the *Workes* in order to suggest that the collected edition has an a coherent agenda from the outset of the production. This chapter has also maintained that the agenda is not straightforwardly to promote the ‘divine right’ of the king, but is rather designed to make clear the means by which James’s ‘divine authority’ has been secured throughout his reign.

Whilst in a discussion of the *Workes* it is easy to explain away *Dæmonologie* as the next logical text in a chronological sequence, there is nevertheless thematic cohesion between the meditations which precede it, and the *Basilikon Doron* by which it is succeeded in the collection. As has been examined, the removal of contextual data from the *Workes* serves to diminish the importance of the original contexts in which many of these texts were first published. *Dæmonologie* (the 1597 edition) will continue to be read by literary scholars as a *Zeitgeist* text which uncomplicatedly interacts with a contemporary current affair, the North Berwick witch trials.<sup>280</sup> It is very much of a particular political as well as literary moment. Yet in reviving this dated text for the 1616 Folio edition what does James want his readers to appreciate in his treatise on witchcraft?

The polemical denunciation of witchcraft and magic aside, *Dæmonologie*, arguably, exhibits James's breadth and depth of learning. In the first instance it is an excellent example of school-room 'disputatio' in action, a rhetorical exercise, displaying logic and reason (although from a modern point of views James's logic and reason are obviously questionable), and a dialogue. That we are told that Philomathes (lover of learning) and Epistemon (wisdom and prudence) 'reason the matter' – a statement that does not occur in the original – presents *Dæmonologie* in almost dramatic (and certainly performative) terms. A fully revamped title page in the 1616 edition informs us that the 'reasoned' argument of Epistemon is 'proued by scripture'. This assertion shows yet more evidence of James attempting to use his reading to consolidate others' comprehension. As the various books within *Dæmonologie* continue, there is no end to the litany of allusions and scholarly references to the fields of astronomy, astrology, linguistics, etymology, scripture, magic, necromancy and sorcery. Indeed, there are times when the king's allusions to these subjects feels very tokenistic, as though he felt compelled to prove that

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<sup>280</sup> For more on the context for *Daemonologie*, see Normand and Roberts (2000), *Withcraft In Early Modern Scotland: James VI's Dæmonologie and the North Berwick Witches*, University of Exeter Press (Exeter, 2000).

he knows the jargon, if not exactly the finer details.<sup>281</sup> *Dæmonologie* fits into the 1616 collection chronologically but also thematically as it showcases James as a king who was not only in touch with contemporary issues, but was sufficiently qualified to interact with them, and who could engage in dialogue and debate with readers, safe in the knowledge that his belief system and dependency on reading scripture has guided his interpretations and convictions.

### ***Conclusions***

The *Workes* is overwhelmingly a very ‘political’ publication, but we must remember that in the first instance it is a literary showpiece; whilst many of the texts comprising the *Workes* might individually be considered as reactive, or at least as having been written to engage in, and interact with, particular events or contemporaneous partisan dialogues, when they are threaded together in one binding, each text thematically interacts with the other. These particular prose writings are important to James for a reason, and are chosen for what they imply about their royal author. Although purporting to be a definitive collection of writings, the king could not see fit to accommodate in his *Workes* any of the writings or translations from his *Essayes* or *Vacant Houres*. It is therefore certainly the case with James and his *Workes* that they have a clearly-defined story to tell, and a particular monarchical journey to plot.

As this chapter has sought to identify, the ‘journey’ plotted in the *Workes* is one of spiritual enlightenment leading to a more actively engaged Christian life. In the previous chapter it was noted how James urged his son Henry in the *Basilikon* to ‘preasse to be a good textuarie’ - the adjective is purposely imported into the vernacular by the king and is certainly imbued with a very specific meaning through its usage in the sentence. In the *Basilikon*, James offered up to the Prince an adequate exemplar of how one would engage

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<sup>281</sup> For instance, see the First Booke of *Daemonologie*, where Epistemon talks of the differences between ‘astronomy’ and ‘astrology’. In a list, he notes the various offshoot branches from ‘astrology’: Cheiromancie, Geomancie, hydromancie, Arithmancie, Physiognomie ‘which were much practised, and holden in great reuerence by the Gentiles of old’, but never goes into any real detail about what those things are. He knows of them, but doesn’t *know* them.

with scripture as a ‘good textuarie’, by simultaneously, and subtly, adhering to the rules he himself was defining and setting out for his son. The *Workes*, as Montague makes clear in his introduction, ought to be regarded by Charles as his own *Basilikon Doron*, and used to aid him in the processes of statecraft and kingship, just as the aforementioned advice manual was intended to be wielded by Henry. The exhortation to ‘preasse to be a good textuarie’ is very much present in the 1616 edition, quite literally with the *Basilikon*’s inclusion. Yet, it might also be viable to argue that it permeates throughout the 1616 collection as a whole, with James’s own desire to prove himself an active and engaged spiritual leader, one who has perpetually read and re-read scripture until the point of thorough comprehension, guiding the *Workes* from the excessive frontispiece and title page to the final text, the ‘Speeche to Starre Chamber’.

As critics have argued, James’s *Workes* represents a monarch assured in his conviction that his throne is a divine right, and his government founded on the principles of the Bible. The immoderate embellishment of a folio edition with symbological, iconographical, and iconoclastic images, read on their own, suggests an over-confident and swaggering monarch, who audaciously aligns (possibly elides) his work with God’s. Yet the careful construction of the *Workes* – the specific choice and placement of texts, as well as the imagistic embellishments and lengthy introduction by the collection’s editor – presents the reader with a retrospective narrative in which James outlines the means by which he came to unite and govern ‘three kingdoms’ peacefully. Just like the *Essayes of a Prentise*, cohesion is brought to a multifarious collection by the thematic strand of, and authorial concern with, reading ‘properly’ for spiritual gain.

## Chapter 6: Bending Higher James's Lute in Tone – Conclusions

As previous chapters of this thesis have attempted to show, the readerly imperatives accentuated by King James VI in his *Essayes* – a publication long-considered by critical scholarship as both novel and novice owing to its ostensibly miscellaneous content and authorial over-ambition – far from being abandoned in later (seemingly more ‘mature’) works, were continually re-visited and galvanised. The longevity of James’s interest in spiritually invested reading praxis, and the application of that reading strategy in his own writing (a stark contrast to the way in which he seldom observed his own rules and cautions<sup>282</sup> on *poesis*), at least meant that as far as the king’s own literature and, by extension, his subjects were concerned, it was a certain mode of reading, as opposed to original composition, that was regarded by the king himself as the most important facet of his cultural mandate. Previous chapters have implicitly suggested that James’s advice to his readers made some impact on other authors during his Scottish reign, with Thomas Hudson and John Stewart of Baldynneis in particular recognised in the present thesis as being exemplary Jamesian acolytes in this respect. Non-Scottish authors who were similarly influenced by, or shared James’s vision, for an investiture in reading in the years straddling the Union of the Crowns (Joshua Sylvester, Gabriel Harvey and du Bartas) have also been discussed in passing in several chapters of this thesis.

What remains to be seen, however, is whether James’s reading objectives continued to enjoy kudos with writers plying their trade later in his British reign, in the 1610s and 1620s; this particular avenue of enquiry would repay further investigation in future scholarship, and it is regrettable that time and space do not permit more comprehensive coverage being presented here. Yet, what this final thesis chapter certainly can do is initiate the discussion. The first section of this chapter will therefore act as a short case study in

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<sup>282</sup> Whilst this thesis has worked within the understanding of the word ‘cautelis’ as meaning cautions or warnings, it is also worth noting a secondary definition for the word. DOST defines the word ‘cautel’ firstly as ‘Cunning or craftiness; a cunning or crafty device or stratagem; a trick or wile’ and secondly as ‘A caution or direction’.

which it will be considered whether two Scottish contemporaries of the king – William Drummond and Sir William Alexander of Menstrie – could be foregrounded as Jamesian devotees. More specifically, this brief *cameo* will present for analysis a body of overlooked epistolary correspondence between Alexander and Drummond – rather than the more ‘literary’ published works of each writer – for two reasons: firstly, to suggest how even after King James had committed to printed paper his *magnum opus* prose *Workes* in 1616, and his perceived public authorial persona had become somewhat subdued, the monarch was still privately preoccupied with rhetorical dialogue and sharing his ideas on what literature is and how it should be used amongst a community of like-minded individuals. Secondly, the letters are presented to support the notion that James’s conception of the ideal Christian reader as an actively engaged ‘textuarie’ is perfectly realised by Drummond and Alexander in James’s preferred literary mode – rhetorical criticism. The foregrounding of the triadic relationship between James, Alexander and Drummond, a succinct but necessary case study, is intended to hint at the extended and prolonged impact of the king’s readerly ideals (as set out in 1584) and suggests one possible way in which the research bound up in this thesis might be progressed. In terms of this chapter, the *cameo* will serve as a springboard into further discussion (in the chapter’s culminating *précis*) on the implication of this doctoral research for subsequent scholarship in the field of study of the literature of King James VI and I.

### ***Model Students?***

In a letter of February 1616 from the prominent statesman, dramatist and poet, Sir William Alexander, to his friend and fellow Scot, William Drummond, two exercises in versification are appended for the latter’s perusal. Contextualising his literary gift to Drummond, Alexander details the conditions from which the exercises arose. Whilst the involved parties here are different to those witnessed in previous chapters of this thesis, the circumstances seem altogether familiar:

I have sent you [...] a Sonnet, which the King made the last Week [...] This forced the Other from me. The last Day being private with his Majesty, after other Things, we fortun'd to discourse of *English Poesy*, and I told one rule that he did like of exceedingly, which was this; *That to make a good sound there must [...] be [...] a short Syllable, and then a long, which is not long positively of it Self, but comparatively, when it followeth a shorter. So that one syllable may be long in one Place and short in another, according as it is matched [...]*. Though this letter would seem idle to some, yet I know it will prove serious to you, and I seek in this but to fit your Humour to whom I write [...].<sup>283</sup>

Having enjoyed the private audience of the monarch after the matter of ‘other things’ (presumably when the day’s statecraft has been dealt with) the king and courtier fell to discussing ‘English Poesy’; the outcome is the decision to try for themselves a novel metrical rule in an original composition of their own devising. The letter itself is interesting, most notably for the way in which it foists upon Drummond considerable responsibility. Having been presented with the context for, and the content and products of, Alexander’s after-hours discussion with the monarch, Drummond’s role as the recipient of this letter (presumably) is to undertake a comparative reading of the two sonnets, and to judge their individual poetic worth in turn.<sup>284</sup>

There is nothing so unusual in one friend seeking the critical feedback of another in this period, but curiously Alexander invites his friend to critique his monarch’s attempts, without James being party to the critical discussion. As the details of this letter seemingly attest, there is a subtle shift in instructive agency; it is no longer King James who moderates the scholarly appraisal of his own writings – as in *The Workes* – but it is rather Alexander who acts as cultural interlocutor, as the conduit of a discussion on poetics between the London court and Drummond’s Hawthornden retreat.<sup>285</sup> The role undertaken

<sup>283</sup> William Alexander in *The Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden*, John Bishop and Thomas Ruddiman, Eds. (Edinburgh: James Watson, 1711), pg. 149.

<sup>284</sup> We must also note here that this letter (and the events which it documents) coincides with the editorial work being undertaken to put together James’s definitive prose collection. As the previous chapter noted, the decision to focus on prose implies disinterest in composing original verse. Yet here, in Alexander’s epistolary correspondence, is evidence to the contrary.

<sup>285</sup> In his parallel life as politician, William Alexander inhabited a similar interlocutory role. In 1614, for example, Alexander was appointed Master of Requests where his main area of responsibility lay in overseeing relations between James’s kingdoms. Such was Alexander’s expediency and conduct during his time in this position that in July 1615 the royal courtier gained admission to the Privy Council of Scotland. As David Reid acknowledges, as an Officer of the Crown, William Alexander thrived as a

by the bold courtier here of cross-border cultural linchpin seems, however, a subsidiary one, when we consider that the prime function of Alexander on this occasion is to play the learned scholar to James' able pupil. Known to enjoy a literary challenge, James would no doubt have eagerly seized upon his pen to experiment with the metrical rule newly taught to him by Alexander in their after hours discussion.

The end product of this literary experimentation is James's sonnet, 'How cruelly these Catives do conspire [...]', which is helpfully rendered by Alexander in the letter (somewhat tactically we might suggest) before the courtier reveals his own:

**A Sonnet by King James VI.**

How cruelly these Catiues do conspire,  
 What loathsome Love breeds such a baleful Band,  
 Betwixt the cankred King of Creta Land,  
 That Melancholy, Old, and Angry Sire,  
 And him who wont to quench Debate and Ire  
 Amongst the romans, when his Ports were clos'd,  
 But now his double Face is still dispos'd,  
 With Saturn's Help, to freeze us at the Fire.  
 The Earth o're couered with a Sheet of Snow,  
 Refuses Food to Fowl, to Bird and Beast,  
 The chilling Cold letts eu'ry Thing to grow,  
 And surfeits Cattel with a staruing Feast,  
 Curs'd be that Loue, and mought continue short,  
 That kill all creatures, and doth spoil our sport. (1711:149)

Despite posturing as the Epistemon<sup>286</sup> poetic tutor, there is nevertheless something sportingly ambitious in Alexander's comparative composition; whereas James ostensibly reveals the upper limits of his improvisational ability in a mere fourteen lines, Alexander's 'sequence' of two sonnets is arguably an attempt to imply that his own poetic accomplishment is the greater of the two men:

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diplomat and peacemaker. See David Reid, 'Alexander, William, first earl of Stirling (1577–1640)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, (2004; online edn, Oct 2006). <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/335>> [accessed 12 March 2013].

<sup>286</sup> In James's treatise on witchcraft, *Dæmonologie*, the character of Epistemon symbolically represents enlightenment and wisdom, yet in an alterantive interpretation of the name, we might viably link it to epistemology or epistemes – two labels used to define categories and their meaning. Epistemon is also a crucial character in Rabelais' *Pantagruel*, and in other contemporary texts.



**A Poem by Sir William Alexander.**

When *Britain's* Monarch, in true Greatness great,  
 His council's Counsel, did Things past unfold,  
 He (eminent in knowledge as in State)  
 What might occur oraculously told;  
 And when far rais'd from this Terrestrial Round,  
 He numbrous Notes with measur'd Fury frames,  
 Each Accent weigh'd, no Jarr in Sense, or Sound,  
 He *Phoebus* seems, his Lines *Castalian* Streams,  
 This worth (though much we owe) doth more extort;  
 All Honour should, but it constrains to Loue,  
 While rauish'd still about the vulgar sort  
 He Prince, or Poet, more than Man doth proue:  
 But all his due who can afford him then,  
 A God of Poets, and a King of Men.

This Day, design'd to spoil the World of Peace,  
 And accessory to so foul a Crime,  
 Why should it rest in the Records of Time,  
 Since stain'd by Treason forfeiting the Place.  
 O! But those err who would it odious make:  
 This Day from Danger *Britain's* Monarch sau'd,  
 That Day when first the Mischief was conceiu'd,  
 Let it accurst still clad with Clouds look black.  
 Then happy Day, to which by Heauen's decree  
 (As consecrated) Festual Pomp is due,  
 Long may thy Saint (a liuing Martyr) uiew,  
 All Hearts for Loue of Him to Honour Thee.  
 More length we wish, but what thou wantst of Light  
 Shall be by Fire extorted from the NIGHT. (1711: 150)

Indeed, such is the subtlety of the shrewd sleight of hand that Alexander manages to implicitly reduce the poetic competency of the king (showing his ability to sustain this new metrical rule over two sonnets, in comparison to James's one) whilst simultaneously praising the king's efforts in statecraft. This artful verbal trickery would not have been lost on the judge of this competition, Drummond, who, we must imagine, had no option but to favour Alexander in this battle of wits. Yet for all the literary ambition displayed by Alexander here, the poetic exchanges (both implied and explicitly stated) between King and courtier, courtier and reclusive poet and bibliophile, suggest that there existed a comfortable conviviality with regard to the exchange of literary criticism.

Further epistolary evidence exists to suggest that a rhetorical relationship between James, Alexander and Drummond was already well-established. An earlier letter of 1615 from Alexander to Drummond provides the first ostensible evidence of concerted literary-critical epistolary exchange taking place between the two poets:

I have perused those Pieces, which you sent me, but in such Haste, that I have rather marked the Faults than mended them, which are very few, some of the Printer, some of the Accent, and others in the congruity according to the Phrase here. This is only in a few particulars, but the whole is good...I may have mistaken some Defects which I find; but I am too free a Friend not to be a Critick at such Times. Be plain with me again for no Fortune can change me from what I am to you. Yesterday *M John Murray* died. Eight days ago I wrote a Sonnet, divining his Death, which you shall receive here. The King commended it much, but thought that I gave him too much Praise, at least it was a generous Error. (1711: 149)

It is a strikingly modern approach to editorial practice – Alexander underlines inherent ‘problems’ for Drummond to subsequently amend, whilst simultaneously (and diplomatically) inviting his friend to argue his own case regarding those very ‘faults’. Moreover, it examples Alexander’s willingness to receive criticism for his own work just as it simultaneously allows him to inhabit the role of informed critic to Drummond’s aspiring poet. In order to maintain this epistolary chain of poetic transmission and criticism, Alexander adds as an attachment a sonnet of his own in which he apparently divines the death of a countryman, fellow poet and acquaintance, John Murray. However, as Alexander honestly admits, Drummond is not the first reader to examine the John Murray sonnet. The lyric had already come under the close scrutiny of King James, who, despite having found much to commend in it, regarded the over-abundant praise of Murray a noteworthy fault in the work.

What is clear from this letter of 1615 is that James’s critical opinion is still very meaningful at this juncture in his reign - even if his published poetic output had dwindled. In his epistolary conversations with Drummond, there is enough evidence to suggest that the tutelary pedantry exercised by James in his reading is the facet of his cultural legacy which has the most impacting influence on Alexander. By his own admission in this letter,

the Scottish courtier is a willing literary ‘Critick’, but the admission that his perusal of Drummond’s most recent project has been necessarily over-hasty suggests that Alexander, (like his king, James VI and I, had earlier implied in the titular designation of his second publication, *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres*) regarded literary composition and analytical decomposition as activities employed to shorten ‘vacant hours’, and with which to engage only after the matter of ‘other things’ had been resolved. Whilst this might be construed as a demotion of literary endeavour to the peripheries, it might also be argued that the need to continue to exercise or sharpen the mind with these kinds of rhetorical exchanges shows the continued importance for James at least of critical thinking and astute reading.

Despite apparently subscribing to Jamesian methods in reading, Alexander cannot be simply described as an unthinking or sychophantic adherent to James’s word. In an epistle of April 1620 (postmarked London) the courtier reveals himself as being highly frustrated with the overbearing editorial qualities of his king:

I received your last Letter with the Psalm you sent, which I think very well done: I had done the same, long before it came, but he [King James] prefers his own to all else, tho’ perchance, when you see it, you will think it the worst of the Three. No Man must meddle with that Subject, and therefore I advise you to take no more Pains therein; but I, as I haue ever wished you, I would have you to make choice of some new Subject worthy of your Pains, which I should be glad to see. I love the Muses as well as euer I did, but can seldom have the Occasion to frequent them. All my Works are written in one Book, ready for the Press, but I want leisure to print them: So referring all further to our old Friend, Sir Archbald Archison, who is coming Home, I continue,

*Your loving Friend* (1711:151)

Alexander’s enjoyment of Drummond’s work has evidently been tempered, and the acerbic edge to Alexander’s letter is too obvious to miss. With the implication being it seems that Drummond intended his psalm to be shown by Alexander to the king, the courtier feels compelled to cushion the impending blow of rejection from the king. Having himself submitted a psalm translation for the king’s perusal, and having been met with disappointment, Alexander explains that he is only too aware of the king’s editorial policy

– in the end the king is guilty of harbouring too great an affection for his own scriptural endeavours above a reasoned consideration of others' attempts. Having read James's *Workes* it is difficult to challenge Alexander's assessment of his monarch's self-belief. Alexander cushions the blow, flippantly quipping that the poetic accomplishment of Drummond's psalm translation is, in the end, entirely irrelevant, and goes further by suggesting that when Drummond reads the final authorized publication, he will concur with Alexander in his assertions that the king's version is the worst of the three. Confidently posturing as a literary advisor to both Drummond and the king, Alexander makes a considered suggestion that Drummond ought to consider another subject with which to engage.

Despite revealing in this letter how his psalm translation advances had also been spurned by his monarch, Alexander's psalm work must have appealed to James in some respect, for the Scottish courtier was the king's main collaborator on a psalm translation project (which aimed to render the psalms metrically). As David Reid notes, Alexander's pronounced literary and editorial input was integral to the project, as 'he had probably translated more than James, polished the royal efforts, and exercised great tact in the whole business'.<sup>287</sup> Following James's death, Alexander not only completed the project on the deceased king's behalf, but was granted license to publish this version by King Charles I. The first edition appeared in print in 1631. The potential monetary gain attached to this project (should King James's version of the psalms be adjudged worthy of widespread public worship throughout his three kingdoms, Alexander stood to make a small fortune) no doubt drove Alexander's continued involvement in this literary project, alongside his diplomatic work. To Alexander's consternation, however, this collaborative edition failed to deliver the monetary success that had been anticipated:

in spite of Charles's injunctions, it was not accepted by the bishops of the Church of England, a body generally favourable to motions from Charles.

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<sup>287</sup> David Reid, 'Alexander, William, first earl of Stirling (1577–1640)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Oct 2006 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/335, accessed 15 Jan 2013]

The general assembly of the kirk in 1631 emphatically rejected it. Charles met that protest with a decree that no other metrical psalms should be sold in Scotland. In 1636 Stirling brought out a second edition, incorporating, with his usual attempt at conciliation, revisions in response to criticisms of the first edition. But at this point the *Psalmes* and Stirling's importance in affairs were overwhelmed by the wave of resistance to Charles's ecclesiastical policy in Scotland.<sup>288</sup>

No matter the perceived monetary failures of this edition of the psalms, the importance for this doctoral study lies in the fact that James willingly identified Alexander as his key collaborator in this translation venture. Having cultivated a relationship with Alexander founded on rhetorical criticism, James realised in Alexander a shared interpretative spirit or ethos which would allow the poet to both understand and render God's word in the same manner that James himself would do.

Thus far, this chapter has placed critical attention on the epistolary correspondence between Alexander and Drummond in which King James has been explicitly mentioned as part of a triadic critical coterie. Yet, there is sufficient evidence to be found in numerous letters contained within the 1711 edition of Drummond's works (wherein all the aforementioned epistolary correspondence between Alexander and Drummond is housed) to suggest that James's physical involvement is not required for robust rhetorical discussion of a Jamesian hue to occur between the two poets. In a letter of February 1620, Alexander acknowledges receipt of a letter and verses from Drummond, which he admits to liking 'very well'. In the same breath Alexander brings to the fore another member of the ideological literary network of moderate Protestant writers by expressing his relief that Drummond has continued to exercise his muse, 'since Samuel Daniel is dead' (1711: 151). In this sequence of letters the men talk of themselves, of their own works, of other writers and importantly of a shared moderate-Protestant ideology.

Arguably, the most startling find amidst this body of rhetorical criticism is a sustained treatise on versification, written by Alexander and appended to a letter which he sent to Drummond. Although the existence of this piece has been acknowledged by

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<sup>288</sup> Reid 2006.

literary scholarship, it remains a sorely overlooked text. Critics have been keen to dismiss Alexander's treatise as 'undistinguished and unfinished' (Reid 2006), and 'a brief set of critical reflections' representing 'a staging post between the eloquent and regressive style of Renaissance literary criticism' (Alexander 2004: lxxvii). The *Mercat Anthology of Early Scottish Literature* advances *Anacrisis* by allowing it to be in some way representative of Alexander's *oeuvre*. As a 'later Protestant and humanist contribution to Scottish rhetorical criticism' it evidences 'just how...critically astute the literati were at this time' (1997: 474). The *Mercat's* editors clearly appreciate the significance of the rhetorical criticism bound up within the leaves of this treatise, yet do not make the connection between what Alexander says in his lengthy discussion about how he approaches the reading process and the readerly advice outlined by King James VI in his *Essayes of a Prentise* in 1584. Arguably, in Alexander's *Anacrisis*, we find a more perfect realisation of Jamesian ideals than even the king himself could have anticipated.

### ***The Anacrisis***

As far as critical scholarship has been able to establish, the *Anacrisis* never made it to publication in Alexander's own lifetime, only coming to the attention of a wider audience in Bishop and Ruddiman's 1711 edition of Drummond, and at least 70 years after its inception. Preserved as an addendum to a letter to Drummond, it is reasonable to assert that the probability of Alexander having originally intended his short treatise to go to press is highly unlikely. The fact that it remained unpublished does not diminish the importance of Alexander's paper; without the supplementary epistle, it might be viable to read the sentiments in *Anacrisis* as mere ruminations on 'good' poetry, but read against the finer detail of the epistolary hot-house, a different conclusion can be reached. The prose essay ought to be regarded as an integral cog in an ongoing discussion (rather than as a stand-alone prose piece), to which James had once been privy. Despite there being no tangible evidence of a direct response from Drummond to this essay, the preservation of this letter and addendum amongst Drummond's papers, coupled with the correspondence

foregrounded above, show that a sustained conversation on poetics had been cultivated for the best part of a decade or two, and that there was a clear precedent for the creation of this treatise.

The letter to which the *Anacrisis* is appended serves as a succinct dedicatory preface. A well-considered essay on literary criticism is certainly directed in this letter towards an appropriate target audience in Drummond. No other man, proclaims Alexander, ‘in our Northern Country [...] hath more diligently perused’ (1711, pg. 158) the authors that he himself claims later in the *Anacrisis* to have read. Alexander opines that Drummond is more than qualified to not only read his work, but also to ‘proceed and spend some flying Hours upon the same Subject’ (1711, pg. 158). The essay is incomplete but is also incomprehensive as Alexander admits that there might be other writers worthy of consideration but who are not included in this study (‘Neither have I went so through all’, 1711 pg. 158). With an assured confidence, Alexander prophesies how the critical efforts of both he and Drummond will ‘with Applause and Contentment be read and embraced by thankful posterity’.

In the opening sequence of the *Anacrisis* Alexander extols the virtues (and practical implications) of meticulous rhetorical criticism, as he claims that ‘language is but the Apparel of Poesy, which may give beauty but not strength’ (1711: 159). Immediately what we see here is the relegation to second place of the very aesthetical concerns prioritized as important by critics such as Kastner and Charlton (1929), but we are also at once reminded of that notion (suggested by James VI in his ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ and confirmed by the title of McGinley and Royan’s collection *Apparelling of Truth*) that truth in the written word might be ‘apparelled’ or concealed. The thematic overlaps between Sidney’s *Defence* and the *Anacrisis* have been well-documented in literary-criticism, as have the shared political and ideological doctrines of the two men in general. When Alexander writes that he has ‘pitied the Ignorance of some who might be admitted for Versifiers and Poets’ and that he considers language to be ‘but the Apparel of Poesy, which may give beauty but not

strength' (1711, 159) it is difficult not to realise the borrowed lexis from the *Defense*, where Sidney writes that

the greatest part of poets have apparelled their poetical inventions in that numbrous kind of writing which is called verse – indeed but apparelled, verse being but an ornament and no cause to poetry, since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets. (Alexander 2004, 12)

Whilst Alexander's stylistic cue here is indeed from Sidney's essay, and whilst it is also difficult to miss the borrowed lexis from the *Defense*, there is significant thematic divergence between the two texts. Where Sidney is compelled to defend poetic endeavour, and is moreover concerned with the 'putting together' of a poem, Alexander is concerned with its deconstruction and actively promotes discerning analytical reading. The *Anacrisis* is an epideictic case study, rather than a defence, of reading practices. In this respect, Alexander's closest literary antecedent is arguably James's *Essayes*.

Alexander takes as his rhetorical point of departure the conceit that critics ought to unveil the truth shrouded in lexical embellishment by poets, and in so doing he can move on at pace to a more detailed discussion of how poetic 'apparel' might be de-robed. This treatise, with its analytical deconstruction of the reading process, thus comes to exist as yet another manifesto for a theologically invested discernment in reading. Before rhetorical censure of an author or work can take place, a discriminating reader (such as Alexander paints himself to be) must 'first dissolve the general Contexture of [the] Work [...] to see what sinews it hath [...] when the external gorgeousness [...] is first removed' (1711, pg. 159). Language is nothing 'but a conduit' and the textual whole a garden where poetic structure, representations and decorum in descriptions are akin to the flowers, avenues and walkways.

Just as James VI had a clearly-defined notion of the ideal poet, so, too, Alexander has preferred criteria for the 'perfyte poet'. Alexander's conception of a 'good poet' is terser, as he looks for a witty conceit, a grave sentence and a generous rapture. Unlike the young James VI however, Alexander is under no illusion that there exists poetic



‘perfection’. ‘There is none so excellent’, he writes, ‘that is not excelled in some Pieces by some other (1711, pg.159). Although convergent in the extent of their belief in the existence of poetic perfection, what is important to note is that both James and Alexander feel the need to provide a clearly defined schema to justify their own reading habits for their audience. In reading a work, Alexander seeks out ‘a grave sentence’, ‘a witty Conceit’ to ‘delight the Spirits’ and ‘a generous Rapture expressing Magnanimity’ to enflame the mind to greater thoughts. ‘All the rest’ argues Alexander, ‘is but a naked Narration or gross Staff to uphold the general Frame’ (xxii-xxiii).

Alexander’s mannered, almost scientific approach to the deconstruction of the text is mimicked in his description of a text as a living organism with hidden tissues and fibres, whose sinews need to be revealed.<sup>289</sup> A deconstruction of the reading process follows, as Alexander claims that ‘when I censure [...] I first dissolve [...] to see and to mark [...] I value [...] I compare [...] I condemn [...] I like’ (1711, pg. 159), and this is a critical model to which his own treatise adheres. We are told that he enjoys the ‘Phrase, Stile...Method and discreet Carriage of Virgil’, admires the ‘deep Judgment and grave sentences of Horace and Juvenal’, and ‘vigour and variety of invention’ in Ovid. The Italian scholar, Julius Caesar Scaliger (1484-1558), comes under scrutiny for critical parsimony – only by judging him on certain aspects of his work, argues Alexander, could Lucan be described as poetically deficient, of barking rather than singing. Had Virgil – an author Scaliger considered ‘without blemish’ – been selectively critiqued (for its aesthetics) then Scaliger, accordingly, ought to have reached the same conclusion. It might be well to acknowledge the individual components of a poem, but Alexander is keen to show in this essay how the poetic ‘sinews’ affect the poetic whole.

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<sup>289</sup> Alexander’s methodological approach and the lexicon employed are not unique in the period. In *Reading Sensations in Early Modern England* (2007: 46), Katherine A. Craik highlights how George Puttenham had earlier, in *The Arte of English Poesie*, inventoried ‘the architecture of the body in terms of its facility to transmit literary expression’ (40). She elucidates: ‘Words do not simply share characteristics with bodies in Puttenham’s discussion [...] instead he describes a vigorous, energetic and powerfully creative exchange between the substance of poetry and the minds and bodies of those who encounter it’.

Proving himself a faithful Jamesian acolyte, Alexander usurps many of James's poetic 'idols' (such as du Bartas and Sidney) as well as exhibiting doctrinal and methodological similarities with their approach to reading and in their stylistic preferences. In presenting a list of contemporaneous (or near-contemporaneous) authors whom he admires (Tasso, du Bartas, Speroni), Alexander further aligns himself with the tastes of his monarch. Whilst du Bartas is acclaimed in the *Anacrisis* for the same reasons that James had favoured him, Alexander's independent thinking allows him to rank another poet as his own 'favourite'. Sidney is unsurprisingly recognised as the pre-eminent scholar of his generation, achieving in his poetry and prose something close to 'perfection':

The *Arcadia* of...Sidney...is the most excellent Work...written in any Language that I understand, affording...Types of Perfection for both the Sexes, leaving the gifts of Nature, whose Value doth depend upon the Beholders, wanting no Virtue whereof a Humane Mind could not be capable. As for Men, magnanimity, Courage, Courtesy, Valour, Judgment, Discretion; and in Women, Modesty, Shamefastness, Constancy, Continancy, still accompanied with a tender Sense of Honour. (1711, pg. 161)

Going by this description, we are made to believe that the *Arcadia* provides the blueprint for appropriate moral conduct, or 'types of perfection'. Here we might argue that Alexander is bringing to the fore what has thus far been implicit in his prose essay – the notion of reading as a means to generate and measure moral judgement.

The *Anacrisis* is brought to an abrupt end with a critical appreciation of John Barclay's *Argenis* (Paris, 1620), an example of Alexander's current literary interests, and (finally, we might exclaim) the explicit invocation of a Scottish text. Thus he concludes the essay in the manner in which it began:

[Barclay's] Work, whether judged of in the Whole, or parted in Pieces, will be found to be a body strong in substance, and full of Sinews in every Member.

In essence, to make a reasoned assessment of the poetic 'whole', a text must be scrupulously compartmentalized before being pieced back together. We can only speculate as to whether time would have permitted Alexander to complete this study of 'English'

poetics, whether the process of ‘completion’ would have allowed Alexander to discourse at greater length on Scottish poetics, or even whether he would have acknowledged the extent of his literary indebtedness to his former monarch.

Although James’s influence on Alexander is implicit in the *Anacrisis*, it is rather more explicit elsewhere in Alexander’s literary corpus. In its assimilation, imitation and imbrication of ideas and phrases from *Basilikon Doron*, Alexander’s *Parænesis* (1604)<sup>290</sup> usurps the mannered style and spirit of King James in the *Basilikon* and serves as an emphatic reaffirmation of the advice imparted by the monarch to his son. In terms of content, there is no escaping the thematic overlap between King James’s ‘royal gift’ and Alexander’s own; the *Paraenesis* is another attempt to instruct the heir to the throne on how to govern effectively.<sup>291</sup> Offering a cohortative encouragement to the prince, Alexander upholds the reign of James VI and I as the finest blueprint of how a monarch ought to rule. Composed in *ottava rima*,<sup>292</sup> this poem galvanised the portrait already popular in the embryonic years of British royal union of Henry as a chivalrous defender of the Protestant faith. If the rhyme scheme implies poetry of heroism, then the opening stanza serves to confirm it. Alexander directly implores the ‘brave youth’ (line 1) of the dedication to listen intently to the exhortation contained within. Alexander implies that he himself is not above the lesson which he is about to impart, and develops this idea by stressing that he will also look to learn from his own didacticism in the *Paraenesis*, and study his own ‘drift’ (1604: l.6). The stanza concludes in a substantiation of the heroic nature of the *Parænesis*, as Alexander resolves ‘still to a Prince to speake of princely things’ (1604: sig. Aii, l.8). Here, the Scottish statesman-cum-poet adopts the tone of one who is a sage advisor, worthy courtier and loyal subject of the prince. In so doing, Alexander not only stresses to the king his credentials as a budding statesman, but also proves to James that he has the capability as an astute and perceptive reader to correctly

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<sup>290</sup> Sir William Alexander, *A Parænesis to the Prince* (London: Richard Field for Edward Blount, 1604).

<sup>291</sup> Records indicate that by 1607, Alexander had been made Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to Henry.

interpret the king's written word and to produce a Protestantised poetics based on a thorough understanding of God's word. Likewise, having worked collaboratively as a reader with the king on psalm translation, Alexander was more than equipped to take up the challenge of bringing the project to fruition in James's stead in 1631. As this project and the aforementioned letters between Alexander and Drummond attest, it is in the act of rhetorical criticism that James's ideals for the good Christian reader are most practically recognised and evolved.

This section of the thesis has attempted to magnify the *Anacrisis* to show its importance as a literary product of James VI's influence, and as an example of a more complex ideological network (whose parameters are yet to be explored and defined) in operation. This thesis contends that the *Anacrisis* fits into a trajectory of rhetorical criticism during this period and exists not as a 'brief set of critical reflections' but as an integral part of an ongoing literary (cross-border and Jacobean) discussion on the reading process, and, more particularly, it poses questions as to what it is that we as readers should extract from literature and how indeed we should go about achieving those ends. By the conclusion of his career, and once more writing from his home in Menstrie, Alexander's unpublished essay illustrates a more accomplished embodiment of James's reading maxims than the monarch himself could achieve in his own writing. To re-read Alexander's *Anacrisis* well, is also, arguably, to truly understand his king better.

### ***Précis***

In Bawcutt's 2001 paper – the theoretical impetus for the present thesis – a convincing argument emerged which implicitly challenged scholars to re-imagine the cultural landscape of a period in Scotland often regarded as creatively stale. By extension, the article invited critics to consider ways in which to revivify the critical terms by which an oft-maligned cultural epoch could be discussed and, importantly, re-assessed. In the decade since Bawcutt roundly confronted the Castalian 'myth', our understanding of the literary

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<sup>292</sup> Eight-line stanzas, each line written in iambic pentameter with the overall rhyme scheme of each stanza

concerns of the Jacobean period in Scotland has significantly advanced. Through the critical dissolution of the Castalian band, some critics have been actively engaged in revising scholarship on those writers previously encompassed by the Castalian epithet – Montgomerie (Lyall 2005), Ayton (Cummings in McGinley and Royan 2010), Stewart (McClune 2005; Heddle 2008; Fleming in McGinley and Royan 2010) – and those previously neglected – Elizabeth Melville (Reid-Baxter 2010), Andrew Melville (Reid, 2011), William Alexander (Stilma in McGinley and Royan 2010; Auger 2012), William Lithgow (van Heijnsbergen in McGinley and Royan 2010); the family network has additionally come to be recognised as a serious cultural force in the sixteenth century (Martin and McClune 2009; van Heijnsbergen 2010). King James’s own literary fortunes have also fared better in this critical renaissance with scholars keen to examine the finer details of a corpus of royally-authored literature, particularly for what it can reveal of the man’s authority (Fischlin and Fortier 2002; Rickard 2007; Parkinson 2013). A collection of essays, just published, edited by David Parkinson – *James VI and I, Literature and Scotland: Tides of Change, 1567-1625* (2013) – gives centre stage to regional sites of cultural innovation in Jacobean Britain. When the spotlight is angled thus, what we find are localised sites of creativity on both the east and west coasts (Fowler; James Melville), and north and south of the border (John Donne and William Drummond for example), in which the cultural or familial network is of huge significance in the creation, evolution and transmission of texts. Interestingly, light is also shed in this collection on those female voices (Margaret Cunningham) who managed to confidently assert their ideas, within a predominantly patrilinear society, by means of artistic networks and cultural channels of communication. The present thesis recognises the importance of the friendship network in Jacobean Scotland, but has sought to show that even when creation moved away from the Royal Mile – even, indeed as the king himself moved south of his native land – James was, even if only virtually, or *in absentia*, still engaged in a robust cultural dialogue on apposite

reading praxis, and occupied with the bookish transactions that such cultural dialogue fostered. Without his ‘Castalian Band’ James still exists alongside like-minded equals (those with a shared God) rather than as a figurehead of poetic subordinates.

Recontextualisation of the poetic treatise within the *Essayes* allows us to re-evaluate not only its importance but the entire publication’s cultural function. When reading with the grain of the *Essayes* as opposed to against it, the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’ (a metaphor, we might presume, for writing endeavour) exists merely as one later step in a drawn-out, but nevertheless systematic, reading process. Throughout his ‘prentise’ piece, James definitively asserts that those with some beginnings of poetic knowledge ought firstly to concern themselves with reading and re-reading scriptural works, or even with those somewhat biblical in hue (du Bartas’s *L’Uranie* as an example), in order to come to a more profound understanding of God’s wisdom. Only when this level of insight has been achieved, argues James, should aspirant poets begin to write, applying this deeper cognizance to their writing in order mimetically to channel God’s word. Thus, far from existing as a miscellaneous juvenile initiate, *The Essayes* stands to represent a sequential case study on how to read scripture discerningly and how best to apply spiritual learning practically.

Consequently, the *sobriquet* ‘manifesto’ is more aptly applied to the *Essayes* than it is to the ‘Reulis and Cautelis’, for only if we consider the entire body of the 1584 publication we find a clearly-defined agenda for how James VI envisaged cultural creativity to look in the Scottish realm. It has been the contention of this thesis that already at the outset of his majority rule, James’s cultural agenda was far more developed than the notion of ‘writing games’ or courtly *puys* has previously suggested, even if only preliminarily or intuitively in some ways. This thesis has brought together a body of evidence from the textual analysis of a selection of James’s texts in support of the notion that the one edifying role consciously and faithfully enacted by the King from his teens to his mid fifties, was that of interlocutor or spiritual facilitator. That James could find no

word in the English language which could sufficiently describe the nuances inherent in his approach to reading is telling; his eventual solution, to import the French loan word ‘textuarie’ and to imbue the word with such spiritual import, suggests that he was consciously differentiating his brand of actively involved reading from other more passive displays. James believed himself to be a good role model for this product, and in his contemporary surroundings King James VI and I was certainly held up as an excellent (but not extra-ordinary) reader. In his *Essayes* of 1584, James had made no pretensions to aesthetic or poetic superiority, but rather had presented himself as one who saw the artistic worth of investing in reading. James might have been a ‘novice’ poet-king, but he was certainly a more experienced Christian-humanist reader.

A deeper appreciation of the king’s literary portfolio might be better achieved through a closer examination of what the monarch actually wrote – or implied – about his reading methodology over a wide range of texts, rather than through active scrutiny of what he chose to write about writing in one slender treatise (see ‘Reulis and Cautelis’). Re-locating the king’s cultural priorities in discriminant reading habits – as opposed to prioritising the act of (monarchical) composition in itself – makes it possible to (re)present James’s literary output as something approaching the thematically uniform or even ideologically cohesive. King James VI and I adroitly manipulated the rhetorical conceit of precept and example in his writings to consistently present himself as the epitome of the knowledgeable reader to whom the majority of his texts were dedicated. In recognising how James reverts time and again to his writing pen in order to reaffirm and prioritise the act of spiritually invested reading to enhance moral, spiritual and philosophical judgement-making, it is possible to define a new set of criterion by which to re-assess James’s role as a cultural operative. Defined against this more nuanced and developed criterion, the king’s writing might then be viewed as the conduit, intermediary or interlocutor through which literary dialogue on Christian-humanist reading praxis is sustained, developed and transmitted over the course of James’s reign of both Scotland and Britain; that King James

VI and I was merely one integral quire amongst many in a strong cultural binding, is surely unquestionable.



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Appendices

Appendix 1



Figure 1: Ceiling Panel, Dean House, Scotland.<sup>293</sup>

<sup>293</sup> One of a series of seven extant panels from a ceiling painted c. 1605-1627.

## Appendix 2

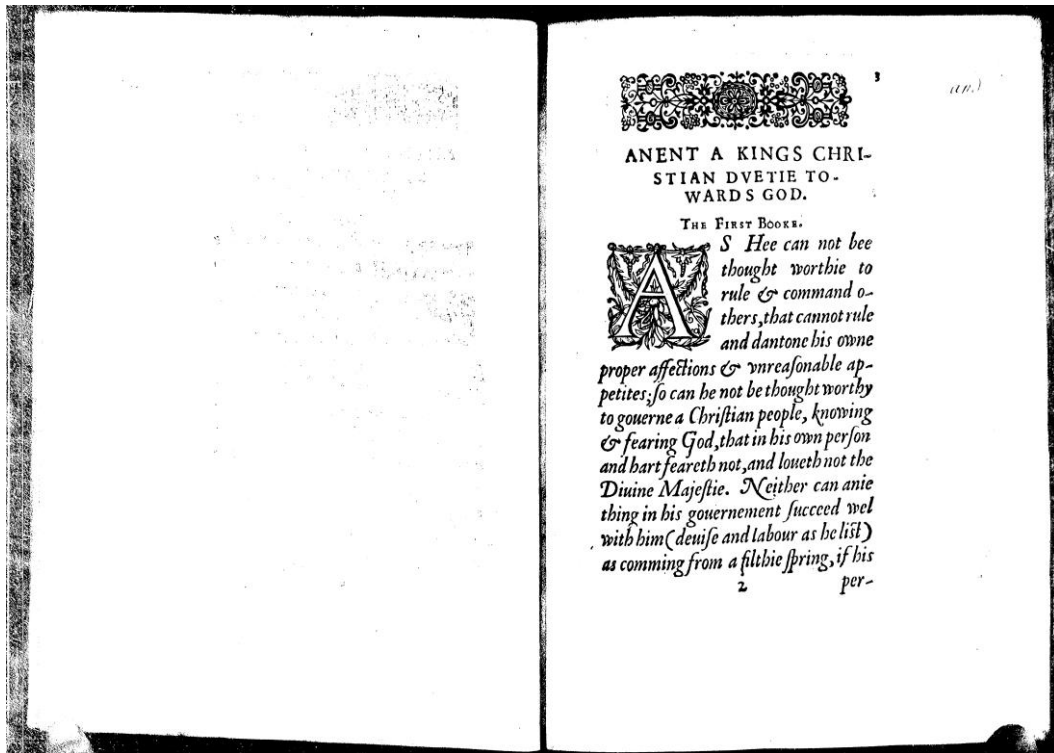


Figure 2: Extract from *Basilikon Doron* (1599), British Library, reel position: STC/963:17.

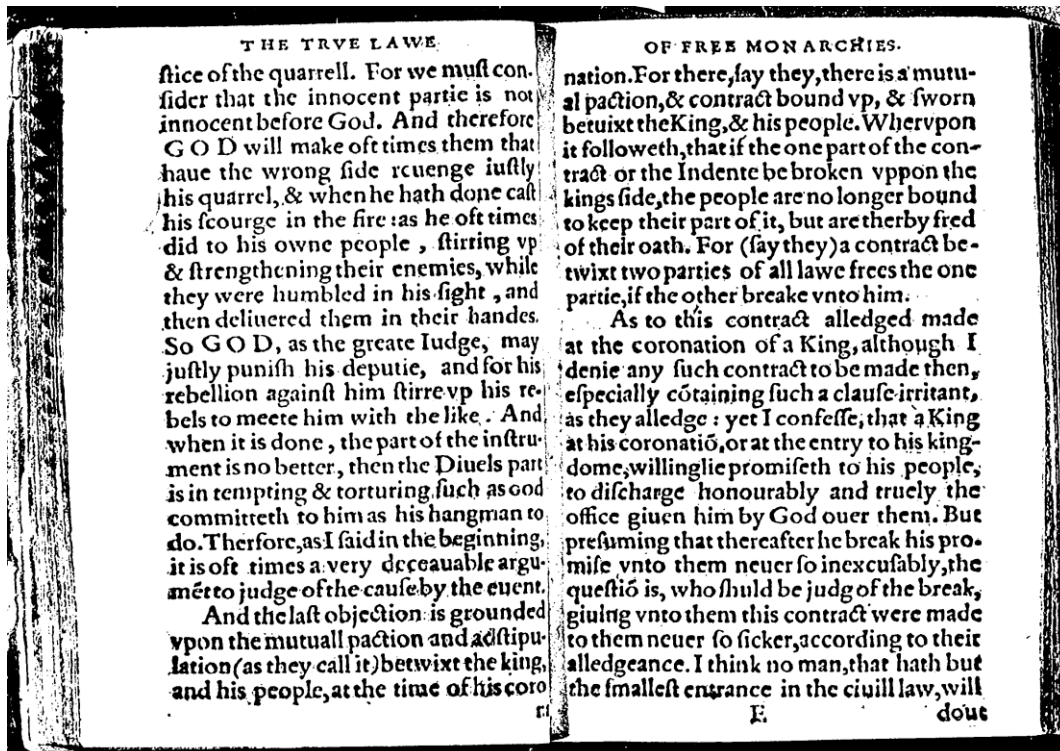


Figure 3: Extract from James VI, *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (Edinburgh: Waldegrave, 1598) <http://tinyurl.com/nnfxo56> [accessed 16th September 2012]



## Appendix 3



Figure 4: The Van de Passe frontispiece of James's *Workes* (London: Robert Barker and John Bill, 1616).



Appendix 4

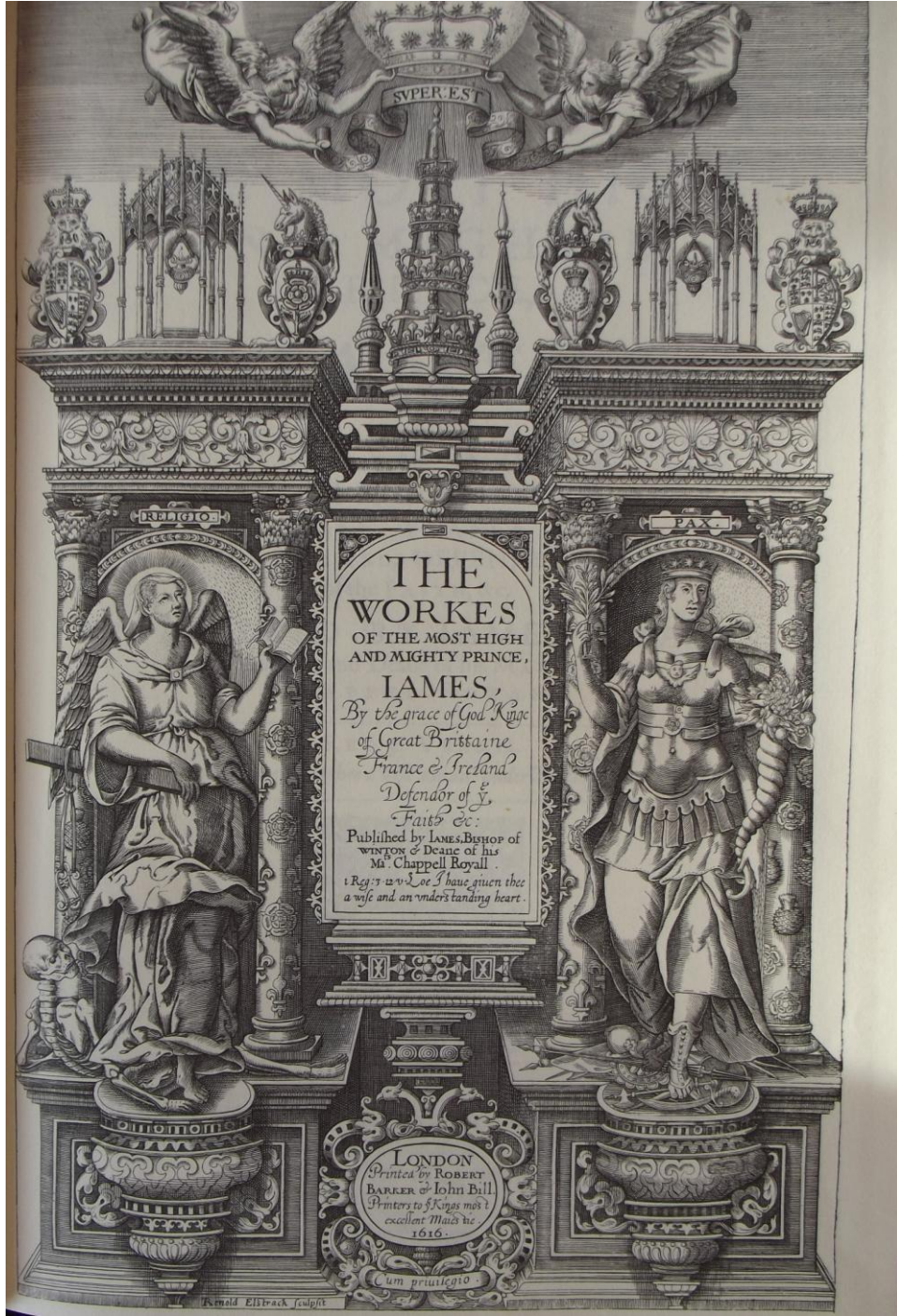


Figure 5: The title page of James's *Workes* (London: Robert Barker and John Bill, 1616), carrying the highly ornate engraving by Renald Elstrack.

## Appendix 5

*Evidence of writings on the nature of kingship by James's parents.*

In thinking about the *Basilikon Doron*, we might (as an aside) consider the parental contribution to James's own monarchical training made by Darnley and Mary Queen of Scots. In the first instance we might look towards the short (and from a modern view perhaps aesthetically negligible) piece of verse, attributed to James's father, Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley. This three-stanza poem admits to being 'Advice to a Prince' and is located within the Bannatyne MS. Although the poem itself lacks any real artistic worth, the maxims imparted are certainly worth noting. This poem takes the form of an instructive list, with each line beginning with the imperative 'be' and every stanza culminating in the refrain 'be bowsum ay to know thy god and lord'. Amongst an extensive list of priorities, a prince ought to be, in Darnley's conception, 'guid and gracious', 'leill and luifand', 'just to pure for ony thing may fall', 'reddye evir to stanche evill and discord', 'cheritabill and sickerlye', 'vertewus', 'patient lawlie and misericord' – terms that one finds refracted in James's *Basilikon*. In the final stanza of Darnley's poem, we find sentiments that directly resonate in James's counsel to his own son:

Be weill avysit of quhome thow counsale tais  
 Be sever of thame that thai be leill and trew  
 Be-think the als quhidder thai be friendis or fais  
 Be to thy saull their sawis or thow persew  
 Be nevir o'er haistye to wirk and syne to rew  
 Be nocht their friend that makis the fals record  
 Be reddye evir all guid works to renew  
 Be bowsum ay to know thy god and Lord.<sup>294</sup>

Whether James was aware of this poem, or indeed ever read or heard it, is difficult to know (although given the proximity of the king to the Bellendens – patrons and relations of the family from which the Bannatyne MS emanated – that the king was likely to have seen his

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<sup>294</sup> Bannatyne Manuscript, fol. 87v. There is one further poem by Darnley in the Bannatyne Manuscript. See Bann MS, fol. 244r. The Bannatyne Manuscript facsimile p.xxxv makes reference to a third poem by Darnley in a different manuscript.

father's poem). Nonetheless, it is easy to find similarities in the monarchic agendas of the aspirational king-consort, Darnley, and his son, King James.

More important an instructive gift than Darnley's uninspiring poem would have been the political science of Mary Queen of Scots. Thought to have been composed at some point during the 1570's, '*Tetrasticha au Quatrains*', with its hand-embroidered front cover, was recognised by its intended recipient, James VI, as a valuable physical artefact, an aesthetically beautiful book and 'most precious Jewell'.<sup>295</sup> On James's death, this book fell into the possession of William Drummond of Hawthornden who subsequently bequeathed this title (amongst a vast array of books) to Edinburgh University. Modern cognizance of the existence of Mary's 'The Institution of a Prince' owes much to the seventeenth century testimonial of Bishop James Montague, who, in 1616 (the year in which James printed his prose *magnum opus* including *Basilikon Doron*), indicated that the Queen had taken lengths to provide her son with an ornate advice manual. Whilst James might have considered his mother's book 'a most precious jewell', we unfortunately cannot provide a more rigorous comparative analysis of Mary's 'Institution of a Prince' and James's *Basilikon Doron* due to the former's theft from Edinburgh University Library.

There is one more piece of literature related to Mary and political science which is certainly worth considering. Amongst the Cotton Collection<sup>296</sup> is an unassuming piece, a very short 'Essay on the Science of Government' written in the hand of Mary's secretary, and purportedly 'the outcome of an argument' between Nau (the secretary) and the queen. It is not an original document, but a hastily recorded copy. Labanoff<sup>297</sup> dates the conversation c.1566 (around the Rizzio moment), but Stewart-Mackenzie Arbuthnot<sup>298</sup> suggests that this springs from Mary's days in captivity 'and that the sentiments it expresses

<sup>295</sup> G.P.V. Akrigg, 'The Literary Achievement of King James I', in *University of Toronto Quarterly*, No. 44 (1975), pg. 176.

<sup>296</sup> 'Essay on the Science of Government', Cotton Collection, c.i, fol 457b.

<sup>297</sup> Prince Alexandre Labanoff, *Lettres, instructions et mémoires de Marie Stuart, reine d'Écosse*, vol. 7, Charles Dolman (London : Charles Dolman, 1844).

<sup>298</sup> P. Stewart-Mackenzie Arbuthnot, *Queen Mary's Book: A Collection of Poems and Essays by Mary Queen of Scots* (London: Bell, 1907).

are the fruit of long and earnest retrospective thought' (1907: 132). It takes the form of a dialogue (the 'Proposition' and 'Queen Mary's Reply'), the 'proposition' being that 'a king should be governed by the advice of his nobility', and the reply (from Mary) being 'in the event of that advice being neither corrupt nor indiscreet, but well considered' (1907: 132). The aforementioned connections are here listed merely as a means by which to contextualise James's offering to Henry and to suggest potential sites of thematic overlap between King James's *Basilikon Doron*, and the known evidence of his parents' engagement with writing on the nature of kingship.