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*The English Accession of James VI: ‘National’ Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England**

THERE is widespread agreement that when James VI of Scotland succeeded to his English throne in 1603, the transition from English queen to Scottish king gave rise to a range of political and cultural tensions. Of that range, this paper explores the ways James’s accession threw into relief the evolving identity of the English realm, the authority-base of the ruler and the role of the subject vis-à-vis the monarch. One issue still contested is the extent to which those stresses were a consequence of James’s Scottish origins or his sex and gender.¹ In imitation of the irenic spirit which James so frequently espoused, it will be argued that both those separable factors contributed much to the early tensions. After fifty years of female rule, James assumed that England would be delighted by the return to normatively male rule, and was anxious to demonstrate the difference a male ruler made. What he misunderstood, and a matter on which he had been badly advised, was the extent to which the English realm had acquired a significant sense of ‘Englishness’ under Tudor rule. From 1559 in particular, across the socio-political hierarchies, a peculiarly Elizabethan synthesis of international Protestantism, vehement anti-Popery, xenophobia and adulation of the monarch had become entrenched in the dominant public discourse. In sustaining the reign of an unmarried woman a significantly different language of authority had been developed,² and over forty-five years the combined efforts of printing press, Church and Protestant zeal represented her as focal point – and charismatic unifier – of her realm to an unprecedented degree.³

*I am grateful for the comments I have received on earlier versions of this paper from colleagues, in particular from Lotte Mulligan, Rhys Isaac and John Cashmere.

1. The most significant exponent of James’s Scottish context and experience has been Jenny Wormald, to whose work a number of more detailed references are made below. Other recent exponents of the significance of the gender factor include A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585* (Cambridge, 1999), and from another angle, Michael B. Young, *James VI and I and the History of Homosexuality* (Basingstoke, 2000).

2. For some recent discussions of this, see Stephen Alford, *The Early English Polity: William Cecil and the English Succession Crisis 1558–1569* (Cambridge, 1998), and McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth*. More popular responses to Elizabeth’s rule have also been widely discussed, but throughout this article particular reference is made to Judith Richards ‘Love and a Female Monarch: The case of Elizabeth Tudor’ *Journal of British Studies* 38, (1999) 133–160.

3. Such unity could, however, easily be overstated. The need to prepare the English coastal communities against a probable Spanish onslaught before 1588 provided many examples of the dearth of commitment to a ‘public’ interest in protecting the ‘national’ good. See, for example Richards, ‘Before the “Mountains Mouse”: Propaganda and public defense before the Spanish Armada’ in *England and the Spanish Armada*, ed. Jeff Doyle and Bruce Moore (Canberra, 1990), pp. 13–34.

The first section of this paper addresses some consequences of the 'foreignness' of the incoming King of England. In 1603 one of James's leading hopes had been to restore the ancient realm of Britain, that fictive entity made familiar by the history of Geoffrey of Monmouth and his successors. James's failure to establish that 'British' construct is well known, and provides compelling evidence of the continuing strength of a pre-existing 'English' identity. The problems confronting James's proposed 'perfect union' of his kingdoms is an issue much discussed elsewhere.⁴ Here it is referred to only as one example of James's considerable – and frequently justified – confidence in his own judgement. On this matter, he was almost certainly misled by the more sycophantic of his English correspondents, who may also have misled him about the popular standing of his English predecessor. It was not just that her rule had been almost preternaturally long. As Thomas Dekker put it, England being

a nation that was almost begotten and borne under her; that had never shouted any other *Ave* than for her name, never sawe the face of any other Prince but her selfe, never understoode what that strange outlandish worde Change signified: how was it possible, but that her sicknes should throw abroad an universall feare . . . ever did the English nation behold so much blacke worne as there was at her Funerall . . . They that durst not speake ther sorrowes, whispered them: they that durst not whisper, sent them foorth in sighes.⁵

Such anxiety was probably the greater because only with hindsight could James be seen as the most likely successor, let alone as achieving a peaceful accession. The acute anxiety of the days immediately following Elizabeth's death speaks eloquently to the importance of securing the 'right' succession. For some, it followed from James being born outside the realm that he could not inherit an English estate, let alone the English Crown. The much-told tale of the Lord Mayor threatening to bar the councillors' way unless they were about to proclaim James king is a powerful indicator of widespread uncertainty about his succession. James's subsequent letter from Holyrood thanking the

4. Even Jenny Wormald has not been able to offer a more plausible description for James's seeking that Union beyond its being his own preference and, he believed, a 'divine obligation laid upon him by God'. She instanced some previous (and historically discouraging) attempts at a comparable union as partial explanation of his idea, but they were surely not promising historical precedents. Jenny Wormald, 'The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies?' *Transactions of the [Royal] Historical Society* (Sixth Series) (1991) 175–194, esp. 177ff. The case for such a union, frequently articulated by James, and the more obvious barriers to it, were usefully summarized by Brian Levack, 'Toward a More Perfect Union: England, Scotland and the Constitution', *After the Reformation: essays in honor of J. H. Hexter* ed. Barbara C. Malament (Philadelphia, 1980), pp. 37–74, but this throws no light on the inspiration for such an unusual enterprise. For an overview of the extensive literature on James's commitment to 'Great Britain' see W. B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997), pp. 31–2.

5. Thomas Dekker, *The Wonderful Year 1603* (London, 1603) ed. G. B. Harrison (London, 1966), pp. 19–20.

Lord Mayor of London for the City's early support⁶ was almost the first – and for some time the only – public word from the King to his new people. Elizabeth's successor was a king from a foreign realm installed in England perhaps with the deathbed support of the Queen, certainly by the contrivance of an inner circle of councillors with whom he had been in furtive contact over the years. He was known personally to almost no one in England, because of the ambiguous status he held there.

All her reign, Elizabeth had made much of being 'borne mere Englishe here amongst us, and therefore most naturall unto us'.⁷ James VI of Scotland was the monarch of one of England's most ancient enemies. That was not an anachronistic concern by 1603. In April 1588, the Earl of Huntingdon had reported that northern gentry were very reluctant to raise new taxes for possible use against the Spanish threat, but if such arms were to be used against Scotland, that ancient enemy, there would be no such resistance.⁸ That was only sixteen years before James's accession. The hostility was still an agreed political 'fact' in 1603. Much of the debate about the proposed Union of the kingdoms was argued from a shared premiss about the continuing strength of that same ancient enmity. Whether the proposed union was a welcome means of ending such enmity, or whether it was being argued that the union would be the more difficult to achieve because of that enmity, the theme was constant that 'in old enmities it is hard to establish . . . a perfect reconciliation'. There was, in both positions, agreement about the enmity; there was also a widespread English anxiety that a union would result in 'too great an increase of ye Scotts upon us'.⁹

James had never been formally acknowledged by Elizabeth as her preferred successor. She had always forbidden any debate about the succession – with relative *public* success. Privately, there was always

6. *The Copie of the K. Maiesties letter to the Lord Maior . . . and to the Aldermen and Commoners* [dated 28 March 1603] (1603) It was fitted on to a single sheet, perhaps to facilitate wider distribution.

7. 'A Speciall grace appointed to have been said after a banquet at Yorke . . . November 1558 [Aiii(v)] [n.p., n.d.]

8. P[ublic] R[ecord] O[ffice] SP 12/208/75.

9. For example, two works by John Thornborough, Bishop of Bristol, *A Discourse Plainly Proving the evident vilitie and urgent necessitie of the desired happye Union . . .* (London, 1604) and *The Joyfull and Blessed Reuniting the two mighty and famous kingdomes . . .* (London, 1605?) in which he used the example of 'Israel and Iuda' as a parallel to argue the strength of rivalry and contention in the absence of a more perfect union, and the associated 'inconvenience and mischiefe'. *A Discourse* pp. 16–19; see also John Hayward, *A Treatise of Union of the two Realmes* (London, 1604) p. 18; 'Arguments drawne against ye union 1604', B[ritis]h L[ibrary]. Eg 2877 f170 b. In December 1605, the Venetian Ambassador reported that, in the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot, a paper had been found, listing a number of Scots. 'When asked as to the meaning of this the prisoners said that it was intended, after the explosion of the mine, to massacre all the Scottish in this country, for they could not submit to the share which their natural enemies now had in the government.' Venetian Ambassador to the Doge and Senate, 22 December 1605, *Calendar of State Papers, Venetian* (hereafter *CSPVen*) vol X, 1603–7, p. 303.

endemic speculation.¹⁰ Interest in the relative merits of alternative claimants' cases intensified in the years before her death, both within and beyond England.¹¹ English Protestant commentators were, not surprisingly, particularly concerned to safeguard the continuing independence of their kingdom, as Henry VIII had defined it. In 1601, Thomas Wilson echoed such concerns when he began his [legally unpublishable] discussion about the likely claimants for the throne, asserting:

This Kingdome is an absolute Imperiall Monarchy held nether of Pope, Emperor nor any but God alone, and so hath bene ever since the year of the World 2855, which was 1108 yeares before Christ . . .

He listed the '12 Competitors that gape for the death of that good old Princess the now Queen', of whom the nearest 'in bloud' was James VI of Scotland. After him came Arabella 'of the same lynne' and preferred by some 'for that she is English borne (the want whereof, if our Lawyers opinions be corant is the cause of his exclusion)'. The belief that a ruler should be native born, itself a mark of the success of Tudor 'nationalistic'

10. For one recent discussion of the early impact of the Elizabethan succession issue on English politics, see Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity*. The possible permutations on claims were almost infinite. The Yorkist claim was said by some, though not by the man himself, to survive in the person of the Earl of Huntingdon. Bishop Quadra reported that Cecil had said that, should the Queen die 'the succession belonged of right to the earl [of Huntingdon], as he was descended from the house of York'. Quadra also enclosed a copy of a 'genealogical tree of the kings of Scotland, with a statement of the right of the various claimants to the succession'. *Calendar of State Papers, Spanish (Elizabeth)* v. 1 Bishop Quadra to the King, 15 October 1560, pp. 176–7. Subsequently, there probably was a general acceptance of Mary Stuart's claims as heir apparent to the throne, but like all other possible claimants, she never won any formal recognition. After her death, the potential for confusion only increased and the outstanding contribution was the work of Robert Parsons, writing as R. Doleman. Comprehensively subverting the English succession traditions, he cast doubt on the legitimacy of all English rulers since Henry II (whose true descendant he declared to be 'the lady Isabella, Infanta of Spaine'). He included (selectively) descendants of female royal offspring, modified comprehensively the claims of lineal descent, interpolated reminders of the intermittent role of war in deciding inheritance, and highlighted the 'wonderfull diversity on matters of religion'. Doleman declared the ultimate weight to be the defence of true religion and 'the approbation of the common wealth', thereby demonstrating to his own satisfaction the absence of any definitive criteria. His conclusion was that after Elizabeth, the matter would be sorted on the battlefield, and that the Infanta would probably triumph, as a princess of a great state, backed by considerable might, and as a candidate free to marry 'suitably'. R. Doleman (Robert Parson et al.) *A Conference About the Next Succession to the Crowne of England* (Antwerp, 1594) passim esp. Bk. II, pp. II, 261. It is hard to know which aspect of Doleman/Parsons' argument offended Elizabethan authorities the most, but it proved impossible for them to suppress this offensive work entirely. Given its import, it is not surprising there were no published replies to it in England until 1603, with John Hayward, *An answer to the first part of a certain conference . . .* (London, 1603). The knowledge of the wide-ranging argument, however, did nothing to reduce English anxieties about Spanish intentions in the final years of Elizabeth's reign.

11. In 1601, a correspondent to Henri IV of France, seeking advice as to royal French preferences for the English throne, outlined Papal concerns for the strength of support for the Lady Arabella. He treated with all apparent seriousness Parsons's disallowance of almost all candidates to the English throne, reported papal dismay at the support for Lady Arabella Stuart, canvassed papal interest in assorted other candidates, and concluded that the then King of Scots was a good friend and near kinsman to the house of Lorraine. BL Stowe 155 ff8–38 'A letter of advice from the Cardinall Dossort to Henry the 4th . . . aboute the succession of the Crowne of England' Dated 26 Nov 1601.

propaganda, appears to have been spread across the full spectrum of English society, if the reported mutterings of Sussex labourers against 'any forreyne prynce', in July, 1603 were accurate.¹² Examining the claims of the most likely candidates, foreign and internal, Wilson concluded grimly that: 'this Crowne is not like to fall to the ground for want of heads that claime to weare it'.¹³

The lack of any acknowledged heir became more threatening to public peace as the old Queen lay dying. On 20 March 1603 the Privy Council had reported to distant 'sondrie Earles and Barons' that it was consulting 'such noblemen of the realme as are now abiding either in the Citie of London or neere unto it' about the appropriate steps to be taken for the 'preservation of the peace and welfare of the State'.¹⁴ The letter was both apology and warning to more distant, possibly disaffected nobility, as rumours circulated that 'many men, both noble and others, had made very great provision of armor, munition, and victuals' against the old Queen's death.¹⁵ Names of alternative claimants were still being bandied around even after the official proclamation of James. One, briefly named by both Chamberlain and John Manningham, was Lord Beauchamp, eldest son of Catherine Grey and the Earl of Hereford. Some 'principall papists were made sure, and some daungerous companions clapt up'.¹⁶ Years later, Lady Anne Clifford recalled those tense times, and how the 'peaceable coming in of the King was unexpected of all parts of the people'.¹⁷ In York, it was reported, the people had 'expected in the interim their houses should have been spoiled and sacked' and when all had passed very quietly, celebrated their 'unspeakable' contentment.¹⁸ Rumours of treasonous plots, and of armed men gathering, existed in sufficient numbers for the Council to take more precautionary steps. It ordered that in each parish:

every Sunday your parson, Vicar or Curate, doo publish and sett forth . . . to the parishioners, admonishing them to their due obedience, and how much wee are bound to praise God for that he hath sent so worthy and Royall a prince to

12. PRO SP 14/2/96.

13. Thomas Wilson, 'The State of England Anno Dom 1600' ed. F. J. Fisher, *Carmen Miscellany* Vol. XVI (1936) pp. 1, 2, 5. Having declared he would not venture into the matter further, Wilson did finally set out his reasons for believing James would prevail despite his foreign birth.

14. *Acts of the Privy Council* (NS) Vol. XXXII, p. 493.

15. Simon Theloo to Dr Dun, 26 March 1603, in G. Goodman, *The Court of King James*, ed. J. S. Brewer (London, 1839) 2 vols, II 57–8, note.

16. *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. N. E. McClure (Philadelphia, 1939) pp. 188–9, letter dated 30 March 1603. *Diary Of John Manningham*, ed. John Bruce [1869] (New York, 1968), pp. 27–8. Subsequently Manningham recorded that 'the Lord Beauchamps' had actually assembled his followers and other gentry 'to goe with him to proclayme the King'. This 'a good lady not understanding gave intelligence that he assembled his followers', pp. 160–1. The misunderstanding of this 'good lady' may well be another indicator of the tensions of the time.

17. *The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford*, ed. D. J. H. Clifford (Stroud, 1990), p. 21.

18. Thomas, Lord Buighley (Lord President of York) to Sir Robert Cecil, 27 March, *Historical Manuscripts Commission Salisbury* pt 15, p. 11. Other reports of a peaceful proclamation of James's accession followed in subsequent days for such places as Chester, Tamworth and Somerset.

raigne over us (namely) James the First, King of England, Scotland, France & Ireland, without any Bloodshed, tumults or uproars to the disturbing of the publique peace of this his Matyes realme, and to our great & manifold comfort farre contrary to all mens expectations . . .

Local authorities were required to keep watch so that 'all Unlawfull and disorderly assemblies, tumultes & attempts' might be suppressed. Letter carriers, suspicious persons, strangers, rumour-mongers 'tending to the disturbance of the common peace' were to be referred to higher authorities.¹⁹ By April 1603, there were many who shared Dudley Carleton's expressed relief that James' accession had been effected in an orderly way.²⁰

The accession proclamation for James I was the first official announcement that he was the next (divinely ordained) king. Elaborately insistent about his right to rule, in terms and at a length which had last been seen in the accession proclamation of Lady Jane Grey, it resonated with the uncertainty and anxiety surrounding the accession of that little-known and foreign prince. The proclamation rehearsed from several angles James's lineal descent from the eldest daughter of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. As that first union had brought peace to England, 'to the ioy unspeakable of the this Kingdome', so the new king 'of their race' was come as another such peace bringer.²¹ There was no reference to 'natural' subjects, the term used extensively in Tudor literature to denote native-born monarchs and their 'natural' subjects, whose 'natural' obligations sustained the body politic.²² Not only was James's 'undoubted right' stressed, but also his kingly qualities, he being 'adorned (besides his undoubted Right) with all the rarest gifts of minde and bodie, to the infinite comfort of all his people and Subjects that shall live under him'. Significantly, the accession proclamation again reminded local officials, at all levels, of their pressing duty to prevent any

19. B[ritish] L[ibrary] ADD MS 6709 ff 4, (4v) 'To Mr Penifader Parson of Draycott and to the Constable there' 2 April 1603. The letter is one of a series distributed much more widely by the Council.

20. '[S]ince we see by this late experience that God can show us greater blessings than we have almost hearts to hope for and that his mercies are then greatest when they are nearest to be utterly despaired of, we may discharge ourselves of all care, as we have little part of any charge and only add the breath of our vows and good wishes to their sails, which in this perilous time have steered so right a course and brought us to so safe a harbour. You shall understand that the statistes here who, in the depth of their judgments, presaged our ruin and confusion, shrink up their shoulder and allow as much to the wisdom and counsels of our great ones as they were wont to detract.' *Dudley Carleton to John Chamberlain 1603-1625, Jacobean Letters*, ed. Maurice Lee Jut (New Brunswick, 1972). Letter dated 9-14 April, 1603, p. 29.

21. Accession Proclamation for James I, 24 March, 1602/3. A beautifully printed version is held in BL, C12 h 1(i). For a modern version, see *Stuart Royal Proclamations* vol. 1 *Royal Proclamations of King James I 1603-1625* ed. James F. Latkin and Paul H. Hughes (Oxford, 1973), pp. 1-3. For the accession proclamation of the nine day queen, see T. B. Howell ed., *Complete Collection of State Trials . . . to 1783* 21 vols (5th edition, 1816) v.1, 739-42.

22. See Richards, 'Love and the Female Monarch' for further discussion of this issue.

disorderly assemblies, or other unlawfull Acte or Attempt, either in word or deede . . . any way prejudiciall to the Right, Honour, State or Person, of our only undoubted and deere Lord and Sovereigne that now is.²³

The announcement of the unknown new monarch was received quietly, if not rapturously. After he proclaimed the King in Northamptonshire, William Fitzwilliam reported to Cecil that his

own eyes were witness to the grief conceived by the loss of the Queen, abundance of tears falling down the faces of multitudes; as also the joy embraced by the entrance of the other, appearing by many streams of innumerable voices delivered with such applause as it seemed to rend the very air.²⁴

'The proclamacion was heard with greate expectacion and silent joye, noe great shouting', a diarist recorded. The silence he attributed to grief for the late Queen, since their joy

could not be lesse then exceeding greate for the succession of soe worthy a king, And at night they shewed it by bonfires, and ringing. Noe tumult, noe contradicion, noe disorder in the city; every man went about his busines, as readylie, as peaceably, as securely, as though there had bin no change, nor any newes ever heard of competitors, God be thanked, our king hath his right!²⁵

Following the conventions for important royal occasions, bonfires and bell-ringing were indeed provided, paid for and promoted by the local authorities; the modern reader is left guessing what more spontaneous signs of pleasure for the new king there might have been.

The new King was welcomed in unexceptionably general terms, acclaimed most often for the promise he brought with him for a secure succession. 'We have a King, and this same King an heire/A toward Prince (if fame be true) or rather/A vertuous sonne sprung from a vertuous father.'²⁶ Even the accession proclamation had ended with a prayer that God would 'blesse his Maestic and his Royall posteritie with long and happy yeeres to raigne over us'.²⁷ Elsewhere, the succession of many sons was acclaimed because it promised the sure frustration of future plots driven by the phoenix-like Antichrist holding sway in Rome.²⁸ In these instances, James's hostility to the papal Antichrist was

23. Accession Proclamation, James I.

24. William Fitzwilliam to Sir Robert Cecil, *HMC Salisbury* pt 15, p. 19.

25. *Manningham Diary* p. 147.

26. I. Ffenton, 'King James his welcome to London' (London, 1603) B3(v).

27. Accession Proclamation, James I. Kenneth Fincham has reminded me that the same sentiment was echoed again in the preface to the 1611 translation of the Bible, in the hope that 'long may [his Majesty] reign, and his offspring for ever'.

28. R. Parker, *Sorrowes Joy, or A Lamentation for our late deceased Sovereigne Elizabeth, with a triumph for the prosperous succession of our gracious King James* (Cambridge, 1603); *King James His Welcome to London With Elizaeas Tombe and Epitaph* (London, 1603) sig [B3v]; *Elizaeas Memoriall* (London, 1603) sig D.

assumed.²⁹ There was little public echo of the ambiguous rumours extant in the circles where the Venetian ambassador moved.³⁰ James's accession was also the more welcome, pamphlets proclaimed, because after so much anxiety, it had proved an entirely peaceful affair. The welcoming literature praised the new King for those attributes desired of any monarch. He was extolled for his virtue, his learning and his promise, as a true Renaissance prince. The cumulative effect of that emphasis on idealized generalities was such that the Venetian Ambassador commented: 'At this beginning of his reign the King's virtues are represented as heroic and he is said to lack no kingly quality.' He added, who knows how sardonically, that the

great lords of Council recently created, and who were one might say almost despised by the older members, are now doing all they can to make the King proud and resolute in place of lukewarm and languid as he is said to be.³¹

Extensively praised for being 'of the [royal] race', James's lineage was also elaborately recast to meet a more specific agenda. Sir Robert Cotton had his (unusually well briefed) genealogy, designed to underpin all arguments for the union of both realms, in the hands of the authorities within two days of Elizabeth's death. Since it was, he wrote,

the intention of our Sovereigne Lord King James . . . to reduce these two potent Kingdomes to that earlier state wherein it stood of old, the king should also revive some ancient name as most indifferently hath comprehended both ye Kingdomes: neither ariseth any fitter than Brittain since that was the name of the single kingdom some 2000 years before . . . great Constantine took ye title of Britannicus, a glorious addition to the style Imperiall.

Cotton argued that such a title was uniquely James's, because unlike his precursors, he could trace his lineage back not just to the Conqueror but also to Alfred 'yr united the Heptarchy'.³² Within days, James's plans

29. This may well have reflected James's own theoretical identification of the Papacy with the 'Pale Horse' of Revelation and of the Papal empire with the rule of Babylon. His orthodox Protestant views were stated again, in his works reprinted in *The Workes of the Most High and Mighty Prince, James* in 1616. Both his 'Paraphrase upon the Revelation of the Apostle St John' and 'A Fruitful Meditation, Containing a Plaine and Easie Exposition . . . of . . . Verses of the 20 Chapter of the Revelation' were profoundly informed by that identification. A recurrent problem for many of his English subjects was his pragmatic (and principled) distinction between intellectual stance and practical toleration.

30. One such rumour was that reported by Scaramelli on 10 July 1603: 'Robert Chricton(sic) . . . who is very intimate with the King, and still more with the Queen as being a Catholic, told me in the strictest confidence that he himself had an interview with the Pope at Ferrara. And had promised in the King's name that if he succeeded to the throne of England, he would permit liberty of conscience, and would restore to their country and their possessions all who had been persecuted for being Catholics'. *CSPVen* X, p. 63.

31. *Ibid.*, Letter dated 15 May 1603, p. 25.

32. PRO SP/14/113, 26 March, unpaginated. Kevin Sharpe has speculated that Cotton prepared this genealogy at the behest of Henry Howard. Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631. History and Politics in Early Modern Britain* (Oxford, 1979) pp. 114-5. This seems the more likely since Cotton had been so actively engaged in service to Howard that he has been described as Howard's 'closest adviser'. Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton. Patronage and Policy at the Court of King James I* (London, 1982), p. 103.

were more formally proclaimed with the declaration that now his 'Realmes of England and Scotland are . . . by . . . providence of God Almighty, & lawfull right of descent united and incorporated together under the Imperiall Crowne of the high and mightie Prince, James'.³³ It is not clear how many who knew of that proclamation would have understood its full intent, but by 1604, other genealogies were fully in tune with the new King's aspirations. One, slightly evasively, traced the descent of King James from Noah,

by divers direct lynes to Brutus, . . . and from him to Cadwalader, the last King of the British blood . . . wherein is playnly shewed his rightfull Tide . . . as well to the Kingdome of Brittain, as to the Principalities of Northwales and Southwales . . . Where also is handled the worthy descent of his Maiesties ancestour Owen Tudyr, and his affinity with most of the greatest Princes of Christendome.³⁴

So the genealogies set out James's unique heritage as precursor to an ever more glorious British future into which the independence of Protestant England was, apparently, to be subsumed. The outcry against the new King's various proposals has been fully discussed by others,³⁵ and the issue is raised again here primarily as one indicator of the extent to which the English ignorance of their new King was reciprocated.

Nevertheless, the English welcome to their new King struck him so forcefully that a year later, James declared himself still quite unable 'to expresse by wordes', his gratitude to his English subjects, for their 'unexpected readinesse and alacritie . . . in declaring and embracing mee as your vndoubted and lawfull King and Gouvernor' He recalled how 'the people of all sorts rid and ran, nay rather flew to meet mee . . . their gestures discovering a passionate longing, and earnestnesse to meete and embrace their new Soueraigne'.³⁶ However unwittingly, James was describing a long-standing English tradition. In his new realm, popular acclamation for the monarch had been an important legitimating device at least since Polydore Vergil described the progress of the victorious Henry Tudor to London in 1485.³⁷ Where such welcoming crowds gathered, they had done so for a number of reasons – including the

33. *Royal Proclamations of King James I* no. 3, p. 7.

34. George Owen Herry, *The genealogy of the High and Mighty Monarch, James, by the Grace of God, King of great Brittain* (London, 1604).

35. See n. 4.

36. 'A speech, as it was Delivered . . . on Mvnday the XIX Day of March 1603' in *James VI and I. Political Writings* ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 132-3.

37. 'Henry meanwhile made his way to London like a triumphing general, and in the places through which he passed was greeted with the greatest joy by all. Far and wide the people hastened to assemble by the roadside, saluting him as King and filling the length of his journey with laden tables and overflowing goblets'; *The Anglia Historia of Polydore Vergil A.D. 1485-1537*, ed. and trans. Denys Hay, (Camden Series LXXIV, London, 1950), p. 3.

opportunities for crime such events presented.³⁸ In 1603 most in such crowds had presumably travelled to see their new King, and the accompanying spectacles. The first published report of the King's progress described his departure from his Scottish capital, with 'multitudes of his Nobility', his splendid reception in Berwick and his travels into his new kingdom. At York, it was reported that his train was still increasing, by numerous 'Noblemen and Gentlemen from the South parts, that came to offer him fealtie, and to reioyce at his sight.'³⁹ That appearances could prove deceptive was illustrated by the discovery, further south, of 'a Cutpurse, a base pilfering thiefe, yet was all Gentleman-like in the outside', who had followed the Court from Berwick, plying his trade all the way.

The first print report of James' initial journey through his new realm was a narrative of royal piety, graciously royal actions, some wild riding and the hunting of numerous deer. As the entourage approached London, the numbers swelled again with both 'Noble and ignoble . . . to see their Sovereigne . . . the better sort came to observe and serve: the other to see and wonder.'⁴⁰ The author described an exemplary English response to an exemplary new monarch, in terms which so much Elizabethan propaganda had made familiar. Missing from that first account was any equivalent on James's part, of Elizabeth's graciousness to her people. But, given the very different context in which he now found himself the object of so many enquiring eyes, he might well have responded to all that curiosity by feeling something of a travelling circus. Moreover, years before, he had advised his son against seeking popularity by being 'prodigall in jowking or nodding at every step, for that forme of being populare, becommeth better aspiring Absolons then lawfull Kings'.⁴¹ That might be read as one more of many criticisms (mainly by foreigners) made of Elizabeth's public behaviour ever since the Venetian Ambassador had commented disapprovingly on her demeanour as she went to her coronation in January, 1559.⁴² Queen Anne understood the functions of pleasing the public, but James's concept of public regality was different. John Savile, reporting the final stages of the royal journey, looked to praise the King in familiar terms. So, after his four mile journey, James

38. For example the Privy Council item of 13 September 1603, deploring that during James's current progress 'rogues growe againe to increase and bee incorrigible and dangerouse' to both subjects and king, and agreeing to banish offenders to 'the Newe Founde Land, the East or West Indies, France, Germanie, Spaine and the Low Countries or any of them.' *Acts of the Privy Council of England* New Series Vol. XXXII AD 1601-1604 (London, 1907) p. 503.

39. T. M., *The True Narration of the Entertainment of his Royall Majesties, from the time of his departure from Edenbrough; till his receiving at London: with all the most special Occurrences . . .* (London, 1603) Sig D2.

40. *Ibid.*, Sig [D4v], E2, F3.

41. James I, *Basilicon Doron* (1599) (Scholar Press, 1969) p. 137.

42. *CSP (Ven)* VII, p. 17.

had not staid above an hour in his chamber, but hearing the multitude throng so fast into the uppermost court to see his highnesse, as his grace was informed, hee shewed himself openly, out of his chamber window, by the space of halfe an houre together . . .

But when the King set out from Theobalds for London, such a multitude came out to meet him that 'his highnesse could not passe without pausing oft-times, willingly enforced, though more willing to have proceeded, if conveniently he could'. James's regal comportment in public was easily misread by subjects who had so frequently heard of their late Queen's public responsiveness. The press was so great, Savile reported, that even three miles out of London, a 'carman let his cart for eight groats to eight persons, whose aboad was not in it above one quarter of an houre.'⁴³ The English crowd knew their role; it was the Scottish King who had not learned – and was hostile to – publicly enacted reciprocity.

The English Privy Councillors understood the conventional roles of such crowds. On 5 April, a proclamation was explicitly uneasy about too many people gathering near the King. It acknowledged the 'earnest and longing desire in all his Majesties Subjects to enjoy the sight of his Royal person and presence' and recognized that such a desire was 'for it selfe, commendable in them, and acceptable to his Majestie, being an Argument of their abundant joy and gladnesse'. Those who held 'any place of charge or office . . . or are of good degree & qualitie in their Countrey',⁴⁴ the administrative lifeblood of the realm, were those particularly instructed to keep their distance, to the end of ensuring good order throughout their local regions. The personal bonding of new monarch and subjects, this passage made clear, would have to wait until more settled times. As the initial anxiety waned, another proclamation required that as the King passed through the realm, the 'Sheriffes . . . Justices of Peace and other gentlemen of the said severall counties, faile not to waite on his Maiestie' through 'their' county.

And it is not doubted, but that all his Majesties good and faithful Subjects will be most readie and willing to shewe themselves forward and carefull in the due accomplishment of the premisses, according to their loyaltie and duety: so if any shall be found disobedient, negligent, or remisse therein, These are to let them know, that they are to sustaine such condign punishment as their offence in that behalfe deserveth.⁴⁵

43. John Savile, *King James his entertainment at Theobalds With his welcome to London, together with a salutarie Poem* (London, 1603), sig [Bv], Bii, [Biiiv]. He employed two assistants to help with his coverage of the great multitudes gathered for the King's arrival at Theobalds. The King set out from Theobalds on 7 May, 1603, and Savile's work was entered in the Stationers Company Records on 14 May, so he was apparently an enterprising man in a number of ways.

44. *Royal Proclamations of King James I* No. 2, 5 April 1603, pp. 4-6.

45. *Ibid.*, No. 4, dated 10 April 1603, p. 8. Manningham's Diary has a succinct summary of this proclamation entered 6 April, p. 159.

The argument so far has been that the new King was little known to his 'natural' English subjects in 1603, except as a stranger from a foreign realm, England's ancient enemy. It was not a foregone conclusion that he would be proclaimed king, and it was even less clear that his new subjects would accept his right to the throne, as the atypical attention to those lineal claims in his accession proclamation demonstrated. The early actions of the Council speak forcefully to their anxiety about the maintenance of order and the prevention of alternative claims. Yet the most striking aspect of the first popular responses to the new King was the extent of public interest in welcoming him. His astonishment, like his declaration that England was about to be subsumed into a totally new identity, may speak to his lack of awareness of his new realm.

The second part of this paper addresses the issue of gender difference between the old and the new monarchs. James's initial public utterances about the old Queen had been exemplary.⁴⁶ From Berwick, he wrote to the Lords of the Privy Council declaring his concern to do all 'honour that we may unto the Queen defunct.' His concern, he wrote, was because he did 'so much respect the dignitie to her appertayning, being not only successor to her in the Kingdome, so neere as we are in bloude'. He declared himself less concerned with 'the Ceremonies of our owne joy' than with those which 'most testifie the honnor we doe beare towards her memory'.⁴⁷ It is, therefore, not surprising that in the semi-public world of court gossip, his attitude to his predecessor was believed to be quite proper. So Chamberlain reported to his friend in Paris, 12 April 1603:

The Queenes funerall is appointed the 28th of this present with as much solemnitie as hath ben used to any former prince, and that by the Kinges owne direction: it shalbe kept at Westminster, and the Lady Arbella is to be chiefe mourner (with a good company): besides the greatest part of the nobilitie, all the counsaile and officers of household.⁴⁸

At the least, ambivalence was, however, soon evident in James's treatment of Elizabeth's memory. By 15 May, the Venetian ambassador reported that the King 'declined to put on mourning, although he knows that the Queen wore strict mourning when she took the life of his mother'.⁴⁹ This, however, was not the long-planned snub the ambassador's remark suggested. Rather, James found it necessary to

46. Although James has long had a reputation for misogynistic comments, of which one of the more remarkable was that 'hee had as live an Ape, as a woman should Baptise his child', the focus here is on his attitude to Elizabeth in particular. The remark is quoted by William Barlow, *The summe and substance of the conference . . .* (London, 1604) Sig P & [v].

47. *Original Letters, Illustrative of English History*, ed. Henry Ellis, 3 vols (London, 1824) iii, 64-7. James to Privy Council, 6 April 1603.

48. *Chamberlain's Letters*, p. 193.

49. *CSPVen*, X, Scaramelli to the Doge and Senate, p. 24.

write to his wife from England, advising her of it. As Queen Anne prepared to travel south, James advised her that wearing 'doole weede' would be 'utterly impertinent at this time for sic reasons as the bearer will show unto you'.⁵⁰ The reasons his messenger gave cannot now be recovered, but at James' court, mourning dress for the old Queen was not a discretionary matter. Following standard protocol, Henry IV's special envoy to the new English King had ensured his entire retinue had suitable mourning attire, only to be advised at Calais that 'no one, whether ambassador, foreigner, or English, was admitted into the presence of the new king in black'. He clung to his resolution to observe the usual courtesies for the late Queen Elizabeth, France's 'good friend', but once in England he was advised that the 'whole court' considered his intention as a premeditated affront. After consulting with English and French associates, and the States deputies, he finally, and reluctantly, abandoned the idea of presenting his entire retinue in mourning. He, for one, read the King's preference as an insult to the memory of Elizabeth, and James himself left no defence of his remarkable refusal to wear mourning for the woman who left him a throne.⁵¹ Eighteen months later, there was still concern at the highest levels about the King's perceived disrespect for Elizabeth's memory. Plans were finally afoot for a memorial for the old Queen, and one councillor wrote that it was

befitting y^e Circumstances of such a Business wherein such a k. shewes care to a Psonadge of y^e Eminency and deareness . . . then shall neyther Exchequer nor London have a Peny but we will have it rather then faile. For this Thing, it does his M^{ty}s honour y^e y^e People see some little thing in doing for her.⁵²

It may be that James's apparent hostility to Elizabeth had been fed by the outpourings of public grief for her he found still being published in London. That literature was couched in terms which not only reflected how far she had stamped her mark on the public consciousness of her people, but it also reflected the general ignorance about the new monarch. Redolent of the dominant terminology of Protestant Englishness, it was anti-Spanish, anti-Catholic and furiously anti-papal. It thereby clashed with James's preferred policy at several levels. Elizabeth was celebrated for having maintained peace in the realm 'In spite of Spaines proud Pope.' Indeed, after 'Twice two & twentie yeares, with great encrease/Of peace, ioy, wealth, much honour & renowne', she then

50. *Letters of James VI and I*, ed. G. P. V. Akrigg (Berkeley, 1984), p. 215.

51. *Memoirs of the Duke of Sully (translated from the French)*, 5th edition, 6 vols (London, 1778) v. 3, 245-6. Others, including the Venetian ambassador, also read James's absence from Elizabeth's funeral as a slight to her memory, but in that matter the King was following usual English practice, and the advice of his English Council.

52. PRO SP 14/13/8 Cranbourne to Sir Thomas Lake 4 March 1605.

resigned up her soule n peace
 To him that gave it an imortal crowne,
 In spite of thousands ten conspiracies
 Which Antichrist against her did devise.⁵³

Perhaps one two-line verse said it all:

Spaines Rodd, Romes ruine, Netherlands reliefe,
 Heavens Jem, Earths ioy, worlds wonder, Natures cheife.⁵⁴

The conventional forms of praise for James had perforce settled for more anodyne remarks. Although greeted on occasion as the 'worthiest Prince in *Europe*', he was more usually simply domesticated into the English context within the traditional Tudor genealogy, going, as usual, back to 'Brave John a Gaunt/Of Edward the third, fourth son was hee.' James was also extolled in faultlessly Elizabethan sentiments: 'God graunt him mongst us long to raigne/to be a scourge to Rome and Spaine.'⁵⁵ A published account of the old Queen's funeral, full of the grief at her passing, and detailing the procession, concluded with brief courtesies: 'Vivat Jacobus: Angliae, Scotiae, Francia et Hiberniae Rex.' A year later, James was still being welcomed in terms which bewailed the loss of Elizabeth – 'so dark a sunset' – before hailing the rise of 'another sunne'. Few beyond court circles, even a year into his reign, echoed Dekker's faultlessly Jacobean greeting to 'this Treasure of a Kingdome (a Man Ruler)'.⁵⁶

After fifty years of female rule, it is not surprising that gender was deployed in pleas to James. A Catholic petition for more toleration argued the case on a number of grounds, including a reversal of the normal gendered allocation of mercy. It set out how welcome it would be to 'all Catholique Princes abroad, and honourable to your Ma^{ty} to understand how Queen Elyzabeths severity is changed into your Royall Clemency; and that the lenity of a man reedified, the misinformed anger of a woman destroyed'.⁵⁷ James himself believed that he would be welcome in his new kingdom because, under him, England would be free at last of petticoat rule. His confidence in that was the greater because he had long known that female rule was, by definition, lesser rule. A decade before, he had written of his own mother's inheritance of the Scottish throne as a 'double curse', she being a 'Woman of sexe and

53. [Arthur Nixon?] *Elizaeas Memoriall, King James his arrival and Romes Downefall* (London 1603) Even the title grated, given the new King's project for bringing peace to Europe.

54. Anon. BL: Eg 2877 [f13v].

55. BL C18 e 2 (82) 'An Excellent new Ballad, shewing the Petigree of our Royal king James . . .' (1603). See also 'A Mournfull Dittie, entituled Elizabeth's losse, together with a welcome for King James' (1603?). This was a single sheet ballad.

56. William Hubbock, *An Oration Gratulatory To the High and Might James . . . On the twelfth day of February last presented . . .* (Oxford, 1604) [B2v]; Thomas Dekker, 'The Magnificent Entertainment . . . 15 March 1604' (London, 1604), A3(v).

57. BL: Sloane 1775 *The Catholiques of England Letter to King James at his first Entrance into England* f. 58.

a new borne babe of aage'.⁵⁸ His distaste for female rule may well have been the stronger as a justification for having occupied his mother's throne since his infancy. Since his adolescence he had resisted all efforts to return her to her homeland, let alone to her erstwhile throne, even when he knew the alternative was his mother's death.

Privately, James was often arrogant about his predecessor. He was usually sensitive to possible public slights on his fellow monarchs,⁵⁹ yet he was, at best, inconsistent in his attitudes to his predecessor. In public, he frequently expressed considerable respect for Elizabeth,⁶⁰ but in June 1603 he asserted to the French ambassador 'with some kind of contempt' that 'in Scotland, long before the death of [Elizabeth], he had directed her whole council, and governed her ministers, by whom he had been better served and obeyed than herself'.⁶¹ Immediately after Elizabeth's death, Robert Cecil's lament for the late Elizabeth 'who was more than a man, and, in troth, sometimes less than a woman' offered a cryptic summary of the old Queen's standing.⁶² James agreed that Elizabeth as monarch had never been simply female, but he did so ambiguously. A commemorative verse, which he wrote, noted, conventionally enough, her manifesting 'A Kings state in a Queene' and 'A Kings heart in a maid'. It concluded, however, by suggesting that to forestall sheer adulation of her, 'Heaven hence by death did summon/To show she was a woman'.⁶³ Others may have shared the view implicit in that, if the witticism recorded by Manningham is any guide: 'Wee worship noe Saints, but we prayd to Ladyes, in the Queenes tyme. (Mr Curle). This superstition shall be abolished we hope in our Kings raigne'.⁶⁴ There are many reasons for believing that the new King encouraged such changes in attitude.

The change from queen regnant to king meant that even familiar metaphors took on another significance under the new regime. Arguing to his first English parliament for the integrity and unity of his two kingdoms in him, James declared:

58. In *Basilikon Doron*, privately published in 1599, James wrote of the 'double curse . . . to the land' by his grandfather, leaving only a 'Woman of sexe and a new borne babe of aage to reigne over them.' *King James VI and I. Political Writings* ed. Sommerville, p. 39.

59. Perhaps the most familiar example of this was James's suppression of Walter Raleigh's *History of the World* (1614) in 1615 'for beeing too sawcie in censuring princes', as Chamberlain reported to Carleton 5 Jan 1615, of a book which ended with the Roman Empire; *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, p. 568.

60. D. R. Woolf, 'Two Elizabeths? James I and the Late Queen's Famous Memory' *Canadian Journal of History* 20, (1985), 167–191, sets out the case for James's ongoing respect for Elizabeth's memory.

61. *Memoirs of the Duke of Sully*, iii, 277. He reported the conversation as having taken place 29 June 1603.

62. Cecil to John Harrington, John Harrington, *Nugae Antiquae*, ed. Henry Harrington, 1779, 3 vols, i, 344.

63. BL Add Ms 15227 F. 83 James I, 'In reg Elizab'.

64. *Manningham's Diary*, p. 157.

What God hath conioyned then, let no man separate. I am the Husband, and all the whole Isle is my lawfull wife; I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke: I hope therefore no man will be so unreasonable as to thinke that I that am a Christian King under the Gospel, should be a polygamist and husband to two wives; that I being the Head, should have a divided and monstrous Body.⁶⁵

That metaphor has led to debate among historians, some of whom have seen it as novel, and sought to explain it from a Scottish context.⁶⁶ But the metaphor of monarch's marriage to the kingdom was in no way unfamiliar in England. On her accession Mary Tudor had argued that, already married to her realm, she could hardly be expected to marry a second husband, although she subsequently did. Elizabeth had frequently evoked the same imagery, more consistently. Both Queens regnant, that is, chose to represent themselves as metaphorical wives, wedded to a kingdom which functioned, it was argued, as a mixed monarchy. It followed that England was peculiarly suited to cope with female rulers since a queen would never lack sage (male) advice from her Council and from Parliament.⁶⁷ Political authority was shared, even within the marriage metaphor, for the two Queens. The same metaphor could, and in this case did, resonate differently when spoken by a male. James was explicit that he was husband, and his kingdoms the wife, 'I am the Head, and it is my Body; I am the Shepherd, and it is my flocke'. The corollary was that ultimate authority was his alone. Since the publication of *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* in 1598, James's view of his monarchy was rhetorically an absolute monarchy, based on an uncompromising reading of patriarchal authority, as the sole source, under God, of authority.⁶⁸

Nearly fifty years of negotiating with a monarch increasingly constructed as charismatic, 'royal virgin and chivalric mistress of the realm's courtiers, soldiers and sailors', left the English political nation

65. 'A Speach, as it was delivered . . . on Mynday the XIX. day of March 1603, Being the First Day of the first Parlament' in *King James VI and I* ed. Sommerville, p. 136.

66. The interesting argument presented by Michael J. Enright, 'King James and his island: an archaic kingship?' *Scottish Historical Review* 55 (1976) 29–40 in no way subverts the argument here; rather it is another indicator of just how multivalent words were in shifting historical contexts, a recurring theme in the study of James, as Jenny Wormald has long argued.

67. Elizabeth's accession was defended against Knox's diatribe against female rule, in part, on these grounds. See [John Aylmer] *An Harboure For Faithfull and Trew Subiectes* (London, 1559) H3 and *passim*. The whole tenor of the printed account of her coronation progress through London, reprinted in 1603, was a stress on the role of good counsel, from all parts of the realm, and the fifth and final pageant was an explicit statement that a woman, like any male ruler, would rule with the aid of good counsel. The point was a more general one. The best-known political handbook of the era followed a discussion of the absolute powers of the monarchy with a discussion of the way in which, in the English commonwealth, the 'making of laws' and the 'providing of moony for the maintenance of themselves' was 'done by the prince in parliament'. Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (1583) ed. L. Alston (Cambridge, 1986), p. 63.

68. Another fruitful field for considering the implications of gender difference in the monarchy might be a comparison of contemporary Court responses to young men preening themselves before on the one hand, Elizabeth, and on the other James. For a discussion of the latter, see Young, *James VI and I and the History of Homosexuality*.

without a ready mode of discourse with a male monarch. It also left the English body politic unprepared for James's masculine, patriarchal language which contrasted sharply with Elizabethan discourses of accessibility, accommodation, mutual complaisance.⁶⁹ At times James used a naturalistic language, evoking his essential unifying nature as divinely chosen ruler of both realms, to override long histories of legal, social and political difference. He set out, in his opening speech to his first English Parliament, 'the blessings which God hath in my Person bestowed upon you all, wherein I protest, I doe more glorie at the same for your weale, then for any particular respect of mine owne reputation, or advantage therein.' Those blessings that God 'hath ioynly with my Person sent vnto you' included international and internal peace, and the opportunity to seal the latter by 'that Vnion which is made in my blood, being a matter that most properly belongeth to me to speake of, as the head wherein that great Body is vnited'.⁷⁰ The royal body male, it would seem, was much more self-sufficient than ever the royal body female had claimed to be.

There was one important exception to James's more explicit espousal of his royal power, one in which he again differed markedly from his English precursors and many of his new subjects. The healing royal touch, attributed only to French and English kings, and a conventional marker of their uniquely sacred status, had long been a major reason for subjects across the social spectrum to turn to their monarch for help, and a polemical instrument to be deployed against royal pretenders and usurpers within and beyond the realm. James was confronted by his first request for the healing touch at Woodstock in 1603. His response was complex. He repudiated the specifically 'superstitious' assumptions of the request. 'I do not thinke that because I am a King therefore I can cure a disease . . . for this would be to attribute more to my Person than belongeth unto a man'. He made a characteristically lengthy and thoughtful speech, examining many aspects of the issue, before resolving that God would 'sooner heare the king than other men praying for his subjects' and inviting all those gathered there to join with him in praying for 'this diseased child' and trusting it would 'please god to heare us'. And so foreswearing all superstition (and centuries of miraculous powers asserted for the English monarchy), James concluded 'I will not refuse to satisfye my peoples desire'.⁷¹ His attempt to redefine the meaning of the occasion, however theologically informed, rapidly faded, and by the time of his son's reign had entirely disappeared from royal rhetoric, as the traditional claims of the royal healing touch were gradually reinstated.

69. R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Philadelphia, 1987) p. 23.

70. 'A speach as it was delivered . . .' in Sommerville, ed. pp. 133, 135.

71. BL Add Ms 22 587 f. 4; 'KING James his extemporarie speech at the first touchinge of a diseased child of the kings evil, att Woodstock 1603'.

Elizabeth had attributed her full royal capacity to her office, despite her female body. James's normatively masculine identity was, for him, irrefutable evidence of the propriety of his rule. He was particularly affronted when he believed himself denied powers which his female predecessors had exercised. The proceedings of the 1610 Parliament illustrate this. It was to that Parliament that James insisted on his right to levy impositions. To question that power in him, James insisted, was to question a power which all English kings had ever had, a power of all Christian kings, even indeed a power which recently 'two women have had and exercised, I leave it to yourselves to think what dutiful subjects ought to do in it'.⁷² Implicit in that, and increasingly clearly articulated as that parliament proceeded was a much broader constitutional issue. James read – and was encouraged by others around him to read – as constitutional accommodation to a female ruler, what others construed as the longstanding traditions of mixed monarchy in England. It may have been, in part, a comparable concern to 'regender' the monarchy which led James to abandon the tradition of having the Lord Chancellor address the Parliament on his behalf, although his use was retained for some parliamentary pronouncements. It is a matter of record that James spoke at greater length to parliaments – and more frequently – than did either his predecessors or his successor.

In 1610 the debate about past royal practice, which James had helped to spark, added more to constitutional mythology than it did to political sophistication. Throughout the parliamentary debates of 1610, all parties invoked the memory of Elizabeth for competing and conflicting political points. Fuller could not recall the Queen levying impositions as James described; an official report of the King's reception of a parliamentary group stressed his hospitality to them in ways 'never seen in the Queen's time'; and the Lord Treasurer, praising the King's proposals, mentioned in passing 'those precious pledges of safety by a regal posterity . . . which our ancestors did not behold though they thirsted after it as that hart after brooks of water'.⁷³ The instances of official and courtier reminders of the bad old days, and by other parliamentary members of the good old days under Elizabeth were so numerous, that it is not in the least surprising that Ellesmere, in his recollections of that parliament, complained how 'big and audacious' the 'popular state' had grown since 'the beginning of his Majesty's gracious and sweet government'. He deplored the strength of nostalgic

72. 'King's Speech at Whitehall . . . 21 Mai', *Proceedings in Parliament 1610*, ed. Elizabeth Read Foster, 2 vols (New Haven, 1966) ii, 102. I am grateful to Rhys Isaac, who drew to my attention how very dismissive was the language James deployed for his two immediate royal precursors in that speech. The view of necessarily limited female monarchy was apparently shared by Bancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, at least in retrospect: 'Though the Queen, our late sovereign, had power to make canons ecclesiastical. Yet it is more proper to the King.' *Ibid.*, I, p. 101. Bancroft's reservations about the power of a female head/governor of the Church of England had been endemic, among the upper clergy at least, since 1558.

73. *Proceedings* ii, pp. 109, 114, 135.

recollections that 'times past were golden days, and the late time a golden time'.⁷⁴ And so the legend of Elizabeth's constitutionally golden reign was taking form – increasingly without reference to her gender, although that was a significant part of the starting point for James's critique of the political practices he found in place. The polemics increasingly redescribed her governmental practice in terms she would have found astonishing. In practice James did have a strong pragmatic understanding that accommodation was an important part of political survival.⁷⁵ But his rhetoric about female rule helped precipitate a conflict in constitutional rhetoric before, during and then beyond the 1610 parliament.

The new King, confident in his learning and his political skills honed in his old kingdom, knew little of and appears to have cared less for, those definitions of Englishness so assiduously fostered in the previous rule, and the court's public rhetoric quickly adopted the new monarch's tone.⁷⁶ So did some royal sermon givers. Dr John Gordon advised James's English subjects that they should be glad of the King's 'laudable modestie' in using the term 'Britain' to encompass all his subjects, 'seeing that the South part is fallen to his royall person, both by the lawe of God, and nature; the name of the former kingdome might have been imposed to this kingdomme, which is last fallen to his power'.⁷⁷ It is less clear that the values of English subjects en masse were so easily redirected. The welcoming literature had demonstrated how deeply they were engrained. For gendered as for cultural considerations, James was slow to recognize the difficulty of the transitions to be made. The humanistic language of love, increasingly evoked in successive Tudor regimes, disappeared progressively from the public rhetoric of

74. Lord Ellesmere, 'Special observations touching all the sessions of the last parliament Anno 7 Regis Jac.' in *ibid.*, pp. 276, 278.

75. Consider, for example, James's advice to the Lords of 21 March, 1610, 'not to dispute what a king may do, but look to his practice, what he doth'; *Proceedings* i, 46–7. Reverting to another familiar theme, in almost the same breath, he justified his greatly increased court expenditure, 'by reason of my issue' and reminded them that the late Queen 'was but a barren prince'; *ibid.* By then, however, the first flush of enthusiasm for abundant guarantees for the succession seems to have faded.

76. Christopher Wortham, 'Shakespeare, James I and the Matter of Britain' *English (Journal of the English Association)* 182 Summer 1996, 97–122, points to one aspect of the subsequent shift in focus in his opening observation that 'There is little celebration of England and Englishness in Shakespeare's plays written after the accession of James VI of Scotland to his English throne'. Wortham points out that Shakespeare's three plays between 1604 and 1607 – *King Lear*, *Macbeth* and *Antony and Cleopatra* – all address issues of political unity and the dangers of dividing a realm; 119–120. The political and legal responses to the proposed union of the kingdoms have been comprehensively and repeatedly discussed. The implications for concepts of allegiance are discussed in *idem*, 'English allegiances in a British context: political problems and legal resolutions', *Parergon*, new series vol 18 (2001), 103–24.

77. John Gordon, *Enactikon or a Sermon of the Union of Great Britannie* (1604) quoted in Peter E. McCullough, *Sermons at Court. Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998) p. 109.

rule.⁷⁸ This was, in hindsight, one of the earlier signs of what has more generally been seen as a wider cultural move from the Elizabethan to the Jacobean mode, that is, a shift between 'the accessible plain style of Elizabeth . . . and the more authoritative plain style of James'.⁷⁹ James certainly appreciated the power of royal magnificence and, like Elizabeth before him, deployed it to theatrical effect. But it was conducted without the reciprocity of subjects and monarch so notably frequently reported of the Elizabethan theatre of royalty.⁸⁰ This was made more obvious by the republication in 1604 of the familiar and much quoted account of Elizabeth's coronation progress through London, a publication which, in an extraordinary achievement, had set the tone for the successful subsequent public presentation of the Queen. In 1604 the themes of that account presented to a new generation of London audiences in new plays by both Heywood and Dekker, reiterating the regal virtues of the Queen commonly asserted from the beginning of her reign.⁸¹ James's 'plain' speech, on the other hand, worked from an authoritative model, which only a male could invoke in such unqualified terms. The language of patriarchalism, indeed the model of monarch as father, was deployed as never before in England. He set out his preferred model in 1609:

Now a Father maye dispose of his Inheritance to his children, at his pleasure: yea, even disinherit the eldest vpon iust occasions, and preferre the youngest, according to his liking: make them beggers, or rich at his pleasure; restraine, or banish out of presence, as hee findes them giue cause of offence, or restore them in fauour againe with the penitent sinner: So may the King deale with his Subiects.⁸²

Those observations and parallels, couched in terms from which few heads of families could dissociate themselves, characterized a move to an authoritative style, an irresistible obligation of obedience to replace Elizabeth's preferred public language of reciprocity. His subjects almost certainly misheard James's intentions, misled by his use of that unfamiliar model. There were other subtle but significant shifts in the

78. While the late Queen's councillors were issuing proclamations for their new King, the language of loving monarch and loving, good subject remained in use, *Royal Proclamations of King James I*, pp. 4–8, but as the King increasingly took the initiative, the language of affective relations faded. *Ibid.*, *passim*. It was not that he did not know that widespread humanistic language; indeed he occasionally used it himself, but without the distinctive value of reciprocity which had been such a hallmark of Elizabeth's usage. See *Basilikon Doron in Political Works* ed. Sommerville p. 31 for an example of his usage of it, and its quite different implications.

79. Curtis Perry, 'The citizen politics of nostalgia: Queen Elizabeth in early Jacobean London', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23 (1993) 89–111, esp. 99.

80. Even when James explicitly deployed the language of reciprocity – most notably in the title of his first and ostensibly anonymous publication, *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies The Reciprocal and Mutuall Dutie betwixt a Free King, and his Naturall Subiects* in 1598 – it is very hard to see what he saw as being reciprocal as commonly understood in the monarch's divinely ordained duty to rule, and the subjects' essentially unqualified, divinely-ordained duty to obey.

81. Perry, 'The citizen politics of nostalgia' 93–6.

82. 'A Speech to . . . the Parliament . . . on Wednesday the XXI of March. Anno 1609', *King James . . . Political Writings* ed. Sommerville, pp. 179–203, esp. p. 182.

English regime from 1603. Where Elizabeth had through the printed word and, to some extent in personal practice, always made an effort to retain the support of the middling and lower sorts, James had learned his statecraft in the very different political context of Scotland. The Scottish practice of 'manrent', whereby men voluntarily bound themselves to a lord, was still strong in the 1590s, not least because the Scottish Crown traditionally 'regarded the local influence of its greatest subjects as a force to be encouraged'. James also saw the benefits of a system which maintained the continuing power of the lords over their communities.⁸³ This may help to explain a difference between James's understanding of who constituted the 'people' and that of his immediate Tudor precursor. The essential difference was in their understandings of where reliable political power lay. Elizabeth had begun her reign firmly expressing the view that it was support of the 'common' people that had saved her during Mary's reign, that the nobility would never have moved to save her. In all his early troubles, James had never had any comparable experience, and his Scottish experience translated into much more traditional view about who, in England, constituted 'the people'. In the aftermath of the Essex fiasco of 1601, he was as adamant as ever Elizabeth had been about the need to retain the support of the 'people' for his claim to the English throne. In that case, his 'people' were the great men of England.⁸⁴ This has also been seen as the reason for his marked reluctance to show himself to his people (more widely construed) as freely as Elizabeth had done. Whatever the reasons, that reluctance occasioned much comment at the time, and subsequently. In a remonstrance from an ostensibly 'loyall subiect', undated but early in the reign, it was reported to James that

It is said that yo^r matie of an ingenious and riall nature, not delyghting in o^r popular salutations, doe passe by great tropes of yr commons with a kind of kingle negligence neither speaking nor looking upon them, the poore sort . . . prate of the manner of their late Queene, whoe when she was publicly abroad would often stay and speake kindlie to the multitud . . .⁸⁵

This has conventionally been read as a matter of his political choice, and explained in part by formative (and unhappy) experiences in Scotland, where large crowds had often foreshadowed political trouble.⁸⁶ The more recent tentative diagnosis, that he suffered from some degree of cerebral palsy, is also richly suggestive.⁸⁷ That would not only explain something of his reluctance to display himself, but also throw light on

83. Jenny Wormald, *Lords and Men in Scotland: Bonds of Manrent, 1442–1603* (Edinburgh, 1985), p. 158 *at passim* esp. pp. 153–165.

84. *Letters of King James* ed. Akkrigg, Letter 78, dated 8 April 1601, pp. 173–78.

85. BL Cotton Ms Faustina, C II ii "Advertisments of a Loyall Subiect to His Gracious Sovereigne Drawn from the Observations of the Peoples Speache" [f 63v] (n.d.).

86. David Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956, 1963), p. 165.

87. A. W. Beasley, 'The disability of James VI & I' *Seventeenth Century* 10 (1995), 151–62.

some of the more unusual aspects of his behaviour. News of his habit of walking by leaning on his nobles, and his ingenious use of that as a mark of political favour, had been sufficiently newsworthy to precede him to London.⁸⁸ Historians have never been left reliant on the notoriously unreliable Arthur Wilson to learn that James

was not like his Predecessor, the late Queen of famous memory, that with a well-pleased affection met her peoples Acclamations, thinking most highly of her self, when she was born up on the wings of their humble supplications.⁸⁹

Very much the same point had been made at the time. Sir Roger Wilbraham noted even before June 1603 that the King neglected those 'ordinaire ceremonies' by which Elizabeth had pleased the 'common people'.⁹⁰ Moreover, almost all the new court was quick to follow his more aloof style. In September 1603, Arabella Stuart wrote to her uncle Shrewsbury, wondering what had happened to the old 'courtesy' of the court: 'for I protest I see little or none of it but in the queen, who ever since her coming to Newbury, hath spoken to the people as she passeth, and receiveth their prayers with thanks and thankful countenance, barefaced; to the great contentment of native and foreign people'. Earlier, Dudley Carleton had found it noteworthy after the Queen's arrival at Windsor from Scotland, that 'in all this journey she hath worn no mask'.⁹¹ Anne continued her practice throughout her reign and enjoyed a markedly warm reception on a number of occasions. Great men, however, no longer followed that style.

That theatre of reciprocity, enacted on occasion in the streets and roads of England, and recounted much more frequently in diverse printed forms, had been for decades a part of the realm's bonding with its long-reigning Queen. The accession of King James made clear just how important it had become, how many expected to view the passing monarch and how naturally it was assumed they would wish to do so. In itself, this was a small matter, but part of a much larger whole. It particularized relations between monarch and people more potently than ever a catechism could. The sixteenth century had been the time when the vernacular had come into new respectability and pervasiveness in religion, in law texts and in political tracts. It was also the language increasingly deployed by printers and publishers in their drive to create and maintain ever-increasing markets for their products; it was the language of political, doctrinal and religious polemics as well as, increasingly, of instruction in those areas. Initially such developments

88. *Manningham's Diary* p. 155.

89. Arthur Wilson, *The History of Great Britain, being the life and reign of King James the first* (London, 1653), pp. 12–13.

90. 'Journal of Sir Roger Wilbraham' quoted in Robert Ashton, *James I by his contemporaries* (London, 1969), p. 7.

91. Cited in Lucy Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King James 2 vols* (London, 1822), i, 161–2; *Dudley Carleton's Letters* p. 35.

were probably not part of any patriotic, let alone democratic, imperative.⁹² But explicitly Protestant, Elizabethan texts were produced in large numbers to persuade the inhabitants of England of their shared Protestant destiny, united under their 'merely English' Queen, so miraculously protected in the dark days of Marian persecution.⁹³ The identity of Protestant Englishness was also defined perhaps by anti-Spanish buccaneers such as Drake and Hawkins, certainly by that extraordinary occasion, the funeral of Sir Philip Sidney. It is a platitude that Sir Francis Walsingham constructed the funeral of his son-in-law to advance his own ideal of Protestant English manhood, and impressive claims for his success have recently been renewed. Joan Rees, for one, has made striking claims for the impact of Sidney's death on the 'people' at large.⁹⁴ Two Latin laments for Sidney, two in both Latin and English, and six in 'mere' English, still extant, also indicate that Sidney's death generated a considerable impact well beyond his aristocratic circle. Such exemplars of English Protestantism, set against the reported cruelty of Spanish Catholicism in the Lowlands as in the New World, and against the perceived barbarity of Irish Catholics, all served to reinforce the lessons of the failed Spanish Armadas, that England was a realm apart. This may not have been a conscious process – certainly celebrations of victory over the first great Armada of 1588 were oddly delayed, before their propaganda potential was recognized – but the terminology and the modes in which people well beyond the closest court circles responded to James's comings do suggest that an 'English' set of values had become widely familiar.

James's very different modes of kingship and understandings of political relationships, as well as his pacific ambitions, swiftly rendered those values old-fashioned at court, though much less clearly so beyond court circles. The preferred new royal ideology of 'British' identity – and unity – found few to comprehend it, let alone adopt it beyond those same court circles. It was not simply James's particularly masculine self-image nor his Scottish origins which gave rise to so much mutual misunderstanding in those early years of his reign, but the heady (and loquacious) consequences of both working together. The ironic aftermath was the speed with which praising the memory of that female monarch, the childless spinster, became a popular mode for criticizing the Stuart regime. A female monarch as critical weapon against male rule – now *that* James did not anticipate.

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92. Gillian Brennan, 'Patriotism, Language and Power: English Translations of the Bible, 1520–1580', *History Workshop*, 27 (1989), 18–36.

93. See Richards, 'Love and the female monarch'.

94. Cited by J. F. R. Day, 'Death be very proud: Sidney, subversion, and Elizabethan heraldic funerals', in *Tudor Political Culture*, ed. Dale Hoak (Cambridge, 1993) pp. 179–203 esp. p. 181 and n. 5.

