
**The Elusive Robert Carr:
A Construction of a Jacobean Favourite, 1598-1612**

BY

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Abstract

This thesis explores the early political career of the Scottish borderer Robert Carr [Kerr], earl of Somerset (1585/6–1645), a courtier and later administrator (1598–1615) in the reigns of James VI and I, King of Scotland, England, and Ireland. For the first time the pervasive contention Carr was a significant Jacobean figure will be challenged. To achieve this, cultural artefacts supplement archival sources to illustrate the era's ever-growing paranoia about royal favouritism. The first chapter explains how contemporaries and early historians of James' reign revived classical portrayals of tyranny to transform Carr's conventional pattern of advancement into something extraordinary. These authors obscured Carr's origin from the formidable Kerrs of Ferniehirst in favour of a narrative that James ignored his natural advisors and promoted a transgressive, pacifist court. The second chapter demonstrates Carr's role as a court broker and James' closest companion. While their friendship conformed to Renaissance norms, Carr struggled for legitimacy in an environment where favouritism was linked to sycophancy. Finally, apprehension about favourites merged with neo-Stoic concerns that James failed to understand or respect English liberties. There were attempts to present Carr as a prop for absolutism. Carr became a conduit for English frustrations about James' refusal to abandon the Anglo-Scottish union, and he attracted baseless claims of sabotaging the 1610 'The Great Contract' between King and Parliament. This thesis argues that Carr was an unremarkable figure in the milieu of the Jacobean Court. The research findings of this thesis demonstrate the deep-set prejudices against courtiers (especially Scots), which turned an inoffensive figure like Carr into one that threatened to destabilise the Commonwealth.

Table of Contents

Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	vii
Abbreviations and Conventions	viii

Chapters

1. Introduction	1
Historiography	4
‘Popular’ culture in early Stuart England	10
Intellectual culture in early Stuart England	15
Political culture in early Stuart England	19
Thesis outline and methodology	24
2. “Before the frantic puffs of blind-born chance.” The (not-so) sudden rise of Robert Carr.	27
Carr as a touchstone for critiques of Jacobean policies	29
The burying of Carr’s genealogy	38
Motives, antecedents, and influences for the tiltyard creators	44
Carr and George Home in Scotland and England	56
Conclusion	61
3. “they’l do nothing but talk of me, and they’l be hang’d before they speak any good.” Friendship, frustration, and friction, 1607-1612	62
Humanism, friendship and Jacobean court politics	64
Carr’s patronage accrual, 1607-1612	75
Seventeenth-century perceptions of courtiers	82
Royal opposition to Carr	86
Conclusion	91

4. “but if’t chance Some cursed example poison’t near the head, Death and diseases through the whole land spread”: Carr as a threat to the Commonwealth, 1607-1612?.....	93
Absolutism and favourites	95
The education of Robert Carr	101
Carr and the Union.....	109
Carr and the Great Contract’s failure.....	117
Conclusion	124
Conclusion	126
Bibliography	132

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Abbreviations and Conventions

APCE	<i>Acts of the Privy Council of England</i> . Edited by H.C. Maxwell Lyte. Vols. 33-34 (1613-1616). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1921-1925.
Balfour	<i>Letters and State Papers During the Reign of King James the Sixth: Chiefly from the Manuscript Collections of Sir James Balfour of Denmyln</i> . Edited by James Maidment. Edinburgh: Adam Anderson, 1838.
Buccleuch	<i>Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Buccleuch and Queensbery, Preserved at Montagu House, Whitehall</i> . Vol. 1 (1438-1778). London: Printed for H. M. Stationery Office by Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1899.
CBP	<i>Calendar of the Letters and Papers Relating to the Affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland Preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office London</i> . Edited by Joseph Bain. 2 vols. (1560-1603). Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1894-1896.
CCP	<i>Calendar of the Cecil Papers in Hatfield House</i> . Edited by M. S. Giuseppi, D. McN. Lockie, G. Dynfalt Owen, and R. A. Roberts. Vols. 1-19 (1306-1612). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1883-1970.
CSPDE	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I (Addenda 1580-1625)</i> . Edited by Mary Anne Everett Green. Vol. 35. London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1872.
CSPDJ	<i>Calendar of State Papers Domestic – James I</i> . Edited by Mary Anne Everett Green. Vols. 9-82 (1604-1615). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1857-1858.
CSPS	<i>Calendar of the State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots 1547-1603</i> . Edited by Joseph Bain, William K. Boyd, Henry W. Meikle, Annie I. Cameron, M. S. Giuseppi, and J.D. Mackie Vols. 3-13/1 (1569-1603). Edinburgh and Glasgow: H. M Stationery Office, 1903-1969

CSPSp	<i>Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas.</i> Edited by Martin A. S. Hume. Vol III (1580-1586). London: H. M Stationery Office, 1896.
CSPV	<i>Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts, Relating to English Affairs. Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice, and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy.</i> Edited by Rawdon Brown, G. Cavendish Bentinck, Horatio F. Brown, and Allen B. Hinds. Vols. 10-14 (1603-1617). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1890-1912.
Downshire	<i>Report on the Manuscripts of the marquess of Downshire, Preserved at East Hampstead Park, Berkshire.</i> Edited by E.K. Purnell, and A. B. Hinds. Vols. 2-4 (1605-August 1614). London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1936-1940.
Egerton	<i>The Egerton Papers.</i> Edited by J. Payne Collier. London: Camden Society, 1840.
Harleian	<i>The Harleian Miscellany; or a Collection of Scarce, Curious, and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts as Well in Manuscript as in Print, Found in the Late Earl of Oxford's Library; Interspersed with Historical, Political, and Critical Notes.</i> Edited by John Malham, William Oldys, and Edward Harley. Vols.1-7. London: T. Osborne, 1808-1811.
Loseley	<i>The Loseley Manuscripts.</i> Edited by Alfred John Kempe. London: John Murray, 1836
Mar & Kellie	<i>Supplementary Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Mar & Kellie.</i> Edited by Reverend Henry Paton. London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1930.
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.</i> Online ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022
RPCS	<i>The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland.</i> Edited and abridged by David Masson. Vols. 3-14 (1578-1625). Edinburgh: H. M. General Register House, 1880-1898.
SP	<i>The Scots Peerage. Founded on Wood's Edition of Sir Robert Douglas's Peerage of Scotland.</i> Edited by Sir James Balfour Paul. 9 vols. Edinburgh: David Douglas, 1904-1914.

Winwood

Memorials in the Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q Elizabeth and K James I Collected (Chiefly) from the Papers of the Right Honourable Sir Ralph Winwood, KT. Edited by Edmund Sawyer. London: W. B. for T. Ward, 1725.

Names

When individuals are introduced, their full name is given as it appears in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Subsequently, they will be referred to in a way most straightforward for the reader.

Quotes

Whilst quoting, the original spelling has been retained. Exceptions have been made where conveyance in the printing changed the author's intention, particularly j/i and s/f.

Dates

Dates are given in Old Style but with the New Year beginning on 1 January rather than 25 March.

Currency

The Scottish Pound's value is difficult to define accurately. In 1567, at the beginning of James' Scottish reign, the Scottish Pound was worth approximately 4 Pounds and 10 Shillings in England. Steady depreciation occurred until 1607, when the conversion rate was stabilised at 12 Scottish Pounds to One English Pound. A Scottish Merk was worth 2/3 of a Scottish Pound.¹

¹Julian Goodare, "The Debts of James VI of Scotland," *The Economic History Review* 62, no. 4 (November 2009), 926; Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch, "James VI: Universal King," in *The Reign of James VI*, eds. Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch (East Lothian, Scotland: Tuckwell Press, 2000), 10; Maurice Lee, *Government by Pen: Scotland under James VI and I*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 15; Allan I. Macinnes, "Regal Union for Britain, 1603-38," in *The New British History: Founding a Modern State 1603-1715*, ed. Glenn Burgess (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1999), 49.

Introduction

In October 1593, James VI of Scotland, accompanied by 300 riders, embarked on his third justice ayre to the “well inhabited and frequented” burgh of Jedburgh at the foot of the Cheviots in the Scottish Middle-March.¹ Amongst those to be tried was the 23-year-old Catholic, Sir Andrew Kerr, laird of Ferniehirst, the King’s former attendant and the eldest half-brother of Robert Carr.² His brother’s trial was almost certainly when the eight-year-old Carr first saw the King whom he later served seventeen years and who would eventually identify him as his closest male companion. Andrew Kerr had been accused of conspiring against royal authority through his (tepid) support of familial ally Francis Stewart, first earl of Bothwell.³ James targeted Bothwell for rising against the Chancellor, John Maitland, first Lord Maitland of Thirlestane at Brig O’Dee in 1589 and then allegedly sabotaging Anne of Denmark’s marriage journey to Scotland with witchcraft.⁴ As Queen Elizabeth I ignored Kerr’s pleas for English protection, he submitted to crown justice.⁵ James stripped Kerr of remaining administrative responsibilities but promised not to raze the Ferniehirst property if the laird repledged obedience within 30 days. The King’s clemency infuriated the Ferniehirst enemy, Alexander Home, first earl of Home, whose remonstrations saw him publicly censured.⁶

The ayre’s conclusion highlighted issues James later faced in England. The King’s untidy conflation of personal relationships and policy limited regal authority.⁷ James focused on Bothwell whilst forgiving his friend the Catholic George Gordon, sixth earl of Huntly, for his identical part at Brig O’Dee. This double-standard raised questions about the King’s partiality,

¹ William Camden, *Britain, or a Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes* (London: Eliot’s Court Press, 1610), II 9; *CPB*, I 506.

² *CSPS*, IX 298; *SP*, V 72.

³ *CSPS*, X 608.

⁴ Robin G. Macpherson, “Francis Stewart, 5th earl Bothwell, c 1562-1612: Lordship and Politics in Jacobean Scotland,” (PhD thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1998), 171, 379.

⁵ *CSPS*, XI 189.

⁶ *CPB*, I 508; *CSPS*, XI 209-210.

⁷ Lee, *Pen*, 7.

galled Elizabeth, and tested the Kirk and crown's connections.⁸ Unpopular in Scotland, James became frustrated by his nobility's passivity executing his decrees. He felt they viewed him as an instrument for fulfilling their ambitions rather than their sovereign lord.⁹ Edinburgh had been in foment in the summer of 1593.¹⁰ Courtiers clashed in the streets, and protestors marched on Holyrood Palace carrying the bloodied shirts of the 'victims' of James' failed justice in the Western March.¹¹ The assembled commissioners spoiled James' Jedburgh arrival by attempting to arrest Huntly supporters who had sought the King's pardon enroute.¹² As James failed to assert control, the King's Middle-March supporters' response to an English retaliatory raid in Teviotdale delayed proceedings.¹³ James later faced similar issues in England, ensuring obedience through projections of his royal power.

Whether King James met the young Carr then is unknown. Regardless, the Jedburgh ayre illustrates some significant ideas this thesis explores. The instability and resistance to authority in the border region where Carr originated raise questions over whether he embodied the oleaginous courtier dominant in the historiography. Kerr's trial demonstrated the political importance of the Ferniehirsts in Scotland. Later authors claimed Carr hailed from unknown origins and that his elevation was unprecedented. That James travelled south to censure Kerr demonstrated that the king believed the laird could destabilise his reign. Yet while significant,

⁸ Ruth Grant, "Friendship, politics and religion: George Gordon, Sixth Earl of Huntly and King James VI, 1581-1595," in *James VI and Noble Power in Scotland 1578-1603*, ed. Miles Kerr-Peterson and Steven J. Reid (London, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 65, 68; Miles Kerr-Peterson, *A Protestant Lord in James VI's Scotland: George Keith, Fifth Earl Marischal (1554-1623)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2019), 67; Maurice Lee, *John Maitland of Thirlestane and the Foundation of the Stewart Despotism in Scotland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 237, 244.

⁹ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom or Province? Scotland and the Regal Union, 1603-1715* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1993), 86; Julian Goodare, "The Nobility and the Absolutist State in Scotland, 1584 – 1638," *History* 78, no. 253 (June 1993), 38. Jenny Wormald found royal control over the aristocracy increased in the 1590s ("Bloodfeud, Kindred and Government in Early Modern Scotland," *Past & Present*, no. 87 (May 1980), 67, *Court, Kirk, and Community: Scotland 1470-1625* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 177; "The Happier Marriage Partner: The Impact of the Unions on the Crowns of Scotland," in *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences*, eds. Glenn Burgess, Rowland Wymer, and Jason Lawrence (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 72, "James VI and I," *History Today* 52, no. 6 (June 2002), 29.

¹⁰ David Calderwood, *The Historie of the Kirk of Scotland*, Comp. Rev Thomas Thomson. (Edinburgh: Printed for the Woodrow Society, 1842), V 249.

¹¹ G. P. V. Akrigg, *Letters of King James VI and I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 121; Calderwood, V 253-257; Robert Chambers, *Domestic Annals of Scotland: From the Reformation to the Revolution*, (Edinburgh: W. and R. Chambers, 1858), I page unnumbered; Cowan, 132; *CSPS*, XI 98; Macpherson, 403; *RSPS*, V 86; John Spottiswood, *The History of the Church of Scotland*, (Edinburgh: The Bannatyne Club, 1851), II 432.

¹² Anne L. Forbes, *Trials and Triumphs: The Gordons of Huntly in Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 2012), 197; Spottiswood, II 438.

¹³ *CBP*, I 506; *RPCS*, V 101.

Introduction

the Ferniehirsts were one of several families whose obedience the King desired. The former English ambassador, Robert Bowes, revealed the border's principal figure when he hypothesised: "Sir George Hume will readily remedy this dryness."¹⁴ A cousin and rival to Alexander Home, George Home, earl of Dunbar, restored border equilibrium by finding Carr employment at court. Rather than Carr benefiting from an inconsistent King's impulses, his elevation was a considered border strategy.

Kerr's trial represented James' need to balance Scotland's factions to become a 'universal king.' That fifteen years later, James transformed Carr into "the Primum Mobile of our Court, by whose motion all the other spheres must move," broke with his previous practice.¹⁵ The youngest of the five brothers, Carr held no jointure and the Reformation had curtailed lairds' younger sons' traditional careers in the church or French military.¹⁶ To assist the King with secretarial duties and have been raised to Viscount Rochester in England by 1613 represented an uncommonly successful career. However, this thesis will argue that Carr never held the singular prominence later attributed to him throughout the historiography, and he remained one of many valued within the King's bedchamber.

The reasons for exaggerations of Carr's influence stems from ever-growing concerns about courtiers' undue influence that developed in the second half of Elizabeth's reign. Any individual close to the King attracted unprecedented scrutiny. An example is Carr's last interaction with the King as he left Royston hunting lodge to answer the arrest warrant for his former associate Sir Thomas Overbury's murder. The then courtier Sir Anthony Weldon witnessed "the King hung about his neck, slaboring his cheeks; saying, for Gods sake, when

¹⁴ *CSPS*, XI 189.

¹⁵ John Nichols, *The Progresses, Processions and Magnificent Festivities of King James the First*, (London: J.B. Nichols, 1828), II 454.

¹⁶ Andrew Amos, *The Great Oyer Poisoning: The Trial of the Earl of Somerset for the Poisoning of Sir Thomas Overbury*, (London: Richard Bentley, 1846), 7.

shall I see thee again; On my soul, I shall neither eat nor sleep until you come again.”¹⁷ The story of how Carr, the youngest in a family whose influence the King nearly destroyed, elicited a publicly embarrassing reaction from James is remarkable. But Carr was neither remarkable nor influential. Like most anecdotes about Carr, the story of his separation from James was fictional, invented to demonstrate a recreant King.¹⁸ Carr left of his own volition, and his arrest occurred the following Friday.¹⁹ James’ brusque, “I will never care to lose the hearts of any for justice sake,” contrasted with the previous weekend’s supposed dramatics.²⁰ Such disinformation bedevilled Carr’s political career. Delineating the motives of those spreading falsehoods and understanding the reasons for their acceptance is the thesis’s basis. I will argue that English neuroses about favourites’ influence distorted Carr’s influence and the resultant benefits he received.

Historiography

In 1580 Michel de Montaigne complained of the prevalence of historians who “fashion history to their own ideas.”²¹ That looseness around the truth would be particularly true in England. A growing consumer demand for reading material saw a flood of affordable small-printed books and broadsides.²² Historical romance’s declining popularity along with growing scepticism about traditional history chroniclers’ authoritative claims saw Procopian secret

¹⁷ Anthony Weldon, *The Court and Character of James I*, (London: R. J. and are to be sold by John Wright, 1650), 30. See also David M. Bergeron, “Writing King James’s Sexuality,” in *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I*, eds. Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), 349; Roger Coke and David Jones. *A Detection of the Court and State of England....* (1696. Reprint, London: J. Brotherton and W. Meadows, 1719), I 86-87; Philip Gibbs, *King’s Favourite: The Love Story of Robert Carr and Lady Essex* (London, Hutchinson & Co 1909), 283-84; William McElwee, *The Murder of Sir Thomas Overbury* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 179, *The Wisest Fool in Christendom: The Reign of King James I and VI* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1958), 227; Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI and I* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2003), ch. 16; Beatrice White, *Cast of Ravens: The Strange Case of Sir Thomas Overbury* (London: John Murray, 1965), 105.

¹⁸ For authors that dispute this story see Curtis Perry, *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 249; Anne Somerset, *Unnatural Murder: Poison at the Court of James I: the Overbury Murder* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997), 306-307.

¹⁹ *CSPDJ*, LXXXII 315-316.

²⁰ Akrigg, *Letters*, 345.

²¹ Michel de Montaigne, *Essays* trans. J. M. Cohen (London: Penguin, 1993), 170.

²² Jason Peacey, “News, Pamphlets, and Public Opinion,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Literature and the English Revolution*, ed. Laura Lunger Knoppers (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 173; Michael Mendle, “News and the pamphlet culture of mid-seventeenth-century England,” in *The Politics of Information in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Brendan Maurice Dooley and Sabrina A. Baron (London: Routledge, 2011), 57; Daniel Woolf, *Reading history in early modern England*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 79-80.

Introduction

histories revived: creating a new sub-genre of ‘contemporary history.’²³ An influential example of this new style was the anonymous manuscript *The Five Years of King James, Or, The Condition of the State of England* (1616).²⁴ While inaccurate, this ‘history’ established the lingering metanarrative about Carr. It claimed that Carr’s “diligence to outward appearance” meant the King took a “great liking to this young Gentleman,” eventually “raising his carriage above his wonted course.”²⁵ This characterisation of Carr as a vacuous non-entity provided the basis for subsequent depictions of the favourite.

The Star Chamber’s 1641 abolition removed state censorship of printed material and saw *The Five Years of King James*, published in 1643. The text’s availability and a burgeoning demand for scurrilous material inspired a spate of works this thesis labels ‘republican histories’. Simonds D’Ewes’ unpublished “Secret History of The Reign of King James,” along with Arthur Wilson and Francis Osborn’s lacklustre efforts, had an identical structure to *The Five Years of King James*, with most material copied verbatim.²⁶ Based on little empirical research, these reworkings portrayed James’ court as immoral.²⁷ These authors depicted Carr as a “beggarly addition,” “held up by the chin in the Glories of the Court.”²⁸ He became a destabilising force whose “dishonest appetites” made him “negligent in state affairs,” the “venomous mushroom” who threatened Henry Stuart, prince of Wales’ inheritance.²⁹ Other contemporaneous histories include Edward Peyton’s *The divine catastrophe of the kingly family of the house of Stuarts* and

²³ Peter Burke, “History, Myth, and Fiction: Doubts and Debates,” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing: Volume Three 1400-1800*, eds. Jose Rabasa, Masayuki Sato, Eduardo Tortarolo, and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 276; Patrick Collinson, “History,” in *A Companion to English Renaissance Literature and Culture*, ed. Michael Hattaway (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000), 63; John L. Watts, “Ideas, Principles and Politics,” in *Wars of the Roses* ed. A. J. Pollard, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995), 113.

²⁴ Alastair Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News, Culture and the Overbury Affair 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 96-97.

²⁵ Anonymous, *The Five Years of King James....* (London: W. R., 1643), 11-13.

²⁶ Daniel Woolf, “Historical Writing in Britain from the Late Middle Ages to the Eve of Enlightenment,” in eds. Rabasa et al, *Historical Writing*, 482.

²⁷ Robert Malcolm Smuts, *Culture and Power in England, 1585-1685* (London: Macmillan Education, 1999), 100. For explanations of repetition’s importance see Stephen Greenblatt, “Marlowe and Renaissance Self-Fashioning,” in *Two Renaissance Mythmakers: Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson*, ed. Alvin B. Kernan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), 51.

²⁸ Arthur Wilson, “An Account of the Intrigue between Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, Viscount Rochester, etc. and the Lady Frances Howard....,” in George Abbott, *The Case of Impotency as Debated in England*. (London: E. Curll, 1715), I 177.” See also Francis Osborn Esq, *The Works of Francis Osborn, Esq.*, (London: R. D. and are to sold by Allen Banks, 1681), 468.

²⁹ Simonds D’Ewes, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Sir Simonds D’Ewes*. ed. James Orchard Halliwell, Esq (London: Richard Bentley, New Burlington Street, 1845), II 348; Arthur Wilson, *The History of Great Britain: being the life and reign of King James the First*, (London: Published for Richard Lowndes, 1653), 55.

Antony Weldon's infamous *Court and Character of James I*. Although Weldon popularised the description of James as "the wisest fool in Christendom," he was the most sympathetic republican toward Carr, seeing him as a victim of the King's capriciousness.³⁰

The term 'republican histories' reflects the era when their works were distributed rather than these authors' political views. The royalist Godfrey Goodman dismissed Weldon and Wilson as Presbyterian bigots, but neither supported the Commonwealth.³¹ While disaffected after his 1617 dismissal from court, in 1648, an equally prickly Weldon denounced MPs as Machiavels for whom "policie and honesty not go hand in hand."³² Arthur Wilson, the third earl of Essex's secretary, reserved particular opprobrium for Carr. Yet his patron's 1645 humiliation by the War Party meant Wilson sided with the Presbyterian parliamentary faction.³³ Simonds D'Ewes may have been a moralising puritan. Still, he recused himself from the Parliamentary cause, becoming so moderate that Charles I gave him guardianship of the royal medals and coins.³⁴ Even Sir Edward Peyton, who produced the most pejorative history, refused to sit in the Rump Parliament.³⁵ Rather than supporting republicanism, these 'histories' drove a contrast between Elizabethan stability and Jacobean advancement of the unworthy, such as Carr. Thus, the authors sidestepped traumatic contemporary events to show that Charles fulfilled Niccolò Machiavelli's maxim: "that if a weak prince succeeds another weak prince, he cannot keep any kingdom going."³⁶

David Lindley appositely refers to these scandal-mongers as "the few pieces of straw" to which historians have added successive layers of mud.³⁷ In making their case against the Stuart dynasty, these Jacobean court historians dwelled on sexual and financial scandals, particularly

³⁰ Weldon, *James*, 58. For Weldon's influence see Jenny Wormald, "O Brave New World? Union in 1603," in *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900*, ed. T. C. Smout (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 26.

³¹ Godfrey Goodman, *The Court of King James I*, (Oxford: John S. Brewer, 1839), II 222.

³² Anthony Weldon, *To the Parliament of England...* (London, 1649), 40. See also Maurice Lee, "James I and the Historians: Not a Bad King after All," *Albion* 16, no. 2 (Summer 1984), 151.

³³ *ODNB*, s.v. Wilson, Arthur.

³⁴ David Cressy, *England on Edge: Crisis and Revolution, 1640-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 414; J. Sears McGee, *An Industrious Mind: The Worlds of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 368-372, 418-419.

³⁵ Blair Worden, *The Rump Parliament 1648-1653* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1974), 390.

³⁶ Niccolò Machiavelli, *Discourses*, ed. Bernard Crick trans. Leslie J. Walker, (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), 1: 19.

³⁷ David Lindley, *The Trials of Frances Howard: Fact and Fiction at the Court of King James* (London: Routledge, 1996), 44.

the Essex annulment and Overbury Trial.³⁸ Specifically designed to appeal to a theatre audience, these works transgressed the already murky early modern distinction between ‘history’ and ‘fiction.’³⁹ With some playwrights sidelining in history there grew a tendency to view Carr’s life as a morality play.⁴⁰ The blend of stylistic flair and minimal concern for accuracy produced works so engaging and quotable that others written by William Sanderson, who attempted to provide balance, were ignored.⁴¹ So while these narratives illustrated perceptions of James’ court, they contained little verifiable information on any individual.⁴²

Works devoted solely to Carr are rare. Post republican historians only occasionally used Carr to exemplify the court’s faults. His marginal status informs the ‘elusiveness’ of the thesis title. With few studies dedicated to Carr, republican characterisations have endured. Nineteenth-century Whigs’ liberal hostility to the Stuarts and reluctance to study status-quo supporters saw them parrot seventeenth-century descriptions of the “despicable minion,” Carr, who was “neither virtuous nor upright.”⁴³ Carr also held little interest for mid-twentieth-century Marxist historians. They claimed that the Stuarts stymied social mobility for those outside the gentry of the kind from which Carr had benefited. Peter Seddon’s inaccurate 1970 article, the only published piece devoted to Carr’s entire career, sits within the Whig tradition. Seddon found that Carr’s advancement derived from James’ sexual desires and consequently, he remained a functionless pawn in the Jacobean court’s factional politics. Kenneth Coomber improves on Seddon in a

³⁸ Alastair Bellany, “‘Raylinge Rymes and Vaunting Verse’: Libellous Politics in Early Stuart England, 1603-1628,” in *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, ed. Kevin Sharpe (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 310.

³⁹ Arthur F. Kinney, “Sir Philip Sidney and the Uses of History,” in *The Historical Renaissance*, eds. Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 298; Albert H. Tricomi, *Anticourt Drama in England, 1603-1642* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 4; Blair Worden, “Historians and Poets,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, nos. 1-2 (March 2005), 72.

⁴⁰ Arthur Wilson, *The Swisser*, ed. Albert Feuillerat (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1904), Act II Scene I 87-88. Francis Osborn wrote the unmemorable *True Tragicomedy Formerly Acted at Court* about the Essex divorce.

⁴¹ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England 1603-1660*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 131.

⁴² Robert B. Bennett, “John Webster’s Strange Dedication: An Inquiry into Literary Patronage and Jacobean Court Intrigue,” *English Literary Renaissance* 7, no. 3 (Fall 1977), 359.

⁴³ Lucy Aikin, *Memoirs of the Court of King James the First*. 2nd ed. Vol. 1. (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme and Brown, 1822), 324; Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *History of England from the Accession of James I to the Outbreak of the Civil War, 1603-1642* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1883), II 26. See also Simon Adams, “Early Stuart politics: revisionism and after,” in *Theatre and Government under the Early Stuarts*, eds. James Ronald Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 30; Kevin Quarmby, “Narrative of Negativity: Whig Historiography and the Spectre of King James in Measure for Measure,” *Shakespeare Survey* 64 (October 6, 2011), 303; George Macaulay Trevelyan, *England under the Stuarts*, ed. John Morrill (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002), 106.

focused thesis on the favourite's patronage accrual and political career. However, Coomber concurs with Seddon that Carr's transformation from a 'privado' to a 'politico' irreparably damaged his (likely romantic) relationship with the King.⁴⁴ Like much Whig history, there is a kernel of truth that political disagreements strained the two's relationship. But both misrepresent Carr's function and power whilst overplaying the Jacobean court's factionalism.

From the 1960s, 'revisionist' historians used archival research to reconstruct a society riven by ideological divisions and social discord.⁴⁵ However, court politics received little attention, which revisionists viewed as a distraction from weighty constitutional arguments.⁴⁶ A desire to present a harmonious society meant that disagreements between James and his Parliaments were explained by the King demonstrating the "financial acumen of a child in a sweetshop."⁴⁷ As Carr continued to be identified (inaccurately) as the prime recipient of the King's munificence between 1607 and 1615, he exemplified the rift between the centre and the localities that more strong-willed kingship could have solved. Since courtiers employed in the intimate bedchamber like Carr had little need for written communication, they escaped revisionist attention.⁴⁸ The second-generation revisionist, Neil Cuddy, is an exception. While he provides a punctilious explanation of Carr's political career in the fifth chapter of his doctoral thesis, his work reveals revisionism's limits.⁴⁹ Despite Cuddy's mastery of archival material, he overestimated Carr's importance in the Jacobean system by not accounting for contemporary paranoia about royal favouritism whilst assessing Carr's purported power.

⁴⁴ Kenneth Gordon Coomber, "Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset," (Master's thesis, University of Alberta, 1982), 149; P. R. Seddon, "Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset," *Culture, Theory and Critique* 14, no. 1 (1970), 51.

⁴⁵ Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 2; John Morrill, "Dynasties, Realms, Peoples and State Formation, 1500-1720," in *Monarchy Transformed: Princes and Their Elites in Early Modern Western Europe*, eds. Robert von Friedeburg and John Morrill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 17. Revisionist was not accepted by those given that label (Richard Cust and Ann Hughes, "Introduction: after Revisionism," in *Conflict in Early Stuart England: Studies in Religion and Politics, 1603-1642*, eds. Richard Cust and Ann Hughes (London: Longman, 1994), 2, 5, 14).

⁴⁶ Ronald G. Asch, "Introduction: Court and Household from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Centuries," in *Princes, Patronage, and the Nobility: The Court at the Beginning of the Modern Age, C. 1450-1650* eds. Ronald G. Asch and Adolf Matthias Birke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1; Richard Cust, "News and Politics in Early Seventeenth-Century England," *Past & Present*, no. 112 (August 1986), 61.

⁴⁷ Mark Kishlansky, *A Monarchy Transformed: Britain 1603-1714*, (London: Penguin Books, 1997), 83; Roger Lockyer and Peter Gaunt, *Tudor and Stuart Britain 1485-1714*, (London: Routledge, 2019), 320.

⁴⁸ David Coast, *News and Rumour in Jacobean England: Information, Court Politics and Diplomacy, 1618-25* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 116.

⁴⁹ Neil Cuddy, "The King's Chamber: The Bedchamber of James I in Administration and Politics, 1603-1625," Doctoral thesis, Oxford University, 1987, 125-152.

Introduction

In the 1980s, a new group of historians questioned whether revisionist methodological innovations justified their sense of triumphalism over their Whig and Marxist forbears.⁵⁰ Known as the New Historicism, this movement elevated culture as a political text by exploring fresh boundaries through literary and non-literary phenomena.⁵¹ Although sometimes dismissed as disaffected Marxists, New Historicists' exploration of the Jacobean court's vibrant literary-political culture added complexity to earlier accounts.⁵² Royal favouritism received renewed attention. In particular, Curtis Perry's seminal *Literature and Favoritism in Early Modern England* breaks down Renaissance constructions of favourites, transforming understanding of figures like Carr. New Historicist approaches took various shapes. David Lindley employed gender, and Alastair Bellany used news and libel culture to deconstruct the events surrounding the Overbury murder trial. Though accomplished, the two historians did not reappraise Carr's early career, drawing their conclusions from over estimations of Carr's influence before his trial.⁵³ New Historicism aims to clarify the ambiguous boundary between representation and event.⁵⁴ Presentations of Carr have skewed towards representations of court favourites rather than depicting Carr's early political career. This thesis adds to existing studies of Carr by employing a New Historicist approach. It employs sources from the period, including literary works, news, and libels, to illuminate their influence in the pamphlets, histories and archival material that formerly explained Carr's early career.

⁵⁰ Glenn Burgess, "The 'Historical Turn' and the Political Culture of Early Modern England: Towards a Postmodern History?" in *Neo-historicism: Studies in Renaissance Literature, History and Politics*, eds. Robin Headlam Wells and Glenn Burgess (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), 33; Peter Lake, "From Revisionist to Royalist History; or, Was Charles I the First Whig Historian?" *Huntington Library Quarterly* 78, no. 4 (Winter 2015), 671; Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Authority and Representing Rule in Early Modern England* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 32.

⁵¹ John Brannigan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 56; Todd Butler, *Literature and Political Intellection in Early Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 8; Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, *Practicing New Historicism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 9.

⁵² Catherine Gallagher, "Marxism and the New Historicism," in *The New Historicism*, ed. H. Aram Veenser (New York: Routledge, 1989), 37, 43. For further criticisms of New Historicism see Jean Howard, "The New Historicism in Renaissance Studies," *English Literary Renaissance* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1986), 19; James R. Siemon, "Reconstructing the Past: History, Historicism, Histories," in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 663-664.

⁵³ Bellany, *Scandal*, 29-30; Lindley, *Howard*, 83.

⁵⁴ Gallagher and Greenblatt, 15.

'Popular' Culture in Early Stuart England

Following the Reformation, theatre emerged as England's dominant entertainment form. Plays centred on kingship and power comprised at least two-thirds of non-comedies produced between 1560-1700.⁵⁵ The court offered a recurrent setting for demonstrating human depravity's timelessness. In particular, an avalanche of plays focussed on monarchies' inner-workings and the issues created by royal favouritism.⁵⁶ Blair Worden argues that the symbiosis between authors and their audience's reactions "not only reflected the public preoccupation with favouritism but also contributed to it."⁵⁷ So deep-set was the recurring trope of the scheming courtier that audiences engrossed by the irredeemable institution of favouritism overlooked playwrights' other, more subtle messages.⁵⁸ Favouritism offered a means to explore deeper governance issues while providing the scandal and spectacle the audience demanded, a point not lost on the historians of the 1640s and 1650s.⁵⁹

A seventeenth-century fear was of 'the other' who lived outside societal conventions and whose behaviour threatened communal stability.⁶⁰ Stephen Orgel identified the theatre as a centre for otherness, exposing the concept to its widest audience.⁶¹ The English expected public servants to strive for personal perfection whilst respecting hierarchy and stability.⁶² Consequently, Carr's critics likened him to theatrical courtly villains who embodied characteristics of the 'other.' So, while favourites were far from novel, Curtis Perry argues they were powerless and interchangeable characters, emblematic of a vapid court culture.⁶³

⁵⁵ F. J. (Fritz) Levy, *Tudor Historical Thought* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1967), 225-233; Worden, "Historians," 83.

⁵⁶ Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 125; Rowland Wymer "Jacobean Pageant or Elizabethan Fin-de-siècle? The Political Context of Early Seventeenth-Century Tragedy," in eds. Wells and Burgess, *Neo-historicism*, 138.

⁵⁷ Blair Worden, "Favourites on the English Stage," in *The World of the Favourite* eds. J. H. Elliott and L. W. B. Brockliss (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 160.

⁵⁸ Victor Lenthe, "Ben Jonson's Antagonistic Style, Public Opinion and Sejanus," *SEL Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 57, no. 2 (Spring 2017), 364.

⁵⁹ Anja Müller-Wood, *The Theatre of Civilized Excess: New Perspectives on Jacobean Tragedy* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 26.

⁶⁰ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983), 9

⁶¹ Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (Winter 1989), 9.

⁶² Michael J. Braddick, *State Formation in Early Modern England: The Uses of Political Power, C. 1550-1700*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 77.

⁶³ Perry, *Favoritism*, 258.

Introduction

Tragedians avoided rationalising a king's affections for their favourites, a technique replicated by seventeenth-century historians. They declined Carr a meaningful characterisation to have him represent an irredeemable system.⁶⁴

While the theatre elucidates early modern conceptualisations of favouritism, this thesis avoids searching for allegorical links between fictional characters and contemporary political figures. Richard Levin dismissed searching for such parallels as 'Fleullenism', while Stephen Orgel found attempts "founded on their own bad scholarship."⁶⁵ The erratic but lessening Jacobean censorship indicated playwrights ceased placing subversive significations on the stage.⁶⁶ Occasionally, I have acknowledged scholarly interpretations of potential comparable figures in footnotes, but I consulted plays to glean insights into the anxieties about the Stuart court as projected onto the stage.

James held little ebullience for dramatists and their productions.⁶⁷ His English reign's early years saw a glut of performances addressing issues of unrestrained ambition, vice and depravity, which fixed the idea that the theatre was a centre of anti-Jacobean sentiment.⁶⁸ Plays such as Ben Jonson's *Sejanus: his fall* (1603), George Chapman's *Tragedy of Bussy D'Ambois* (1604), and Samuel Daniel's *Tragedy of Philotas* (1605) were about the erosion of political virtue in Elizabeth I's increasingly authoritarian final years rather than being anti-Jacobean

⁶⁴ Mario DiGangi, "A Beast So Blurred: The Monstrous Favorite in Caroline Drama," in *Localizing Caroline Drama: Politics and Economics of the Early Modern, 1625-1642*, eds. Adam Zucker and Alan B. Farmer (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 174.

⁶⁵ Stephen Orgel, "Royal Theatre and the Role of King," in *Patronage in the Renaissance*, eds. Guy Fitch Lytle and Stephen Orgel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 267. See also Richard Levin, "On Fleullen's Figures, Christ Figure and James Figures," *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 89, no. 2 (March 1974), 302-03. For playwrights who objected to their works being scrutinised for political commentary see Ben Jonson, *Volpone, or The Fox in Five Plays*, ed. G.A. Wilkes (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), dedication.

⁶⁶ Heather Hirschfeld, "Richard Brome and the idea of a Caroline theatre," in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Contemporary Dramatists*, ed. A. J. Hoenselaars (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 228; Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and Its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 28.

⁶⁷ Richard Dutton, *Mastering the Revels: The Regulation and Censorship of English Renaissance Drama* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1991), 142; Peter R. Roberts, "The Business of Playing and the Patronage of Players at the Jacobean Court," in *James VI and I: Ideas, Authority, and Government*, ed. Ralph A. Houllbrooke (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 81-90. For those who dispute James' disinterest in the plays presented at court see John Astington, *English Court Theatre: 1558-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999, 201-203; Jane Rickard, *Writing the Monarch in Jacobean England: Jonson, Donne, Shakespeare and the Works of King James*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 51.

⁶⁸ Robert Ornstein, *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), 3.

narratives.⁶⁹ The enthusiasm for ideologically focused productions was ephemeral, as their creators not only attracted the Privy Council's interest but were commercial flops.⁷⁰

Subsequently, a loose consensus allowed Jacobean playwrights to challenge traditional ideas so long as the audience remained pleased.⁷¹ Thus, a favourite could reflect monarchical weakness and folly. So long as the upstart was eventually vanquished and orthodoxy restored.

Another anti-favourite medium was the exploding news and libel culture. Centred on information exchange in London's Royal Exchange, Lincoln Inn's Fields, and especially St Paul's Cathedral, manuscripts, newsletters, and from the 1620s onward, corantos satisfied an increasingly literate society obsessed with the latest events.⁷² For a government that wished to conceal signs of conflict or disarray, the ever-changing news inspired sedition and discontent.⁷³ Theoretically, the Privy Council regulated domestic news; however, printed material's censorship was haphazard and controlling manuscript circulation impossible.⁷⁴ News which

⁶⁹ Peter Holbrook, "Jacobean masques and the Jacobean peace," in *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque*, eds. David Bevington, and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 73; Annabel Patterson, "Political Thought and the Theater, 1580-1630, in *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* ed. Arthur F. Kinney (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 35; Matthew H. Wikander, "'Queasy to be Touched': The World of Ben Jonson's 'Sejanus,'" *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 78, no. 3 (July 1979), 345.

⁷⁰ Daniel Cadman, "The 'accession of these mighty State': Daniel's Philotas and the union of crowns." *Renaissance Studies* 26, no. 3 (June 2012), 366, *Sovereigns and Subjects in Early Modern Neo-Senecan Drama: Republicanism, Stoicism and Authority* (London: Routledge, 2016), 104.

⁷¹ Hugh Craig, "Jonson, the antimasque and the 'rules of flattery'," in eds. Bevington and Holbrook, *Masque*, 179; Lawrence Manley, "Theatre," in *The Elizabethan World*, eds. Susan Doran & Norman L. Jones (London: Routledge, 2011), 532-533.. Margaret Heinemann disputes that dramatists identified with courtly values (*Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama under the Early Stuarts*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 16-17).

⁷² Paul Arblaster, "Posts, Newsletters, Newspapers: England in a European system of communications," in *News Networks in Seventeenth Century Britain and Europe*, ed. Joad Raymond (London: Routledge, 2006), 21; Michael J. Braddick, "Administrative performance: the representation of political authority in early modern England," in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy, and Subordination in Britain and Ireland*, eds. Michael J. Braddick and John Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 175; Markku Peltonen, *Rhetoric, Politics and Popularity in Pre-revolutionary England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 48-50; Daniel Woolf, "News, history and the construction of the present in early modern England," in eds. Dooley and Baron, *Information*, 88-89.

⁷³ Sabrina A. Baron, "The guises of dissemination in early seventeenth-century England: News in manuscript and print," in eds. Dooley and Baron, *Information*, 42; Coast, 83-84; Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), 2.

⁷⁴ Daniel Woolf, "News, history and the construction of the present in early modern England," in eds. Dooley and Baron, *Information*, 104; Heather Woolfe, "Manuscripts in Early Modern England," in *A Concise Companion to English Renaissance Literature*, ed. Donna B. Hamilton (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), 114. Thomas Cogswell found Jacobean censorship to be the envy of many continental rulers (*The Blessed Revolution: English Politics and the Coming of War, 1621-1624*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 21).

Introduction

flowed freely from Europe's developing information network made regulation difficult.⁷⁵ While news awareness was a component of gentlemanly behaviour, how far down the social scale news could be disseminated orally or how great an overlap existed between 'populist' and 'elite' cultures has been difficult to define.⁷⁶ News culture's vibrancy resulted in greater awareness of Carr than any minor court figure had previously attracted.

Court gossip remained a lynchpin of seventeenth-century news, alongside Catholic outrages and diplomatic and military manoeuvrings. Compilers explored the boundaries of corruption and brought the royal bedchamber's private world into the public sphere.⁷⁷ Fascination with courtiers' changing fortunes created volumes of material exaggerating court life's impermanence. James focused on quelling criticism of his religious or foreign policies, so court gossip offered a helpful distraction from more combustible issues.⁷⁸ Stylistically, the authors' voice featured in newsletters and corantos, acclimatising readers to the later republican historians' moralising tone.⁷⁹ The demand for event-focused writing created an ancillary interest in printed histories offering insights into the courts of former monarchs.⁸⁰

A growing news awareness informed an increasingly pernicious libel culture's audience. Labelled the "poetry of political decay" by Alastair Bellany, libels constituted scandalous writing

⁷⁵ Joad Raymond, "News Networks: Putting the 'News' and 'Networks' Back in," in *News Networks in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Joad Raymond and Noah Moxham (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 109; Debora K. Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006), 2; Tracey A. Sowerby, "Elizabethan Diplomatic Networks and the Spread of News," in eds. Raymond and Moxham, *News Networks*, 313.

⁷⁶ Michael J. Braddick, "England and Wales," 23, Peter Burke, "Popular History," 450, Andrew McRae, "Manuscript Culture and Popular Print," in *The Oxford History of Popular Print Culture: Cheap Print in Britain and Ireland to 1660*, 134 in ed. Joad Raymond (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 21; Stephen Greenblatt, "Introduction," in *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1982), 5.

⁷⁷ Joshua Eckhardt, "'Love-song weeds, and Satyrique thornes': Anti-Courtly Love Poetry and Somerset Libels," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (March 2006), 48; Ronald Hutton, *Debates in Stuart History*, (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 65; James Knowles, "To 'scourge the arse / Jove's marrow so had wasted': scurrility and the subversion of sodomy," in *Subversion and Scurrility: Popular Discourse in Europe from 1500 to the Present*, eds. Tim Kirk, and Dermot Cavanagh, (London: Routledge, 2000), 76.

⁷⁸ Coast, 49-50, 115-116.

⁷⁹ Nicholas Brownless, "Spoken Discourse in Early English Newspapers," in ed. Raymond, *News Networks*, 71.

⁸⁰ Woolf, "construction," 80-83, 98-100; Sara Barker, "Time in English Translations of Continental News," in eds. Raymond and Moxham, *News Networks*, 348.

produced without monarchical approval.⁸¹ They centred on personal defamation and, in a model adopted by the republican historians, revelled in instability and conflated courtly political and sexual deviance through a caustic blend of fact and fiction.⁸² Libels' popularity did not always translate to acceptance of their views. Despite libelling's ignobility and association with tavern culture, it offered "a remarkable vehicle for the dissemination of political attitudes" across the social strata.⁸³ When penalties for libelling the monarch increased in 1554, critics diverted their attention to safer governmental figures.⁸⁴ Even when seditious materials were outlawed, the quick profits from publishing forbidden works ensured they remained in circulation.⁸⁵

With satire banned in 1599, libelling allowed subversive thoughts reach a wider audience. The poet George Wither demonstrated difficulties abiding by established boundaries, receiving four months in Marshalsea prison for fumbling when counterbalancing his court critiques in his moral tome, *Abuses Stript, and Whipt. or Satirical Essayes* (1613).⁸⁶ As Renaissance England emphasised careful self-representation, individuals were sensitive to affronts to personal honour.⁸⁷ Libels forced public figures to suffer slurs on their reputation or engage with traducers almost exclusively of lower social standing.⁸⁸ James engaged with libellers, which legitimised the art form.⁸⁹ Writing in 1622, James feigned indifference, claiming, "By Tailing rymes and

⁸¹ Andrew Bellany, "The embarrassment of libels: perceptions and representatives of verse libelling in early Stuart England," in *The Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 145. See also Andrew McRae, *Satire, and the Early Stuart State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 26, 39, 70, "Manuscript Culture," 133.

⁸² Alastair Bellany, "Libel," in ed. Raymond, *Print Culture*, 142; Perry, "'If Proclamations Will Not Serve': The Late Manuscript Poetry of James I and the Culture of Libel," in eds. Fischlin and Fortier, *Royal Subjects*, 209.

⁸³ Jamie A. Gianoutsos, "Criticizing Kings: Gender, Classical History, and Subversive Writing in Seventeenth Century England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 70 (2017), 1383.

⁸⁴ David Ibbertson, "Edward Coke, Roman Law, and the Law of Libel," in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500-1700*, ed. Lorna Hutson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 491; Woolfe, 126.

⁸⁵ Bellany, *Scandal*, 93, "Libel," 154.

⁸⁶ George Wither, *Abuses Stript, and Whipt. or Satirical Essayes* (London: G. Eld, for Francis Burton, 1613). See also Michelle O'Callaghan, "'Now thou may'st speak freely': Entering the Public Sphere in 1614," in *The Crisis of 1614 and the Addled Parliament: Literary and Historical Perspective*, eds. Stephen Clucas and Rosalind Davies (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003), page unnumbered.

⁸⁷ Clegg, *Censorship*, 92; David Randall, "Joseph Mead, Novellante: News, Sociability, and Credibility in Early Stuart England," *Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 2 (April 2006), 298; Kevin Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 12.

⁸⁸ Andrew McRae, "The verse libel: popular satire in early modern England," in eds. Kirk and Cavanagh, *Scurrility*, 59.

⁸⁹ Cesare Cuttica, *Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) and the Patriotic Monarch: Patriarchalism in Seventeenth-century Political Thought* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 2012, 104-106; Richard Dutton, "Patronage, Licensing and Censorship," in ed. Hamilton, *Renaissance Literature*, 83. David Cressy disagrees James' engaged with political critics (*Dangerous Talk: Scandalous, Seditious, and Treasonable Speech in Pre-modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 114).

vaunting verse / Which, our kings brest shall never peirce.”⁹⁰ Libel’s acceptance as an art form and a willing acceptance of courtiers as figures of ridicule assisted republican historians in implanting courtiers’ expected behaviours.

Intellectual Culture in Early Stuart England

Alongside the stage and popular verse, inspiration for and acceptance of the republican historians’ version of Carr as the effeminate, underserving, and sycophantic courtier can be found in the exploding sixteenth-century English interest in classical Rome. A governing class, progressively steeped in humanist classics, identified with Roman civility and republican virtue and responded bitterly against those who violated these values.⁹¹ Understanding the classical past offered insight into contemporary culture, and the literary elite found Roman histories germane as English political theory.⁹² The study of Rome signified a dissatisfaction with the present; the elite’s admiration of a former age illustrated the decay of their contemporary world. Dramatists used ancient Roman problems to explore current domestic issues without inviting censors’ scrutiny.⁹³ English humanists expanded the precedents and archetypes potentially applied to monarchs’ advisors from deep inside the classical past. Carr came to public attention just as English fascination with Rome rediscovered the empire’s darker elements.

In 1591 Sir Henry Savile’s vernacular translation of Cornelius Tacitus’ *Histories* and *Agricola* brought the renewed European passion for the Roman historian to England.⁹⁴ Tacitus’ terse, compact style found an enthusiastic reception amongst those tired of Ciceronian “pathetic,

⁹⁰ James VI and I, *The Poems of James VI of Scotland*. ed. by James Craigie (Edinburgh: Published for the society by W. Blackwood, 1955-58), 182.

⁹¹ John Kerrigan, “The Romans in Britain,” in eds. Burgess et al, *Accession*, 114; Paulina Kewes, “Roman History, Essex, and Late Elizabethan Political Culture,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Age of Shakespeare*, ed. Robert Malcolm Smuts (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2016), 268; Johann P. Sommerville, “English and Roman Liberty in the Monarchical Republic of Early Stuart England,” in *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essays in Response to Patrick Collinson*, ed. John F. McDiarmid (London: Ashgate, 2007), 203.

⁹² Freyja Cox Jensen, “Ancient Histories of Rome in Sixteenth-Century England: A Reconsideration of Their Printing and Circulation,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2020): 417; Alexandra Gajda, “Political Culture in the 1590s: The ‘Second Reign of Elizabeth,’” *History Compass* 8, no. 1 (2010), 93.

⁹³ Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 143; Collinson, 63; Jamie A. Gianoutsos, *The Rule of Manhood: Tyranny, Gender, and Classical Republicanism in England, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), intro, ch.1.

⁹⁴ Bradley J. Irish, “The Literary Afterlife of the Essex Circle: Fulke Greville, Tacitus and BL Additional MS 18638,” *Modern Philology* 112, no. 1 (August 2014), 280; Paulina Kewes, “Roman History, Essex, and Late Elizabethan Political Culture,” in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 251; Patricia J. Osmond, “In Defense of Tiberius: Edmund Bolton, Tacitean Scholarship and Early Stuart Politics,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2020), 594.

piercing oratory,” with 67 English editions of his works printed between 1600-1649.⁹⁵ Cynical, disturbing and dispiriting, Tacitus offered a safe substitute for Machiavelli’s exposure of humanity’s worst impulses.⁹⁶ While Tacitus’ tone indicated support of liberty, he made no definitive statements on monarchy’s institutional worth.⁹⁷ Tacitus accentuated rulers’ weaknesses to warn his readers about immorality.⁹⁸ Central themes included the potential of government corruption to engulf an entire society and how politicians’ exploitation of human greed could destroy a state.⁹⁹ Tacitus’ newfound popularity did not mean his cynicism superseded the well-read civic humanist histories of Sallust, Pliny, Cato, and Livy.¹⁰⁰ However, by the beginning of the seventeenth century, few believed that Rome had been a centre of civic virtue and decorum.¹⁰¹ Many learned from Tacitus that nobility, virtue, and service were insufficient to achieve political success.

Tacitus’ portrayal of Tiberius’ court in *The Annals of Imperial Rome* demonstrated life’s restlessness under tyranny, and supplied an evocative vocabulary for describing corruption, and a

⁹⁵ John Marston, *The Fawn in The Works of John Marston*. ed. A. H. Bullen. Vol. II (London: John C Nimmo, 1887), Act III Scene I 282. See also Peter Burke, “Tacitism, scepticism, and reason of state,” in *The Cambridge History of Political Thought: 1450-1700*, eds. J. H. Burns, and Mark Goldie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 485.

⁹⁶ Markku Peltonen, *Classical Humanism and Republicanism in English Political Thought 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 124; Robert Malcolm Smuts, “Court-Centred Politics and the Uses of Roman Historians, c1590-1630,” in ed. Sharpe, *Culture and Politics*, 25.

⁹⁷ Gajda, “Second Reign,” 95; Quentin Skinner, “Classical Liberty and the Coming of the English Civil War,” in *Republicanism and Constitutionalism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000-2002), II 12; Daniel J. Kapust, *Republicanism, Rhetoric, and Roman Political Thought: Sallust, Livy, and Tacitus*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 114; Levy, *Historical Thought*, 250.

⁹⁸ Mary F. Tenney, “Tacitus in the Politics of Early Stuart England,” *The Classical Journal* 37, no. 3 (December 1941), 151.

⁹⁹ K. W. Evans, “Sejanus and the Ideal Prince Tradition.” *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 11, no. 2 (Spring 1971): 253; Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 222, “The State of Christendom: history, political thought and the Essex circle.” *Historical Research* 81, no. 213 (August 2008), 435.

¹⁰⁰ J. H. Salmon, “Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England.” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 50, no. 2 (June 1989), 204; Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government, 1572-1651*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 120-131; William White, “Sir John Eliot’s The Monarchie of Man and Early Stuart Political Thought,” *The Historical Journal* 62, no. 3 (2019), 662.

¹⁰¹ Paulina Kewes, “Henry Savile’s Tacitus and the Politics of Roman History in late Elizabethan England.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 74, no. 4 (December 2011), 525; Curtis Perry, “Seneca and English Political Culture,” in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 314; Robert Malcolm Smuts, “Varieties of Tacitism.” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2020), 442.

repertoire of tricks to portray those who sought singular power.¹⁰² Tacitus' fatalistic view of struggles for the court's moral health, where "Adulation bears the ugly taint of subservience," was adapted to critique those who sought advancement from James.¹⁰³ Tacitus' portrayal of Sejanus, advisor to Tiberius, provided a blueprint to vilify any councillor deemed to hold undue influence. Born the son of a gigolo, Sejanus used his exclusive gift that he "knew how Tiberius' mind worked" to gain absolute power, which he used solely for his gratification.¹⁰⁴ Sejanus embodied fears of private councillors, becoming the figure through which contemporary favourites would be judged. Sir John Eliot equated George Villiers, first duke of Buckingham, with the villainous favourite in the Commons, and pamphleteers used the same analogy to a Carr a decade earlier.¹⁰⁵ So while Carr never had the influence or ambition Tacitus instilled into Sejanus, seventeenth-century authors transformed him into the first-century Roman favourite.

Tacitus' revival did not solely provide a new framework for judging prominent courtiers. From the 1570s, continental Catholic polemicists John Leslie, Richard Verstegan, and the Jesuit Robert Persons denounced Elizabethan governance and questioned the Jacobean succession. The Queen's non-noble ministers received particular attention. The Catholic authors indelicately condemned the "smoth tongue, of shamelesse face, of little honestie," of Sir Christopher Hatton, or the "vile and abject courage" of William Cecil, first Baron Burghley who "murther & butcher such as innocetly live under his jurisdiction."¹⁰⁶ Person's portrayal of Robert Dudley, earl of Leicester's "spoyling and oppressing almost infinite private men" and "intollerable licentiousnesse in all filthy kind and manner of carnality" set an absurd precedent for courtiers' behaviour.¹⁰⁷ Person's ad hominem attack, available after the 1641 removal of the Star Chamber's regulatory mechanisms, set a high bar for future commentators to surpass in

¹⁰² F. J. (Fritz) Levy, "The theatre and the Court in the 1590s," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 278; Robert Malcolm Smuts, "Cultural Diversity and Cultural Change at the Court of James I," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (New York: Cambridge, 2005), 107.

¹⁰³ Cornelius Tacitus, *The Histories*, trans. Kenneth Wellesley, comp. Rhiannon Ash (London: Penguin Books, 2009), Bk. 1.

¹⁰⁴ Cornelius Tacitus, *Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Michael Grant (London: Penguin Classics, 1996), 72, 157.

¹⁰⁵ R. N. Oxon, *Sir Thomas Overbury's Vision.... Harleian*, VII 176. See also J.H. Elliot, "Introduction," in eds. Elliott and Brockliss, *Favourite*, 2; J. H. Salmon, "Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England," in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 224.

¹⁰⁶ John Leslie, *A Table Gathered Ouut of a Booke Named a Treatise of Treasons* (Antwerp: J. Fowler, 1572); Richard Verstegan, *A Declaration of the True Causes of the Great Troubles*, (Antwerp: J. Trognesium, 1592), 53.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Persons, *Leicester's Commonwealth* (London: Anno Dom, 1584), 174.

demonstrating evil as an unprecedented occurrence and the current court *bête noire* as a ‘monstrous singularity.’¹⁰⁸

Tacitus’ rediscovery spawned neo-Stoicism, a movement that offered a philosophical basis for the complaints against Carr. The renowned Flemish humanist and translator of Tacitus, Justus Lipsius, believed the historian provided real-life exemplars for Lucius Seneca’s thought.¹⁰⁹ Lipsius fused the philosopher’s Christian values in a Tacitean style to produce the enormously successful *On Constancy* and *Six Books of Politics* which comforted the defeated: “constancy is a right and immovable strength of the mind.... By strength I understand a steadfastness not from opinion, but from judgment and sound reason.”¹¹⁰ Lipsius intended his advice for surviving the war-devastated Low Countries rather than Elizabethan political intrigue.¹¹¹ But, many found Lipsius’ mental world of legal insecurity and spiritual oppression felicitous to 1590s England.¹¹² Stoic philosophy did not dictate a withdrawal from public life but offered guidance for political engagement, with submission, resistance, or indifference, being legitimate responses to an unjust government.¹¹³ Emphasising inner freedom, neo-Stoicism comforted marginalised courtiers by prioritising inner discipline and fortitude while depicting a world where success was not reliant on any of those qualities.

Neo-Stoicism held a broad appeal beyond those seeking to explain career disappointments. The philosophy’s pan-denominational appeal explained its English success.¹¹⁴ Even if John Calvin attacked stoic apathy as fatalistic, his acolytes identified with Seneca’s

¹⁰⁸ Perry, *Favoritism*, 15. See also DiGangi, “Monstrous Favorite,” 159; Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016),.

¹⁰⁹ Adriana Alice Norma McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 3-4; Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 165.

¹¹⁰ Justus Lipsius, *Concerning Constancy*, ed. R. V. Young (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2011); IV. See also Gerhard Oestreich, *Neostoicism and the Early Modern State*, ed. Helmut Georg Koenigsberger and Brigitta Oestreich, trans. David McClintock, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 13.

¹¹¹ Kewes, “Tacitus,” 528-534; Osmond, 595; Tuck, 46.

¹¹² Alexandra Gajda, “The Gordian Knot of Policy, Statecraft, and the Prudent Prince,” in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 292; Sarah Hutton, “Platonism, Stoicism, Scepticism and Classical Imitation,” in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 45-46; McCrea, 11-12.

¹¹³ Reid Barbour, *English Epicures and Stoics: Ancient Legacies in Early Stuart Culture*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 16; Cadman, *Sovereigns*, 10; Kapust, *Political Thought*, 136.

¹¹⁴ Alan D. Orr, “‘God’s hangman’: James VI, the divine right of kings, and the Devil.” *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 18, no. 2 (July 2016), 139; J. H. Salmon, “Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 169, 186

contention that God: “does not pamper a good man like a favourite slave; he puts him to the test, hardens him, and makes him ready for his service.”¹¹⁵ Stoic beliefs in customary law and perpetuation of societal precedents melded with English convictions in common law’s superiority and the nobility’s primacy within established institutions. The governing class initially welcomed the end of Elizabethan parsimony but soon believed James’ liberality benefitted the unworthy. Subsequently, the Senecan adage “it counts as a shameful waste when the recipient is not worth the gift” gained currency.”¹¹⁶ Neo-Stoicism’s popularity was not just an English phenomenon. Some Scots, frustrated by their King’s Anglicisation, found that neo-Stoicism explained their reduced influence after the court’s move to London.¹¹⁷ James notably ignored neo-Stoic principles and vocally expressed his distaste for them.¹¹⁸ The King’s commitment to traditional humanistic ideals meant that he and those close to him, like Carr, were consistently portrayed as contravening neo-Stoic tenets.

Political Culture in Early Stuart England

A group of writers and political and military figures associated with Robert Devereaux, second earl of Essex, were especially receptive to neo-Stoicism.¹¹⁹ The earl offered generous patronage and a stimulating environment for those tired of the Elizabethan court’s Petrarchan affectations and chivalric allegories.¹²⁰ Tacitism’s hint of danger and exclusivity fostered a sense of self-satisfaction. Essexians believed neo-Stoicism provided them a shrewdness which distinguished them from those who naively accepted servitude as obligatory for political survival.¹²¹ Essex, who disliked courtly life, adored Tacitus. In particular, Tacitus’ imperious characterisation of his father-in-law, Gnaeus Agricola, exemplified the singular military

¹¹⁵ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 4.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*, 15.

¹¹⁷ David Allan, *Philosophy and Politics in Later Stuart Scotland: Neo-Stoicism, Culture and Ideology in an Age of Crisis, 1540-1690* (East Linton: Tuckwell, 2000), 95, 122, 216.

¹¹⁸ Glenn Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 61; Freyja Cox Jensen, *Reading the Roman Republic in Early Modern England* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 17.

¹¹⁹ Cressy, *Dangerous Talk*, 47; Irish, “Literary Afterlife,” 277; Paulina Kewes, “Translations of State: Ancient Rome and Late Elizabethan Political Thought,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 83, no. 3 (2020), 470.

¹²⁰ Mordechai Feingold, “Scholarship and Politics: Henry Savile’s Tacitus and the Essex Connection,” *The Review of English Studies* 67, no. 282 (2016), 865; Ornstein, 47; Smuts, “Cultural Change,” 107.

¹²¹ Markku Peltonen, “Citizenship and Republicanism in Elizabethan England,” in eds. Gelderen and Skinner, *Republicanism*, I 104.

leadership Essex craved.¹²² Essex's penchant for Tacitean history saw him patronise John Hayward, whose influential *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie III* attacked aspirational advisors.¹²³ Commercially successful, Hayward reinforced favouritism's dangers when describing Richard II's deposition: "it is oftentimes a daungeous to a Prince, to have evill and odious adherents, as to bee evill and odious himselfe."¹²⁴ Elizabeth banished Hayward to the tower in the Essex rebellion's aftermath and burned the book's second edition.¹²⁵ Despite attracting monarchical displeasure, Tacitean ideology remained in vogue. Historians railed against English kings who employed "minions, and wicked counsellors, as furtherers and abettors in those mischiefs."¹²⁶ Half a century later, Francis Osborn began his *Traditional Memorial on the Reign of King James* by showing "venerable Reverence to.... bold Authors that arraign Tacitus for his Digressions."¹²⁷

Essex's military ethos - combined with sub-rituals based on fidelity, honour and mutual reliance - ensured even after the earl's 1601 execution that the group remained a distinct entity.¹²⁸ While James pardoned many incriminated in the rebellion, the King's unwillingness to reform the Elizabethan government dashed hopes of political rehabilitation. The circle's maintenance saw them manipulate Essex's memory to fit the present cause *de jure*. Rather than a hideous miscalculation, Elizabeth's inconsistency provoked Essex's rebellion, while his risible 1597 Irish campaign "reduced that barbarous Nation to their first rules of noble civility."¹²⁹ The

¹²² Simon Adams, "The patronage of the crown in Elizabethan politics: the 1590s in perspective," in ed. Guy, *Last Decade*, 44; Hugh Gazzard, "'Those Grave Presentments of Antiquitie' Samuel Daniel's Philotas and the Earl of Essex," *The Review of English Studies* 51, no. 203 (August 2000), 428; Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics: 1588-1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 520.

¹²³ Kewes, "Tacitus," 524; F.J. (Fritz) Levy, "Hayward, Daniel and the Beginning of Politic History in England," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 50, no. 1 (Winter 1987), 15-19; Robert Malcolm Smuts, "States, monarchs and dynastic transitions: the political thought of John Hayward" in *Doubtful and Dangerous: The Question of Succession in Late Elizabethan England*, ed. Susan Doran (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014), 277.

¹²⁴ John Hayward, *The First Part of the Life and Raigne of King Henrie III*, (London: John Wolfe, 1599), 6.

¹²⁵ Patrick Collinson, *This England: Essays on the English Nation and Commonwealth in the Sixteenth Century*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2011), 79-80; Richard Dutton, "Patronage, Licensing and Censorship," in ed. Hamilton, *Renaissance Literature*, 90.

¹²⁶ William Martyn, *The Historie, and Lives, of the Kings of England* (London: William Stansby for John Bill, William Barret, and Henrie Fetherstone, 1615); 320.

¹²⁷ Osborn, *Works*, 431.

¹²⁸ Bradley J. Irish, "Solidarity as ritual in the late Elizabethan court: faction, emotion, and the Essex circle," in *Positive Emotions in Early Modern Literature and Culture*, eds. Cora Fox, Bradley J. Irish and Cassie M. Miura (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2021), 124-132; Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 432.

¹²⁹ Gervase Markham, *Honour in His Perfection....* (London: B. Alsop, for Benjamin Fisher, 1624), 26.

advocate of the Jacobean succession who favoured toleration for English Catholics now modelled implacable anti-Spanish Protestantism.¹³⁰ Sympathisers invoked the idealised version of Essex as Cassandra rendered powerless in a system that preferred uncultured submissive advisors, a figure into which Carr was later transformed.¹³¹

The revival of the literary, uncommercial closet drama attracted Essexian literary figures.¹³² Encouraged by the patronage of Senecan style drama by Mary Herbert (née Sidney), countess of Pembroke, authors such as Samuel Daniel and Fulke Greville embraced not just Senecan form but also themes of failed counsel and tyrannical excess.¹³³ The privately performed closet drama added to the exclusivity Essexians cultivated. Freed from corporeal assaults in packed theatres and lewd, audience-pleasing passages, closet dramatists designed their works to impart civic responsibility.¹³⁴ They chose as their focus Seneca and satires of Juvenal and Persius, which complemented Tacitus' first century CE denunciations of Roman decadence.¹³⁵ Essexians also patronised the Spenserian-influenced anti-court poetry of Wither, Christopher Brooke, and William Browne, all of whom were hostile to Carr.¹³⁶ Both genres' glacial pacing of action allowed authors to explore what Stephen Greenblatt has identified as a particular Renaissance concern: how to reconcile submission to hierarchal authority without losing one's identity.¹³⁷ These celebrations of subjects who honourably accommodated themselves to living under unjust laws provided another moral standard Carr failed to attain.¹³⁸

¹³⁰ Lucy Hutchinson, *Memoirs of the Life of Colonel Hutchinson*, (London: J.M. Dent, 1913), 61; Maureen King, "The Essex Myth in Jacobean England," in eds. Burgess et al, *Accession*, 184.

¹³¹ Heather Dubrow, "The Sun in Water": Donne's Somerset Epithalamium and the Poetics of Patronage," in eds. Dubrow and Strier, *Historical Renaissance*, 197.

¹³² Zachary Lesser, "Playbooks," in ed. Raymond, *Print Culture*, 525-526.

¹³³ Curtis Perry and Melissa Walter, "Staging Secret Interiors: The Duchess of Malfi as Inns of Court and Anticourt Drama," in *Duchess of Malfi: A Critical Guide*, ed. Christina Luckyj (London: Continuum, 2011), 92. Lucy Russell, countess of Bedford also patronised Essexian writers (Jacqueline Eales, *Women in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, (Hoboken: Taylor and Francis, 2012), 67).

¹³⁴ Marta Straznicky, "Closet Drama," in ed. Kinney, *Renaissance Drama*, 419-423.

¹³⁵ Smuts, "Roman Historians," 30.

¹³⁶ Michelle O'Callaghan, *The 'Shepeards Nation': Jacobean Spenserians and Early Stuart Political Culture, 1612-1625*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000), 10.

¹³⁷ Greenblatt, *Self-fashioning*, 9.

¹³⁸ Laurie Shannon, *Sovereign Amity: Figures of Friendship in Shakespearean Contexts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 200), 162.

While Essex's followers saw themselves as practitioners of the noble honour code, they never organised in opposition to the Stuart monarchs.¹³⁹ They retained ideological fluidity, part of what Michael Barbezat identifies as varieties of overlapping communities of feeling available to seventeenth-century individuals.¹⁴⁰ Recent scholarship contends that James intended Queen Anne's and Prince Henry's courts to accommodate politically and diplomatically useful Essexians he found philosophically off-putting.¹⁴¹ Prince Henry, like Essex, modelled his behaviour on Agricola, no doubt influenced by his tutor, John Hayward (back in favour after advocating for James' desired English and Scottish union).¹⁴² Henry's 1612 death and Anne's in 1619 removed the thin-skinned Essexian's perception they could influence crown policy.

In James' first decade in England, Essexian concerns over misappropriated power focused on Robert Cecil, first earl of Salisbury. Cecil's role as Secretary, Master of the Court of Wards, and after 1608, Treasurer earned him a substantial income and meant that he maintained the state security apparatus. Despite generous emoluments and extensive commercial interests, Cecil amassed debts of £37,000 to support the networks through which he imparted his influence across London and throughout England's localities.¹⁴³ He dominated cultural patronage and funded architectural projects, thus impressing his political weight and staggering wealth.¹⁴⁴ Contrastingly, Essexians barely noted Carr before his courtship of Frances Howard and the annulment of her marriage to the third earl of Essex.

¹³⁹ Neil Cuddy, "The Conflicting Loyalties of a 'vulger counselor': The Third Earl of Southampton, 1597–1624," in *Public Duty and Private Conscience in Seventeenth-century England: Essays Presented to G.E. Aylmer* eds. John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011), 123.

¹⁴⁰ Michael D. Barbezat, "The corporeal orientation: Understanding deviance through the object(s) of love," in *The Routledge History of Emotions in Europe 1100-1700*, eds. Andrew Lynch and Susan Broomhall (London: Taylor & Francis, 2019), 120.

¹⁴¹ James Knowles, "'To Enlight the Darksome Night, Pale Cinthia Doth Arise': Anna of Denmark, Elizabeth I and the Images of Royalty," in *Women and Culture at the Courts of the Stuart Queens*, ed. Clare McManus (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 23, 42; Robert Malcolm Smuts, "Royal Mothers, Sacred History and Political Polemic," in *Stuart Succession Literature: Moments and Transformations*, eds. Paulina Kewes and Andrew McRae (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 286.

¹⁴² Aysha Pollnitz, "Humanism and the Education of Henry, Prince of Wales," in *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England*, ed. Timothy Wilks (London: Paul Holberton, 2008), 52; Timothy Wilks, "Poets, Patronage, and the Prince's Court," in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 168.

¹⁴³ Pauline Croft, "Robert Cecil and the Transition from Elizabeth to James I," in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 62; David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), 272; J. F. Merritt, "The Cecil's and Westminster 1558-1612: The Development of an Urban Power Base," in *Patronage, Culture and Power: The Early Cecils*, ed. Pauline Croft. (New Haven: Yale Center for British Art, 2002), 232-242.

¹⁴⁴ Pauline Croft, "Introduction," in ed. Croft, *Early Cecils*, xii, xix.

While Whig historians distinguished between a favourite and a minister, in the seventeenth-century mind they were identical.¹⁴⁵ Cecil remained a courtier, successful in “being pleased to be his Maysters will.”¹⁴⁶ He presented the King with personalised gifts and ingratiated himself with Queen Anne and Prince Henry.¹⁴⁷ Cecil staged masques and other royal entertainments for foreign dignitaries and, in 1607, surrendered his family home, Theobolds, with its extensive hunting grounds to the eager James.¹⁴⁸ Reliant on his ‘little beagle’, James fretted over Cecil’s health, bemoaned their infrequent social interactions, and attended to his Secretary on his deathbed.¹⁴⁹ Although later accounts attempted to turn Carr into the all-powerful favourite such as Cardinal Richelieu or the Duke of Lerma, Cecil best resembled these continental figures.¹⁵⁰

James’ retention of Cecilian power structures eased his transition to English kingship but ensured that bitterness from Cecil’s late-Elizabethan rivalry with Essex remained.¹⁵¹ Cecil avoided the public role that Essex sought. So, as Carr would later be, the Treasurer’s detractors portrayed him as shadowy and ignoble.¹⁵² Cecil fulfilled the role assigned by the king to be the

¹⁴⁵ Antonio Feros, “Images of Evil, Images of Kings: The Contrasting Faces of the Royal Favourite and the Prime Minister in Early Modern Political Literature,” in eds. Elliott and Brockliss, *Favourite*, 206; David Starkey, “Introduction: Court history in perspective,” in *The English Court: From the Wars of Roses to the Civil War*, ed. David Starkey (London: Longmans, 1987), 11-12.

¹⁴⁶ Anonymous, “Advance, advance ye ill-disposed muse,” in “Early Stuart Libels: an edition of poetry from manuscript sources,” eds. Alastair Bellany and Andrew McRae. *Early Modern Literary Studies Text Series I* (2005).

¹⁴⁷ Pauline Croft, “Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 140-142; Alan Haynes, *Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, 1563-1612: Servant of Two Sovereigns*. (London: Owen, 1989), 182-184.

¹⁴⁸ Croft, “Introduction,” xiii, Loades, 272

¹⁴⁹ Catherine Loomis, “‘Little Man, Little Man’: Early Modern Representations of Robert Cecil,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 37, no. 1 (Summer 2011), 138-144. That James’ intended the nickname to disparage Cecil see Alan Stewart, “Government by Beagle: The Impersonal Rule of James VI and I,” in *Renaissance Beasts: Of Animals, Humans, and Other Wonderful Creatures*, ed. Erica Fudge (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), 101, 108.

¹⁵⁰ Pauline Croft, “Can a Bureaucrat be a Favourite? Robert Cecil and the Strategies of Power,” in eds. Elliott and Brockliss, *Favourite*, 87, “Introduction,” ix, “The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 1 (1991), 49; Haynes, 185.

¹⁵¹ Pauline Croft, “Rex Pacificus, Robert Cecil, and the 1604 Peace with Spain,” in eds. Burgess et al, *Accession*, 145; Nicholas Tyacke, “Puritan politicians and King James VI and I, 1587-1604,” in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain: Essays in Honour of Conrad Russell* eds. Thomas Cogswell, Richard Cust, Peter Lake, and Conrad Russell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 43-44.

¹⁵² Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 141; Natalie Mears, “Regnum Cecilianum,” in ed. Guy, *Last Decade*, 48.

primary target of anti-court invective.¹⁵³ Subsequently, it was rumoured that he orchestrated the Gunpowder Plot and found 'Here Lieth the Toad' scrawled on his door.¹⁵⁴ Modern commentators have found him represented as the treacherous dwarf Craterus in Samuel Daniel's *The Tragedy of Philotas* and the unworthy Dametas in John Day's *Isle of Gulls* (1606).¹⁵⁵ The unprecedented volume of libels denigrating the Treasurer following his death prompted John Chamberlain to remark, "I never knew so great a man so soon and so generally censured."¹⁵⁶

Libels applied the archetypes of court favourites to Cecil and later to Carr. His absence of noble blood featured prominently, along with accusations he was a false friend whose "unparalleled lust and hunting after strange flesh" represented a sodomitical society.¹⁵⁷ Historians have failed to acknowledge that Cecil was such a polarising figure. Republicans misrepresented the hardworking Treasurer as a remnant of Elizabethan order battling James' unrestrained dotage on his favourites. Later historians did not share contemporaries' view that Cecil's spinal deformity meant "A Crookt back great in state is Englands curse."¹⁵⁸ They reinforced Cecil's characterisation as the virtuous bureaucrat struggling to maintain a functioning commonwealth against a King determined to exhaust it for his gratification.¹⁵⁹ Cecil's political and cultural dominance dispelled the idea that Carr held extraordinary influence over the King between 1607-1612. Instead, during these years, Carr fulfilled a conventional bedchamber role.

Thesis Outline and Methodology

This thesis' first chapter redresses accounts of Carr's incredible career trajectory. The oft-repeated story that Carr's fall at the Accession Tilt of 1607 triggered an instant exaltation will be debunked. The first chapter's other aim is to reveal Carr's family status and explain why

¹⁵³ Croft, "Bureaucrat," 93; James Knowles, *Politics and Political Culture in the Court Masque* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 11.

¹⁵⁴ Gajda, *Political Culture*, 206; Jenny Wormald, "Gunpowder, Treason, and Scots," *Journal of British Studies* 24, no. 2 (April 1985), 143.

¹⁵⁵ Daniel Cadman, "Philotas," 368; Croft, "Reputation," 48, 56, Levy, "theatre," 298. Catherine Loomis, and Albert Tricomi argue that Craterus was a composite character of the court's vices (Loomis, 152; Tricomi, 35). Paul Hammond states that Dametas represented Carr, but this is impossible (*Figuring Sex between Men from Shakespeare to Rochester* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), 132).

¹⁵⁶ Robert Folkestone Williams, *The Court and Times of James the First*, comp. Thomas Birch. (London: Henry Colburn, 1848), I 169.

¹⁵⁷ Anonymous, "Passer by know here is interrred," earlystuartlibels.net, d19, accessed 10 May 2022.

¹⁵⁸ Anonymous, "Heere lieth Robbin Crookt back....," earlystuartlibels.net, d4, accessed 10 May 2022.

¹⁵⁹ Bergeron, *King James and Letters of Homoerotic Desire*, (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999), 72.

Introduction

republican and Whiggish accounts denigrated Carr's Ferniehurst ancestry. The lack of analysis of reasons for Carr's advancement has meant that the baseless accusation that he was the King's lover persists in the historiography. The second chapter contextualises Carr and James' relationship by demonstrating their adherence to conventions of Renaissance friendship. The chapter then explains how contemporary literature's negative perceptions of courtiers inflated estimates of the patronage Carr received and the resultant resentment from other royal family members. The final chapter explains anxieties about favourites as a consequence of James' perceived absolutism. These fears exaggerated estimations of Carr's role in the twin failures of the Anglo-Scottish Union and Cecil's 1610 Great Contract.

To support these arguments, a range of primary sources have been consulted. I have read over 40 court-centred or historical plays to better understand early modern conceptions of figures, such as Carr. Other literature, masques, and poetry, either contemporary or with a revived popularity, supplement dramatists' views. English and European popular advice or courtesy books provide exemplars for courtier's expected behaviour. Classical and sixteenth-century philosophical texts and essays of influence provide further insight into seventeenth-century values. Other evidence includes contemporaneous histories of the Jacobean era and those focused on earlier monarchs' relationships with their companions. Pamphlets and libels have been consulted by myself, along with English and Venetian state papers and court figures' correspondence. That the bulk of surviving letters detailing court life originated from underappreciated public servants on the periphery of true power has been accounted for when assessing their criticisms of Carr.¹⁶⁰ James' perspective has been taken from his printed works, speeches, and surviving letters. This research offers a fresh perspective through which to examine Carr's actions. The thesis will argue that Carr held no significant influence, had a minimal public role, and was moderately compensated before 1613.

While the thesis, for the first time, catalogues the early events of Carr's life through a post-revisionist interpretation, it is not without flaws. Trammelled in Shanghai, Covid-19 restrictions have made my original archival research impossible. I have relied on digital sources and those printed works that navigated China's labyrinthine postal system. As with many

¹⁶⁰ Mears, "Regnum Cecilianum," 47.

revisionist works, criticism can be made that dismantling previous narratives is overemphasised without offering a supported alternative. With no original archival research adding clarity to Carr's ambiguous religious views, Peter Lake's conclusion that anti-Catholicism underpinned perceptions of those in the public sphere remains untested for Carr.¹⁶¹ Keith Brown finds few early modern British historians who provide balanced coverage of Scotland and England.¹⁶² Carr's is a British story, and Carr's Scottish identity has been provided with a fuller exploration than previously. However, the little-known years between 1598-1607 remain unilluminated, as the Ferniehirst papers and National Records of Scotland could not be consulted during the pandemic years. My analysis of Carr focuses on identifying the tropes used in histories and literary productions in seventeenth-century England to mitigate these roadblocks. I hope this approach sheds new light on the previously elusive favourite.

¹⁶¹ Peter Lake, "The politics of 'popularity' and the public sphere: the 'monarchical republic' of Elizabeth I defends itself," in eds. Lake and Pincus, *Public Sphere*, 61.

¹⁶² Keith M. Brown, "Seducing the Scottish Clio: Has Scottish History Anything to Fear from the New British History," in ed. Burgess, *New British History*, 239.

Chapter One

“*Before the frantic puffs of blind-born chance*”: The (not-so) sudden rise of Robert Carr.

On 24 March 1607, at the Accession Day tilt, a courtier's page, recently returned from France, was thrown by a tempestuous horse whilst presenting his shield to the King. On rushing to the stricken rider, James found that the handsome young man had served him previously in Scotland. The King immediately prepared private quarters for his recuperation in Whitehall and visited him daily, where he would teach him Latin. This was the remarkable story most often used to explain how Robert Carr first received the King's attention, the moment from which he rose to unprecedented favour.¹ Literary anecdotes which emphasised the uncommon allowed early modern authors to impart morals to their readers.² The playwright George Chapman's scepticism about courtiers' promotions influenced the story of Carr and James' imagined first meeting. In *Bussy D'Ambois*, Monsieur, the French king's brother, lamented that the “frantic puffs” of monarchs which “pipes through empty men, and makes them dance” had replaced aristocratic service and virtue.³ Stories of Carr's fall are so common that some accident must

¹Aiken, 270; Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant*, 324-325; Maurice Ashley, *The Stuarts in Love: with Some Reflections on Love and Marriage in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1964), 119; *ODNB*, s.v. Carr [Kerr], Robert, earl of Somerset; David M. Bergeron, “King James and Robert Carr: Letters and Desire,” *Explorations in Renaissance Culture* 22 (January 1996), 1, *Royal Family, Royal Lovers: King James of England and Scotland*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1991), 87; Bryan Bevan, *King James VI of Scotland and I of England* (London: Rubicon Press, 1996), 116; Thomas Cogswell, *James I: The Phoenix King* (London, United Kingdom: Allen Lane, 2017), ch. 5; Coomber, 33; Pauline Croft, *King James* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 87; Gardiner, *England*, II 43; Gibbs, 1-2; S. J. Houston, *James I* (London: Routledge, 2014), 45; Edward Le Comte, *The Notorious Lady Essex* (London: R. Hale, 1969), 31; John Lingard, *The History of England from the First Invasion by the Romans to the Accession of William and Mary in 1688* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1902), VII 105; David Lloyd, *State-worthies, Or, The States-men and Favourites of England since the Reformation....* (London: Thomas Milbourne for Samuel Speed, 1670), 472; John Matusiak, *James I: Scotland's King of England* (Stroud, Gloucestershire: History Press, 2015.), ch. 14; McElwee, *Wiseest Fool*, 177; Conrad Russell, *The Reign of James I* (London: Methuen, 1974), 53; Seddon, “Carr,” 49; Somerset, 56; Stewart, *Cradle King*, ch. 16; Frederick von Raumer, *History of the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, Illustrated by Original Documents* (London: John Murray), 1835, II 229; Beatrice White, 18-19; Michael B. Young, *King James and the History of Homosexuality* (Oxford: Fonthill, 2016), ch. 1.

² Joel Fineman, “The History of the Anecdote: Fiction and Fiction,” in ed. Veaser, *New Historicism*, 56-57; Gallagher and Greenblatt, 50; Michael Ulliot, “Early Modern Biography, New Historicism and the Rhetoric of Anecdotes,” *Clio* 40, no. 3 (2011), 310.

³ George Chapman, *Bussy D'Ambois*, in *The Plays and Poems of George Chapman*, ed. Thomas Marc Parrott. (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1910), Act V Scene II 32-53. See also Katherine Rowe, “Memory and Revision in Chapman's Bussy Plays,” *Renaissance Drama* 31 (2002), 132.

have occurred. Yet the subsequent events' enduring prominence reflected authors' intentions to mirror Monsieur's complaints rather than historical reality. This chapter investigates why successive generations of historians transformed a minor event into one of such significance. It shows that the tiltyard creators aimed to obfuscate Carr's family history, to portray him as the theatrical 'base upstart', unfit for public service.

The 'tiltyard story' satisfied readers by comparing Carr's rapid rise to favour with his later fall, fulfilling the adage: "He that rises hardly, stands firmly; but he that rises with ease, alas, falls as easily!"⁴ Later additions to it reinforced Carr's otherness by emphasising Carr's alleged French connections. The story targeted James, fashioning him into the revived Platonic "monstrous winged drone," who "follow[ed] no Law, but Passion and Sensuality."⁵ The story demonstrated a king unable to fulfil Renaissance ideals of gentlemanly friendship, suggesting impropriety in his patronage distribution.

Republican historians avoided identifying Carr's Ferniehirst origins. Despite agreeing he served as a Scottish page, they struggled to give Carr a consistent origin story. Critics denigrated his genealogy to accentuate the unnaturalness of his 1613 marriage to Frances Howard.⁶ Erroneously, D'Ewes, Sparke, and Arthur Wilson ascribed Carr's birth to "mean parentage" in a village near Edinburgh.⁷ Antony Weldon believed that Carr's accident accounted for his sudden preferment and found the favourite "well-bred."⁸ Among other Jacobean critics, Edward Peyton did not address Carr's background, and Francis Osborn stated only that his rise was injudicious.⁹ No sympathetic primary chronicler mentioned the tiltyard. William Sanderson and Godfrey Goodman confirmed he was a gentleman but did not refute the false origin stories.¹⁰

⁴ Ben Jonson, John Marston, and George Chapman, *Eastward Ho!* ed. Michael Neill (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), Act II Scene II 83.

⁵ Robert Persons, *A Conference about the Next Succession* (Reprint, London: R. Doleman, 1681), 53; Plato, *Republic*, trans. C.J. Rowe (London: Penguin, 2012), Book IX.

⁶ See Anonymous, *A Cat May Look upon a King*, (London: William Roybould, 1652), 52; *The Just Downefall of Ambition.....* (London: R. Higgenbotham, 1615), page unnumbered.

⁷ D'Ewes, II 329. See also Michael Sparke, *The Narrative history of King James* (London: M. Sparke, 1651), 18-19; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 54.

⁸ Weldon, *James*, 57.

⁹ Francis Osborn, *Works*, 462.

¹⁰ Goodman, 215; Sir William Sanderson, *Aulicus Coquinaræ....* (Republished 2017 by Forgotten Books), 110, *A Compleat History....* (London: Howard Moseley, 1656), 376.

Although revisionist historians have located the Ferniehirsts on the Scottish borders, they have not explained the importance of Carr's family in his career.¹¹ Carr's court position resulted from George Home. The Ferniehirst's link to Home is not new; in his 1990 doctoral thesis, Neil Cuddy explained Carr's promotion affirmed Home as James' preeminent courtier.¹² This chapter complements Cuddy's work on James' English bedchamber, providing an exposition of the tiltyard creators' motives before explaining the Ferniehirst-Home connection, to definitively disprove a March 1607 accident influenced Carr's rise.

Carr as a Touchstone for Critiques of Jacobean Policies

Resentment within the court at Carr's elevated position partly resulted from his origin outside the English nobility. Monarchies long maintained stable relationships with their peerage, and under the feudal-baronial system, magnates "acted as the bones and the firmness of the states."¹³ Society held that "feigned Gods in Orbs above Gloriously plac'd that specious Hierarchy," a divine justification that assumed a natural inequality.¹⁴ A renewed trust in the nobility as guarantors of social order developed from the inflation and population pressures which tested European stability in the sixteenth century.¹⁵ Yet while essential in local

¹¹ Gardiner, *England*, II 42; G. P. V. Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant, Or, The Court of King James I*, (New York: Atheneum, 1978), 177.

¹² Neil Cuddy, "Loyalties," 132, "The King's Chamber," 127, "The revival of the entourage: the Bedchamber of James I, 1603-1625" in ed. Starkey, *English Court*, 190. For those who find Home brought Carr to court but the tiltyard caused his promotion see *ODNB*, s.v. Carr, Robert, earl of Somerset; Cogswell, *Phoenix*, ch. 5; Somerset, 55.

¹³ Giovanni Botero, *The Reason of State*, trans Robert Bireley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 85. See also Aristotle, *The Politics*, trans. T. A. Sinclair. ed. Trevor J. Saunders (London: Penguin, 1992), III XVII; Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, trans. M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Alden Press, 1967), 136-137; Sir John Ferne, *The Blazon of Gentrie* (London: John Windet, for Andrew Maunsell, 1586), 80; Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. Peter E. Bondanella (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 2005), 36; Robert Pont, "On the Union of Britayne," in *The Jacobean Union: Six Tracts of 1604*, ed. Brian P. Levack and Bruce R. Galloway (Edinburgh: Clark Constable, 1985), 2; G.D. Scull ed., *Dorothea Scott, Otherwise Gotherson and Hogben of Egerton House, Kent, 1611-1680* (Oxford: Parker and Co, 1883), 150, 187, 195.

¹⁴ Fulke Greville, "A Treatise of Monarchy," in *Complete Works* (Hastings: Delphi Publishing, 2021), 324.

¹⁵ Nicholas Canny, "Rethinking the Relations of Elites and Princes in Europe, from the 1590s to the 1720s," in eds. Friedeburg and Morrill, *Monarchy Transformed*, 349; Jennifer Richards, "Assumed Simplicity and the Critique of Nobility: Or, How Castiglione Read Cicero," *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (Summer 2001), 462-464; Robert Shephard, "Court Factions in Early Modern England," *The Journal of Modern History* 64, no. 4 (December 1992), 722, 742. The nobilities' position within Scottish society mirrored England. See Keith M. Brown, *Noble Power in Scotland from the Reformation to the Revolution*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 9, *Noble Society in Scotland*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), 6-8; Julian Goodare, *The Government of Scotland: 1560-1625*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 88.

governance, noble families required more than conferment of their titles and offices and sought court positions to affirm their privilege and ancient lineage.¹⁶

Sixteenth and seventeenth-century advice books justified noble privilege and great families' exalted position. Recycling Aristotelian and Ciceronian thought, the influential Baldassare Castiglione observed that within the court, "as soon as it is discovered that one of them was well born and the other not, the latter will be respected far less than the former."¹⁷ English authors' need to prove the durability of "old riches or prowess remaining in one stock" saw them outdo each other to demonstrate the longevity of noble power.¹⁸ Although the Black Death decimated England's great families, commentators celebrated the endurance of the nobility "which hath stood against the waves and weathers of time."¹⁹ Thus, those descended from "those auncestours, who for the common state, neither spared labour, losse of libertie nor life" were most suited for public office.²⁰ These guidebooks' success assisted republican views that James promotion of Carr was to the "dishonour of our Ancient Nobility."²¹

Renaissance theatre pushed the trope of the excessively influential low-born favourite. Aside from the royal family, only the nobility could patronise dramatists.²² Consequently, playwrights ensured inappropriate counsellors originated outside established families. Ben Jonson's *Sejanus* became a notorious exemplar of this archetype.²³ Christopher Marlowe's

¹⁶ Hamish M. Scott, "Aristocrats and Nobles," in *Early Modern Court Culture* ed. Erin Griffey (Abingdon: Routledge 2022), 102-103.

¹⁷ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. by George Bull (London: Penguin, 2003), bk.4. For the works English influence see Peter Burke, *The Fortunes of the Courtier*, (London: Polity Press, 1995), 56-79; John E. Mason, *Gentlefolk in the Making: Studies in the History of English Courtesy Literature and Related Topics from 1531 to 1774* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935), 34.

¹⁸ Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. L. Alston (London, 1583. Reprint, Shannon: Irish University Press, 1972), 38. See also James Cleland, *Hērō-paideia, or The institution of a young noble man*, (Oxford: Joseph Barnes, 1607), 4; Ferne, 2; Robert Greene, *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier....* (London: John Wolfe, 1592), page unnumbered; Nicholas Grimald, *The Institucion of a Gentleman*. (London: Charles Whittingham, 1839), xxvi; Gervase Markham, *gentleman's academie* (London: Valentine Simmes for Humfrey Lownes, 1595), 44; Annibale Romei, *The Courtiers Academie* (London: Valentine Simmes, 1598), 186.

¹⁹ Francis Bacon, *The Essays* (Edited by John Pitcher. London: Penguin Books, 1985), "Of Nobility"; Laurence Humphrey, *The Nobles or of Nobilitye* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1563), Book One.

²⁰ Henry Peachem, *Peachem's Compleat Gentleman*: ed. G. S. Gordon (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906), 2; William Vaughan, *The Golden-grove* (London: Simon Stafford, 1600), "Of Noblemen."

²¹ Francis Osborn, *Works*, 462.

²² John Leeds Barroll, *Anna of Denmark, Queen of England: A Cultural Biography* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 53-56; Dutton, *Authorship*, 5.

²³ Ben Jonson, *Sejanus: his fall*, in ed. Wilkes, *Five Plays*, Act IV Scene I, Act V Scene I, Act IV Scene I.

Gaveston in *Edward II* (1591) was another whose family history made him unfit to advise a king. The Duke of Lancaster attacked Edward for promoting his favourite, asking:

My lord, why do you thus incense your peers
That naturally would love and honour you,
But for that base and obscure Gaveston?²⁴

Samuel Daniel transformed the Macedonian nobleman Dimnus into a scheming court parasite, blaming his 'low estate' for conspiring against Alexander.²⁵ Even *Bussy D'Ambois*, which initially floated possible royal service from those outside the nobility, eventually condemned the entire court system, which corrupted any man regardless of birth.²⁶ The ingrained negativity towards non-noble advisors created by these literary precedents ensured the acceptance of republican belittlements of Carr's origins.

Despite widespread support for their eminence, the nobility feared a rising gentlemanly or non-elite class confident in their ability to self-fashion to courtly standards.²⁷ Those with insufficient private wealth could not be trusted to act for the public good. Thus, any position obtained by the humbly born had to have been gained ignobly.²⁸ As the crown's confiscation of church property during the Reformation lessened great peers' ability to challenge royal authority, monarchs held greater scope to select their advisors. John Hayward summed up elite anxieties in his history of Henry IV, describing the Bishop of Durham as: "another of the Kings dainties... rising from meane estate to so high a pitch of honour, hee exercised the more excessively his ryote, avarice and ambition."²⁹ The English nobility's primacy and ignorance of the Scottish

²⁴ Christopher Marlowe, *Edward II*, ed. Martin Wiggins and Robert Lindsey (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), Act I Scene I 98-100.

²⁵ Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedy of Philotas*, in *The Dramatic Works*, comp. Rev. Alexander Grosart. Vol. III of *The Complete Works in Verse and Prose of Samuel Daniel*, (Blackburn: for the Spenser Society, 1885), Act I Scene I, 198.

²⁶ *Bussy D'Ambois*, Act I Scene I, 3. For alternative interpretations see Giles Bertheau, "Prince Henry as Chapman's 'Absolute Man,'" in ed. Wilks, *Henry Revived*, 138.

²⁷ Susan D. Amussen, "Social Hierarchies," 273 and Janet Dickinson, "Nobility and Gentry," in ed. Doran and Jones, *Elizabethan World*, 286-287; Michael Steppat, "Social Change and Gender Decorum: Renaissance Courtesy," in *The Crisis of Courtesy: Studies in the Conduct-book in Britain, 1600-1900*, ed. Jacques Carré (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 28.

²⁸ Bellamy, *Scandal*, 172; John E. Mason, 24; Curtis Perry, "1603 and the Discourse of Favouritism," in eds. Burgess et al, *Accession*, 171.

²⁹ Hayward, *Henrie III*, 10. Hayward borrowed his description from Persons' (*Leicester*, 21).

hierarchy meant that Carr drew accusations of being another low-born favourite who challenged traditional power structures.

James believed status gave ‘natural authority’ to governors, even if the great Scottish families’ disinterest in royal service made this imperceptible in his Scottish reign.³⁰ In England, James encountered a nobility hypersensitive to rewards distributed beyond their limited circle.³¹ European observers found that the later Tudors would “withdraw sometime upon the sudden, their great favour from certaine Subjects of high estate.”³² During Elizabeth’s reign, fourteen noble families expired, and 60 peers went unrewarded between 1590 and 1603.³³ James’ advice to Henry that his servants should be “men of the noblest blood.... contrarie to that of start-ups” raised expectations for a more patrician regime.³⁴ Following his English arrival, James’ rehabilitated those out of favour with Elizabeth. In 1605 he increased the powers of Henry Howard, earl of Northampton, head commissioner of the Earl Marshalship - the gatekeeper of noble privilege.³⁵ Nevertheless, the great magnates still believed James’ policies “drowned the dignity of the best of the Nobility.”³⁶ They were dismayed that a Scot addressed the pressing need to create new titles.³⁷ But nobles’ lack of appreciation was a culmination of exclusion and lack of deliverance for earned entitlements, both real and imagined, in Elizabeth’s final years.

Even if Carr were from the Scottish nobility’s highest rank, this would unlikely have impressed English commentators. They detested Scottish identification with their locality,

³⁰ Keith M. Brown, *Noble Society*, 5; Mark Fortier, “Equity and Ideas: Coke, Ellesmere, and James VI and I” in eds. Fischlin and Fortier, *Royal Subjects*, 278; Reid R. Zulager, “A Study of the Middle-Rank Administrators in the Government of King James VI of Scotland, 1580-1603,” (PhD diss., University of Aberdeen, 1991), 18, 54.

³¹ Richard Cust, *Charles I and the Aristocracy, 1625-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 41.

³² Persons, *Leicester*, 12; Verstegan, *Treatise*, 56.

³³ Wallace MacCaffrey, “Patronage and Politics Under the Tudors,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 24; Linda Levy Peck, “Peers, patronage and the politics of history,” in ed. Guy, *Last Decade*, 90; Curtis Perry, “The citizen politics of nostalgia: Queen Elizabeth in early Jacobean London,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 23, no. 1 (Winter 1993), 94. For fears Elizabeth had created a noblesse de robe see Sir Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia....* (London: Anno Dom, 1641), 5.

³⁴ James VI and I, *Basilicon Doron*, 37 and Trew Law of Free Monarchies 65, 72 in *King James VI and I: Political Writings* ed. Johann P. Sommerville (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), *A Meditation upon the XXV, XXVI, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX Verses of the XVth Chapter of The First Book of The Chronicles of The Kings*, in *Workes of Prince James* (Edinburgh: Henry Charteris, 1603), 15.

³⁵ Cust, *Aristocracy*, 22; Linda Levy Peck, “Mentality of a Jacobean grandee,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 162.

³⁶ *Five Years*, 8. See also Dorothea Scott, 152-154; Hutchinson, 62; Michael Sparke, 19.

³⁷ Peck, “Peers,” 108; Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1965), 100.

perceiving the Scottish peerage as disproportionately large and loosely defined.³⁸ Carr was neither “the son of an obscure Scottish knight” nor were the Ferniehirsts peers. Carr’s father, Thomas, and half-brother were significant lairds, an imprecise and broad classification with no parallel in England.³⁹ As 52 acres represented the minimum landholding for lairdship, Carr’s critics easily assigned him a penurious background.⁴⁰ The Ferniehirsts were of higher status than most, ranking above the 307 bonnet lairds, or cadet families, in the borders who shared their surname with an original kinship group but acted independently.⁴¹ The admission of hundreds of Protestant bonnet lairds to the 1560 Reformation Parliament and again in 1587 further confused outsiders seeking to understand the lairds’ precise hierarchy.⁴²

The Ferniehirsts were one of four principal border families, alongside the Eastern March Humes (Homes) and the Middle March Scotts of Buccleuch and Kerrs of Cessford.⁴³ The English government respected Ferniehirst power. A 1585 intelligence report noted they held “larger means than many of the nobility.”⁴⁴ The destruction of records in Henry Radcliffe, fourth earl of Sussex’s 1570 razing of Ferniehirst castle, and Thomas Ker’s failure to leave an inventory, has made Ferniehirst wealth challenging to calculate.⁴⁵ Historian Maureen Meikle believes that their fourteen burgages around Jedburgh saw them dominate the region. The unprecedented 5000 merk dowry for Thomas’s sister, Margaret, in 1559 demonstrated their wealth.⁴⁶ While Ferniehirst Castle lacked the grandeur of those inhabited by the Bothwells or

³⁸ Anonymous, *A Modern Account of Scotland....*, Harleian VI 125; Bacon, *The Union of the Two Kingdoms of Scotland and England* (Edinburgh, s.n. 1670), 37.

³⁹ Wormald, “Marriage Partner,” 72-73.

⁴⁰ Anna Groundwater, *The Scottish Middle March, 1573-1625: Power, Kinship, Allegiance* (Royal Historical Society, 2010), 37-38.

⁴¹ Keith M. Brown, *Noble Power*, 49; Maureen M. Meikle, “The Invisible Divide: The Greater Lairds and the Nobility of Jacobean Scotland,” *The Scottish Historical Review* 71, no. 191/192 (Summer/Fall 1992), 75.

⁴² Kerr-Peterson, 7; Lee, *Pen*, 5; Jenny Wormald, “Ecclesiastical vitriol: the kirk, the puritans and the future king of England,” in ed. Guy, *Last Decade*, 186.

⁴³ Gordon Donaldson, *All the Queen's Men: Power and Politics in Mary Stewart's Scotland* (London: Batsford Academic and Educational, 1983), 108; Goodare, “Borderlands,” 202; Lee, *Maitland*, 7.

⁴⁴ *CSPS*, VII 557.

⁴⁵ *CSPS*, III 168.

⁴⁶ Maureen M. Meikle, “Lairds and Gentleman: A Study of the Landed Families of the Eastern Anglo-Scottish Borders c.1540-1603,” PhD diss., Edinburgh University, 1988), 214, 255. In 1586 James gifted to Huntly 5000 merks to marry Henrietta Stewart (Keith M. Brown, *Noble Society*, 126).

Huntlys, the rebuild of the substantial original, completed in 1598, was more extensive than any other Middle March residence.⁴⁷

A laird's complex responsibilities were equivalent to any peer in England. Possession of a barony, of which the Ferniehirsts held nine in Roxburghshire, gave the holder the right to sit in the Scottish parliament.⁴⁸ A barony made a laird accountable for rent collection, property transfers, provisioning of parish schools, and supervision of local courts.⁴⁹ Along with official duties, lairds kept cohesion within the kinship group through managing manrent, military organisation, defence of tenants, and simultaneously projected wealth and power.⁵⁰

Ferniehirst manpower factored significantly in Scottish politics. The 1580 return from France of Esmé Stuart (Stewart), the first duke of Lennox, would have been impossible without Ker's border power base.⁵¹ James' forbade Carr's sister Anne's marriage to his friend Huntly to forestall a threatening alliance between the Ferniehirsts and the highland Gordons.⁵² Historian Julian Goodare equates their status to Northumbrian country gentry but found their proximity to Edinburgh offered more significant political influence.⁵³ While Scots regarded the Ferniehirsts as the equivalent of nobility, the English saw them as the equivalent of the knightly class, or "a powerful but vague concept."⁵⁴ So while contemporaries had some justification for viewing Carr outside the highest echelons of nobility, claims of a base parentage were vastly overstated.

Concomitant with fears that James failed to respect the preeminence of the great English families, enduring portrayals linked the King's pacifism to his creation of an effeminate court

⁴⁷ Keith Durham and Graham Turner, *Strongholds of the Border Reivers: Fortifications of the Anglo-Scottish Border, 1296-1603*, (Oxford, Osprey, 2009), 42; Tranter, *The Fortified House in Scotland, Volume One: South-East Scotland* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1962).128, 140.

⁴⁸ For Andrew Kerr taking his seat in parliament see *RPS*, A1597/1/6/1.

⁴⁹ Keith M. Brown, *Noble Power*, 62, *Noble Society*, 184; Meikle, "Lairds," 76-80. Ian D. Whyte, *Scotland before the Industrial Revolution: An Economic and Social History, C 1050-c 1750*. (London: Longman, 1995), 243.

⁵⁰ George MacDonald Fraser, *The Steel Bonnets: The Story of the Anglo-Scottish Border Reivers* (1971. Reprint, New York: Skyhorse Pub., 2015), ch. xviii; Thomas I. Rae, *The Administration of the Scottish Frontier 1513-1603* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1966), 9, 26; Wormald, "Bloodfeud," 75.

⁵¹ Ruth Grant, "George Gordon, Sixth Earl of Huntly and the Politics of the Counter-Reformation in Scotland, 1581-1595," (Doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2010), 40.

⁵² Christianna Floyd Kay, "Royal Opportunity: Noble Marriages in the Reigns of Elizabeth I and James VI/I, 1558-1625," (PhD Diss, Victoria University of Wellington, 2020), 108; Forbes, 94-98.

⁵³ Goodare, "Borderlands," 202.

⁵⁴ Kerr-Peterson, 6.

culture that degraded English masculine virtues. James believed a king should “be slowe in taking on a warre,” imbibing the Erasmian view, “a better kind of fame derives from the art of peace.”⁵⁵ James as a peacemaker dominated Stuart propaganda, notably in Ben Jonson’s *Masque of Queens* (1609), where “Men-making poets” defeated the forces of witchcraft and disorder.⁵⁶ James believed his ‘Rex Pacificus’ fulfilled Erasmus’ demand for Christian unity to counter an expansionist Islamic challenge.⁵⁷ Initially, the public celebrated their pacifist King while commemorating Elizabeth for her imperialistic anti-Spanish policies.⁵⁸ But as James’ English reign entered its second decade, the quixotic Stuart propaganda struggled to counter a wave of Elizabethan nostalgia.⁵⁹ James’ attempt to simultaneously celebrate his and Elizabeth’s foreign policy collapsed following Henry’s November 1612 death, leading to a growing perception that “the country of Elizabeth was reduced beneath his scepter.”⁶⁰ Eventually, the Thirty Years’ War’s outbreak meant that the idea the “Souldiour must give place to the scholler” completely fell from favour.⁶¹

Ideas of an ‘evil empire’ threatening to destroy an honourable society has been influential in western civilisation.⁶² James did not believe Spain had the will or the ability to overwhelm England. Still, many feared that the Jacobean peace allowed Spain to recover its strength and destroy Protestant Europe.⁶³ James’ rejection of neo-Stoicism allowed critics (who incorrectly positioned Epicureanism as oppositional to Stoicism) to portray him as a “truly Saturnalian

⁵⁵ Basilicon Doron, 33; Desiderius Erasmus, *The Adages of Erasmus*, ed. William Barker, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 319-333, *The Education of a Christian Prince*, ed. Neil M. Cheshire, Michael John Heath, and Lisa Jardine, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 133. See also “Speech, 16 March 1604” in ed. Sommerville, *Political Writings*, 135.

⁵⁶ Ben Jonson, *The Complete Masques*, ed. Stephen Orgel (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 135.

⁵⁷ Robert Applebaum, “War and Peace in ‘The Lepanto’ of James VI and I,” *Modern Philology* 97, no. 3 (February 2000), 339; Ronald G. Musto, “Just Wars and Evil Empires: Erasmus and the Turks,” in *Renaissance Society and Culture: Essays in Honor of Eugene F. Rice, Jr.*, eds. John Monfasani and Ronald G. Musto (New York: Italica Press, 1991), 200; Robert Malcom Smuts, “The Making of *Rex Pacificus*: James VI and the Problem of Peace in an Age of Religious War,” in eds. Fischlin and Fortier, *Royal Subjects*, 382.

⁵⁸ Sir Robert Cotton, *An Answer To such Motives As were offer'd by certain Military -Men to Prince Henry* (London: Henry Mortlock, 1675) 4-99.

⁵⁹ Jerzy Limon, “The masque of Stuart culture,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 209, 218; Perry, “Late Manuscript Poetry,” 209-220; Robert Malcolm Smuts, “The Political Failure of Stuart Cultural Patronage,” in eds. Lytle and Orgel, *Patronage*, 170; Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981), 21.

⁶⁰ Aiken, 312.

⁶¹ Romei, 267.

⁶² Lipsius, *Constancy*, II VII, XXII ; Musto, 197.

⁶³ Anonymous, *Robert Earl of Essex's Ghost....*, *Harleian* V 222.

prince.”⁶⁴ Accusations of self-indulgence sprung from portrayals of a decadent and insular court presided over by a monarch oblivious to an existential threat to the nation. Its classical precedent can be found in Tacitus’ description of Rome’s humiliation by the Thracians, following the satyritic Tiberius’ seclusion to Capri.⁶⁵ It is a fundamental theme of Phillip Massinger’s *Duke of Milan* (1623), where a ruler and a court are consumed by liberality and blurred sexual boundaries, living in an atmosphere where the smooth-faced courtiers of Milan ignored the mounting Spanish menace following their crushing victory at Pavia. The exploding news culture and heightened pulpit rhetoric contributed to the idea that English honour depended on protecting European Protestantism.⁶⁶

In early modern Europe, it was assumed that Kings should have “prowess in Chivalry,” and to be “unwarlike was to be unmanly.”⁶⁷ Justifications for patriarchal authority identified women with decay and stoked fears about their ability to revert to the animal, another example of ‘the other’ who effaced masculine power and identity.⁶⁸ Attacking a tyrant’s virility emphasised the servility a regime inculcated into its acquiescent subjects.⁶⁹ Views that women embodied social crisis saw Elizabeth dogged by allegations that sexual interests influenced her political decisions.⁷⁰ That a monarch’s desires influenced appointments diminished during James’ reign

⁶⁴ Lucius Annaeus Seneca; *Apocolocyntosis*, trans W. H. D. Rouse. Project Gutenberg, 2003), page unnumbered. See also Isaac Casaubon, *Corona Regia*, ed. by Winfried Schleiner trans. Tyler Fyotek, 1615, (Reprint, Genève: Droz, 2010), 87. For Seneca’s views on Epicurus see Lucius Annaeus Seneca, *Dialogues and Essays*, trans John Davie, comp. Tobias Reinhardt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

⁶⁵ Tacitus, *Annals*, 181-184. Similar ideas are in Procopius, *The Secret History*, trans. G. A. Williamson and Peter Sarris (London: Penguin Books, 2007), 9.

⁶⁶ Michael J. Braddick, “State Formation and Social Change in Early Modern England: A Problem Stated and Approaches Suggested.” *Social History* 16, no. 1 (January 1991), 8; John Rigby Hale, *Renaissance War Studies*, (London: Hambledon, 1983), 489-493.

⁶⁷ Persons, *Succession*, 42. See also Anonymous, *Examples for King . . .*, Harleian II 209; Henry Wright, *The First Part of the Disquisition of Truth* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1616), 76. Queen’s too were expected to embrace warfare see Thomas Dekker, *The Whore of Babylon* in *The Complete Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (Hastings: Delphi Publishing, 2019, Act V, Scene VI.

⁶⁸ Susan D. Amussen, “Cuckold’ Haven: Gender and Inversion in Popular Culture,” in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 528; James Knowles, “Can ye not tell a man from a marmoset?: Apes and Others on the Early Modern Stage,” in ed. Fudge, *Renaissance Beasts*, 138; Camille Paglia, *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 1-12; Gail Kern Paster, *The Body Embarrassed: Drama and the Disciplines of Shame in Early Modern England*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 17.

⁶⁹ Bushnell, *Tyrants*, 20; Gajda, “Christendom,” 445; Anthony Kaldellis, *Procopius of Caesarea: Tyranny, History, and Philosophy at the End of Antiquity* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 145.

⁷⁰ Leslie, *Treasons*, page unnumbered; Robert Shephard, “Sexual Rumours in English Politics: The Case of Elizabeth I and James I,” in *Desire and Discipline: Sex and Sexuality in the Premodern West* eds. Jacqueline Murray and Konrad Eisenbichler, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 103. Judith Richards argues that Elizabeth’s sex was not a barrier to legitimacy (“Love and a Female Monarch: The Case of Elizabeth Tudor.” *Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 1999): 142).

but still existed. In a government where personal access to the king was paramount, James' decision to revive the bedchamber as a political centre and then have it dominated by his Scottish companions raised the twin English fears of public business transacted in private and domestic affairs under foreign control.⁷¹

Playwrights highlighted the social challenges of gender inversion resulting from an uxorious political culture.⁷² Samuel Daniel's Cleopatra attributed her downfall to "my lascivious court / Fertile in ever fresh and new choice pleasures."⁷³ Courts depicted in plays were centres of cuckoldry, a distinctive concern in early modern society.⁷⁴ Ludovico's demise in *The Duke of Milan* came from his attention to his wife, Marcelia - the ultimate marker of effeminacy.⁷⁵ William Davenant's *Cruell Brother* (1630) and Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar* (1640) focused on the lack of manly vigour in London and the court.⁷⁶ Republican historians portrayed Carr as connecting these interlinking stereotypes of James as a pacifist king and his court as a centre of effeminacy.

James' reluctance to wage war meant he was perceived to have abandoned his royal duties. In 1618, the rout of the forces of Frederick of the Palatine, husband to Princess Elizabeth, created contempt for James' pusillanimous abandonment of his paternal responsibilities.⁷⁷ The pamphlet *Tom Tell Troath* (1622) lamented: "The old compasse of honour is quite forgotttt.... to

⁷¹ Amy L. Juhala, "For the King Favours Them Very Strangely: The Rise of James VI's Chamber," in eds. Kerr-Peterson and Reid, *Noble Power*, page unnumbered; Robert Malcom Smuts, "James I and the Consolidation of British Monarchy?," in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 72. Dries Raeymaekers, "Access," in ed. Griffey, *Court Culture*, 128-130.

⁷² Mario DiGangi, *The Homoerotics of Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 160; Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts, Modern Sexualities*. (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 111.

⁷³ Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedie of Cleopatra*, in comp. Grosart, *Works*, III Act I Scene I.

⁷⁴ Philip Massinger, *The Roman Actor*, in *The Plays of Philip Massinger*, comp. William Gifford (London: William Templeton, 1840), Act IV Scene II; Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, *The Changeling*, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works*, eds. Gary Taylor and John Lavagnino (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), Act I Scene II 1-80, Act III Scene III 9-12; John Webster, *The White Devil*, in *The Duchess of Malfi, the White Devil, the Broken Heart and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, ed. Jane Kingsley-Smith. (London: Penguin Books, 2014), Act I Scene II, 315-321.

⁷⁵ Laura Gowing, "Ordering the body: illegitimacy and female authority in seventeenth-century England," in eds. Braddick and Walter, *Negotiating Power*, 52; Tim Stretton, "Women," in ed. Doran and Jones, *Elizabethan World*, 340.

⁷⁶ Richard Brome, *The Court Beggar. A Comedie*, (Richard Marriot, and Tho. Dring, 1653), Act III Scene II, 1609, Act V Scene I, 2285-2290; *Cruell Brother*, Act II Scene III.

⁷⁷ Cogswell, *Blessed Revolution*, 24-25; Gianoutsos, "Criticizing Kings," 1373; Jane Rickard, "James I and the Performance and Representation of Royalty," (PhD diss., University of Warwick, 2002), 126.

which they tacke and untacke all publicke affaires.”⁷⁸ As justifications for action against Spain mounted, a suspicion developed that courtiers benefited from the continued peace through their consistent accrual of patronage.⁷⁹ The younger nobility, ignored by Elizabeth, increasingly identified with the Senecan concern:

brave men should take up arms and spend all night in camp, standing before the rampart with bandaged wounds, while in the city perverts and those who live on vice have not a care to trouble them.⁸⁰

Historian George Akrigg argues that James’ historical reputation would have been entirely different had his reign ended in 1619.⁸¹ But it did not, and his failure to uphold English conventions of masculine honour became a defining characteristic applied to the entire Stuart dynasty.

The burying of Carr’s genealogy

Carr’s absence of a title would have ensured the English viewed him as inadmissible for public service. That he was from a border family added to this unease. In particular, the borderers of the Middle March filled the English with fear and revulsion. Suspicious of outsiders and governed by concepts of clan loyalty and the Bloodfeud, the English viewed the entire region as uncivilised.⁸² Andrew Boorde summarised English perceptions in his *The First Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (1542): “The borders of Scotland... lyueth in much povertie and penurye.... In these partyes be many out-lawes and stronge theves, for much of theyr lyvyng standeth by steyling and robbing.”⁸³ Even other Scots complained of the borderers, Scottish Knight Richard Maitland encapsulating the standard view, “Hors, nolt, nor scheip; Nor yit dar sleip For their mischiefs.”⁸⁴ The porous border’s judicial insecurity, combined with the Cheviot’s

⁷⁸ Anonymous, *Tom Tell Troath*..., *Harleian* II 433.

⁷⁹ *A Cat May Look*, 63; William Shakespeare, *Coriolanus*, ed. Jonathan V. Crewe, (New York: Penguin Books, 1999), Act I Scene III 22-25.

⁸⁰ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 13.

⁸¹ Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant*, 395.

⁸² Raphael Holinshed, *The First and Second Volumes of Chronicles* (London: Henry Denham, 1587), 9; John Leslie, *The Historie of Scotland*, trans. Father James Dalrymple, 1578 (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, 1889), 97; Pont, 21; Thomas Wilson, *The State of England Anno Dom. 1600*, ed. F. J. Fisher Vol. XVI (London: Camden Miscellany, 1936), 14.

⁸³ Andrew Boorde, *The First Boke of the Introduction of Knowledge* (London: N. Trübner & Co, 1870), 136.

⁸⁴ Sir Richard Maitland, *The Poems of Sir Richard Maitland, of Lethingtoun, Knight* (Glasgow: Maitland Club, 1830), 52.

broken country, created ideal territory for the search for plunder known as reiving. Between 1586-1596 the English ambassador William Bowes estimated Scots took £92,989 6s 1d of English property.⁸⁵ For James, who consistently faced potential court conspiracies, a disorderly border distracted potentially oppositional lairds from involving themselves in Edinburgh's politics.⁸⁶ The potential to end the disorder also justified James' accession and the eventual union of the two crowns.⁸⁷

The entire border region undercut notions of English racial superiority and challenged ideals of shared Protestant values, and the efficacy of Tudor state justice. Scottish and English borderers maintained closer economic and social links with each other than with their London or Edinburgh compatriots. This interconnectedness contributed to the English government's belief the entire area was lawless, which saw local Englishmen barred from government roles following the 1569 Northern Uprising.⁸⁸ Despite English justice's alleged superiority, statistics failed to show reduced crime rates in the English Marches. English inability to impose order was blamed on the Scottish lairds' reluctance to control their followers. Despite Southern England's disdain toward the border, no seventeenth-century historian mentioned this component of Carr's identity. Along with hazy genealogical references, much about the borderers and his parents' lives spawned misunderstandings of Carr's genealogy and regional origins.

Although his family's lack of a title made Carr unfit for office *prima facie*, this could be explained by his borderer status. Jacobean critics wanted to portray James' court as decadent and pacifist, an image which clashed with the Ferniehersts' violent past. In the English imagination, the borderers were the antithesis of pacifism or effeminacy. William Camden noted, "the fernhersts and others nutured in the arts of war have greatly distinguished themselves."⁸⁹

⁸⁵ MacDonald Fraser, ch. VI, XII, XVII; Julian Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999,) 261; D. L. W. Tough, *The Last Years of a Frontier: A History of the Borders During the Reign of Elizabeth*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928), 29.

⁸⁶ Jane E. A. Dawson, *Scotland Re-formed, 1488-1587*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 306; Goodare, "Borderlands," 180.

⁸⁷ Anonymous, *A Treatise About the Union of England and Scotland*, in eds. Levack and Galloway, *Union*, 61; Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton, *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, ed. Charles Sanford, (Edinburgh: Printed at the University Press by T. and A. Constable for the Scottish History Society), 447; John Dodderidge, *A Breif Consideracion of the Unyon* in eds. Levack and Galloway, *Union*, 143-144.

⁸⁸ *CCP*, VIII 562.

⁸⁹ Camden, II 10.

Historian Mervyn James might have been describing the borderers when portraying the Essex circle as:

characterised by the self-assertive lifestyle, to latent violence and competitiveness of honour.... comprised above all in the ties of mutual loyalty and support, based on kinship and affinity, which bound together the lineage and its allies.⁹⁰

The borderers shared characteristics with the mainstay of Essexian iconography. For example, Philip Sidney's 'shepherd knight' renounced the court to find solace in pastoral solitude.⁹¹ Those who chafed under perceived Jacobean absolutism admired the contumaciousness of the borderers who took "to thame selves the grettest libertie and license."⁹² Amongst those clamouring for a Spanish war, a cynicism developed over James' refusal to "remove every evil intention....to return to the path of virtue".⁹³ The appeal of the borderers' independence was now preferable to living in aimless courtly servitude.

An early modern belief in inherited personal characteristics further explains why republican historians never explained Carr's parentage.⁹⁴ As the English despised his father, Thomas Ker, that there was no seventeenth-century mention of Carr's paternity appears strange. Widely regarded as an "envious and malicious papist," Elizabeth herself labelled Ker an 'evil man'.⁹⁵ A 1581 intelligence report stated that he was "a most unfit person to be near or about a young King."⁹⁶ A reconverted Catholic, Ker remained devoted to his rediscovered faith. Spain identified Ferniehirst Castle as a centre for Jesuit activity, and Ker introduced Father Robert Persons and William Crichton to James in December 1581.⁹⁷ Ker captained 20 lesser lairds and 1500 followers throughout the Marian Civil Wars and Northern Uprising against the English-backed forces which challenged royal authority.⁹⁸ In May 1581, the execution of the regent

⁹⁰ Mervyn James, *Society*, 434.

⁹¹ Richard C. McCoy, *Rites of Knighthood: The Literature and Politics of Elizabethan Chivalry* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2021), 67; O'Callaghan, *Spenserians*, 19.

⁹² Leslie, *Historie*, 97

⁹³ Castiglione, bk. four.

⁹⁴ Cleaver, "the dutie of Parents towards their children"; Grimald, xlvi; Romei, 196, 216.

⁹⁵ *CSPS*, IV 599; Thomas Sparke, *A Sermon Preached at Cheanies the 14. of September, 1585. at the Buriall of the Right Honourable the Earle of Bedford* (Oxford, Joseph Barnes, 1585), 4.

⁹⁶ *CSPS*, V, 622.

⁹⁷ *CSPSp*, III 547; Ruth Grant, "The Brig o' Dee Affair, the sixth earl of Huntly: Huntly and the politics of the Counter-Reformation," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 95.

⁹⁸ *CCP*, I 460; *CSPS*, III 48, IV 130; *SP*, V 64.

James Douglas, the fourth earl of Morton, demonstrated the triumph of the anti-English Lennox and Arran faction. The English angrily noted that Ker “stood in a shott over against the scaffold.... delyting in this spectacle.”⁹⁹

Thomas Ker showed scant respect for the English Protestant administration, yet Carr’s opponents recognised his admirable qualities. His singular loyalty to his religion and the Marian cause made him unique among her supporters. Despite the destruction of his property in April 1570, he remained “fretting and fuming” after the English victory at Edinburgh Castle in February 1572.¹⁰⁰ His devotion was such that he sought refuge with Sir John Forster in England rather than surrendering to the hated John Erskine, seventeenth or first earl of Mar.¹⁰¹ Of the nine peers and 18 major lairds who fought for Mary, only he and Adam Gordon chose exile over reconciliation.¹⁰² Ker’s willingness to suffer for his principles made it difficult for republicans to turn him into the opportunist who profited off “other mens ruines,” a feature of Person’s account of Dudley’s genealogy.¹⁰³ Carr’s descent from Thomas Kerr did not conform to authors who desired to show James’ court had abandoned the military honour code,

Carr’s mother, Janet Scott of Buccleuch, could also not diminish his heritage. Scott was known for her chastity, obedience, loyalty, and piety, fulfilling the Renaissance ideal where “there cannot be anything more holie, or worthier of a wise man, than to seeke conjunction with an excellent and commendable wife.”¹⁰⁴ Her marriage to Thomas Ker surprised all, but Scott prioritised the need to end the Buccleuch/Ferniehirst.¹⁰⁵ Historians Ruth Grant and Maureen Meikle find Scott the critical court intermediary for those who wished to contact Mary Queen of

⁹⁹ Calderwood, 575; Meikle, “Lairds,” 106; Rae, 206.

¹⁰⁰ *CSPS*, IV, 129; *SP*, V 63-65.

¹⁰¹ *CSPS*, IV 696. See also Anonymous, *Diurnal of Remarkable Occurents* (Edinburgh, Bannatyne Club, 1833), 258-259.

¹⁰² *RPCS*, II, 334.

¹⁰³ Persons, *Leicester*, 161, 178.

¹⁰⁴ Romei, 237. See also *Basilicon Doron*, 41; Alex Niccholes, *A Discourse on Marriage and Wiving...., Harleian*, II 145.

¹⁰⁵ *RPCS*, II, 665. See also Sir William Fraser, *Buccleuch*, 136-142; Anna Groundwater, “He made them friends in his cabinet: James VI’s suppression of the Scott-Ker feud” in eds. Kerr-Peterson and Reid, *Noble Power*, page unnumbered.

Scots.¹⁰⁶ Scott advocated for her husband throughout his French exile and ensured the continued familial support from the English Warden, Forster.¹⁰⁷ Such was Scott's handling of the family's mounting debts, she managed their finances after her husband's return.¹⁰⁸ The scandal-free Scott was even more challenging to disparage than her husband. In a society where parents were to be "examples of all godlinesse and virtue," Janet Scott could not be used to explain her famous son's perceived shortcomings.¹⁰⁹

The false accusations that Thomas Ker conspired with Arran to murder Francis Russell, the second earl of Bedford, on 27 July 1585 further explained the burying of Carr's family history. In early modern society, fatherly guidance was paramount lest a son "fal under woemens Judgment, which commonly is unjust and fantasticall."¹¹⁰ The true story of Thomas Ker's demise created sympathy for Carr, who never knew his father who died in exile in Aberdeen in 1586. If disseminated, events following Bedford's death would have transformed Ker into the admired tragic archetype whose innocence is ancillary to maintaining sovereign authority.

James' spiritless response to the claimed Ferniehirst-Arran conspiracy must have tempted republicans to have included the episode in their histories. By March 1585, the King believed that Arran and his supporters prevented the finalisation of the Anglo-Scottish Peace Treaty.¹¹¹ James sacrificed Ker, who had supported him and his mother, for an English subsidy and potential place in the succession.¹¹² When informed of the accusations, the English ambassador, Edward Wotton, Baron Wotton of Marley, reported James "sheds tears over it like a newly

¹⁰⁶ *CSPS*, V 304, VI, 637. See also Ruth Grant, "Politicking Jacobean Women: Lady Ferniehirst, the Countess of Arran and the Countess of Huntly," in *Women in Scotland: C.1100 - C.1750*, ed. Elizabeth Ewan and Maureen M. Meikle, (East Linton [Scotland]: Tuckwell Press, 2002), 96-97; Maureen Meikle, "Victim's, Viragos and Vamps: Women of the Sixteenth Century Anglo-Scottish Frontier," in John C. Appleby and Paul Dalton, *Government, Religion and Society in Northern England 1000-1700* (Stroud: Sutton, 1998), 182.

¹⁰⁷ *CSPS*, V 222.

¹⁰⁸ *CBP*, I 357; *CSPS*, VII 24-25.

¹⁰⁹ Cleaver, "dutie." See also Barnabe Rich, *The Excellency of Good Women* (London: Thomas Dawson, 1613), 7; Vaughan, "duties of the wife towards her husband."

¹¹⁰ Cleland, 44. Similar ideas are expressed in Sir Thomas Elyot, *The boke named The Governor*, comp. Foster Watson, (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1907), XIX; Ferne, 25; Grimald xxxiv

¹¹¹ Ruth Grant, "Making of the Anglo-Scottish Alliance of 1586," in Julian Goodare and Alasdair A. MacDonald, *Sixteenth-century Scotland: Essays in Honour of Michael Lynch*, (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 218.

¹¹² *CSPS*, VIII 43. See also Julian Goodare, "James VI's English Subsidy," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 121; Felicity Heal, "Royal Gifts and Gift-Exchange in Sixteenth Century Anglo-Scottish Politics," in *Kings, Lords and Men in Scotland and Britain, 1300-1625: Essays in Honour of Jenny Wormald*, eds. Stephen I. Boardman and Julian Goodare, eds. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 295.

beaten child.”¹¹³ Without an investigation, James ordered no “revenge aganis ony Englishman” and wrote to Elizabeth in August wishing “for the repairing of this foresaid mischief.”¹¹⁴ The treaty eventually disappointed James, which removed his appetite to subjugate himself to English demands. Still, Ker remained under arrest in Aberdeen.¹¹⁵ Even the staunch Presbyterian, John Spottiswood, believed that Ker’s “service of the king’s mother.... should have made him better respected.”¹¹⁶

Bedford’s death was no Catholic-Scottish conspiracy. Instead, the English government memorialised the slain earl as a model of Calvinist virtue and put an end to the Arran faction’s influence.¹¹⁷ On 31 July, Wotton wrote to Elizabeth’s Principal Secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham, advising: “[the Queen] would do well to seem to take great offence at the death of Lord Russell.”¹¹⁸ Walsingham, eager to be rid of Arran, concurred, informing Wotton on 5 August.¹¹⁹ Sir John Forster’s two initial reports created problems in attributing Bedford’s death to Ker. Forster, who resented Bedford’s attendance, blamed him for intervening in a *mêlée* caused by the “usual troublemakers.” He praised Ferniehirst for his measured conduct and stated both men “parted quietly owte of the feeld.”¹²⁰ On 31 July, Forster turned on his friend, claiming that Ker arrived at the truce in battle arrangement, which even Forster’s admirer, historian Robert Borland, attributed to English government pressure.¹²¹ On 23 August, Arran entered Forster’s account, despite the warden’s chief witness, Robert Carvel, not being in attendance.¹²² Forster informed Walsingham that Arran and Ker devised the murder on 22 July, despite nobody knowing that Bedford would attend his first day of truce in two years.¹²³ A foremost responsibility for any early modern ruler was executing justice.¹²⁴ These lies meant that republican revelations of Thomas Ker’s identity would reveal the immorality and political

¹¹³ *CSPS*, VIII 41.

¹¹⁴ Akrigg, *Letters*, 65; Calderwood, 379; *CSPS*, VIII 41; *RPCS*, III 759.

¹¹⁵ *CPB*, I 199-210.

¹¹⁶ Spottiswood, II 327.

¹¹⁷ James Melville, *Memoirs of His Own Life*, ed. T. Thomson, 1827, (Reprint, New York: AMS Press, 1973), 344.

¹¹⁸ *CSPS*, VIII 46.

¹¹⁹ *ibid*, 56.

¹²⁰ Calderwood, 378; *CBP*, I, 156-161; *CSPS*, VIII 38.

¹²¹ Robert Borland, *Border Raids and Reivers* (Dalbeattie: Thomas Fraser, 1898), ch. 6; *CSPS*, VIII 45.

¹²² W. C. Dickinson, “The Death of Lord Russell, 1585.” *The Scottish Historical Review* 20, no. 79 (April 1923), 184.

¹²³ *CBD*, 195-199; Tough, 238.

¹²⁴ Maurizio Viroli, *From Politics to Reason of State: The Acquisition and Transformation of the Language of Politics, 1250-1600*, (Reprint, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 21-22.

opportunism they wished to associate with Carr and the Jacobean court, instead displayed by central figures of Elizabethan militant Protestantism.

Despite his flaws, Ker was a folk hero rather than a tamed courtier, meaning he remained unmentioned in pre-nineteenth-century descriptions of Carr. His father's notoriety made it implausible that when encountering a prone Carr in 1607, James merely recalled: "he had a Page of that name when he came first into England."¹²⁵ At the least, he must have remembered his "own bed took fire, which made great frey among them" at Andrew Kerr's 1585 wedding.¹²⁶ As vital border agents, Carr's parents played a significant role in James' early life. Given his genealogy, there could have been nothing less remarkable than Thomas Ker's and Janet Scott's son fulfilling a role within James' administration.

Motives, Antecedents, and Influences for the Tiltyard Creators

The moment when favourites were 'made' was a popular subject in Jacobean culture for two reasons. It highlighted their obscure origins and demonstrated that personal qualities or meritorious actions played little part in their ascent. Dramatists rarely made favourites' value apparent to their audience, attributing their rise to the whims of kings who failed to exhibit constancy, "a virtue to be required at al times."¹²⁷ The trope of a sudden arrival solved the need for a complete characterisation or justification of a favourite's function.¹²⁸ Early modern stage advisors represented a corrupt system.¹²⁹ In Jonson's *Sejanus: his fall*, characters constantly appeared and vanished, representing the court as inherently volatile.¹³⁰ Even the sympathetically portrayed Montmorency, the Lord High Constable, in Chapman's *The Tragedy of Chabot*

¹²⁵ Arthur Wilson, *History*, 54.

¹²⁶ *CSPS*, VII 533.

¹²⁷ La Perrière, *The Mirrour of Policie*, (London: Adam Islip, 1599), page unnumbered; Bushnell, *Tyrants*, 9-20; Worden, "Favourites," 162, 165.

¹²⁸ John Day, *The Isle of Gulls*, (London: Thomas White for the Old English Drama, 1831), Scene II, 20; *Duke of Milan*, Act II 27-28.

¹²⁹ Greenblatt, "Marlowe," 56.

¹³⁰ Anne Barton, *Ben Jonson, Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 93-95; Jonathan Dollimore, "Sejanus: History and Realpolitik," in *Ben Jonson*, ed. Harold Bloom, (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1991), 164.

Admiral of France (1621¹³¹), had his arrival accentuated.¹³² Favourites' hastened arrival also resulted from the stage's time constraints. Nevertheless, D'Ewes, Sparke and Wilson appropriated the accepted archetype of the propitious favourite to show that Carr's arrival contravened the neo-Stoic advice to "shun good fortune that makes men weak and causes their minds to grow sodden."¹³³

Little archival evidence supports republican accounts of the 'tiltyard story'. Historians most frequently cite Thomas Howard, earl of Suffolk's quip that Carr should "speak well of his own horse" for "breaking a leg in the King's presence."¹³⁴ Suffolk wrote this in reply to Sir John Harington, the tutor of Princess Elizabeth, who sought further advancement at court. A successful Elizabethan naval commander, Suffolk was made a Privy Councilor by James in 1603 as part of the Howard family's rehabilitation. But James' olive branch balanced the power of Cecil and signalled his goodwill to conformist Catholics.¹³⁵ Neither Suffolk nor his uncle, Northampton, were social companions, and their influence ended at the political backwater of the Privy Chamber.¹³⁶ Ignored by the King, disliked by Anne, and without Cecil's organisational structures, Suffolk was one failed courtier writing to another.¹³⁷ By exaggerating its faults, Howard softened the news that Harington was unrequired at court. He therefore disguised his lack of usefulness to a potential client with a feigned aloofness from court politics.¹³⁸ Suffolk's

¹³¹ Whether James Shirley revised Chapman's original is debated. See Derek Crawley, "The Effect of Shirley's Hand on Chapman's 'The Tragedy of Chabot Admiral of France,'" *Studies in Philology* 63, no. 5 (October 1966), 679, 683-89; Theresa Herring, "Chapman and an Aspect of Modern Criticism," *Renaissance Drama* 8 (1965), 169; Irving Ribner "The Meaning of Chapman's 'Tragedy of Chabot,'" *The Modern Language Review* 55, no. 3 (July 1960), 322.

¹³² George Chapman, *The Tragedy of Chabot Admiral of France*, in ed. Parrott, *Plays*, Act II Scene II 13. Montmorency is equated with Buckingham (Norma Dobie Solve, *Stuart Politics in Chapman's Tragedy of Chabot*, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1928), 100-101).

¹³³ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 11.

¹³⁴ Norman Egbert McClure ed., *The Letters and Epigrams of Sir John Harington* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1930), 34.

¹³⁵ Croft, "Bureaucrat," 85.

¹³⁶ Neil Cuddy, "Reinventing a Monarchy: The Changing Structure and Function of the Stuart Court, 1603-88," in *The Stuart Courts*, ed. Eveline Cruickshanks, (Stroud: Sutton, 2000), 67; Eric N. Lindquist, "The Last Years of the First Earl of Salisbury, 1610-1612," *Albion* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1986), 27. For the Privy Chamber's former prominence see Starkey, "Introduction," 13, "Representation Through Intimacy: A study in the symbolism of monarchy and court office in early-modern England," in *Symbols and Sentiments: Cross-cultural Studies in Symbolism*, ed. I. M. Lewis (London: Academic Press, 1977), 198-201.

¹³⁷ Levy, "theatre," 275; Timothy Wilks, *Of Neighing Courses and of Trumpets Shrill: A Life of Richard, 1st Lord Dingwall and Earl of Desmond (c.1570-1628)* (London: Lucas Publishing, 2012), 18; Williams, 138.

¹³⁸ D. H. Craig, *Sir John Harington* (Boston: Twayne, 1985), 23, 29; Debora K. Shuger, "A Protesting Catholic Puritan in Elizabethan England," *Journal of British Studies* 48, no. 3 (July 2009), 587-630. 592.

letter is an Epistle Disswasorie, a particular correspondence style that contemporary Angel Day advised to deliver unwelcome news.¹³⁹

Numerous issues undermined the letter's veracity. Norman McClure whilst compiling Harington's letters in the 1930s, moved Henry Harington's nineteenth-century attribution from 1611 to 1607.¹⁴⁰ This change made little sense as in 1611 Carr shared the enrolments office with Harington. Secondly, Suffolk exemplified English administrators' failure to understand James' sense of humour.¹⁴¹ He resented the jibes about his weight and innuendo about his wife and Robert Cecil.¹⁴² A self-styled cultured antiquarian, Suffolk aimed to amuse Harington, a collector and composer of libels and satirist of court excess.¹⁴³ A private moment between two unfulfilled friends; the letter was not intended as an evisceration of the Jacobean system.

Crucially, the isolated Suffolk relied on second-hand gossip about Carr. The passage which consistently excited historians aiming to demonstrate James' romantic feelings for Carr is:

Robert Carr is now most likely to win the Prince's affection, and do the it wonderously in a little time. The Prince leaneth on his arm, pinches his cheek, smoothes his ruffled garment, and, when he looketh at Carr, directeth discourse to divers others.¹⁴⁴

Here Suffolk remarked on the speed Carr gained James' countenance. Alan Bray argues that this behaviour remained within the period's homosocial boundaries.¹⁴⁵ Actually, Suffolk took inspiration from Queen Isabella's description of her husband in *Edward II*:

But dotes upon the love of Gaveston.
He claps his cheeks and hangs about his neck,
Smiles in his face and whispers in his ears;
And when I come he frowns, as who should say,
'Go whither thou wilt, seeing I have Gaveston.'¹⁴⁶

¹³⁹ Angel Day, *The English Segetorie* (London: Robert Waldergrave, 1586), 148-156. See also Carolyn James and Jessica O'Leary, "Letter-Writing and Emotions," in eds. Lynch and Broomhall, *Emotions*, page unnumbered.

¹⁴⁰ Harington, 32-34; Sir John Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*.... comp. Henry Harington, Ill. Thomas Park. Vol. I. (London: J Wright, 1804), 390-397.

¹⁴¹ Jenny Wormald "James VI and I, Basilicon Doron, and the Trew Law of Free Monarchies: the Scottish context and the English translation," in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 54.

¹⁴² Akrigg, *Letters*, 234, 250, 257.

¹⁴³ D. H. Craig, 2; Peachem, 107; Woolfe, 124.

¹⁴⁴ McClure, *Harington*, 34.

¹⁴⁵ Alan Bray, *The Friend* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 27-28, "Homosexuality and the Signs of Male Friendship in Elizabethan England," *History Workshop* 29 (Spring 1990), 5,9.

¹⁴⁶ *Edward II*, Act II Scene I 51-55.

Suffolk selected Marlowe's interpretation as it provocatively blurred sodomy with friendship, patronage, social rank, and power.¹⁴⁷ Other common literary gestures are evident throughout the letter. James never dismissed 18 courtiers for their outdated attire, nor failed to reply to Cecil's messenger for failing to praise his prize jennet. Equally unrealistic is Suffolk's warning that Carr may attempt to seduce Harington's wife, which reinforced the Renaissance trope that favourites were "extreme amorists" unable to control their sexual desires.¹⁴⁸

Scant evidence supports the King personally witnessing Carr's 1607 Accession Day accident. During Elizabeth's reign, the tilt had been an act of aggression and supplication; the goal was to demonstrate martial prowess, but it was controlled, at least temporarily, in the Queen's service.¹⁴⁹ James had little enthusiasm for this Elizabethan relic.¹⁵⁰ Those who wished to propagate Spenserian chivalry were associated with the court of Prince Henry.¹⁵¹ John Nichols recorded that James attended Divine Service at Whitehall on 24 March but did not mention a tiltyard visit.¹⁵² In his account of Carr's fall, Anthony Weldon indicated that the King's dislike of the tilt meant that he was not in attendance:

newes as instantly carried to the King,
having little desire to behold the triumph,
but much desired to have it ended, and no sooner ended,
but the King went instantly to visite him.¹⁵³

¹⁴⁷ Goldberg, *Sodometries*, 119; Curtis Perry, "The Politics of Access and Representations of the Sodomite King in Early Modern England," *Renaissance Quarterly* 53 (2000), 1061; Bruce R. Smith, *Homosexual Desire in Shakespeare's England: A Cultural Poetics*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 210.

¹⁴⁸ For examples see Anonymous, *Strange Apparitions, or the Ghost of King James* (London: J. Aston, 1642), 4; Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Loyal Subject in The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge: University Press, 1906), Act I Scene II; *Court Beggar*, Act I Scene I 184; John Ford, *Love's Sacrifice in Complete Works of John Ford*, Durham: Lulu.com, 2019 Act I Scene II, Act III Scene IV; Persons, *Leicester*, 22-32, 174-175.

¹⁴⁹ McCoy, 61-62.

¹⁵⁰ Paul Hammer, "Upstaging the Queen: the Earl of Essex, Francis Bacon and the Accession Day celebrations of 1595," in eds. Bevington and Holbrook, *Masque*, 58; Roy C. Strong, "The Popular Celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 21, no. 1/2 (Jan- Jun 1958), 101.

¹⁵¹ Charles Cornwallis, *A Discourse of the Most Illustrious Prince, Henry Late Prince of Wales*. (London: John Benson, 1641), 16; Caterina Pagnini, "Henry Stuart 'The Rising Sun of England' The Creation of a Prince of Wales (June 1610)," *Drammaturgia* 16, no. 6 (2019), 263; Wilks, "The Pike Charged: Henry as Militant Prince," in ed. Wilks, *Henry Revived*, 197.

¹⁵² Nichols, II 123.

¹⁵³ Weldon, *James*, 57-59.

James was often bored and fatigued at public events.¹⁵⁴ Depictions of James drew from Philip Sidney's King Eurachus, who hated "pompous ceremonies." James' reluctance to interact with his subjects emphasised James' aversion for communality, a distinctive feature of early modern life.¹⁵⁵ James preferred exclusivity when presenting the court's magnificence over negotiating the throng of 12,000 who attended the Whitehall tiltyard.¹⁵⁶

There was also little that confirmed that a March 1607 fall caused Carr's malady. A month after the tilt, the Treasurer recorded an expense for "makeinge ready certen lodgings at Whitehall for his Majestie to see Master Carre whoe lay sicke there by the space of twoe days;" which did not indicate a broken leg.¹⁵⁷ The recurring claim that James' arranged Carr's treatment from the renowned French physician, Sir Theodore Turquet de Mayerne, cannot be accurate as his English visit ended in October 1606.¹⁵⁸ James was caricatured as a lewd moralising schoolmaster.¹⁵⁹ Showing Carr as the docile minion receiving the King's lectures supported claims James' desired the same receptivity from the public.¹⁶⁰ But the King could not have taught Carr Latin in the two days the young borderer was confined. Historians took the Suffolk joke literally: "some one should teach him English too; for, as he is a Scottish lad, he hath much need of better language."¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁴ Jeroen Duindam, "Royal Courts," in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern European History, 1350-1750: Volume II Cultures and Power* ed. Hamish M. Scott (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 462; Leah S. Marcus, "Jonson and the Court," in *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*, ed. Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2006, 33; McCabe, "Panegyric and its Discontents: The First Stuart Succession," in eds. Kewes and McRae, *Succession Literature*, 34.

¹⁵⁵ Philip Sidney, *New Arcadia*, in *Complete Works*, (Hastings: Delphi Publishing, 2013), page unnumbered. See also Una McIlvenna, "Emotions in Public: Crowds, mobs and communities," in eds. Lynch and Broomhall, *Emotions*, page unnumbered.

¹⁵⁶ Jonathan Goldberg, *James I: And the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne and Their Contemporaries* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1989), 32; Michael Lynch, "Court Ceremony and Ritual during the Personal Rule of James VI," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 75; Jenny Wormald, "James VI and I: Two Kings or One?" *History* 68, no. 223 (1983), 204.

¹⁵⁷ Cuddy, "King's Chambers" 127(n).

¹⁵⁸ H. R. Trevor-Roper, *Europe's Physician: The Life of Theodore De Mayerne*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); 101-113.

¹⁵⁹ Alan Stewart, "Boys' buttocks revisited: James VI and the myth of the sovereign schoolmaster," in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Thomas Betteridge (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 134; John Morgan, *Godly Learning: Puritan Attitudes towards Reason, Learning, and Education, 1560-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 205; Grant G. Simpson, "The Personal Letters of James VI: a Short Commentary," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 143.

¹⁶⁰ *Basilicon Doron*, 42.

¹⁶¹ McClure, *Harington*, 33.

Republican sources were confused whether Carr attended the tilt as a page of James Hay, first earl of Carlisle or Richard Preston, earl of Desmond.¹⁶² He certainly was not one of the 30 Englishmen with the means to joust.¹⁶³ Yet emphasis that Carr remained an equine page connected him to the pastoral, bumbling striver of popular drama.¹⁶⁴ Carr could have represented George Home. However, associations with James' most competent minister precluded depictions of Carr as another unpopular Scottish favourite. Instead, he was attached to Hay, the Francophile whom Jenny Wormald identifies as James' most embarrassing courtier.¹⁶⁵ If he were Hay's page, it would be strange that Carr took no part in Hay's January 1607 wedding masque yet three months later presented his shield to the King.¹⁶⁶

The tiltyard creators designed the story to show both protagonists' defiance of societal norms. Firstly, James' instantaneous interest in Carr ignored Thomas Breme's advice, "to know his behaviour and wisdom and virtues, long before thou admittest him as thy secreete friend."¹⁶⁷ Although virtue was believed to be a noble characteristic, exceptions could be made "through the proper virtues, and merites of a man tending to the benefit of his country," including "valiency in armes, or such lyke."¹⁶⁸ Carr's ignoble entrance contrasted with Seneca's vision of how the lowly could win acclaim:

We humans at times enjoy the sight of a courageous youth meeting the charge of some beast with his spear-point.... the more honourable the young man who does so, the more pleasure we take in the sight...here is a contest worthy of God.¹⁶⁹

Castiglione advised the wellborn to participate in jousts and tournaments, like Barnabe Rich, who argued in 1578, "there hath bene no glory thought so great....as that which hath bene

¹⁶² Arthur Wilson, 54.

¹⁶³ Wilks, *Neighing Coursers*, 29; Alan Young, 23, 41, 123.

¹⁶⁴ See Ludowick Carlell, *The Fool Would be a Favourit*. (London: Humphrey Moseley, 1657), Act I Scene I, 125-173, Act IV Scene II, 297-375; John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi*, in ed. Kingsley-Smith, Act I Scene II, 198.

¹⁶⁵ Wormald, "Marriage Partner," 75.

¹⁶⁶ Nichols, II 108.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas Breme, *The mirrour of friendship* (London: Abel Jesses, 1584), page unnumbered.

¹⁶⁸ William Segar, *Honor Military, and Civill* (London: Robert Barker, 1602), 209-210. See also Elyot, 189; Grimald, li. For those who believed that virtue was the preserve of the nobility see Cleland, 4, 179; *Dorothea Scott*, 157-158, 175; Humphrey, bk. one. For alternative ways to demonstrate virtue see Sir Walter Raleigh (Falsely Attributed), *The Cabinet-council* (London: Thomas Newcomb for Thomas Johnson, 1658), 36; Ferne, 17; Markham, *gentlemans academie*, 51.

¹⁶⁹ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 6.

gained by force of martiall prowess.”¹⁷⁰ Historian Ruth Kelso finds a courtier’s jousting ability the most respected masculine pursuit symbolising fortitude and self-assertion.¹⁷¹ The second earl of Essex intended his performance at the tiltyard to become the talk of London. He contested all-comers at the 1594 and 1596 tilts and starred in the allegorical *Pageant of the Choice of Life*, co-scripted with Francis Bacon in 1595.¹⁷² Carr’s supposed humiliation is a direct counterpoint to Essex’s magnificence.

Literary precedents inspired republican assertions that Carr fell as he presented his lord’s shield, not the dangerous charge. The image of the stricken Carr linked him to the buffoons of the great proponents of Elizabethan chivalric poetry. Carr resembled Phillip Sidney’s unarmed new Corinthian white knight in *New Arcadia*.¹⁷³ However, Edmund Spenser’s Guyon best-portrayed Carr, who in James’ hated *Faerie Queene* (1590), was the first knight to be unseated by the heroine Britomart, and thus “fownd him selfe dishonored so sore / Ah gentlest knight, that ever armor bore.”¹⁷⁴ With strict conventions governing the awarding of prizes, James, to honour Carr despite his ignominy, again demonstrated the King as the ‘other.’¹⁷⁵ The accident indicated how Carr could neither challenge nor serve royal authority. Carr’s vulnerability to James’ “tender and grateful nurse” gave both feminine qualities.¹⁷⁶ The story underlined James’ reputation for inconsistency and lack of stability, suggesting he embodied “the frailty of a woman, whose weak mind is often set on loose delights.”¹⁷⁷

Accusations of Carr’s effeminacy gave way to the allegation that James pursued sodomitical relationships with his favourites. Elite men were expected to be the ultimate

¹⁷⁰ Castiglione, bk. one. See also Grimald, lxxi; Barnabe Rich, *Allarme to England* (London: Henrie Middleton, for C. Barker, 1578), page unnumbered.

¹⁷¹ Ruth Kelso, *The Doctrine of the English Gentleman in the Sixteenth Century*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1929), 154.

¹⁷² Paul E. J. Hammer, “The smiling crocodile: the earl of Essex and late Elizabethan ‘popularity,’” in eds. Lake and Pincus, *Public Sphere*, 101, “Accession Day,” 44-52; Robert Malcolm Smuts, “Court Entertainments,” in ed. Kinney, *Renaissance Drama*, 285; Alan Young, 37.

¹⁷³ Sidney, *New Arcadia*, page unnumbered.

¹⁷⁴ Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. A. C. Hamilton. (London: Routledge, 2017), bk. III, i, vii. James’ asked Elizabeth to punish Spenser (Richard A. McCabe, “The poetics of succession, 1587-1605: the Stuart claim,” in ed. Doran, *Doubtful*, 196-197.

¹⁷⁵ For tilt rules see Segar, 188-190.

¹⁷⁶ Le Comte, 31. See also Greenblatt, *Self-fashioning*, 240.

¹⁷⁷ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Noble Gentleman* in ed. Waller, *Works*, XIII Act II Scene I.

guarantors of sexual order in households and communities.¹⁷⁸ Claims James' abandoned his responsibilities to devote himself to Carr represented the corruption of the monarchy, for if James could not control his passions, how could he rule others?¹⁷⁹ Person's unprecedented use of Robert Dudley's sexuality to break down traditional hierarchies and social bonds provided a readymade framework for Jacobean and Carolinian critics. Thus, sexual depravity became a metaphor for political corruption, which created a perception that those "with their skirtes and laps open" could gain coveted positions.¹⁸⁰ The tiltyard story appealed to those who believed that government should not be reduced to the "particular and peculiar inclination of the King."¹⁸¹ Unlike traditional portrayals of evil councillors being responsible for misgovernment, the implications of a sexual attraction made James culpable for Carr's ascendancy.

The two's relationship illustrated the revived interest in Ovid's "Metamorphosis" fleeting reference to Jupiter being "fired with love for Phrygian Ganymede."¹⁸² The Roman invocation of an interest in fables' usefulness saw authors invoke the low-born Ganymede as a substitute for Carr. The allegorical figure of Jupiter showed that James had fallen into a 'womanly' love with Carr's beauty, or the sexual pleasure he offered, trumping his more cerebral qualities.¹⁸³ The story demonstrated James' perversion of the gentle love between true friends and succumbing to his passions.¹⁸⁴ Christopher Marlowe captured fears of sovereigns' sexuality superseding their duty in the *Tragedy of Dido* (1586) where Venus chastised her disorderly sodomite father for

¹⁷⁸ Gowing, 62; James Knowles, "Sexuality: A Renaissance Category," in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 680; Christine Peters, *Women in Early Modern Britain, 1450-1640* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 72.

¹⁷⁹ Bellany, *Scandal*, 178; Danielle Clarke, "The sovereigns vice begets the subjects error': the Duke of Buckingham, 'sodomy' and narratives of Edward II, 1622-28," in ed. Betteridge, *Sodomy*, 47; Hammond, 117.

¹⁸⁰ Greene, page unnumbered. Daniel Juan Gil, *Before Intimacy: Asocial Sexuality in Early Modern England* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), 9; Curtis Perry, "Court and Coterie Culture," in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 106.

¹⁸¹ Perry, *Favouritism*, 33, 62.

¹⁸² Ovid, *The Metamorphosis*, trans. Mary M. Innes (New York: Penguin Books, 1955), 229.

¹⁸³ Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 61-66; Hammond, 75; Michael B. Young, "James VI and I: Time for a Reconsideration?," *Journal of British Studies* 51, no. 3 (July 2012), 541.

¹⁸⁴ Joseph Cady, "The 'Masculine Love' of the 'Princes of Sodom' Practising the Art of Ganymede' at Henri III's Court: The Homosexuality of Henry III and His Mignons Pierre de L'Estoile's *Mémoires-Journaux*," in eds. Murray and Eisenbichler, *Sexuality*, 139; Umberto Grassi, "Emotions and Sexuality: Regulation and homoerotic transgressions," in eds. Lynch and Broomhall, *Emotions*, page unnumbered; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan Rhetoric: Theory and Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 16-17.

“playing with that female wanton boy / Whiles my Aeneas wanders on the Seas.”¹⁸⁵ More explicitly, the first stanza of Richard Barnfield’s 1594 paean to Ganymede finished:

Of that faire boy that had my hart intangled;
Cursing the time, the place, the sense, the sin;
I came, I saw, I viewd, I slipped in.¹⁸⁶

Given the omnipresence of the Ganymede fable, it is hardly surprising that many applied its imagery in their representations of James’ relationship with Carr.

While contemporary libels more frequently invoked Ganymede in describing James’ relationship with his cup-bearer, Buckingham, the fable authors later melded this story to the tiltyard fall.¹⁸⁷ Since its late twelfth-century inception, the tiltyard was associated with expressions of male conquest and the deliverance of virginity.¹⁸⁸ The term ‘tilting’ was understood as an innuendo for sexual intercourse, and slightly built courtiers were known as tilting staffs.¹⁸⁹ In *The White Devil* (1609), John Webster described the French Ambassador as an enthusiastic tilter, despite his tiny tilting staff. Like Carr, he was noted for his poor horsemanship.¹⁹⁰ There was a literary precedent for the tiltyard providing the genesis for a same-sex attraction when Melecasta fell in love with Britomart in *The Faerie Queene*.¹⁹¹ Although physical evidence of a sexual relationship between Carr and James was lacking, historians drew on these literary precedents to undermine James’ kingship.

Whilst academics concur that current definitions of same-sex relationships do not apply to those of the sixteenth century, little consensus exists on the nature of desire between men at this time.¹⁹² A phrase from a 1615 continental libel, “the handsome Robert Carr caught your

¹⁸⁵ Christopher Marlowe, *The Tragedy of Dido Queene of Carthage*, ed. John S. Farmer (Project Gutenberg, 2005), Act I Scene I.

¹⁸⁶ Richard Barnfield, *The Teares of an Affectionate Shepheard....* (London, 1594).

¹⁸⁷ Anonymous, “The Warres of the Gods,” earlystuartlibels.net, L7, accessed 10 February 2022.

¹⁸⁸ Alan Young, 18.

¹⁸⁹ John Marston, *Antonio and Mellida* in ed. Bullen, *Works*, Act I Scene I, 124, *Fawn*, Act I Scene II 39-40; Francis Osborn, *The True Tragicomedy Formerly Acted at Court: A Play*, trans. John Pitcher, ed. Lois Potter (New York: Garland, 1983), Act I Scene IV 20.

¹⁹⁰ *The White Devil*, Act III, 64-70. Webster repeats the joke in *The Duchess of Malfi* (Act I Scene II, 33-38).

¹⁹¹ Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, bk. III, i, lvii-lxv.

¹⁹² Jonathan Goldberg, “Sodomy and Society: The Case of Christopher Marlowe,” *Southwest Review* 69, no. 4 (Fall 1984), 372; Knowles, “Sexuality,” 675; Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 2, 93.

eye,” implied a corporeal attraction without a spiritual basis.¹⁹³ However, Paul Hammond categorised this as a licit pleasure, for nothing else could occur.¹⁹⁴ Michel de Montaigne acknowledged romantic passion’s power, for “that fire is a rash one, fickle, fluctuating and variable” but concluded it could never be as powerful as true friendship.¹⁹⁵ Attributing James a lascivious interest in Carr did not necessarily indicate that he had fallen in love; instead, what had transpired could never become a true friendship.¹⁹⁶ The wide semantic field around the language of friendship meant that James’ alleged initial encounter with Carr was one of the myriad of behaviours that contemporary commentators thus placed in the “confused category of debauchery.”¹⁹⁷

While conceivable that Carr broke his leg in a riding accident in early 1607, the accepted republican insistence he had recently returned from France was baseless. D’Ewes, Sparke, Weldon, and Wilson contend that Carr was one of twelve Scottish footmen “according to the custom of the French,” unneeded in England, so dispatched to France with £50 each in 1603.¹⁹⁸ However, Scottish poverty meant that Queen Anne brought a Danish carriage to her 1590 marriage, with only local volunteers accompanying her entrance into Edinburgh.¹⁹⁹ The Octavian’s financial retrenchment between 1596-98 reduced her footmen from twelve to five. Carr’s pedigree meant he never served in this capacity, being a Page of Honour from 1598-1604.²⁰⁰ Subsequently, later versions of the story changed his English court dismissal to clumsiness in serving or an inability to recite the Latin grace adequately.²⁰¹ These unattributed accounts showed an uncultured upbringing, demonstrating Carr unable to self-fashion to English courtly standards without a French sojourn.²⁰²

¹⁹³ *Corona Regia*, 81. See also Edward Hyde earl of Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641* comp. W. Dunn Macray, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), I 49.

¹⁹⁴ Barbezat, 119.

¹⁹⁵ Michel de Montaigne, *On Friendship*, trans M. A. Screech (London: Penguin Books, 1991), page unnumbered.

¹⁹⁶ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. Roger Crisp (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 150.

¹⁹⁷ Knowles, “sodomy,” 74, 86, “Sexuality,” 676.

¹⁹⁸ *A Cat May Look*, 51; *Five Years*, 6; D’Ewes, II 329-330; Michael Sparke, 18; Weldon, *James*, 57; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 54.

¹⁹⁹ Lynch, “Ceremony,” 85; Maureen Meikle, “Anna of Denmark’s Coronation and entry into Edinburgh, 1590: Cultural, Religious and Diplomatic Perspectives,” in eds. Goodare and MacDonald, *Sixteenth-century Scotland*, 289.

²⁰⁰ Amy L. Juhala, “The Household and Court of King James VI of Scotland, 1567-1603,” (PhD diss., University of Edinburgh, 2000), 314, “For the King Favours Them Very Strangely,” appendix.

²⁰¹ Ashley, 119; Gibbs, 2; William McElwee, *The Murder of Sir Thomas Overbury* (London: Faber and Faber, 1952), 23, *Wisest Fool*, 177.

²⁰² Bevan, 116; Keith M. Brown, *Noble Society*, 16, “The Scottish Aristocracy, Anglicization and the Court, 1603-38,” *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 3 (1993), 549.

These threadbare stories assisted authors in connecting Carr to the French court, where an absence of a national elected assembly produced excessive taxation, venal officeholding, and political clientelism.²⁰³ The French had a fixed characterisation within the English imagination. They were fickle and mutable, with their sensuous Latin Catholicism antithetical to English Protestant values.²⁰⁴ In 1579 John Stubbs lost his hand for suggesting that: “in times past the noble Englishmen delighted rather to be seen in France in bright armor than in gay clothes and masking attire; they did choose rather to win and hold by manly force than by such effeminate means.”²⁰⁵ A generation earlier, Henry Peachem noted that the French were “sudden in action and generally light and inconstant,” and Thomas Smith found the French crown notorious for elevating the undeserving.²⁰⁶ John Donne sums up the English views of the French in his poem “To His Mistress on Going Abroad”: “Men of France, changeable chameleons, Spitals of diseases, shops of fashions.”²⁰⁷ French news was popular, and from the 1580s plays fixated on France’s dynastic civil wars.²⁰⁸ James’ English court replicated that of Scotland, and the politically aware resented that the despised Esmé Stuart had created this Scottish institution from the French model.²⁰⁹

Carr’s critics focused not only on his alleged Gaelic links and emphasised his cultural differences, but also fostered the idea that he challenged English intellectual values. The Scottish Pound’s depreciation curtailed those young Scots who pursued a continental journey. Still, an invented French interlude reminded English readers of the Auld Alliance. A journey linked Carr to Person’s Dudley, who conspired with the French to prevent the return of Calais to England.²¹⁰ With Scottish law not offered for study until 1722, practically all Scottish lawyers studied civil law in France. A French visit associated Carr with Franco-Scottish philosophical and legal

²⁰³ Greville, *A Treatise of Monarchy*, X (441); Sharon Kettering, “The Historical Development of Political Clientelism,” *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 18, no. 3 (Winter 1988), 422.

²⁰⁴ Jean Christophe Mayer, *Representing France and the French in Early Modern English Drama*, (Newark, DE: University of Delaware Press, 2008), 26-27.

²⁰⁵ Lloyd E Berry ed., *John Stubb's 'Gaping Gulf', with Letters and Other Relevant Documents* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia for the Folger Shakespeare Library, 1968), 111.

²⁰⁶ Peachem, 239; Thomas Smith, 40.

²⁰⁷ John Donne, *The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Edmund Kerchever Chambers (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1896), 343; Mayer, 28.

²⁰⁸ Cadman, *Sovereigns*, 23-24; Herring, 168; Richard Hillman, *Shakespeare, Marlowe and the Politics of France*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 2.

²⁰⁹ Cuddy, “King’s Chambers,” 13; Michael B. Young, *Homosexuality*, ch.1.

²¹⁰ Person’s, *Leicester*, 62-63.

tradition.²¹¹ Jean Bodin's (1576) and Pierre Grégoire's (1596) defences of unlimited monarchical power, *De Republica*, were enormously popular, while Henri IV's 1589 accession lessened protestant scholars' propagation of constitutionalist theories of kingship.²¹²

The constitutionalist/Monarchomach decline heightened fears of French-trained Scottish Catholic academics entering the Jacobean court. William Barclay's *De Regno et Regali Potestate*, criticised monarchical resistance, finding that to rebel against kings was to rebel against God.²¹³ His son John's absolutist fiction was a seventeenth-century best seller.²¹⁴ James invited both to join his court in 1603. William Barclay declined to convert, but John remained in the royal household as a gentleman in waiting until 1615.²¹⁵ Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton's *The Right of Succession to the Kingdom of England* pleased James as it refuted Persons whilst adjudging that a true king cannot be a tyrant.²¹⁶ Adam Blackwood's 'De Jezabilis' savaged Elizabeth for her execution of Mary.²¹⁷ When Blackwood visited James in 1604, the King showed the philosopher's replies to the hated Buchanan, displayed in his library. The two's correspondence before Blackwood's 1613 death unnerved courtiers.²¹⁸ Though the link to Carr may be subtle, the invented French connection tapped into pre-existing fears of a Scottish-French constitutional threat.

²¹¹ Paul Christianson, "Political Thought in Early Stuart England," *The Historical Journal* 30, no. 4 (December 1987), 956; Howell A. Lloyd, "The Political Thought of Adam Blackwood," *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 4 (2000), 918; Zulager, 59.

²¹² Burgess, "Bodin in the English Revolution," 390; Howell A. Lloyd, *The Reception of Bodin*, (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 389-390; Paul Christianson, "Young John Seldon and the Ancient Constitution, ca 1610-1618," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128, no. 4 (December 1984), 273; Peter Holmes, "The Authorship and Early Reception of a Conference about the Next Succession to the Crown of England," *The Historical Journal* 23, no. 2 (June 1980), 424.

²¹³ J. H. Burns, *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 18; Johann P. Sommerville, "English and European Political Ideas in the Early Seventeenth Century: Revisionism and the Case of Absolutism," *Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 2 (April 1996), 173.

²¹⁴ Matthew Growhoski, "'A most dangerous rudeness': Anti-populism and the Literary Justification of Absolutism in the Fiction of John Barclay (1583-1621)," in *Democracy and Anti-democracy in Early Modern England 1603-1689*, ed. Cesare Cuttica (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 114-125.

²¹⁵ Sophie E. B. Nicholls, "Catholic Resistance Theory: William Barclay versus Jean Boucher," *History of European Ideas* 44, no. 4, 404-405; Johann P. Sommerville, "James I and the Divine Right of Kings: English politics and continental theory," in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 58-60.

²¹⁶ Anne McLaren, "Challenging the Monarchical Republic: James I's Articulation of Kingship," in ed. Diarmid, *Monarchical Republic*, 172-179.

²¹⁷; Lloyd, "Blackwood," 924-27, 933; Sommerville, "Revisionism," 173.

²¹⁸ *ODNB*, s.v. Blackwood, Adam; Johann P. Sommerville, "King James VI and I and John Selden: Two Voices on History and the Constitution," in eds. Fischlin and Fortier, *Royal Subjects*, 305.

Carr and George Home in Scotland and England

Carr's rise to prominence can be explained by the competition for royal support between the border's premier families. Carr's position was due to George Home. Courtiers and ambassadors considered "no man was so tender of the King's prerogative," even if "no one can say why."²¹⁹ The King valued Home's Scottish service. As Master of the Horse, he apprehended Huntly in February 1589 and maintained a perpetual feud with Bothwell.²²⁰ The English regarded him as their greatest ally in the bedchamber, and Home pursued payment of James' English subsidy.²²¹ Most importantly for James, Home limited the despised press of suitors and petitioners who held ingress rights to the King.²²² James needed the Scottish magnates to manage the country through the Privy Council and enhance the court's prestige. However, he required clear personal separation, preferring the company of tight-knit friends and lifelong servants.²²³ Home's primary function was maintaining the barrier between the public and private sphere.

After James removed Andrew Kerr's administrative responsibilities in October 1593, the Ferniehirsts needed alternative means to gain the regal access required to maintain their Middle March status. Attaching themselves to Home was an obvious way to reclaim royal favour.²²⁴ An alliance allowed both parties to undercut the influence of their mutual enemy, Cessford. Although it was unclear whether James considered Cessford for anything beyond social companionship, Home viewed him as his principal rival in government.²²⁵ Perpetually acrimonious, relations between the Ferniehirsts and Cessfords deteriorated further after Cessford's 1590 murder of Carr's uncle, William Ker of Ancram.²²⁶ Only the Ferniehirsts and the Eastern March Homes could counter the Cessfords' power. Home held a rivalry with his cousin, and even if Alexander accepted George's preeminence, he lacked a male heir to insert into the bedchamber.²²⁷ The mutual respect for a surname meant an important kinsman often

²¹⁹ Goodman, 21 ; D'Ewes, II 9.

²²⁰ Akrigg, *Letters*, 90; *CSPS*, X, 2.

²²¹ *CSPS*, XIII Part I, 139, 150, 219.

²²² Akrigg, *Letters*, 243-246; *CSPV*, X 519. See also Robert Carey, *Memoirs of Robert Cary, Earl of Monmouth*, Ed. F. H. Mares (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 66; Oglander, 166.

²²³ Keith M. Brown, *Noble Power*, 185; Juhala, "Chamber," page unnumbered.

²²⁴ Keith M. Brown, "The Stewart Realm: Changing the Landscape," in eds. Boardman and Goodare, *Lords and Men*, 22-24.

²²⁵ Cowan, 129, 132; Macpherson, 409; Meikle, "Invisible Divide," 84.

²²⁶ *RPCS*, IV 585.

²²⁷ *CSPS*, XI, 208.

gave an opportunity for elevated service to a fellow laird's younger son or even those below the rank of a laird.²²⁸ The Homes of Manderston previously bonded to Thomas Ker in the Marian Civil Wars.²²⁹ Carr's promotion by George Home inverted this tradition, although the basic principle remained.²³⁰

Despite Home's good standing, his career had plateaued by 1598. As the third son from a cadet family, Home's lack of patrimonial responsibilities allowed him to devote himself to royal service. However, his lack of an independent power base limited his administrative usefulness. Asserting control in the borders allowed Home to demonstrate his governmental credentials. By 1597 James viewed bringing the region under judicial control as essential to being designated Elizabeth's successor.²³¹ A wave of disorder meant the English viewed these regional failures as analogous to those in Ireland and saw them suspend James' subsidy.²³² While the new English Middle March Warden, Robert Carey, claimed he held influence over Robert Kerr of Cessford, the English Ambassador, Robert Bowes, was attacked when he attempted to bring the laird to justice.²³³ Home was appointed a border commissioner, but frustratingly, his cousin Alexander, earl of Home, apprehended Cessford in February 1598.²³⁴ Within the Jacobean administration, the tenuous Octavian hold on power meant that the positions of Treasurer and Chamberlain could soon be available.²³⁵ For the bonnet laird Home to bond the Ferniehirsts to himself through bringing Carr to court offered Home the gravitas needed to secure one of those roles.

Fluctuating fortunes were not atypical for border lairds, and the Ferniehirsts could not be permanently excluded from court.²³⁶ James amicably hunted with Andrew Kerr in the 1580s,

²²⁸ Ben-Amos, 72-73; Meikle, "Lairds," 55, 61.

²²⁹ *CSPS*, IV 130; Gordon Donaldson, 108.

²³⁰ Anna Groundwater, "From Whitehall to Jedburgh: Patronage Networks and the Government of the Scottish Borders, 1603 to 1625," *Historical Journal* 53, no. 4 (2010), 882; Meikle, "Vamps," 183.

²³¹ Susan Doran, "James VI and the English Succession," in ed. Houlbrooke, *Ideas*, 27-38; Anna Groundwater, "The Chasm Between James VI and I's Vision of the orderly 'Middle Shires' and the 'wickit' Scottish Borderers between 1587 and 1625," *Renaissance and Reformation* 30, no. 4 (Fall 2007), 106.

²³² Goodare, "Subsidy," 115; Michael Questier, *Dynastic Politics and the British Reformations, 1558-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 236; Rae, 217.

²³³ Carey, 41; George MacDonald Fraser, ch. XIII, XL; Tough, 265-267.

²³⁴ Meikle, "Lairds," 123; Rae, 247; Tough 264.

²³⁵ Julian Goodare, "Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 41; Macdonald, 174; Jared R. M. Sizer, "The Good of this Service Consists in Absolute Secrecy: The Earl of Dunbar, Scotland and the Border (1603-1611)," *Canadian Journal of History* 36, no. 2 (August 2001), 235.

²³⁶ Kerr-Peterson, 5.

and the eldest Ferniehirst served the customary six months in the bedchamber in 1592.²³⁷ Even though Andrew Kerr's support of Bothwell angered James, the King's pursuit was controversial. Queen Anne backed the rebel earl, the English were sceptical of his guilt, and no convention of the nobility would convict him.²³⁸ Andrew's wife, Anna Stewart served as a gentlewoman of the chamber from 1596 and was the influential Lord Ochiltree's daughter and the transplanted English courtier Roger Aston's sister-in-law.²³⁹ Thomas's oldest daughter Juliana married Patrick Hume of Polwarth, the former court poet and master carver, who remained a gentleman in Queen Anne's household.²⁴⁰ The attempted Presbyterian coup in December 1596 transformed the Catholic border lairds from a threat to potential guardians.²⁴¹ In 1598, the Ferniehirsts signalled their recovery with the completed rebuild of Ferniehirst Castle.²⁴²

By the century's end, the Ferniehirsts modelled the settled behaviour James desired from his border lairds to assist in an anticipated designation of successorship from Elizabeth. The family ended cross-border raiding and were at peace with the Scotts of Buccleuch.²⁴³ Sir Robert Carey's conciliatory approach saw English relations with the Ferniehirsts improve.²⁴⁴ Home ended conflict between his cousin, Lord Home, and Andrew Kerr. In comparison, the English still sought Cessford, who concurrently feuded with all other significant border families. In May 1599, Bowes reported, "Sir George Home has now done Sir Robert Kerr [to become as] it were the champion of the Chamber."²⁴⁵ The closeness between Home and Carr was such that when Thomas Overbury headed to the Scottish Court in 1601, Sir William Cornwallis at Berwick told

²³⁷ *CSPS*, IX 298, 313; *SP*, X 72.

²³⁸ Edward J. Cowan, "The Darker Vision of the Scottish Renaissance the Devil and Francis Stewart," in *The Renaissance and Reformation in Scotland: Essays in Honour of George Donaldson*, eds. Ian B. Cowan and Duncan Shaw (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1983), 130; 38; Jemma Field, *Anna of Denmark: The Material and Visual Culture of the Stuart Courts, 1589-1619* (Manchester: Manchester University Press), 2020, 20.

²³⁹ Juhala, "Household," 112, 329-330.

²⁴⁰ Helena Mennie Shire, *Song, Dance and Poetry of the Court of Scotland under James VI* (Cambridge: University Press, 1969), 80.

²⁴¹ Julian Goodare, "The Attempted Scottish Coup of 1596," in eds. Goodare and MacDonald, *Sixteenth-century Scotland*, 312-314.

²⁴² Tranter, 141.

²⁴³ Sir William Fraser, *Buccleuch*, 141.

²⁴⁴ Carey, 59.

²⁴⁵ *CSPS*, XIII Part 1, 488.

him to seek “Robin Carr, then page to Earle of Dunbarre”.²⁴⁶ In 1601, Home finally got the treasury.²⁴⁷ Robert Carr became the Page of Honour for the unusually long tenure of five years.

While the Ferniehirsts and George Home’s correlative interests explained Carr’s Scottish service, they do not explain how the young man arrived in England. In 1608, James boasted that he governed Scotland by pen.²⁴⁸ He did so through Home, his “principal, professional thug,” who ruthlessly implemented royal policies.²⁴⁹ Aside from the King, only Home held jurisdiction over either side of the border.²⁵⁰ One of two Scots initially appointed to the English Privy Council, Home was a close second in power to Robert Cecil, even if he held few substantive policy ideas.²⁵¹ James admitted that Home alone secured his former chaplain George Abbot the archbishopric of Canterbury, in 1611.²⁵² From 1605, Home and his collection of “broken men” forcibly brought the borderers to a “godly, peacable and quiet form of living.”²⁵³ Home ensured the crown held the majority of ecclesiastical property through the Scottish Parliament’s 1606 abolishment of the Act of Annexation.²⁵⁴ Home extracted a grant of 400,000 merks the following year, sparing the King the incendiary move of subsidising Scotland with English money.²⁵⁵ Most pleasingly, Home forced royal moderators on the synods and expelled the clerical opponents of the bishops, including Andrew and James Melville, the King’s most hated Presbyterians.²⁵⁶

By 1607 the increasingly unwell Home spent approximately half his time in Scotland. These absences provided an impetus for following the European pattern of placing someone in

²⁴⁶ Sir Thomas Overbury, *The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Overbury*, comp. Edward F. Rimbault (London: John Russell Smith, 1856), xxx.

²⁴⁷ Lee, *Pen*, 20; Sizer, 23.

²⁴⁸ “Speech, Last Day of March 1607,” in ed. Sommerville, *Political Writings*, 173.

²⁴⁹ Zulager, 58.

²⁵⁰ Groundwater, “Jedburgh,” 882.

²⁵¹ Croft, “Elizabeth to James,” 56; Cuddy, “Reinventing,” 71-72; Jenny Wormald, “James VI, James I and the Identity of Britain,” in *The British Problem C. 1534-1707: State Formation in the Atlantic Archipelago* eds. Brendan Bradshaw, and John Morrill (London: Macmillan Education, 1996), 187.

²⁵² *CSPDJ*, LXI, 12.

²⁵³ *Balfour*, 172.

²⁵⁴ Roger Lockyer, *James VI and I* (London: Longman, 1998), 179.

²⁵⁵ Lee, *Pen*, 65.

²⁵⁶ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom*, 90; Questier, 316; Spottiswood, III 183; Wormald, *Community*, 198. Home’s responsibility for the increasing Scottish calm has been challenged. See Goodare, “Scottish Politics,” 41; Lee, *Pen*, 90; Sizer, 240.

the royal bedchamber to represent his significant interests.²⁵⁷ While the need for Ferniehurst support had lessened, he brought Carr south to fulfil this role. Likely motivations stemmed from Home's lack of a male heir, Carr's talent, or loyalty to Home during his Scottish service. James compared his visits to London to flashes of lightning and spent half his time hunting when he was "reluctant to sign grants during his recreations."²⁵⁸ Having Carr travel with the King as a groom was an advantage for Home over most other councillors.

Phillip Seddon insists Carr was one of the pages dismissed by James shortly after he arrived in England.²⁵⁹ Disingenuously, Seddon uses as support a general request from James to his Scottish Privy council to find employment for unneeded pages returning home. As the Groom of the Stool, Thomas Erskine, first earl of Kellie, best known as Viscount Fenton, needed to remain on good terms with Home, the keeper of the Privy Purse, Carr would have been the last page dismissed.²⁶⁰ Home paid for a Robert Carr's winter clothing in the autumns of 1603 and 1604, along with his £20 wages in August 1604.²⁶¹ In a tactless move given his family history, Carr managed Home's sideline business of selling potential recusants' names from 1605.²⁶² There was just over a year without Carr's presence in England recorded. It was theoretically possible that, like his father, nephew and many other young Scotsmen, Carr spent this time in France.²⁶³ However, this was unlikely given the scarcity of lucrative court positions he now held. William Camden's 1607 Latin edition of *Britannia* indicated Carr was already a known figure.²⁶⁴ The sale of recusants, along with his license for calfskins in Chester, allowed Carr to compile his renowned wardrobe.²⁶⁵ It was illogical that he could have acquired it in France when he had no independent source of income. By 1607 he was no longer just Home's man in the bedchamber but acted as his court broker.²⁶⁶

²⁵⁷ Cuddy, "entourage," 174; Linda Levy Peck, *Court Patronage and Corruption in Early Stuart England* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 2003), 30; Robert Malcolm Smuts, "Courtiers, ministers and favourites," in Griffey, *Court Culture*, 70.

²⁵⁸ J. P. Kenyon, *The Stuarts: A Study in English Kingship*, (London: Fontana/Collins, 1986), 41; Lynch, "Court Ceremony and Ritual," 82; MacGregor, "The Household Out of Doors: The Stuart Court and the Animal Kingdom," in ed. Cruickshanks, *Stuart Courts*, 98-99; Stewart, "Beagle," 103-105.

²⁵⁹ Seddon, "Carr," 47.

²⁶⁰ Bellany and Cogswell, xxiii; Cuddy, "entourage," 185.

²⁶¹ *CSPDJ*, IX 147, 162; *CSPDE*, XXXV 432.

²⁶² *CCP*, XVII 451.

²⁶³ Groundwater, "Jedburgh," 882.

²⁶⁴ Camden, II 10.

²⁶⁵ *CCP*, XVII 158.

²⁶⁶ Kettering, "Clientelism," 425.

Conclusion

Ultimately, in early 1607 one of James' longstanding grooms, and an associate of his most loyal and influential courtier, required medical treatment, and the King showed some concern.²⁶⁷ This request would be extraordinary if James had not known Carr previously but becomes much less so when Carr had been changing his linen, putting his underwear on, and sleeping outside his bedchamber for the previous nine years.²⁶⁸ The sudden elevation of an unfamiliar page also contradicts the pattern of the Jacobean Court, which resisted the introduction of new faces and always required a trusted recommendation.²⁶⁹ Essentially the stories around this accident are too speculative and ideologically motivated to be considered reliable. Instead of an unreasoned infatuation with a young courtier, the elevation of Home's protégé rewarded the minister's service whilst acknowledging his ailing health necessitated divulging his English responsibilities to his understudy. With Home rewarded with lucrative offices and monopolies, James created an enduring powerbase for his effective Scottish managers. Carr's knighthood on Christmas Eve 1607 was unremarkable, with 74 conferred annually between 1605-1609.²⁷⁰ However, Carr's accompanying £600 annual rentcharge affirmed his and Home's service.²⁷¹ Ultimately, Carr was not as effective as Home, but in 1607, he began seeing the reward for his nine years of service.

²⁶⁷ Akrigg, *Letters*, 337.

²⁶⁸ Juhala, "Chamber," Appendix.

²⁶⁹ Cuddy, "Reinventing," 188-193; Juhala, "Household," 118; Adrienne McLaughlin, "Rise of a Courtier: The Second Duke of Lennox and strategies of noble power under James VI," in eds. Kerr-Peterson and Reid, *Noble Power*, page unnumbered.

²⁷⁰ Norman Egbert McClure ed., *The Letters of John Chamberlain. Vol. I.* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), 249; Stone, *Crisis*, 77.

²⁷¹ *CSPDJ*, XXIX 390.

Chapter Two

“they'l do nothing but talk of me, and they'l be hang'd before they speak any good:”

Friendship, frustration, and friction, 1607-1612

In the anonymous 1643 manuscript *The Five Years of King James*, which outlined the alleged initial scandals of James' reign, the author recounted an anecdote where Robert Cecil tried to curtail the royal expenditure lavished on Carr. A £5000 payment to Carr particularly displeased the Treasurer. This remittance related to Sherbourne Estate in Dorset, which Sir Walter Raleigh forfeited to the crown in 1608, then had been gifted to Carr in January 1609. Prince Henry requested this gift be placed under his management in April 1610, with Carr awarded £20,000 compensation.¹ The author claimed this constituted a “sum the Treasurer thought too great a bulk to be carried lightly away” and “mounted by the wing of love, not of merit.” Thus, Cecil devised a ruse to assemble Carr's payment in silver and lay it out in his home, Salisbury House's entranceway. He then invited James to dinner, where the King, ostensibly only accustomed to the weak Scottish pound's value, became dumbstruck at the amount gifted to his favourite. Cecil's plan succeeded when James decided the amount was too much for one man and ordered Carr receive less than half.²

William Sanderson dismissed the episode in 1656 as an “old wives tale,” and historians encountered little difficulty refuting either of these stories.³ While fantastical elements meant that the anecdote lacked the tiltyard story's longevity, it showed key concepts that seventeenth-century critics wished to present about the Jacobean Court.⁴ The author used the anecdote to further ‘other’ James, further supporting Greenblatt's emphasis on this concepts importance.⁵

¹ *CSPDJ*, XLVIII 549, LIII 598.

² *Five Years*, 10; D'Ewes, II 334-335; Osborn, *Works*, 450-51; Michael Sparke, 13; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 61.

³ Sanderson, *Compleat*, 376.

⁴ Coke and Jones, 66; John Heneage Jesse, *Memoirs of the Court of England During the Reign of the Stuarts Including the Protectorate. Vol. I.* (Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1840), 57, see 388 for the story applied to other courtiers.

⁵ Greenblatt, *Self-fashioning*, 9.

The poverty of his Scottish reign rendered James unable to manage a true European power's seemingly more sophisticated finances. James is presented as self-indulgent and frivolous, emphasising his femininity. Rather than sound political judgement, his final decision to reduce Carr's final settlement showed him lacking Lipsius' "immovable strength of the mind".⁶

While establishing continuity between presentations of Carr's elevation then his continued favour, the 'table story' planted new themes instrumental to understanding Carr's early reception. The story introduced Carr's opponents, willing to confront his special favour and the corruption they felt bedevilled the Jacobean government. Besides Cecil, there was Walter Raleigh, whose memory by 1643 had transformed him from a reviled Elizabethan sycophant to a Protestant "brave, heroic, worthy Martialist."⁷ Also introduced is Henry Stuart. Along with Raleigh, he represented the other great hope of English Protestant militarism.⁸ Seventeenth-century writers ubiquitously portrayed him and the remainder of the royal family as implacably hostile towards Carr.

This chapter expands on the building anti-court sentiments presented in the first chapter. Not only were favourites' methods of gaining coveted positions questioned, but cynicism increased about their abilities to execute their responsibilities. The chapter's title explains the depth of hostility towards courtiers. The line is from Ludowick Carlell's 1637 comedy *The Fool would be a Favourit*. Carlell demonstrated rare sympathy for courtiers, believing that the prejudice they aroused precluded rational judgement of an individual's merits.⁹ Before Cecil's May 1612 death, Carr was a moderately compensated courtier with no more influence over the King than any other Scottish advisor. James' observance of the Renaissance ideals of friendship led to undue attention on Carr. The heightened focus also reflected commentators' need to transform companions into Perry's 'monstrous singularity.'¹⁰ Carr never fulfilled this archetype.

⁶ Lipsius, *On Constancy*, I ch. IV. For princes to avoid sudden change see Botero, *Reason*, 43; Machiavelli, *Prince*, 63.

⁷ William Browne, *Britannia's pastorals*, (London: John Haviland, 1625), 105.

⁸ Robert Malcolm Smuts, "Prince Henry and his World," in *The Lost Prince: Henry, Prince of Wales*, ed. Catherine Macleod (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2012), 19-20; Timothy Wilks, "Poets, Patronage and the Prince's Court," in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 160, 165; J. W. Williamson, *The Myth of the Conqueror: Prince Henry Stuart: a Study of 17th Century Personation*, (New York: AMS Press, 1978), 129.

⁹ *The Fool Would be a Favourit*, Act II Scene I, lines 185-187. Carlell's sympathy for his protagonist, Young Gudgen, expired quickly, the corrupting influence of the court making him hubristic, cowardly, and untrustworthy.

¹⁰ DiGangi, *Homoerotics*, 159; Perry, *Favoritism*, 15.

Humanism, friendship, and Jacobean court politics

The long-held view, one Carr claimed himself in a 1629 speech to King Charles, was that he interceded with the press of suitors James despised.¹¹ Throughout Europe, Monarchs increasingly sought intimacy from a broker or favourite to relieve the claustrophobic formality of court life.¹² But with Home often conducting administration in Scotland, James required a trustworthy yet amenable replacement. Brokerage was not an easy business. The practitioner preserved the monarchy's majesty by limiting the King's accessibility yet had to rebuff petitioners or office-seekers without arousing hostility. As English grandees tended to offer advice without the reverence monarchs expected, they seldom fulfilled the role of a favourite. Therefore, they lacked the personal connection to the monarch to act as a broker.¹³ Carr's distance from preexisting court networks reduced potential accusations of nepotism. However, brokers were influential individuals with independent resources in other European courts.¹⁴ To boost his new broker's credibility, James ensured the perception Carr was the "most honored Lord, who the wisest King since salamon doth so beefriend."¹⁵ By imparting Carr's authority through his position as his closest companion, James raised concerns about whether he allowed private amusements to supersede the public interest.¹⁶

Clear boundaries governed friendship between the male elite. Upper echelons of early modern society valued humanist ideals of constancy, fidelity, and equality in friendship. An acceptance existed that there should be a profound connection between friends, barely deviating from Aristotle's contention: "One cannot be a friend - in the sense of complete friendship - to

¹¹ Robert Carr, "Speech made to K. Charles be the E. of Somerset relating to himself," *Archaeologia* 17 (1814), 328. See also Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1895), 26.

¹² Ronald G. Asch, "Monarchs," in *Early Modern Court Culture* in ed. Griffey, *Court Culture*, 27; Duindam, "Royal Courts," 465; Kettering, "Clientelism," 43. The Privy Council and Court of Requests were supposed to receive petitioners (R. W. Hoyle, "The Masters of Requests and the Small Change of Jacobean Patronage," *English Historical Review* 126, no. 520 (June 2011), 547-548, 553).

¹³ Jeroen Duindam, "Court as a Meeting Point: Cohesion, Competition, Control," in *Prince, Pen, and Sword: Eurasian Perspectives*, eds. Maaïke van Berkel and Jeroen Duindam (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 85.

¹⁴ Sharon Kettering, *Patrons, Brokers, and Clients in Seventeenth-century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 4, "Clientelism," 425.

¹⁵ John Abernethy, *A Christian and Heavenly Treatise* (London: I. Beale for John Budge, 1615), dedication.

¹⁶ Barbour, 4, 152; Braddick, *State Formation*, 85-88; Duindam "Meeting Point," 47.

many people, just as one cannot be in love with many people at the same time.”¹⁷ To Michel de Montaigne, the epitome of close friendship was where “souls are mingled and confounded in so universal a blending that they efface the seam which joins them together.”¹⁸ In a world where early death was common, trust was placed in a dedicated and elevated friendship, as there could not be “anything else so helpful to us in both good times and bad.”¹⁹ Ciceronian humanists adjudged friendship to be an expression of one’s fitness for social and political life.²⁰ Sir Walter Raleigh justified the importance of friendship in the first lines of his *Instructions of a Father to his Son* (1617): “THERE is nothing more becoming any wise man, than to make choice of friends; for by them thou shalt be judged’ what thou art.”²¹ Here Raleigh applied Erasmus’ belief that “in some ways it is a more acceptable situation for the state when the prince himself is bad than when his friends are.”²²

While a consensus existed on an ideal friendship between equals, both classical and contemporary figures disputed whether a King could find such a relationship with a subject. Aristotle acknowledged friendship could ensure loyalty from a monarch’s followers, but in doing so, the inherent equality of friendship degraded a prince’s status.²³ Although rare, Aristotle found that a friendship between those of different statuses was possible if affection was proportional. Contemporaries took the Greek philosopher’s insight to exaggerate James’ effusiveness toward Carr. Not everyone agreed. To Petrarch, all monarchs’ friendships were illusory: “There is hardly anyone who esteems someone from whom he does not expect either private or public benefaction.”²⁴ Castiglione defended the right of monarchs to befriend his attendants believing they should be “free to relax just as we like to do.”²⁵ However, Castiglione’s *Courtier*

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 150. See also Breme, page unnumbered; Cicero; *True Friendship*, 29-31; Cleland, 196; Steeven M. Guazzo, *The Civile Conversation*, vol. 1, ed. Sir Edward Sullivan, trans. by George Pettie, (London: Constable and Co. Ltd, 1925); 26; Plutarch, *Plutarch's Morals*, trans. Arthur Richard Shiletto (London: George Bell & Sons, 1898), 158; 26.

¹⁸ Montaigne, “On Friendship”.

¹⁹ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *How to Be a Friend: An Ancient Guide to True Friendship*, eds. Philip Freeman and J. G. F Powell (Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2018), 35.

²⁰ John M. Warner, “The Friendless Republic: Freedom, Faction, and Friendship in Machiavelli’s Discourses,” *The Review of Politics* 81, (2019), 2.

²¹ Sir Walter Raleigh, *Instructions of a Father to his Son*, (Glasgow: Robert and Andrew Foulis, 1754), 1, 155.

²² Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, 71.

²³ Aristotle, *Politics*, III xvi. See also Elyot, 163.

²⁴ Francesco Petrarca, “How a Ruler Ought to Govern His State,” in *The Earthly Republic: Italian Humanists on Government and Society*, ed. Benjamin G Kohl (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978), 49.

²⁵ Castiglione, bk. two.

demonstrated scepticism of the motives of those who sought kings' friendship.²⁶ Jean Bodin contended that a relationship abrogated a king's impartiality in dispensing justice. Instead of rewarding followers, Bodin recommended that kings ensure loyalty through their moral example.²⁷

The English leaned away from notions that friendship aided civic betterment and toward the Machiavellian view that human self-interest meant the ambitious exploited humanistic notions of fraternity for their betterment.²⁸ Using Richard III's example, William Vaughan argued that Henry Bollingbrooke abandoned friendship with the King after his patronage abated.²⁹ Sir John Eliot supported Castiglione's view, but only if those friends confined their role to apolitical "pleasure & delight."³⁰ Francis Bacon disagreed with Aristotle arguing a King "cannot gather this fruit (friendship), except (to make themselves capable thereof) they raise some persons to be as it were companions and almost equals to themselves." As a client of both Carr and later Buckingham, Bacon found a prudently selected friend advisable for a monarch. Yet he acknowledged that this "many times sorteth to inconvenience."³¹ With no justification that a monarch's selection of a friend required the public's unconditional support, critics of Carr had numerous methods to attack the validity of his friendship with James.

Most of the population viewed the James-Carr friendship as unsuitable, either because they believed that a King could never find true companionship or because their example failed to conform to Ciceronian guidance. The early modern convention that friendship should be a public act expressed through physical intimacy saw later historians focus unduly on Carr.³² As the first chapter demonstrated, the 'tiltyard creators' depicted James as ignoring the Ciceronian maxim: "make sure in the first place that you don't love too quickly and don't give your friendship to those unworthy of it."³³ As Carr held limited means, he could never demonstrate to those who

²⁶ Frank Lovett, "Path of the Courtier: Castiglione, Machiavelli and the Loss of Republican Liberty," *The Review of Politics* 74, no. 4 (Fall 2012), 296-300.

²⁷ Jean Bodin, *Six Books of the Commonwealth*, trans. M. J. Tooley (Oxford: Alden Press, 1967), 136-137

²⁸ *Love's Sacrifice*, Act V Scene IV; Machiavelli, *Discourses*, 1:37, *Prince*, 8.

²⁹ Vaughan, "friendship."

³⁰ Sir John Eliot, *The Monarchie of Man*, ed. Alexander B. Grosart. Vol. 1. (Printed for Private Circulation Only, 1879), 11.

³¹ Bacon, "On Friendship." See also Martin Butler, "The Legal Masque: Humanity and Liberty at the Inns of Court," in ed. Hutson, *Law and Literature*, 180; 191-192; Clark, 58; McCrea, 98-99.

³² Bray, *Friend*, 2, "Male Friendship," 4; O'Callaghan, *Spenserians*, 5; Perry, "Access," 1058, 1073.

³³ Cicero, *True Friendship*, 137.

questioned his relationship with James that he “followeth you not for anie respect of lucre or gaine” or he “preferre[d] the honour or profite of their frende before their owne.”³⁴ The little-known Scot was a sign James lacked political prudence. Sovereigns were expected to be “conversing with none (as neere as he can) but with excellent men, and such are vertuous.”³⁵ The Carr-James relationship encouraged dramatic constructions of kings who had abandoned reason, such as Marlowe’s Edward II, who would exchange his kingdom for his friend.

Concerns about whether a monarch should have friends merged with questions about the achievability of an elevated personal bond with another.³⁶ An individual’s elevation conflicted with views that a monarch should place their needs behind those of the nations. Cultural historian Laurie Shannon elaborates on the nature of monarchical friendship: “Friendship expresses both the height of a subject’s power and the depths of a monarch’s weakness.”³⁷ Repeated aspirations of ‘equality’ or ‘all things in common,’ unobtainable between a sovereign and a subject, implied that James’ relationship with Carr was sodomitical.³⁸ George Chapman argued that those who sought a monarch’s friendship disguised their ambition:

Friendship is but a visor, beneath which
A wise man laughs to see whole families
Ruin’d upon whose miserable pile
He mounts to glory.³⁹

Tacitus’ cynicism saw some dismiss exclusive friendship as a shibboleth. The Roman historian provided a skeleton for seventeenth-century presentations of Carr when he denounced Otho for bringing: “the ruin of the empire even when he was playing the part of the emperor’s friend. Could he have earned the principate by his mincing airs? Or by his effeminate dress?”⁴⁰ James’ dislike for Tacitus justified his oversight of this cultural shift. Yet his education should have

³⁴ Cleland, 194.

³⁵ Wright, 56.

³⁶ Alan Bray, “Epilogue,” in *Sodomy in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Betteridge, *Sodomy* 168; F. J. (Fritz) Levy, “Francis Bacon and the Style of Politics,” *English Literary Renaissance* 16, no. 1 (Winter 1986), 119.

³⁷ Shannon, 2, 10.

³⁸ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 152; Bacon, “Of Followers and Friends”; Guillaume Du vair, *The Moral Philosophie of the Stoicks* (London: Felix Kingston, for Thomas Man, 1598), 177; Erasmus, *Adages*, 29; A. C. Grayling, *Friendship*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 79-81; Montaigne, “On Friendship”.

³⁹ *Admiral of Chabot*, Act I Scene I 234-238.

⁴⁰ Tacitus, *Histories*, bk. 1.

made him aware that a friend should be carefully selected, as Cicero found tyrants (and the young) incapable of friendship.⁴¹

James had an extensive collection of humanist works, and factoring this in alongside his lonely childhood, the idea of Aristotelian companionship must have appealed.⁴² Yet an early attempt at friendship taught him he could not cultivate an exclusive and intimate friendship with the great magnates. Arran's fall, accompanied by the 1585 English release of the Ruthven lords, meant James decided to be a 'universal king' and not show undue favour to any faction.⁴³ Nevertheless, the sixth earl of Huntly's biographer, Ruth Grant, believed that James identified the highland lord as his closest companion.⁴⁴ The King gifted Huntly one of the seven original editions of *Basilicon Doron*, had him carry his sceptre at his first Parliament's opening, and personally composed a masque for the Earl's 1589 marriage to Henrietta Stewart.⁴⁵

James' adoption of Huntly as his friend reflected overconfidence in his control of the Scottish aristocracy.⁴⁶ Huntly embarrassed James in 1589 after the King personally forced him to disband at Brig O' Dee.⁴⁷ Despite being controversially remised for his crimes, Huntly murdered James Stewart, second earl of Moray, in February 1592. In December that year, he refused to be attainted for alleged correspondence with Phillip II of Spain.⁴⁸ Despite these provocations, James continued his intimate communication with the absent earl, even if it gave an impression of weakness, stymied any church settlement and enraged Elizabeth.⁴⁹ James' fronted the S£40,000 for Huntly's surety note and hoped for reconciliation with the earl at Henry's 1594 baptism.⁵⁰ James applied little of the clemency he had shown Huntly to the November 1596

⁴¹ Cicero, *True Friendship*, 99, 129; Stephen Greenblatt, *Tyrant: Shakespeare on Politics*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2018), ch. 7.

⁴² George F. Warner, *The Library of James VI. 1573-1583* (Edinburgh: Scottish Historical Society, 1893).

⁴³ Steven J. Reid, "of bairns and bearded men: James VI and the Ruthven Raid," in eds. Kerr-Peterson and Reid, *Noble Power*, page unnumbered.

⁴⁴ Grant, "George Gordon," 18, 97, 257; "Friendship," page unnumbered.

⁴⁵ Jennifer M. Brown, "Scottish Politics 1567-1625," in *The Reign of James VI and I*, ed. Alan Gordon Rae Smith (London: Macmillan, 1973), 22; Peter R. Roberts, 89; Wormald, *Community*, 180; "Cradle King," 253.

⁴⁶ Wormald, "Marriage Partner," 72.

⁴⁷ Grant, "George Gordon," 94; Meikle, *Scottish People*, 234.

⁴⁸ Forbes, 178-198; Goodare, "Scottish Politics," 39.

⁴⁹ Jennifer M. Brown, 27-28; Burns, *Monarchy*, 224; Hammer, *Polarization*, 168. For other reasons for James' leniency see Doran, "English Succession," 28; Meikle, *Scottish People*, 234.

⁵⁰ Lynch, "Ritual," 90; Simpson, 146.

Presbyterian rioters.⁵¹ James made Huntly a Marquis in 1599 and continued to correspond with him over difficulties with the Kirk. Nevertheless, James decided to no longer follow the Scottish practice of monarchs sharing their personal life with their high-born companions.⁵²

James' relationship with Huntly taught him that the upper nobility was unwilling to play the dutiful role he prescribed. Although questions about equality were inevitable, Carr could be an innocuous figure for the presentation of sole friendship. With jealousy unavoidable, it would at least be directed at Carr rather than creating factionalism between the great families. Carr's designation also prevented others from seeking the position. At least initially, Carr's few personal interests requiring the King's intervention meant he could follow Castiglione's advice to "engage in conversation which will be pleasing and agreeable to his master."⁵³ Contemporaries have interpreted that for James, Carr was "a fit harbour for his most retired thoughts."⁵⁴ James was aware that kingship was a performance. In *Basilicon Doron*, he wrote, "That a King is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the people gazingly doe behold."⁵⁵ The notion that he could take an unknown servant and mould him into the perfect companion was alluring.⁵⁶ He could pretend that he and Carr were friends, but it was only ever a veneer. Too persistently self-interested for true friendship, James compensated with effusive demonstrations of affection, raising contemporary observers' ire.⁵⁷

James' relationships with his Scottish companions who accompanied him to England undercut notions that his friendship with Carr approached the Renaissance ideal. One of James' closest childhood companions was John Erskine, eighteenth or second earl of Mar. While a Ruthven Raider, Mar put aside significant regional affiliations to devote himself to royal service.⁵⁸ The contemporary Archibald Napier, first Lord Napier of Merchistoun, found Mar held

⁵¹ Alan R. Macdonald, "James VI and the General Assembly, 1586-1618," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 174-175; Questier, 215.

⁵² Keith M. Brown, *Noble Society*, 10; Goodare, *Government*, 88.

⁵³ Castiglione, bk. two.

⁵⁴ Arthur Wilson, *History*, 54.

⁵⁵ *Basilicon Doron*, 49.

⁵⁶ Goldberg, *Literature*, 166; "Marlowe," 376; Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 132; Jane Rickard, *Authorship and Authority: The Writings of James VI and I*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 117. For satire of James' pretensions see William Davenant, *The Cruell Brother: A Tragedy*, (London: Augustine Mathewes for John Waterson, 1630), Act I Scene II).

⁵⁷ Anonymous, *The None-such Charles* (London: R.I. and are to be sold by John Collins, 1651), 21.

⁵⁸ Dawson, *Scotland Re-formed*, 305; Goodare and Lynch, 14; Lee, *Pen*, 95.

the most influence over the king, and Amy Juhala asserts that Mar was undoubtedly one of James' most trusted friends and servitors.⁵⁹ Carr and later Buckingham were prominently associated with the bedchamber's intimate responsibilities. However, it was James' childhood companion, Thomas Erskine, who devoted himself as yeomen of the guard and as groom of the stool.⁶⁰ Historian Adrienne McLaughlin maintains that the old Ferniehirst ally, Ludovick Stuart, second duke of Lennox, was James' most prestigious Scottish courtier.⁶¹ The duke's few English political aspirations meant that James valued his impartial advice offered whilst hunting and drinking together.⁶² Lennox retained the Scottish Lord High Chamberlainship, was considered for the English Privy Council's presidency and became the honorific first Nobleman of the Bedchamber despite infrequent English court appearances.⁶³

James publicly raised the presentation of his relationship with Carr above his other Scottish friends, but this hollow demonstration of humanist principles bestowed credibility on Carr in managing access to the King. To have elevated one of his tight-knit Caledonian milieu would have bemused the others. Jacobean critics ignored these other Scots as they did not support images of a court beset by frivolous sycophancy. Frustratingly for the republicans, bedchamber Scots' political advice often matched their sensibilities. Lennox opposed the Spanish match, James Hay advocated for the Huguenots, and Mar and Fenton counselled clemency for Sir Walter Raleigh in 1603.⁶⁴ Accusations of sexual desire or excessive flattery explaining James' promotion of these grizzled, forthright companions could not be applied. James Hay's legendary profligacy made him the only Scottish courtier on whom critics could hang their anti-court prejudices. But his absence of political ambition, peculiar appearance, and general bonhomie meant that even Weldon found him "generally beloved."⁶⁵ Therefore, aside

⁵⁹ Juhala, "Chamber," page unnumbered; First Lord Archibald Napier, *Memoirs of Archibald First Lord Napier*, (Edinburgh: 8th Lord of Napier, 1793), 7.

⁶⁰ Cuddy, "entourage," 185; Juhala, "Household," 25; Starkey, "Intimacy," 204-212.

⁶¹ McLaughlin, page unnumbered.

⁶² Keith M. Brown, *Noble Power*, 197, "Anglicization," 566-567; Juhala, "Chamber," page unnumbered; Macpherson, 179.

⁶³ Wilks, *Neighing Courses*, 19.

⁶⁴ Mark Nicholls and Penry Williams, *Sir Walter Raleigh: In Life and Legend*. 1995. Reprint, (New York, Continuum International, 2011), 225.

⁶⁵ Weldon, *James*, 7.

from an allusion to Fenton in *Eastward Ho!*, the older Scots were ignored by seventeenth-century authors.⁶⁶

Carr's friendship with Sir Thomas Overbury, a relationship that an evidently jealous James broke when he imprisoned Overbury in 1613, presented another problem for Carr's detractors.⁶⁷ For him to break his devotion to the king suited his opponents, as fellowship could be practised "in good men onely."⁶⁸ That Carr committed the ultimate betrayal in murdering his friend was seized upon by libelers and became a key component of Sir Edward Coke's prosecution of Carr during his 1615 trial. Alastair Bellany claims that Carr's alleged treachery demonstrated courtiers' fickleness, as he abandoned his greatest ally for a flighty and sexualised woman.⁶⁹ The Carr-Overbury relationship was portrayed as inward, threatening, private, and isolating, which failed to conform to the ideal that friendship should be public.⁷⁰

Carr's enemies intensified the Overbury friendship to demonstrate it as the antithesis of Giovanni Boccaccio's story of Titus and Gisippus, the most celebrated paean to Renaissance friendship.⁷¹ In Boccaccio's tale, Gisippus so valued Titus' friendship that he forewent his upcoming marriage to Sophronia after his companion fell in love with her. Eventually, Titus repaid Gisippus when he attempted to clear his friend of a false murder charge by claiming himself the culprit. For Coke and later writers, Carr became the immoral Scottish inversion of Titus, the Roman visitor to Athens. Not only did Overbury's homicide contrast with Titus' selfless confession, but it showed Carr had eschewed humanist lessons to control his passions. Unlike Titus, tormented by his desire for Sophronia, Carr fabricated an impression of learning through co-opting his friend to write the letters that won over Frances Howard.⁷² Republican historians perpetrated the idea of Carr's reliance on his friend by presenting Overbury as Pythias

⁶⁶ *Eastward Ho!* Act II Scene II 75-80.

⁶⁷ Arthur Wilson, *History*, 52. See also James L. Sanderson; "Poems on an Affair of State - The Marriage of Somersset and Lady Essex." *The Review of English Studies* 17, no. 65 (February 1966), 59;

⁶⁸ Elyot, 162.

⁶⁹ Bellany, *Scandal*, 175.

⁷⁰ Perry, *Favouritism*, 106.

⁷¹ Michael Sherberg, *The Governance of Friendship: Law and Gender in the Decameron*, (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2011), 2.

⁷² Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. G. H. McWilliam (London: Penguin Books, 2003), Day X, Story VIII.

to Carr's Damon.⁷³ In drawing this parallel, they suggested the Middle Temple educated Overbury covered deficiencies in Carr's intelligence.⁷⁴

Presentations of an immoral friendship were easily invented as Overbury and Carr were never friends in the Renaissance mould. Jacobean courtiers often attached expert advisors to themselves, and Overbury provided this service for Carr.⁷⁵ That is not to say that they did not work closely together or were not mutually supportive before 1613. But it was not the deep personal bond that has seeped into the historiography, confusingly positioning Overbury as the domineering supplicant.⁷⁶ With Carr's position contingent on close personal contact with the King, he could not have simultaneously maintained a close friendship with Overbury. Rather than being upset, Overbury sought to utilise Carr's closeness to the King. In August 1612, Overbury suggested to Carr that as James could not "drew him one hour from you," they should utilise this to gain the vacant Secretary of State.⁷⁷ Overbury travelled in Europe from the end of 1608 to early 1610. He requested the Brussels ambassadorship in March 1611 before spending much of the year's remainder excluded from court.⁷⁸ These prolonged or requested absences prevented any deep connection between the two.

Overbury's Essexian-influenced political beliefs made Carr reticent in forming too close a partnership with his advisor. *Sir Thomas Overbury's Observations in His Travels, Upon the State of the Seventeen Provinces* (1609) revealed much about why Carr eventually disassociated himself from his secretary. While Lindley and Bellany deemed the work inconsequential, Overbury's effusive praise of the democratic, efficient and egalitarian United Provinces

⁷³ Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis/On Duties*, trans. Walter Miller, (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1913), bk. Three; D'Ewes, II 335; Thomas Frankland, *The Annals of King James....* (London: Tho. Braddyll, for Robert Clavel, 1681), I, 14; *Tragicomedy*, IV II 64, V 29-40; Weldon, *James*, 20.

⁷⁴ Chester Dunning, "The Fall of Sir Thomas Overbury and the Embassy to Russia in 1613," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 22, no. 4 (Winter 1991), 696; Eckhardt, 48; McElwee, *Overbury*, 26.

⁷⁵ R. J. W. Evans, "The Court: A Protean Institution and an Elusive Subject," in eds. Asch and Birke, *Princes*, 490; Linda Levy Peck, "Court Patronage and Government Policy: The Jacobean Dilemma," in eds. Lytle and Orgel, *Patronage*, 32. For dislike of courtiers' appointing themselves advisors see *Emperors Favourite*, Act I Scene I, 352-353.

⁷⁶ Le Comte, 151; Robert Folkestone Williams, I 147(n); David Harris Willson, *King James VI and I* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1956), 335.

⁷⁷ Thomas Overbury, *The Overbury Letters (1613)*, (archive.org), 21.

⁷⁸ *Downshire*, II 273, III 31; Overbury, 14.

essentially critiqued James' political management.⁷⁹ From 1611 Overbury's loyalty to the Neville-Pembroke faction despite the King's disinterest made him an increasing liability. Implacable hostility towards the Howards and consistently advocating for a parliamentary solution to England's financial issues placed Overbury out of step with current regal thought.⁸⁰ Overbury's arrogance exacerbated the growing ideological distance between him and Carr, limiting both men's potential for advancement.⁸¹ Henry Wotton summed up the fundamental contradiction when he puzzled over how Overbury remained incarcerated in 1613 whilst Carr remained in the King's esteem.⁸²

Presentations following Overbury's murder misrepresented his accomplishments and showed that Carr had sacrificed his friend to fulfil his ambitions. In death, Overbury became "A Scholler, full of Gentleman-like parts / Whose noble carriage won a world of hearts."⁸³ Yet, estranged from Ben Jonson and much of his former scholarly circle after 1612, his literary achievements were mediocre. The academic John Considine found that the hitherto unknown Laurence Lisle published Overbury's one poem, 'The Wife,' as a posthumous hatchet job.⁸⁴ For Overbury to be made a noted intellectual not just lionised the poisoned courtier; but emphasised the two's lack of equality, again demonstrating Carr and Overbury had distorted a fundamental principle of friendship.

Carr's murder trial failed to show a compelling picture that he betrayed his closest friend. At Carr's arraignment, Francis Bacon portrayed Overbury as Carr's great friend and "oracle of direction." Yet, his evidence consisted of Overbury assisting with administrative tasks.⁸⁵ Likewise, letters produced at the trial demonstrated a procedural relationship. Overbury's June 1613 offer to Carr to terminate their relationship in exchange for his release from the Tower

⁷⁹ Bellany, *Scandal*, 41; C. H. Firth, *Stuart Tracts 1603-1693*, (London: Archibald and Constable and Co, 1903), 214-217.

⁸⁰ *Buccleuch*, 101; Owen Lowe Jr Duncan, "The Political Career of Sir Henry Neville: An Elizabethan Gentleman at the Court of James I," (PhD. thesis, Ohio State University, 1974), 234-244.

⁸¹ *Downefall of Ambition*, page unnumbered; Weldon, *James*, 57.

⁸² Wotton, *Letters*, II 28.

⁸³ Dunning, 696.

⁸⁴ John Considine, "The Invention of the Literary Circle of Sir Thomas Overbury," in *Literary Circles and Cultural Communities in Renaissance England*, eds. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 61-69. Alastair Bellany moderates Considine's condemnation (*Scandal*, 115-116).

⁸⁵ Oxon, 169; Scott, Walter, and John Somers Somers, comps. *A Collection of Scarce and Valuable Tracts* 2nd ed. Vol. 2. (London: T. Cadell, W. Davies, 1809), 351.

illustrated an absence of a deep connection.⁸⁶ The incongruous mannerisms and incorrect dating of the friendship's origin made the September 1613 letter claiming Overbury penned the Howard love letters a forgery.⁸⁷ Nobody following Overbury's arrest thought the relationship remarkable enough to inform Carr of the detention, with Samuel Calvert noting, "nor doth the lord C. miss him."⁸⁸

Support that Overbury and Carr held a professional relationship could be found in Carr's dealings with John Holles, first earl of Clare. A Cambridge and Gray's Inn graduate, Holles served Essex in his 1597 Irish campaign before becoming a parliamentary opponent of the Union. From 1610 he found employment as Prince Henry's household comptroller.⁸⁹ Holles disliked courtiers' prodigality so much that he warned his eldest son John to stay away from James Hay.⁹⁰ In early 1614, at a personal low point, he offered his services to Carr. Needing a replacement advisor, the favourite accepted. The two maintained a close professional relationship until Holles' 1637 death.⁹¹ Consistently grateful for the courtesy he showed him, Holles said about Carr, "the Lyon is not as he is painted." He called Carr his friend in a December 1615 appeal to James for Carr's innocence, which resulted in his imprisonment.⁹² Republican historians buried Holles' association with Carr as his second son was the parliamentarian hero Denzil, first Baron Holles. They wished to prevent a familial association with a bogeyman of the early Stuart courts. Carr's relationships with Overbury and Holles demonstrated his willingness to seek advice from those trained in common law who understood the workings of the English government. Both men provided valuable service, but unlike Holles, Overbury failed to place his preference for Parliament rather than a Spanish dowry to ease English financial difficulties behind his patron's political interests.

⁸⁶ Overbury, 6.

⁸⁷ *ibid*, 28; Winwood, III 475(n).

⁸⁸ *APCE*, 1613-1614 145; *Downshire*, IV 125; *Mar & Kellie*, 51; Winwood, III 448.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Goldring, "'So just a sorrowe so well expressed': Henry, Prince of Wales and Art of Commemoration," in ed. Wilks, *Henry Revived*, 281; Alexander Thompson, "John Holles." *The Journal of Modern History* 8, no. 2 (June 1936), 148, 152-154; E. C. Williams, *Anne of Denmark: Wife of James VI of Scotland: James I of England* (London: Longman, 1970), 118.

⁹⁰ P. R. Seddon ed., *Letters of John Holles*, (Nottingham: Derry and Sons Ltd for the Thoroton Society, 1975), I xxvi-xxxix.

⁹¹ *ibid*, I 60-62, III 443, 487.

⁹² *ibid*, I 73, 96.

Carr's patronage accrual, 1607-1612

As Carr's status depended on his perception as the King's idealised Renaissance companion, a gap developed between the power he supposedly held and that which he did. With Cecil handling the royal correspondence, Fenton guarding access to the bedchamber, and no examples of a successful intervention with potential suits, he, like many potential patrons, promised much but delivered little before 1612. Carr supposedly supplied a brokerage service in late 1608 when he advocated for James Elphinstone, first Lord Balmerino, who faced charges for tampering with the King's correspondence in 1599. Alastair Bellany argues that Carr's extraction of the office of the clerk of enrolments in the King's bench demonstrated his newfound brokerage position.⁹³ Whether Carr interjected into the affair is unclear, and the King believed the Elphinstones dragged Carr into the matter unwillingly.⁹⁴ Balmerino and his brother Alexander, fourth lord Elphinstone, had already appealed to, and been ignored by, Home, Lady Jane Drummond, and both the King and Queen. In desperation, Alexander turned to Balmerino's brother-in-law Carr.⁹⁵ Any intervention Carr may have provided was ineffectual. Balmerino wrote to him in May 1609, complaining that Carr took his children's inheritance for little benefit to himself.⁹⁶ Carr distanced himself from his newly gained office as he worried it advertised to prospective clients that he offered little value for money.⁹⁷

Carr held no formal administrative positions before Cecil's death.⁹⁸ The MP and minor-courtier, Sir Richard Paulet of Freefolk, could not recall Carr's first name when he compiled a list of naturalised Scots in 1610.⁹⁹ Carr's family saw little benefit from his relationship with James. He secured Andrew some minor felling rights and charters to lands in Rickiltoun and Oxnam in 1608. However, despite 29 creations in the Scottish peerage between 1603-25, Carr reported in 1610 that James denied Andrew's request to be made Lord Jedburgh until he showed sufficient wealth to support the title. His cousin, Robert Kerr of Ancram's 1608 request for a

⁹³ Bellany, *Scandal*, 35.

⁹⁴ Akrigg, *Letters*, 307.

⁹⁵ Sir William Fraser, *The Elphinstone Family Book of the Lords Elphinstone*, Vol. II. (Balmerino and Coupar. Edinburgh, 1897), 181; Paul, V 71.

⁹⁶ Sir William Fraser, *Elphinstone*, 177-182; *ODNB*, s.v. Elphinstone, James.

⁹⁷ *CSPDJ*, LIV 605; Paul E. Kopperman, *Sir Robert Heath 1575-1649: Window on an Age* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1989), 13-16; Stone, *Crisis*, 444.

⁹⁸ Sizer, 230.

⁹⁹ Pauline Croft, "Capital Life," in eds. Cogswell et al, *Popularity*, 76.

court position went unfulfilled, and he had to return his nephew, Andrew Kerr of Oxnam, to Jedburgh when he arrived in London seeking employment in 1610.¹⁰⁰

Following the deaths of James' two key administrators, Home in February 1611 and Cecil in May 1612, Carr assumed only their most sinecurial roles. Uncertainty about who would fill the void in Scotland's political management followed the death of Home.¹⁰¹ According to Marc Antonio Correr, the Venetian Ambassador, the view prevailed, "it would seem that he [Carr] alone is to dispose of everything"¹⁰² But despite Carr being perceived as Home's successor, both Lennox and Mar were offered and declined the Scottish responsibilities.¹⁰³ Eventually, Carr assumed the honorific role of Lord High Treasurer of Scotland. It has been accepted that Carr secured the deputy treasurership for his uncle Sir Gideon Murray, of Elibank, Lord Elibank, to whom he transferred his administrative responsibilities.¹⁰⁴ But the well-qualified Murray previously served as a Scottish Privy Councilor, commissioner of the exchequer, border commissioner, and managed Home's Scottish offices.¹⁰⁵ Home's Scottish deputy, Alexander Seton, first earl of Dunfermline, assumed the position of the king's principal advisor and agent in Scottish affairs.¹⁰⁶ Seton's preferment could have been James' reluctance for Carr to divide himself between London and Edinburgh or that Carr's long Scottish absence rendered him ineffective in managing that nation's nobility. Most likely, the King recognised Seton as the central figure in the Scottish elite's philosophical and literary networks and preferred the continuity that the capable administrator provided.¹⁰⁷

James' reluctance to use Carr as a Scottish manager does not explain why Home's coveted English positions --Keeper of the Privy Purse and Master of the Wardrobe--were awarded to John Murray, first earl of Annandale, and James Hay, respectively.¹⁰⁸ James installed Carr as a Knight of the Garter in May 1611 to console him for his lack of faith that he could

¹⁰⁰ Groundwater, *Middle March*, 38, "Jedburgh," 882-886; *SP*, V 73-7.

¹⁰¹ *CSPDJ*, LXI LXII 5-37; *RPCS*, IX 156-157(n).

¹⁰² *CSPV*, XII 135.

¹⁰³ *Downshire*, III 20.

¹⁰⁴ *RPCS*, X 159 (n).

¹⁰⁵ *CSPDJ*, LXXIV, 204. For allegations Carr assisted his brother-in-law Thomas Hamilton, earl of Melrose, and first earl of Haddington see *RPCS*, IX 369(n).

¹⁰⁶ *RPCS*, IX 160(n).

¹⁰⁷ Allen, 111; Peter Davidson, "Alexander Seton, First Earl of Dunfermline: his library, his house his world," *Catholic History* 32, no. 3 (2015), 320.

¹⁰⁸ Groundwater, "Jedburgh," 879; Schreiber, 12.

assume Home's responsibilities. The ceremony focused on Charles' investiture as Duke of York, with Carr's initiation treated with "less sumptuousness."¹⁰⁹ Events reinforced continuity rather than the elevation of a favourite. Charles bore the standard of France and Navarre to replace the assassinated Henri IV; Thomas Howard, fourteenth earl of Arundel, replaced his namesake; the deceased Viscount of Bindon and Carr superseded his patron, George Home. Nothing was unprecedented about this event with Carr, the fourth Scot to receive the honour.¹¹⁰ Contrary to expectations, George Carew assumed Cecil's lucrative Court of Wards.¹¹¹ Carr did not go without, receiving the ceremonial position of the Keeper of Westminster Palace, with its £500 annual income in June 1611, and became the fifth Scot admitted to the English Privy Council in April 1612.¹¹² But before 1613, Carr never enjoyed any meaningful political power in Scotland or England.

With no official position, Carr's power source was his perceived access to the King, which created the impression that he influenced the distribution of rewards. A belief that Carr controlled patronage dovetailed with constructions where James' lack of male firmness meant he had descended into the Aristotelian prodigal King who "heap gifts on flatterers or purveyors of some other pleasure."¹¹³ Justifications exist that Carr benefitted most from royal extravagance in the first half of James' English reign. From 1608, he received the second-largest individual annual pension of £800, to add to previous awards of a 15-year £600 rent charge and £300 worth of jewellery.¹¹⁴ However, this largesse was no more than that distributed to other courtiers. As a younger son from a bonnet laird, John Ramsay, earl of Holderness (best known as Viscount Haddington), who killed the Ruthven brothers during the Gowrie conspiracy, equally depended on royal benefices.¹¹⁵ Haddington's pension was £600, his grants of lands returned £1070

¹⁰⁹ *CSPV*, XII 154.

¹¹⁰ Keith M. Brown, "Anglicization," 567.

¹¹¹ McClure, *Chamberlain*, 357; Seddon, "Carr," 54; Robert Folkestone Williams, 170.

¹¹² *CSPDJ*, LXIV 43.

¹¹³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 87.

¹¹⁴ *CCP*, XX 305; *CSPDJ*, XXIIIX 392, XXXI 418. George Home received the largest pension (Menna Prestwich, *Cranfield: Politics and Power under the Early Stuarts*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1966), 15).

¹¹⁵ Aiken, 294; *ODNB*, s.v. Ramsay, John.

annually, and like Carr, he received a £300 set of jewellery in March 1608.¹¹⁶ Unlike Carr, his debts were controversially relieved in 1607.¹¹⁷

However, the most valuable reward was not these gifts, but a government office, a monopoly, or custodianship of a customs farm. As Carr later pointed out, these had all been distributed by 1607.¹¹⁸ With kickbacks ranging from 5-15%, Linda Peck estimates that these officeholders siphoned 40% of royal income.¹¹⁹ Between 1610-12 Robert Cecil enjoyed an annual income of £25,000, while Northampton's eleven years in office allowed a bequeathment of £80,000 in 1614.¹²⁰ Despite these offices' revenue, James' old Scottish companions received additional cash grants. Although gifted Rochester Castle in 1611, Carr did not share in the £36,310 outlaid on courtiers at Michaelmas 1610.¹²¹ For Cecil and Home, courtiers such as Carr, Hay, and Haddington offered a helpful distraction from their benefits, which drained public finances, impacted most on the lives of those outside the court, and needed reform.¹²²

Never a wastrel before Cecil's death, no physical signs showed that Carr earned an abnormally large income. London was expensive. Lawrence Stone estimates a courtier's yearly expenses could not be less than £1000, while for prominent figures, they would run between £5000 to £10,000.¹²³ Most Scots preferred quick patronage forays to return to comfortable lives in their former localities.¹²⁴ Carr did not maintain a coach or partake in the city palace building craze along The Strand other court figures embraced.¹²⁵ Financial constraints or political insecurity meant he always slept in the King's chambers at Whitehall. Eventually, Carr gained 41 palace rooms vacated by Princess Elizabeth after her 1613 marriage but did not acquire the

¹¹⁶ *CCP*, XX 305; *CSPDJ*, XXIIIX 366, XXXI 418.

¹¹⁷ *CSPDJ*, XXVI 348; Winwood, II 217. James gifted Haddington's wife, Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe, lands returning £600 annually (Jesse, 65).

¹¹⁸ Carr, 328.

¹¹⁹ Peck, "Legitimacy," 77, *Corruption*, 18, "Dilemma," 30.

¹²⁰ Croft, "Bureaucrat be a Favourite," 90, "Jacobean Court," 146; Peck, "The Earl of Northampton, Merchant Grievances and the Addled Parliament," *The Historical Journal* 24, no. 3 (September 1981), 534.

¹²¹ Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant*, 173; Coomber, 56; Frederick Charles Dietz, *English Public Finance: English Government Finance*, (London: The Century Company, 1932), 107; Haynes 207.

¹²² Perry, *Favoritism*, 20.

¹²³ Stone, *Crisis*, 449.

¹²⁴ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom*, 45; *Noble Power*, 186, "Anglicization," 550-551.

¹²⁵ Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), ch. 4; Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-century England*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 207, 212; Menna Prestwich, "English Politics and Administration, 1603-1625," in ed. Smith, *James VI and I*, 146.

bowling alley and cockpit.¹²⁶ When he requested Venetian or Dutch hangings or masters, he pointedly asked ambassadors to find bargains.¹²⁷ Tellingly, Carr confessed to John Holles that he could not afford to marry Frances Howard.¹²⁸ A valid question, albeit one beyond this thesis's scope, is whether Carr's benefits were excessive for a courtier whose barely discernible role was managing suits brought to the king? While James failed to meet the Senecan ideal that gifts should be given in moderation, it is inaccurate to suggest that Carr sustained any special favour before 1612.¹²⁹

In Carr's early career, one significant piece of royal patronage became the most controversial of James' reign. This gift was the January 1609 transfer of Sir Walter Raleigh's forfeited Sherbourne Estate, a previous crown gift. Raleigh's bravura performance at his 1603 treason trial, and the Attorney-General, Sir Edward Coke's mismanagement of the straightforward case, began the courtier's political rehabilitation.¹³⁰ A despised Elizabethan figure, Raleigh, became a victim to those "great men cloath their private hate / In those faire colours of the publike good."¹³¹ Although convicted, Raleigh's death sentence was commuted to imprisonment in the Tower, which despite his complaints, was not onerous.¹³² He seemingly kept familial control of Sherbourne by transferring it to his brother-in-law George Hall shortly before his trial.¹³³ But a clerk's omission of ten words in the transcription left the estate in Raleigh's possession at his conviction.¹³⁴ Intermittently unsympathetic to Raleigh, Cecil alerted James to the issues in the conveyance in November 1608, suggesting Sherbourne would be suitable for

¹²⁶ A. R. Braunmuller, "Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset, As Collector and Patron," in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 233.

¹²⁷ *Downshire*, III 369, IV 73. Carr took possession of £1000 of Venetian masters intended for the Prince of Wales in December 1612. Timothy Wilks asserts he never reimbursed the new Venetian ambassador Dudley Carleton ("The Picture Collection of Robert Carr, Earl of Somerset (c.1587-1645), Reconsidered," *Journal of the History of Collections* 1, no. 2 (1989), 169-171). Carr's non-payment seems incongruous with Carleton sending him more paintings in April 1615 (*CSPDJ*, XI 289).

¹²⁸ Seddon, *Holles*, III 510.

¹²⁹ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 113.

¹³⁰ Anna R. Beer, *Sir Walter Raleigh and His Readers in the Seventeenth Century: Speaking to the People*, (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1997), 7-8; Stephen Greenblatt, *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 114.

¹³¹ *Philotas*, Act III Scene I 1136. See also *A Cat May Look*, 68; Naunton, 6; Osborn, *Works*, 377; Thomas Scott, *Sir Walter Raleighs ghost, or Englands forewarner*, (London: John Schellem, 1626), 10.

¹³² Michael Booth, "Moving on the Waters," in *Literary and Visual Raleigh* ed. Christopher M. Armitage (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), 201; Nicholls and Williams, 227; Willard M. Wallace, *Sir Walter Raleigh* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959), 229. For literary allusions to Raleigh's comfortable punishment see *Chabot*, Act V Scene I 179-180.

¹³³ Beer, *Just Desire*, 162-63; Wallace, 227.

¹³⁴ *CSPDJ*, XLI 1609, 487

Carr.¹³⁵ This goodwill towards a bedchamber Scot offset Cecil's lukewarm support for the Union.¹³⁶ It cultivated a potential ally in Carr and would improve relations with Carr's patron, George Home after Cecil ruled against him in the captaincy of Northam Castle.¹³⁷ Cynically, Cecil's proposition made Carr a figure for public opprobrium, distracting attention from the treasurer's significant accrual of patronage.

Gifts carried great significance in earlymodern England, so James must have known that such a bestowal made Carr a public figure.¹³⁸ The King's gift made Raleigh, the master of Renaissance self-fashioning, Carr's public adversary.¹³⁹ Playing for widespread sympathy, Raleigh leaked a January 1609 letter to Carr. Referencing Thomas Ker's demise, Raleigh begged Carr not to "begynne your first buildings upon the ruyns of the innocent."¹⁴⁰ The letter's audacious tone and theatrical manoeuvring between pride and self-pity revealed a good deal about why the King disliked Raleigh. Despite occupying the same rank, Raleigh condescended to Carr. The experienced courtier played to the crowd as he complained of court life's fickleness, making thinly disguised allusions to James' Scottish advisors and devaluation of honours.¹⁴¹

Significantly, Raleigh created the false impression that Carr actively sought the estate, and Sherbourne was Raleigh's ancestral home. John Webster referenced the 'injustice' in *The White Devil* and *The Duchess of Malfi*, and it perturbed the poets George Wither and William Browne.¹⁴² Evidence of the incident's long shadow showed in the libels directed at Carr during the Essex annulment and his later murder trial.¹⁴³ In his *Brief Lives* (1693), John Aubrey repeated the idea that Carr looked to profit from others' misfortunes, asserting that Carr had "begged" the soft-hearted King for the estate.¹⁴⁴

¹³⁵ CCP, XX 1608, 149.

¹³⁶ Croft, "Elizabeth to James," 54.

¹³⁷ Croft, "Jacobean Court," 144-145.

¹³⁸ Felicity Heal, *The Power of Gifts. Gift Exchange in Early Modern England* (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014), 24; MacCaffrey, "Patronage," 22; Linda Levy Peck, "'For a King Not to be Bountiful Were a Fault': Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 1986), 36.

¹³⁹ Nicholls and Williams, 259.

¹⁴⁰ Edward Edwards, *The life of Sir Walter Raleigh. based on contemporary documents...Together with his letters*, (Macmillan & co, 1868), 327.

¹⁴¹ Edwards, 326-328.

¹⁴² Browne, 82-105; *Duchess of Malfi*, Act V, Scene I, 7-8; *White Devil*, Act IV Scene 2, 90-92; Wither (page unnumbered).

¹⁴³ Anonymous, "Poore Pilot thou hast lost thy Pinke," earlystuartlibels.net, h10, accessed 12 October 2021.

¹⁴⁴ John Aubrey, *Aubrey's Brief Lives*, ed. Oliver Lawson Dick (London: Vintage, 2016), 'Sir Walter Raleigh.'

The Sherbourne affair introduced Henry Stuart as Carr's rival. The Prince's involvement began with Raleigh's son Carew's appeal to the Rump Parliament for the estate's return in 1649. Carew, who showed a remarkable recollection of events that transpired when he was four, utilised negative preconceptions of James' and Carr's relationship to drive his case. Taking advantage of the current heightened anti-Scottish feelings, he portrayed the King as a besotted fool, utterly beholden to his favourite. He claimed his mother, with her children beside her, threw herself in supplication at James' feet yet "could obtain no other Answer from him, but that he mun have the Land, he mun have it for Car."¹⁴⁵ Carew emphasised that Prince Henry "came with some anger to his Father" to demand that he receive the property so it could be later returned to Raleigh, "whom hee much esteemed."¹⁴⁶ James' and Cecil's plans for Sherbourne were scrapped in November 1609, with it unclear whether the more significant influence was Henry or the "importunate suitor," Lady Raleigh. Eventually, the King awarded her £8000 compensation, with a further annuity of £400 in February 1610.¹⁴⁷ The King then purchased Sherbourne from Carr for £20,000 in April 1610 and transferred it to the management of Henry.¹⁴⁸

An unnecessary and tawdry affair, the crown paid £28,000 for an estate returning an annual profit of £400. Cecil contravened his own Book of Bounty, undoing his previous fiscal responsibility in bringing crown debt under control.¹⁴⁹ Just a year earlier, the Privy Council warned the King that "benefits that are promiscuously bestowed and without convenient examination of merit or value.... breed contempt of the gifts, and ingratitude to the giver."¹⁵⁰ The forced transfer of the estate of this revived English military hero to an unknown Scot with no identifiable merits fuelled accusations that "a prodigall King is neerer a Tyrant."¹⁵¹ Just as Cecil expected MPs to acquiesce to an increased tax burden through the Great Contract, it redrew parliamentary attention to the Scots at court. Yet it was Carr, not the King or Cecil, whose reputation suffered. It fed Tacitean conceptions of court life's impermanence, setting Carr up as

¹⁴⁵ Carew Raleigh, *A brief relation of Sir Walter Raleigh's Troubles....*, Harleian IV 59.

¹⁴⁶ Aubrey, 'Raleigh'; Leonard Tennenhouse, "Sir Walter Raleigh and the Literature of Clientage," in eds. Lytle and Orgel, *Patronage*, 248, 254.

¹⁴⁷ Gardiner, *England*, II 46; McClure, *Chamberlain*, 280; Nicholls and Williams, 233;

¹⁴⁸ *CSPDJ*, LIII 601.

¹⁴⁹ Robert Ashton, "Deficit Finance in the Reign of James I," *The Economic History Review* 10, no. 1 (1957), 19-20; Croft, "Bureaucrat be a Favourite," 88; Menna Prestwich, "Administration," 148.

¹⁵⁰ Pauline Croft, "A collection of several speeches and treatises of the late Lord Treasurer Cecil." *Camden Fourth Series* 34 (July 1987), 278.

¹⁵¹ Francis Bacon, *An Essay of a King* (London: Richard Best, 1642), 3.

another favourite who could only gain “his fortune by the others ruine.”¹⁵² Carr’s retribution was now eagerly awaited by the majority who supported Raleigh during the disagreement.

Seventeenth-century perceptions of courtiers

Carr’s entry into the national consciousness was particularly hazardous as negative preconceptions of the court had produced an intense prejudice against those associated with it. Early modern culture despised no figure more than the court ‘flatterer.’ Carr would always have struggled to avoid this caricature no matter the actual reasons for his prominence. An increasingly powerful state apparatus reignited Aristotelian fears within the elite that, given greater freedom to select their advisors, rulers valued the low-born who will “sooth men up in their humours” rather than those offering honest counsel.¹⁵³ Sixteenth-century advice books and histories unanimously condemned perpetrators of ‘flattery’.¹⁵⁴ The ‘flatterer’ figured prominently on the stage. Plays elevated the audience’s sense of dread by presenting autocrats’ inability to see how the self-interested ‘flatterer’ who “speakes aloud in powers right” imperilled the commonwealth.”¹⁵⁵ The Essex circle attacked obsequiousness, which they associated with continental absolutism.¹⁵⁶ These fears, along with the belief that flatterers “just as wood-worms breed most in soft and sweet wood,” meant that the Jacobean Court had, and would continue to have, a reputation for flattery, despite little evidence James’ exhibited this character trait.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵² *Court Beggar*, Act IV Scene I, 1745.

¹⁵³ Aristotle, *Ethics*, 98. See also Anonymous, *The Last Part of the Mirour for Magistrates* (London: by Thomas Marsh., 1578), 12-14; Anonymous, *The Character of an ill Court-Favourite....*, *Harleian*, II 52; Pierre Matthieu, *The powerful favourite, or, The life of Ælius Sejanus* (Paris, 1628), 6.

¹⁵⁴ Breme, 22; Cleland, 195; Giovanni Della Casa, *Galateo of Manners: Or, Instructions to a Young Gentleman How to Behave Himself in Conversation* (London: Bernard Lintott, 1703), 75; Elyot, 189, 89; Humphrey (page unnumbered); Markham, *gentleman’s academie*, 47.

¹⁵⁵ See William Alexander, *Tragedy of Darius*, in *The monarchicke tragedies Cræsus, Darius, The Alexandrean, Julius Cæsar*. (London: Valentine Simmes for Ed: Blount, 1607), Actus Primus; Fulke Greville, *Mustapha*, in *Complete Works*, Act III Scene II. Thomas Lodge, *The Wounds of Civill War*, (London: John Danter, 1594), Act III Scene I; John Marston, *The Insatiate Countess*, in ed. Bullen, *Works*, III Act I Scene I 258-262.

¹⁵⁶ Sir Henry Wotton, *A parallel betweene Robert late Earle of Essex, and George late Duke of Buckingham*, (London: 1641), 2.

¹⁵⁷ A. D. B. *The Court of the Most Illustrious and Most Magnificent James* (London: Edw: Griffin, 1619), 77. See also Dorothea Scott, 165; Hutchinson, 64;. For James’ denouncement of flattery see Elizabeth Read Foster ed., *Proceedings in Parliament 1610*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), II 59; *Basilicon Doron*, 36, 38, *Meditation*, 18.

A preoccupation with the flatterer's threat to government stability meant that well before James' accession courtiers faced oppressive scrutiny of their promotions and actions.¹⁵⁸ Courtiers attracted an impressive range of vituperative adjectives. Across all varieties of literature, they were parasites, 'court caterpillars,' 'moths and mice,' 'stale oysters,' 'Egyptian louse,' scorpions, baboons, vipers, serpents, 'night grown,' or even 'poisonous mushrooms.'¹⁵⁹ Evocatively, Titius Sabinus in *Sejanus* dismissed courtiers as "Like snails on painted walls."¹⁶⁰ The Catholic polemics that emerged from the 1570s revived the idea of a monarch in thrall to evil counsellors. Protestant authors were also critical. John Stubbes was unimpressed by the "rabblement of itching, canvassing, discoursing, and subtle heads" in the Elizabethan Court.¹⁶¹ All worried that rewarding flattery encouraged immorality among a prince's subjects.¹⁶²

Throughout the 1590s, the court became connected with pacifism after the political careers of Charles Blount, Lord Mountjoy, and Essex stalled once they left for foreign military service. Alternatively, Cecil and his allies, who remained at court and advocated for peace, enjoyed greater prominence.¹⁶³ Concerns on how "Mushrooms in State that are prefer'd by dotage, open the Gap to Hate and Civil Tumult" are revealed in *Charlemagne; Or the Distracted Emperor* (1600).¹⁶⁴ In seeking royal influence, the military achievements of Orlando, the Emperor's nephew, cannot match the courtier Ganelon's enchanted ring, which he uses to bewitch the Emperor into falling for his sister Theodora. *Charlemagne* took caricatures of the morally bereft favourite to their logical extreme when the foolish courtier La Fue consented to

¹⁵⁸ Richard Cust, "The 'public man' in late Tudor and early Stuart England," in eds. Lake and Pincus, *Public Sphere*, 119, 130; Feros, 207; Daniel J. Kapust, *Flattery and the History of Political Thought: That Glib and Oily Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 36, 40-41, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Cornwallis, 3; *Cruell Brother*, Act I, Scene III; *Whore of Babylon*, Act II Scene I; *Love's Sacrifice*, Act I Scene I; Hutchinson, 66; *Edward II*, Act I Scene 4 284; *Antonio and Mellida*, Act II Scene I 131; William Strode, *The floating island a tragi-comedy* (London: Thomas Collins or Thomas Childe, 1655), Act I Scene IV.

¹⁶⁰ *Sejanus*, Act I Scene I.

¹⁶¹ *Gaping Gulf*, 142.

¹⁶² Viroli, 253.

¹⁶³ Pauline Croft, "Rex Pacificus," 142-143; Paul E. J. Hammer, "'Absolute and Sovereign Mistress of her Grace'? Queen Elizabeth and her Favourites, 1581 – 1592," in eds. Elliott and Brockliss, *Favourite*, 47; Smuts, "Cultural Patronage," 185.

¹⁶⁴ Anonymous, *The History of the Life, Reign, and Death of Edward II, King of England* (London: J.C. for Charles Harper, Samuel Crouch, and Thomas Fox, 1680), 7.

the entranced King's sexual advances, having gained the ring's possession.¹⁶⁵ Union proponents hoped James would reform "these courtes swaied by Ambition, and unjust Jealousies."¹⁶⁶

It is puzzling that a King with James' acumen retained so many of Cecil's appointees. James' opponents exaggerated his penchant for favourites during his Scottish reign to demonstrate his unsuitability for the English crown. The continuation of 'regnum Cecilianum' and James' initial reluctance to hold his highest officeholders to account reinforced these preconceptions. Quickly, portrayals of the new regime described it as a "cymerian darkenes" and courtiers who "for filthie Lucre's sake, will avouch and confirme falshold for truth."¹⁶⁷ James' court's failure to set a moral exemplar combined with indifferent support for international Protestantism produced accusations that a seedy squalor replaced the Elizabethan golden age.¹⁶⁸ Criticism emanated from within the court itself. Rather than attacking the system of royal patronage dispersal, those seen as undeserving such as Carr, were concurrently pitied for being "but one degree remov'd from slaves" yet envied for the benefices they received.¹⁶⁹ For Pauline Croft, criticism of individual courtiers was preferable to addressing the fundamental flaws in the system, while Curtis Perry views these attacks on favourites as a safety valve that enabled the system to function.¹⁷⁰

James' inability to arrest the declining impression of his "fraile and transitory Court" saw popular drama rail against kings who presided over dissolute courts. Playwrights perpetuated a cynicism where courtiers had abandoned notions of public service, and so in the popular imagination, "grow fat and burley from the Juice and Substance of exhausted Provinces."¹⁷¹ In 1618, John Spencer begged James, "separate your selfe from the company of blasphemous wretches and abhominable drunkards."¹⁷² The quick succession of the Essex annulment, the trial

¹⁶⁵ Anonymous, *Charlemagne; or, The distracted emperor*, ed. W. W. Greg (Oxford: Printed for the Malone Society by John Johnson at the Oxford University Press, 1937), Act IV Scene I.

¹⁶⁶ William Cornwallis, *The Miraculous and Happie Union....* (Edinburgh: Thomas Finlason, 1604), page unnumbered.

¹⁶⁷ *Most Magnificent James*, 140; Melton, 29.

¹⁶⁸ John Spencer, *Votivæ Angliæ, Englands Complaint to Their King* (London: H. Dudley, 1643), 43-44.

¹⁶⁹ Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *Queen of Corinth* in ed. Waller, *Works*, VI Act I Scene I. Beaumont's 1616 death meant Fletcher's second author is sometimes attributed as Philip Massinger.

¹⁷⁰ Croft, "Reputation," 51; Perry, *Favouritism*, 10, "Access," 1060.

¹⁷¹ *ill Court-Favourite*, 52. See also *The Noble Gentleman*, Act II Scene I; *Cruell Brother*, Act I, Scene I; *Whore of Babylon*, Act I Scene II; *Roman Actor*, Act I Scene I.

¹⁷² John Spencer, 45.

of Carr and Howard, and then Buckingham's rise to prominence meant to the general populace James' courtiers were "A pack of ravenous currs" or "an alphabet of scurvy faces."¹⁷³

In essence, little changed from Elizabeth's final years and the Jacobean era, with increased praise of Elizabeth's reign a safe means of expressing dissatisfaction with the current regime.¹⁷⁴ Authors resisted criticising the monarch or policies directly; they instead targeted courtiers' moral failings.¹⁷⁵ Opinions of the court had not worsened, and the same accusations of Elizabeth's courtiers were applied to James. The public tired of courtiers' endless engagement in role-playing and self-interest within their "servile station... all low and base."¹⁷⁶ Yet, the enjoyment felt for scapegoating courtiers produced an appetite for essays, plays, libels, and pamphlets that perpetuated and entrenched the view that the court was "the only school to make an honest man a knave."¹⁷⁷ Writing shortly after Charles' accession, Sir Francis Hubert, in his 'Life and Death of Edward II,' summed up the preceding half-century's accumulated perception of court life. Abandoning hope any courtier's removal could reform the institution, he implored: "Strike at the Root and fell it to the ground."¹⁷⁸

In 1650, the royalist William Sanderson defended James' promotion of Carr, suggesting the young Scot was "fancied, meerly for his fashion: upon no other score nor plot of design."¹⁷⁹ When cataloguing Carr's effects for his trial in late 1615, Sir Edward Coke struggled to dampen his wonderment when describing the sumptuousness of Carr's wardrobe, which confirmed the unanimous agreement from court insiders that Carr was exceptionally dressed.¹⁸⁰ James appreciated the magnificence that splendidly attired courtiers presented to foreign visitors and found Carr's speedy adoption of the latest styles amusing. But the King's views were out of step

¹⁷³ *Tom-Tell Troath*, 422. See also John Hacket, *Bishop Hacket's Memoirs....* (London: Sam. Briscoe, 1715), 9.

¹⁷⁴ Simon Adams, "Favourites and Factions at the Elizabethan Court," in eds. Asch and Birke, *Princes*, 265; Curtis Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture: James I and the Renegotiation of Elizabethan Literary Practice*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 12.

¹⁷⁵ Cressy, *Dangerous Talk*, 91; Braddick, *State Formation*, 24; Peck, *Corruption*, 175-177.

¹⁷⁶ *Fawn*, Act I Scene I 53. See also; C. V. Wedgwood, *Truth and Opinion: Historical Essays*, (London: Collins, 1960), 177.

¹⁷⁷ *Whore of Babylon*, Act II Scene I.

¹⁷⁸ Francis Hubert, *The Poems of Sir Francis Hubert*, comp. Bernard Mellor (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press), 1961, 33.

¹⁷⁹ Sanderson, *Aulicus*, 110.

¹⁸⁰ *Loseley*, 406-412; *Winwood*, III 442.

with humanist guidance, which condemned those who made “idols of their carcasses.”¹⁸¹ To George Chapman, the “new fashion, which becomes them,” made courtiers “Like apes, disfigur’d with the attires of men.”¹⁸² For Italian commentators, extravagant dress displayed spiritual weakness, which potentially masked a humble birth.¹⁸³ The English believed men should be judged by their actions and ideas, “nor yet ouersluggishly cloathed, like a cōltreie clowne.”¹⁸⁴ Carr’s ability to elevate his appearance was just one attribute James found arresting, so Sanderson’s suggestion that this solely explained his advancement confirmed the impression that Carr was a parvenu. Additionally, an obsession with his appearance reinforced Carr’s unsuitability for either friendship or public service, as a man “so infected with this selfe love and liking of him selfe: that he hath no respect or care to please any man ells.”¹⁸⁵

Royal opposition to Carr

The family underpinned the early modern English social structure as the chief economic institution and the means for Protestant instruction.¹⁸⁶ Therefore, continental libels emphasised the enmity Carr garnered from royal family members.¹⁸⁷ Additionally, the presentation of a royal family riven with division due to an absence of patriarchal authority exemplified the adage: “it is impossible for a man to understand how to governe the common wealth, that doth not know to rule his owne house.”¹⁸⁸ Typical of the pop psychology used to explain the tensions Carr caused, William McElwee asserts that James used Carr to substitute for his estranged family.¹⁸⁹ Other authors account for James’ supposed distance from his family by drawing attention to their embarrassment at the public displays of affection James made towards Carr.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸¹ Greene (page unnumbered). See also *Most Magnificent James*, 56; Justus Lipsius, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes* (London: Richard Field for William Ponsonby, 1594), 37.

¹⁸² *Bussy D’Ambois*, Act I Scene II 49-50.

¹⁸³ Castiglione, bk. two; Romei, 187; Petrarch, 72.

¹⁸⁴ Cleland, 215; Elyot, 125; Grimald, 2; Peachem 237.

¹⁸⁵ Della Casa (page unnumbered).

¹⁸⁶ Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 25.

¹⁸⁷ *Downshire*, V (page unnumbered, no.717).

¹⁸⁸ Robert Cleaver, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government* (London: Thomas Man and George Norton, 1610), (preface).

¹⁸⁹ McElwee, *Wisest Fool*, 177.

¹⁹⁰ Bergeron, “James and Robert Carr,” 6; Cuddy, “entourage,” 195(n); E. C. Williams, 134.

Queen Anne undoubtedly found Carr odious. Yet, contemporary authors did not depict her as his lead adversary. Anne resisted patriarchal authority, and there were fears her anti-Calvinist, crypto-Catholic beliefs may be imparted onto her children.¹⁹¹ Apprehension about the Queen's character contributed to an unfair reputation for frivolity. There were also vacillations about whether her "unruly appetite" made her a subversive female or whether she was a victim of James' inattentive callousness.¹⁹² In reality, her court operated as a distinct political centre.¹⁹³ Anne's interactions with potential critics saw her develop compatible intellectual interests to the Essex circle and visit prominent political prisoners like Raleigh.¹⁹⁴ It attuned the Queen to the courtly mood, which merged with her devotion to the Stuart dynasty. Her dislike for Carr did not stem from jealousy for his undue influence over her husband, sexual or otherwise. Rather, she suspected this inexperienced Scot might tarnish the monarchy's reputation.

Many incidents support Anne's obloquy towards Carr. In May 1611, Anne poked fun at Carr and Overbury in the Whitehall gardens, then believed they responded by openly laughing at her. Richard Taverner gossiped to William Trumbull in Brussels of a "much afflicted" King forced to choose between a tearful queen who threatened to return to Denmark and Carr, who claimed if Overbury were punished, he would leave the court.¹⁹⁵ In the 1650s, Godfrey Goodman claimed both sides were content to let the matter drop. However, Goodman invented his version, as he had Anne start the dispute by remarking, "there goes Somerset and his Governor," which is impossible given the incident occurred in 1611 and Carr received his earldom in 1613.¹⁹⁶ It seemed that the Queen directed her anger against Overbury, not Carr.¹⁹⁷ Anne could have done so, as she realised that James would not punish his friend or would not reveal weakness in

¹⁹¹ Barroll, 37, 40-42, 49, 60; Susan Dunn-Hensley, *Anna of Denmark and Henrietta Maria: Virgins, Witches, and Catholic Queens* (Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 19-28, 47; Maureen M. Meikle and Helen M. Payne, "From Lutheranism to Catholicism: The Faith of Anna of Denmark (1574 - 1619)," *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 64, no. 1 (January 2013), 46; David Stevenson, *Scotland's Last Royal Wedding: The Marriage of James VI and Anne of Denmark*, (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1997), 67.

¹⁹² For accusations of Anne's infidelity see Sir Edward Peyton, *The divine catastrophe....* (London: Giles Calvert, 1652, 21-22. For James' excessive attention to his wife see Francis Osborn, *Works*, 416. For negative portrayals of Anne see Ashley, 109, 116; Kenyon, 41; Willson, *James*, 95. For works refuting negative portrayals see Barroll, 15; Dunn-Hensley, ch. 3; Maureen M. Meikle, "A Meddlesome Princess: Anna of Denmark and Scottish Court Politics, 1589-1603," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 127.

¹⁹³ Croft, "Jacobean Court," 138; Dunn-Hensley, 113-117; Field, 22.

¹⁹⁴ Barroll, 71; Beer, *Raleigh*, 3; Nicholls and Williams, 238.

¹⁹⁵ *Buccleuch*, 101; *Downshire*, III 83.

¹⁹⁶ Goodman, 216.

¹⁹⁷ Lindley, *Howard*, 84.

submitting to his wife's demands. On 5 June, John More reported that Anne took offence at "Overbury's uncivil demeanours towards her." Despite Carr's efforts to restore him, Overbury's exclusion from court lasted until 13 November.¹⁹⁸

On 22 June 1611, Fenton provided conflicting evidence that Anne's fury was directed at Overbury, writing that the Queen "was not weill satisfied with him (Carr)."¹⁹⁹ But Fenton's letter was to the earl of Mar. Disputes over Henry in 1600 and 1603 due to Anne's rejection of the Scottish practice of noble guardianship for royal offspring meant that Anne (renowned for her ability to hate) despised no one more than Mar.²⁰⁰ Fenton may have exaggerated the dispute to show his friend that another of James' companions had upset the Queen. Still, nothing indicated Anne expressed any positive statements about Carr. The Scottish gifts Carr received at the expense of her former northern allies galled her and sharpened her perception that his presence tarnished the Stuart image.²⁰¹

Whilst Anne was Carr's firmest opponent, seventeenth-century writers pinned Stuart enmity toward Carr on her son Henry. Carr's elevation to a scheming European-style privado required an invention of an honourable rival in the style of Jonson's Germanicus or Marlowe's Prince Edward.²⁰² Persistent rumours existed that Carr had poisoned the Prince - unsurprising, given the strong association of favourites with poison.²⁰³ More than 100 works were dedicated to Henry before his premature death.²⁰⁴ His admirers managed his image to demonstrate a chivalric militant Protestantism that concurrently embraced the moralistic worldview of Tacitus and Seneca.²⁰⁵ A rash of commemorations following his November 1612 passing centred on his death's "great Ocean of sorrow," which indelibly imprinted the lost promise of his potential reign into the public imagination.²⁰⁶ For his biographers, "He was most vertuous all his lifetime,

¹⁹⁸ CSPDJ, LXVII 87; *Downshire*, III 85, 138.

¹⁹⁹ *Mar & Kellie*, 41.

²⁰⁰ Anne's ability to hold a grudge is noted in Field, 25-26; Meikle and Payne, 50-52; Stevenson 74. For her disagreement with Mar see Barroll, 20-34.

²⁰¹ Dunn-Hensley, 129; Knowles, "Images," 35.

²⁰² *Tom-Tell Troath*, 450; D'Ewes, I 46, 49.

²⁰³ *A Cat May Look*, 54-62; Brian Nance, *Turquet De Mayerne as Baroque Physician: The Art of Medical Portraiture*, (Boston: Brill, 2001) 181-82 Weldon, *James*, 26.

²⁰⁴ Michael Ulliot, "James Reception and Henry's Receptivity: Reading *Basilicon Doron* after 1603," in ed. Wilks, *Henry Revived*, 66.

²⁰⁵ Bertheau, 142; 133; Gianoutsos, *Manhood*, ch.1; Irish, "Solidarity," 277; Ulliot, "Henry's Receptivity," 75;

²⁰⁶ Malham and Oldys, 450. See also Coke and Jones, 70.; Peyton, 28; Sanderson, *Aulicus*, 144, *Compleat*, 377;

charitable....and gracious to all persons.” His supposed worst vice was that “he shewed too much inclination to excessive eating of fruits.”²⁰⁷ Excessive praise was part of a European trend to overplay seventeenth-century prince’s potential, with Henry a more complex character than contemporary biographers portrayed.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, these hagiographies raised the unanswered question: how could a gifted prince whose popularity allegedly threatened James be powerless to forestall the rise of a ‘worthless favourite’ like Carr?²⁰⁹

The incident between Carr, Overbury, and his mother had created ill will, but verifiable instances of conflict were rare. There was no reason why Henry, obsessed with continental diplomatic and military affairs, would trouble himself with Carr’s meagre accrual of patronage and power. The alleged break with the Queen in 1611 could not have caused an irreparable break as on Shrove Tuesday 1612, Carr was part of the Prince’s team, victorious in a tilt against another group of nobles under the Duke of Lennox.²¹⁰ Only one incident offered a personal explanation for Henry’s dislike. At an unspecified date, the Prince requested James that he might preside at the Privy Council, and Carr supported this. Cecil disagreed, seeing it without constitutional precedent or in the public’s interest. When the Privy Council supported Cecil, the treasurer privately informed Henry that Carr convinced the King to reject the request. When Carr attempted to explain himself, “his Highness turned from him with great indignation, and would not hear his justification.”²¹¹ The incident is not implausible as Cecil and the other Privy Councillors, frustrated at the Prince’s prodigality and clumsy interventions in state affairs, were unlikely to consent to additional powers.²¹² Nevertheless, the story’s sole source is Robert Johnston’s obscure *Historia Rerum Britannicarum* (1655). Given D’Ewes and his compatriots’ struggles to find anything beyond Henry’s moral distaste to justify the pair’s fissure, it raises questions about how this one work reported this incident.²¹³

²⁰⁷ Cornwallis, 17; William Haydon, *The True Picture and Relation of Prince Henry....* (Leiden: William Christian, 1634), 30-31.

²⁰⁸ Field, 24; Pollnitz, “Henry,” 23-24; Ulliot, “Biography,” 307.

²⁰⁹ Term is used by Gardiner, *England*, II 46.

²¹⁰ *CSPDJ*, LXVIII 121.

²¹¹ Thomas Birch, *The Life of Henry Prince of Wales: Eldest Son of James I* (Dublin: G. Faulkner, 1760), 193-194.

²¹² Croft, “several speeches,” 258-59, “Elizabeth to James,” 58; Sarah Fraser. *The Prince Who Would Be King: The Life and Death of Henry Stuart*, (New York: William Collins, 2017), ch. 17, 22, 29.

²¹³ D’Ewes, II 351-352.

The interrelationships between the two men's circles do not show a definitive division. George Chapman concurrently received both men's patronage for his translation of Homer's *Iliad*. After Henry's death, other prominent writers, Benjamin Rudyard, Samuel Daniel, and John Donne, transferred their services to Carr; John Webster dedicated his elegy, "A Monumental Column," to his former patron's supposed enemy.²¹⁴ Of course, pragmatism determined where artists received patronage, but no change of allegiance attracted accusations of betrayal. Carr's inheritance of Cecil's Spanish pension may have angered Henry, but many others received such payments.²¹⁵ At any rate, recent scholarship has shown that Henry held more nuanced views of Spain as the implacable Protestant hero he was portrayed to be. After Carr assumed some of Cecil's secretarial responsibilities, the correspondence between the two on a Spanish match revealed nothing other than typical formalities and courtesy.²¹⁶

A shortage of incidents illustrating an alleged rivalry between Henry and Carr led to a rumour that the two became rivals for the affection of Frances Howard.²¹⁷ David Lindley finds the only piece of contemporaneous support for either story to be a line from an August 1612 Venetian dispatch: "his Highness has begun to show a leaning to a certain lady of the Court."²¹⁸ The evidence's completeness must be questioned. Alongside the vagary, the ambassador Antonio Foscarini imbued a sense of urgency to encourage Venetian support for their ally Charles Emmanuel I, Duke of Savoy's anti-Hapsburg marriage offer.²¹⁹ Frances' husband, the third earl of Essex, grew up with Henry, and after 1608 the princely court became a centre for former followers of his father. There were reports of a dispute at a tennis match, and many at court felt Frances had been treated coldly by Essex. Still, these hardly justified the domestic ructions had Henry cuckolded his friend.²²⁰ The Prince also had an open offer of marriage to doña Ana,

²¹⁴ Braunmuller, 240-42; 58; Patricia G. Pinka, "Donne, Idios and the Somerset Epithalamion," *Studies in Philology* 90, no. 1 (Winter 1993), 64; Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1994), 155-156; Wymer, 149. Robert Bennett asserts the dedication was ironic (360, 364-367).

²¹⁵ Robert Stuart David Cross, "To Counterbalance the World: England, Spain, & Peace in the Early 17th Century," (PhD diss., Princeton University, 2012), 508; Samuel Rawson Gardiner, "On certain Letters of Diego Sarmiento Acuña.... *Archaeologia: or Miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity* 41 (January 1867), 153-155.

²¹⁶ Henry Ellis, *Various Letters Illustrative of English History*, (London: Harding and Lepard, 1827), III 226-231.

²¹⁷ Abbott, I 168; D'Ewes 90; Sanderson, *Aulicus*, 144; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 55.

²¹⁸ *CSPV*, XII 412.

²¹⁹ Sarah Fraser, ch. 12; O'Callaghan, *Spenserians*, 87.

²²⁰ For the 'tennis story' see Robert Codrington, *The Life and Death, of the Illustrious Robert Earle of Essex* (London: F. Leach, for L. Chapman, 1646), 5. For distaste at court around Essex's treatment of his wife. See also Birch, 195; Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex, in the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I and Charles I. 1540-1646*, (London: John Murray, 1853), 222; Sanderson *Aulicus*, 111.

daughter of Phillip III of Spain; pursuing a relationship with a prominent married noblewoman would have been an international provocation.²²¹

The story humanised Henry, whose sexuality had previously been unpronounced.²²² The bewitching and sexually liberal Frances tempted the Prince. Nevertheless, Henry prioritised his Protestant values and the kingdom's needs by putting aside his desires (at least in the Wilson version).²²³ After Howard spurned Henry, a further anecdote claimed he publicly humiliated her when he refused to pick up her dropped glove at a court dance, stating, "He would not have it, it is stretcht by another."²²⁴ Such lewdness was not only out of character, but Howard's father, Suffolk or uncle, Northampton, never would have accepted this impingement of her honour. The entire incident is redolent of the interaction in *The Changeling* when De Flores, the sexually enchanted servant of Vermandero, declared, "I should thrust / My fingers into her sockets here" after Beatrice rebuffed his attempt to retrieve her glove.²²⁵ Rather than explaining Henry's distaste for Carr, rumours that the two were romantic rivals accentuated the threadbare evidence of a rivalry between Henry and Carr.

Conclusion

While Anne would later be given a prominent role in introducing George Villiers to court, a supposedly career-ending event for Carr, royal family members had little influence over his career. The historian Andrew McRae argues that by the end of his life, Buckingham was a man who had lost control over the fashioning of his own identity.²²⁶ Between 1607 and 1612, his alleged predecessor Carr was never allowed to construct his own. Carr never transcended the entrenched view that "Favouritship is growne stale."²²⁷ James must take partial responsibility for

²²¹ Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: The Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 10; Calvin F. Senning, *Spain, Rumor, and Anti-Catholicism in Mid-Jacobean England: The Palatine Match, Cleves, and the Armada Scares of 1612-1613 and 1614* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 6-8.

²²² Cornwallis, 19; Peyton, 27; Roy C. Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales, and England's Lost Renaissance* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), 55; E. C. Williams, 132.

²²³ Bellany, *Scandal*, 149-156; Cogswell, *Phoenix*, ch.5; Lindley, *Howard*, 54, 66.

²²⁴ Abbott, I 170; *Tragicomedy*, Act I Scene IV 229; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 56.

²²⁵ *The Changeling*, Act I Scene I 238. *The Changeling* is interpreted as a commentary on the Howard Affair see Tony Bromham and Zara Bruzzi, 'The Changeling' and the Years of Crisis, 1619-1624: A Hieroglyph of Britain, (London: Pinter, 1990), 18-34; Lindley, *Howard*, 78.

²²⁶ McRae, *Satire*, 51.

²²⁷ *Fool would be a Favourit*, Act V, Scene II 481.

the perception of his favourite, as he was either oblivious or unwilling to acknowledge that the world of Petrarch, Castiglione, and Boccaccio was becoming that of Chapman, Marlowe, and Jonson. To be successful as a bedchamber broker Carr needed to be kept in the background, which he essentially had been, aside from the Sherbourne misstep. The Essex annulment and Carr's marriage to Howard in 1613 transformed James' and Carr's friendship. For Carr, his responsibilities and rewards were not commensurate with the public hatred directed at him, and he pressed the King for increased compensation.

The traumatic deaths of the King's two principal advisors and his son created uncertainty. It was an inopportune time for Carr to extract further influence from James. The King became frustrated that Carr continued to request additional positions after already giving Carr the meaningful responsibility of Lord Chamberlain, along with two adjunct positions in royal households. He warned Carr, "ye might lead me by the heart and not by the nose." By early 1615, James had absorbed the changing turn to cynicism when he vented at Carr, "For the exterior to the world, what can any servants expect of their prince but countenance or reward."²²⁸ Carr's fatal error was that he believed he should obtain the power that was perceived he held, an authority beyond his abilities.

²²⁸ Akrigg, *Letters*, 335-340.

Chapter Three

*“but if’t chance
Some cursed example poison’t near the head,
Death and diseases through the whole land spread”:*
Carr as a threat to the Commonwealth, 1607-1612?

In the Civil War’s aftermath, the writer Francis Osborn sought to account for divisions between the Stuarts and Parliament. He attributed some of their genesis to Carr’s attempt to have the 1614 Parliament revive the previously rejected 1607 Anglo-Scottish Union. Osborn contended that Carr and other “corrupting members” aimed “to submit both to one law” through the introduction of the ‘bills of grace’ which would “suffer the English to share in the privileges of Scotland.”¹ Of the stories concocted by the republican historians, this is easily refuted. Carr never spoke in the House of Parliament, where the King introduced the 58 bills of grace on 5 April. These bills had no connection to the Union but were the muted concessions the crown would make to obtain Parliamentary subsidies.²

While other republican histories did not feature a 1614 attempt by Carr to revive the Union, Arthur Wilson had Carr head the ‘undertakers,’ a group of ministers who aimed to ensure newly elected MPs “should comply solely to the Kings desires.”³ Wilson’s story is also false, with the undertakers’ existence since dismissed as parliamentary paranoia.⁴ Carr attended only the last of the eleven Privy Council meetings held during the ‘Addled Parliament’.⁵ His sole action during the 1614 elections was assisting his fellow Kentish landowner and East India Company investor, Sir Edwin Sandys, to win the seat of Rochester.⁶ If Carr sought a malleable

¹ Osborn, *Works*, 467.

² Jansson More, XX.

³ Arthur Wilson, *History*, 77; “There was an ould ladd rode on an ould padd,” earlystuartlibels.net, H1, accessed 8 May 2022.

⁴ Duncan Owen Lowe Jr and Clayton Roberts, “The Parliamentary Undertaking of 1614.” *English Historical Review* 93, no. 368 (July 1978), 481; Tim Harris, *Rebellion: Britain’s First Stuart Kings, 1567-1642* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 129; Peck, “Merchant Grievance,” 550-551.

⁵ *ACPE*, XXXIII 409-456.

⁶ Thomas L. Moir, *The Addled Parliament of 1614*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958), 106; Theodore K. Rabb, *Jacobean Gentleman: Sir Edwin Sandys, 1561-1629*. 1998, (New Haven: Princeton University Press, 2017), 177.

MP, the ornery common law defender Sandys was a terrible choice.⁷ While these purported stories are outside this thesis' focus, their shared theme that Carr undermined English constitutionalism has seeped into presentations of his early political career. This chapter explains how the portrayals of Carr as a prop for absolutism originated by reevaluating his unexceptional public movements before 1613.

The previous chapter outlined the universal view of courtiers as the "lean hungry crows that tire / Upon the mangled quarters of a realm."⁸ This chapter demonstrates how the court's opposition not only focused on perceived fiscal and moral irresponsibility but also felt it threatened English liberties. The chapter's title is from John Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, which presented a court so infused with evil that Professor Robert Ornstein concluded that English tragedians could push the genre no further.⁹ The quote formed a portion of the purported heroic courtier Antonio's speech which praised the French king for placing his trust in "a most provident council, who dare freely / Inform him the corruption of the times."¹⁰ Debuted just before Carr's trial, *The Duchess of Malfi* demonstrated the public scorn for advisors like Carr and why he featured prominently in descriptions of the Jacobean era.

Criticisms of the early Stuarts focused on their propensity to be led by their advisors.¹¹ James' promotion of the unworthy was as much of a marker of tyranny as his pronouncements or alleged misuse of prerogative powers. Before evaluating how far James held despotic inclinations, the first part of this chapter outlines how monarchs' indulgence of favourites affronted individual liberties. The background on favourites' association with tyranny contextualises the second section. Here repeated assertions of Carr's delusory intelligence are reevaluated. These contentions emphasised Carr's unsuitability for political office. The chapter's third section outlines how Carr's entry into the public consciousness following the Anglo-Scottish Union's legal failure exacerbated English bitterness over James' refusal to abandon the project. Finally, the chapter reassesses Carr's rumoured intervention to thwart Cecil's Great Contract of 1610, arguing that he played no part in the first Jacobean Parliament's dismissal.

⁷ Derek Hirst, *England in Conflict, 1603-1660: Kingdom, Community, Commonwealth* (London: Arnold, 1999), 90.

⁸ *Whore of Babylon*, Act III Scene I.

⁹ Ornstein, 129.

¹⁰ *Duchess of Malfi*, Act I Scene II 8-19.

¹¹ Susan Doran, "Polemic and prejudice: a Scottish king for an English throne," in ed. Doran, *Doubtful*, 226, 229;

Absolutism and favourites

Seventeenth-century English society obsessed over precedent and hierarchy: the nobility wielded public authority and secured political liberties. To rule by “advice of their friends and favourites only” was un-English, a feature of Eastern despots or Catholic kings.¹² Throughout the sixteenth century, the English became distressed that European monarchs replaced representative assemblies with a noblesse de robe.¹³ Across Europe, the bedchamber created unease amongst the political class.¹⁴ They feared an ambitious individual from outside the elite would not just protect a monarch from clamouring suitors but instead insulate them from their true advisors.¹⁵ With the king secluded from honest counsel, a favourite “teaches him the arts of the tyrant,” or even worse, ruled as a surrogate “without any condition to ascertain his authority.”¹⁶ Although James heeded Francis Bacon’s advice that “there must be some middle counsellors to keep things steady,” criticism remained that he allowed favourites immoderate influence.¹⁷ Contemporary descriptions of James’ dependence first on Carr, then Buckingham cast him as the cut-rate version of Machiavelli’s tyrannical Cesare Borgia. The Aragonese tyrant of Romagna and Marche at least showed the good sense to destroy his favourite, minister Remirro de Orco, when his influence threatened his regime’s stability.¹⁸

As representatives of England’s other empyrean ordained institution, Parliamentarians feared that James had misplaced the ‘natural affection’ to be shared by all subjects.¹⁹ MPs became compelled to “rendereth him a King of free and able men.... more glorious then to be a

¹² Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, 7. See also *ill Court-Favourite*, 53; Martyn, 320; Persons, *Succession*, 47-48; *Gaping Gulf*, 57; Wright, 13.

¹³ Nicholas Henshall, *The Myth of Absolutism*. London: Longman, 1992), 2; Lake, “‘popularity’,” 87; Johann P. Sommerville, “Absolutism and Royalism,” in eds. Burns and Goldie, *Political Thought*, 348. For continental beliefs in English absolutism see Bodin, 67.

¹⁴ Jeroen Duindam, “Pre-modern Power Elites: Princes, Courts, Intermediaries,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Political Elites*, eds. Heinrich Best and John Higley (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 167; Robert Harding, “Corruption and the Moral Boundaries of Patronage,” in eds. Lytle and Orgel, *Patronage*, 59.

¹⁵ *Dorothea Scott*, 188.

¹⁶ Matthieu, 10; Wright, 66. See also *Death of Edward II*, 10, 40; Bacon, *King*, 2; Cotton, 128; Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, 90; Machiavelli, *Prince*, 80-82.

¹⁷ Bacon, ‘Of Ambition.’

¹⁸ Machiavelli, *Prince*, 27.

¹⁹ Margaret Atwood Judson, *The Crisis of the Constitution: An Essay in Constitutional and Political Thought in England, 1603-1645* (New York: Octagon Books, 1980), 21.

King of Slaves, Beggars, and Bankrupts.”²⁰ Increased state intervention in the economy created disquiet about unequal opportunities. Most accepted a proto-bureaucracy dominated by noble patronage and kinship. Yet, kingship should be practised publicly, not privately and chaotically.²¹ Any officeholder needed plausibility for their promotion. Therefore, for James’ critics to blame the “rascals...Whose blacke deeds have ecclips’t his worth” spotlighted the tensions produced by the royal prerogative and the rule of law’s unclear boundaries.²²

The stage was where those beyond the literary elite absorbed arguments against monarchical absolutism. The undue powers of advisors to exclude those who offered candid opinions were essential features of early modern drama. Playwrights used overpromoted confidants to raise questions about civic culture and duties, hereditary succession, and legitimate forms of resistance.²³ In Daniel’s *Philotas*, Ephestion captured fears of the unworthy companion’s power as he simpered, “God gives to Kings the honour to command / To subjects all their glory to obey.”²⁴ Thus the stage Machiavel became a feature of early-seventeenth-century drama, even if he maintained little connection to the Florentine writer’s thoughts.²⁵ Representing the King as “Protectors of impious persons” demonstrated Calvinist disgust at the court’s fragile moral order.²⁶ The revival of the Senecan over-achiever or striver, an expression of neo-Stoic aversion for individuals of overweening ambition, featured in later constructions of Carr.²⁷ Beneath these preconceptions of Carr’s influence, no royal policy revealed the favourite’s hand in its creation.

Since inimical libels feigned moderation to attack ‘evil councillors’ within the court, the stage offered the most concerted subversion of sovereign authority. Dramatists pushed what Curtis Perry labels ‘instrumental favouritism,’ where favourites were extensions of absolute

²⁰ James Howell and William Prynne, *The Pre-eminence and Pedigree of Parlement* (London: R.R. for Humphrey Moseley, 1645), 11.

²¹ Bacon, *King*, 3; *Cabinet-council*, 191.

²² Anonymous, “The Five Senses,” earlystuartlibels.net, L8, accessed 10 February 2022.

²³ Evans, 254-255; Greenblatt, *Tyrant*, ch. 5: Worden, “Favourites,” 165.

²⁴ *Philotas*, Act IV Scene II 1676-77. For similar views see *Darius*, Act I Scene I; *The Roman Actor*, Act I Scene II, Act IV Scene II; *Emperor’s Favourite*, Act I Scene I 459-460.

²⁵ Ornstein, 24, 30; Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation 1500-1700*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965), 57, 77.

²⁶ *Cabinet-council*, 85. See also *None-such Charles*, 35.

²⁷ Barbour, 191; Gajda, “Christendom,” 435; Perry, “Seneca,” 316.

power rather than corrupting advisors.²⁸ Presentations of the court rarely placed the sovereign at the centre of the action, which, combined with an absence of a physical barrier between the actors and the audience, pricked regal pretensions that they were at a divinely ordered universe's centre.²⁹ Lipsius unintentionally revealed drama's ability to efface monarchical authority: "When thou seest a poor beggarly fellow playing a king's part on a stage, adorned with golden robes, thou envyest him not, knowing that under the same gorgeous attire are scabs, filth, and uncleanness."³⁰ Concerted attacks on royal authority saw audiences more inclined to take a contrary view to Lipsius: to view the lowly actor, the tyrant, and the king as the same creature. Even performances supportive of robust monarchies, such as *Sejanus* or Stroud's *Floating Island*, failed to provide compelling justifications for kingship beyond the chaos engendered by the alternatives.³¹

Authors successfully represented favourites as a component of absolutism. Yet, there has never been agreement on how far James aimed to impose autocratic kingship in England. James supported the ancient contention that a tyrant was a monarch unbound by law who allowed "his unrulie affections to burst forth."³² Another area of broad agreement was Bodin's postulation that a tyrant would have "subjects oppressed as if they were slaves, and their property treated as if it belonged to the tyrant."³³ In the lead-up to the Civil War, Lipsius' similar yet woollier idea that a just sovereign's actions are "undertaken, & executed for the good of the subjects" expanded a monarch's responsibilities from the French philosopher's views.³⁴ When assessing whether Carr assisted Jacobean absolutism, it is essential to consider that before the Civil War,

²⁸ Perry, *Favoritism*, 231.

²⁹ Stephen Longstaffe, "Political Plays," in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 486; Stephen Orgel, *The Illusion of Power: Political Theater in the English Renaissance*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 4.

³⁰ Lipsius, *Constancy*, XIV.

³¹ Burgess, "Political Culture," 39; Margaret Forey, "William Strode's *The Floating Island*: Play and Political Propaganda," *The Seventeenth Century* 27, no. 2 (June 2012), 129-130.

³² *Basilicon Doron*, 22, 72. See also Alexander, *Darius*, Act V Scene I; Bodin, 56, 62; Castiglione, bk. four; Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, 91; *Mustapha*, Act II Scene II; La perrière, (page unnumbered); Lipsius, *Politickes*, 26; *Roman Actor*, Act I Scene II; Thomas Smith, 6; Wright, 10; *Swisser*, Act IV Scene II 10-11.

³³ Bodin, 57.

³⁴ Lipsius, *Politickes*, 19. Lipsius paraphrased Erasmus (*Christian Prince*, 79).

contemporaries distinguished this term from tyranny.³⁵ While tyranny was universally condemned, defenders “against those who made a make a Scar-crow of the Regall Name” were not difficult to find, with republican government regarded as a chaotic “Tyranny of a Multitude.”³⁶ Therefore, not all critics felt that James constrained their liberties, and many advocated for him to practice a more robust kingship.

While a seventeenth-century tyrant’s characteristics were defined, whether James demonstrated them has divided historians. Defying revisionist arguments, Johann Sommerville maintains that James remained a consistent yet frustrated absolutist, with views in step with the majority of the population.³⁷ By contrast, Jenny Wormald and Conrad Russell find James’ statements exulting his authority to be rhetorical flourishes, and argue that he was at heart a constitutionalist.³⁸ Paul Christianson and Glenn Burgess occupy a middle ground, presenting an inconsistent King who oscillated between the two positions but became reluctantly absolutist after 1610.³⁹ Michael Braddick argues that Jacobean England remained a patrimonial society, albeit one struggling to contain inequality and social disturbances.⁴⁰ Further disagreements exist over how far those characterised as constitutionalists accepted divine right principles or whether they agitated against unlimited royal authority.⁴¹

³⁵ Glenn Burgess, “Tyrants, Absolute Kings, Arbitrary Rulers and the Commonwealth of England: Some Reflections on Seventeenth-Century English Political Vocabulary,” in *Monarchism and Absolutism in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Cesare Cuttica and Glenn Burgess (London: Routledge, 2015), 150; James Daly, “The Idea of Absolute Monarchy in Seventeenth-Century England,” *The Historical Journal* 21, no. 2 (June 1978), 228; Johann P. Sommerville, “Early Modern Absolutism in Practice and Theory,” in *Democracy and Anti-democracy in Early Modern England 1603-1689*, ed. Cesare Cuttica (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 154.

³⁶ Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha, Or, The Natural Power of Kings*, (London: Walter Davis, 1680), 53-69; Wither, page unnumbered. See also; Cotton, 20; Elyot, 12, 268; Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, VII; Lipsius, *Six Bookes*, 18.

³⁷ Sommerville, “Absolutism,” 118, “John Selden,” 290, 313, “Revisionism,” 168-172.

³⁸ Conrad Russell, “Parliamentary History in Perspective, 1604-1629,” *History* 61, no. 201 (1976), 25; *Unrevolutionary England, 1603-1642*, (London: Hambledon Press, 1990), 20; Wormald, “Marriage Partner,” 77, “Cradle King,” 254.

³⁹ Glenn Burgess, *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution: An Introduction to English Political Thought, 1603-1642*, (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1992), 111; Paul Christianson, “Selden,” 274; “Royal and parliamentary voices on the ancient constitution, c.1604-1621,” in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 72, 95, “Political Thought,” 956.

⁴⁰ Michael J. Braddick, “The Early Modern English State and the Question of Differentiation from 1550-1700,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 38, no. 1 (January 1996), 88, 93-109. See also Anthony Fletcher, *Reform in the Provinces: The Government of Stuart England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 251-256. For similar tensions during Elizabeth’s reign see J. A. Sharpe, “Social strain and social dislocation, 1585-1603,” in ed. Guy, *Last Decade*, 211.

⁴¹ J. G. A. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law: A Study of English Historical Thought in the Seventeenth Century: A Reissue with a Retrospect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 35.

Arguments that James exhibited absolutist tendencies often fixate on his two treatises on kingship, *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron*. Reliant on Biblical and classical authors and sixteenth-century continental theorists, his twin polemics offer clues to why he struggled to adapt to English politics.⁴² However, it is arguable whether either work encapsulated James' thoughts. Historians see *Trew Law*'s strident divine right views in a few ways. They argue that James intended the work as a reaction to the attempted 1596 Presbyterian coup; a rejection of his hated former tutor, George Buchanan; or a retort to Person's *A Conference about the Next Succession*.⁴³ But dismissing *Trew Law* as an isolated outpouring of frustration overlooks the justifications for his authority that appear in James' subsequent pronouncements. So while inflammatory statements, "the King is above the law, as both the author and giver of strength thereto," were not a feature of his English reign, he included *Trew Law* in his 1616 *Collected Works*.⁴⁴ *Basilikon Doron*'s breezy aphorisms revealed a King more at ease. However, the abrupt break with his previous work and the London sale of 16,000 bound copies of this 'private document' suggested its purpose was to win support for his English accession.⁴⁵ James' works meant kingship remained in the public discourse.⁴⁶ Yet the pithy libellers undermined James' anachronistic rationalisations of his power. For if he had been divinely appointed, why was it necessary to constantly remind others of this?

⁴² *Trew Law*, 77. See also; Burns, *Monarchy*, 231; Rebecca W. Bushnell, "George Buchanan, James VI and neo-classicism," in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* ed. Roger A. Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 104; James VI and I and Charles Howard McIlwain, *The Political Works of James I: Reprinted from the Edition of 1616* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), xxxvi; Wormald, "Basilicon Doron," 36. Glenn Burgess does not find *Trew Law* to be an absolutist work (*Absolute Monarchy*, 40-41).

⁴³ J. H. Burns, "George Buchanan and the anti-monarchomachs," in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 23; Peter Lake, "The King (the Queen) and the Jesuit: James Stuart's True Law of Free Monarchies in Context/s," *Transactions of the RHS*, 2004, 243-253; Aysha Pollnitz, *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 265; Jenny Wormald, "'Tis True I am a Cradle King:' the View from the Throne," in eds. Goodare and Lynch, *James VI*, 251. For authors who found *Trew Law* represented James' views see John Cramsie, "Philosophy of Imperial Kingship and the Interpretation of James VI and I," in ed. Houlbrooke, *Ideas*, 46.

⁴⁴ *Trew Law*, 75; Sommerville, "Selden," 275. Jenny Wormald found *Trew Law* readily available ("Basilicon Doron," 52).

⁴⁵ Linda Levy Peck, "The mental world of the Jacobean court: an introduction," in ed. Peck, *Mental World*, 4; Pollnitz, "Henry," 27, *Princely Education*, 318; Rickard, *Authorship*, 112-116; Wormald, "Basilicon Doron," 48. Kevin Sharpe disagrees James intended *Basilikon Doron* to win over an English audience ("Public Duty and Private Conscience in the Writings of James VI and I," in eds. Morrill et al, *Public Duty*, 89).

⁴⁶ Perry, "Late Manuscript Poetry," 209-225; Rickard, *Authorship*, 6.

Although James' actions conformed to constitutional principles, some believed him oblivious to his subjects' rights. Frustration remained at James' insistence that he could override laws and his refutation of natural and common law was the same.⁴⁷ His loquacious digressions on constitutional principles caused needless ill-will. James' oratory lacked the complaisance and reciprocity Elizabeth imparted to MPs.⁴⁸ James' intertwining of his image with imperial Roman iconography in English coins was ill-advised, given the renewed interest in classical kings and emperors' excess.⁴⁹ The not particularly lucrative sale of the newly created title of Baronet created another flashpoint with a nobility attuned to any change to precedent.⁵⁰ James' motivation for a powerful monarchy partly reflected his belief that as a universal king, he needed strength to avoid England replicating the French and German religious divisions.⁵¹ Zealous Protestants saw James' reluctance to confront Catholicism as a component of his defiance of God's law.⁵² Parliamentarians became uneasy over the power of church courts, which ignored common law principles and the preeminence of the king in parliament model.⁵³

While James' public image management failed to present him as abiding by constitutional precedents, he never wished to submit people to his rule. He called Parliaments more often than Elizabeth and used his prerogative powers no more frequently.⁵⁴ Manipulation of elections or interference in legal procedures did not occur. James sought advice when considering the 1000 or more petitions he received each year.⁵⁵ Civil lawyers and Anglican divines had no discernable government role.⁵⁶ Despite notable royal victories such as the Bates' or Calvin's Case generating parliamentary teeth-gnashing, the judiciary ruled against the crown

⁴⁷ James VI and I, *Meditation*, 15.

⁴⁸ Perry, "nostalgia," 95; Russell, "Parliamentary Politics," 18, *Unrevolutionary England*, 8-11; David L. Smith, *The Stuart Parliaments, 1603-1689: Reconstruction in Early Modern England*, (London: Arnold, 1999), 102; Jenny Wormald, "one king, two kingdoms," in *Uniting the Kingdom?: The Making of British History*, ed. Alexander Grant (London: Routledge, 1996), 164.

⁴⁹ Knowles, "Images," 21; Kevin Sharpe, *Image Wars*, 80, *Reading Authority*, 43.

⁵⁰ Cust, *Aristocracy*, 28; Frankland, 11; Stone, *Crisis*, 84-93.

⁵¹ Orr, 137.

⁵² *Non-such Charles*, 35.

⁵³ Alan Cromartie, *The Constitutionalist Revolution: An Essay on the History of England, 1450-1642*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 166, "Political Culture," 93.

⁵⁴ Michael J. Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars*, (London: Penguin Books, 2009), ch. 2; Kishlansky, 56; Russell, *James*, 58.

⁵⁵ Hoyle, 562, 580.

⁵⁶ Christianson "Political Thought," 959; R.C. Munden, "James I and 'the growth of mutual distrust': Kings, Commons, and Reform, 1603-1604" in *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History*, ed. Kevin Sharpe (London: Methuen, 1985), 63.

in most legal actions.⁵⁷ James felt patronised by common law defenders' compulsion to educate the foreign King through exaggerated claims of England's mixed constitution's immemorial nature.⁵⁸ The first Jacobean Parliament made it clear that only war, or at least the preparation for conflict, necessitated them granting extraordinary revenue. After 1610, James accepted this interpretation, turning to accepted methods of increased borrowing. If James believed in absolutism during his Scottish reign, it had not been an option, and its Parliament was not as tame as the English or James portrayed.⁵⁹ Little suggests that James behaved differently from previous monarchs but changing cultural and intellectual trends placed his actions under greater scrutiny. Writing shortly after James' death, Robert Filmer encapsulated mainstream views of the Jacobean era, concluding "by his late Majesty King James, a King can never be so notoriously Vitious, but he will generally favour Justice, and maintain some Order."⁶⁰

The Education of Robert Carr

An enduring presentation of Carr was that a limited intelligence and lack of formal education made him unsuited for advising the King and rendering adequate service in the governmental roles he assumed. While undeveloped learning was not foremost in republican complaints when they recalled Carr's sudden arrival, they noted he "had not the bounty of his minde" or "no great depth of Literature or Experience."⁶¹ Edward Peyton created the often repeated anecdote that at his arrest Carr "furnished his Library onely with twenty Play-books and wanton Romances; and had no other in his Study."⁶² As at most, 2.5% of England's male population received higher education, the republicans needed to balance pleasing the educated elite without alienating a popular audience.⁶³ Carr's unexceptional development was not unique, and the training of some of his more venerated alleged rivals, the third earl of Essex and Cecil,

⁵⁷ Fortier, "Equity and Ideas," 266; Judson, 48.

⁵⁸ Alan Cromartie, "The Constitutionalist Revolution: The Transformation of Political Culture in Early Stuart England," *Past & Present* 163 (May 1999), 93; Bryan P. Levack "Law and Ideology: The Civil Law and Theories of Absolutism in Elizabethan and Jacobean England," in eds. Dubrow and Strier, *Historical Renaissance*, 125; Johann P. Sommerville, *Politics and Ideology in England, 1603-40*, (London: Longman, 1986); 88-90.

⁵⁹ Goodare, *Government*, 40, 91, 103, "Scottish Politics," 30-34; Kerr-Peterson, 8; Wormald, "one kingdom," 165, "Two Kings," 195. Maurice Lee regarded James' Scottish reign absolutist ("Scotland, the Union and the Idea of a General Crisis," in ed. Mason, *Scots and Britons*, 48).

⁶⁰ Filmer, 68. See also Alastair Bellany, "Writing the King's Death: The Case of James I," in eds. Kewes and McRae, *Succession Literature*, 37-42.

⁶¹ Arthur Wilson, *History*, 7, 54.

⁶² Peyton, 33.

⁶³ Lawrence Stone, "The Educational Revolution in England, 1560-1640," *Past & Present*, no. 28 (July 1964), 56.

barely differed from Carr's vocational instruction.⁶⁴ Later historians, less concerned with Carr's perceived moral failings, took these mild republican rebukes and transformed Carr into a "brainless athlete" or a "feather-brained ephebe."⁶⁵ Little evidence exists that academic deficiencies impacted Carr's administrative performance or concerned his fellow government ministers.

While Carr's critics emphasised his lack of education, they were not wrong that he lacked academic instruction. Beginning his service at James' Scottish court at around thirteen, Carr would have received a grammar school education at best.⁶⁶ While his early development is unknown, it can be assumed he received a similar education to other younger sons of late sixteenth-century greater Scottish lairds. Humanism and Latin were taught, but emphasis remained on martial skills, horsemanship, and estate administration. The 1567 Education Act, ordering schools to provide religious instruction, saw most Catholic families tutor their younger sons within the household.⁶⁷ The Kers' eldest sons, Andrew and William, inherited their parents' properties. The middle brother's title, Mr James Ker of Ferniehirst, indicated he held an MA, although the institution that conferred it is unknown.⁶⁸ Robert's luck was to come under the guidance of George Home following Janet Scott's 1593 death. Nothing would be unusual about Carr's training to those outside England. In the rest of Europe, courtly service provided an understanding of the higher nobilities' mores.⁶⁹

Opponents noted Carr's lack of formal education as a further measure to underline his otherness and agreed on the desirability of university education for a government administrator. Throughout the sixteenth century, education replaced virtuous actions as a marker of status.⁷⁰ The nobility used university education for their youngest sons to preserve their position in an increasingly sophisticated governmental system.⁷¹ When Carr arrived in England, attending a

⁶⁴ Croft, "Elizabeth to James," 51; Devereux, 228; Haynes, 15; David R. Lawrence, *The Complete Soldier: Military Books and Military Culture in Early Stuart England, 1603-1645*, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 107.

⁶⁵ McElwee, *Wiseest Fool*, 176; Bergeron, "James and Robert Carr," 2, "James Sexuality," 359.

⁶⁶ Whyte, 241.

⁶⁷ Meikle, "Lairds," 275, *The Scottish People*, 313.

⁶⁸ *SP*, V 67. Carr had another older brother, Thomas Ker of Oxnam; little is known of him as he was murdered by Hector Turnbull of Stenelage in 1601 (*RPCS*, IX 55).

⁶⁹ Duindam, "Meeting Point," 77; Scott, "Aristocrats and Nobles," 104.

⁷⁰ Alexander Montgomerie, *The Cherry and the Slae*, (Edinburgh: Andrew Anderson, 1682), stanza 55-58

⁷¹ Mervyn James, *Society*, 377-380; Helen M. Jewell, *Education in Early Modern England* (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1998), 55-56; Kelso, 116.

higher learning institution had become a tenet of the elite. Channelling Cicero, James Cleland advised the nobility: “If you meane your Sonnes shoulde profite in learning and good manners, send them to the University.”⁷² To Robert Filmer, “Men who prove wise of Mind, were by Nature intended to be Lords, and Govern.”⁷³ Lipsius articulated the neo-Stoic stance on education: “As an empty ship without ballast is tossed and tumbled on the sea with the least blast of wind.... not kept steady and poised with the ballast of reason.”⁷⁴ Tacitus ensured his *Agricola*, the noble martialist suffocated by tyrannical jealous incompetence, “drunk deeper of philosophy than a Roman and a senator properly may.”⁷⁵ Education was a marker of class and gender, which opponents used to re-emphasise Carr’s androgyny and supposed low birth.⁷⁶

Highlighting Carr’s anti-intellectualism allowed Stuart opponents to paint the favourite with tyrannical characteristics not applicable to the King. English Renaissance education aimed to teach students theories of good governance, instil emotional control through Ciceronian moralism, and promote Protestant godliness.⁷⁷ Illustrating Carr’s lack of learning implied an absence of those values. It also allowed the Essex circle to distance the Scot from their paragon of aristocratic virtue, who supposedly espoused, “There is no treasure so much enriches the minde of man as learning.”⁷⁸ James’ Scottish court culture matched the intellectualism of any other in Europe and arguably outshone the pallid humanism and arcane chivalric antiquarianism that dominated Elizabeth’s.⁷⁹ As ideal companions were “those who are Religious and learned,” the English were disappointed that education standards amongst James’ associates did not match their negative preconceptions.⁸⁰ As Carr’s learning was the exception amongst James’

⁷² Cleland, 34.

⁷³ Filmer, 31.

⁷⁴ Lipsius, *Constancy*, V, *Politickes*, 40.

⁷⁵ Cornelius Tacitus, *Agricola and Germania*, trans. Harold Mattingly, comp. J. B. Rives (London: Penguin Classics, 2009), page unnumbered.

⁷⁶ Jean R. Brink, “Literacy and Education,” in ed. Hattaway, *Renaissance Literature*, 96.

⁷⁷ Peter Mack, *Rhetoric*, 11-12, 20, 34-36, 135, “Rhetorical Training in the Elizabethan Grammar School,” in ed. Smuts, *Shakespeare*, 206; Morgan, 172; Stone, “Educational Revolution,” 72.

⁷⁸ Tenney, 154.

⁷⁹ Parry, 66; Murray Pittock, “From Edinburgh to London: Scottish Court Writing and 1603,” in ed. Cruickshanks, *Stuart Courts*, 13; Robert Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 20. That James’ cultural achievements were overstated see Rickard, *Authorship*, 45.

⁸⁰ Botero, *Reason*, 36. See also Anonymous, *Scotland Characterised.... in Harleian*, VII 357; Denys Hays, “Scotland and the Italian Renaissance,” in eds. Cowan and Shaw, *George Donaldson*, 114-118; Meikle, *Scottish People*, 320-321.

companions, the English elevated Carr's importance to support preexisting beliefs in their intellectual superiority over the Scots.

According to Castiglione and Erasmus, a tyrant believed "successful government requires no art or training other than brute force."⁸¹ This judgment applied to the ruler and his advisors. James spent much of his life repudiating his monarchomachial education; however, no previous English sovereign discoursed so profoundly on the nature of kingship. By exaggerating James' reliance on an obscure Scot, opponents adapted Castiglione's argument to spotlight James' preference for outside administrators rather than educating himself in English governance. Instead, James should have heeded Thomas Smith's suggestion to improve his noble advisors "through habilitie of education" or seek guidance from Parliament.⁸² Untrained in English legal or theological discourse, Carr was excluded from political discussion, which as with many other favourites, saw him transformed into what Anne Barton labels a 'Lethal Buffoon'.⁸³

For some commentators, a counsellor's "Fidelity and Knowledge" was not as important as age and experience, which ranked only behind a "feare of God."⁸⁴ So while Carr's educational attainment was not always mentioned, that he rose to prominence "before he had either wife or beard" is featured in all republican histories.⁸⁵ The Essex rebellion entrenched opinions on the unsuitability of youth in governance. Sir Robert Naunton captured the ephebiphobia, chastising James for allowing "Children in the great Councell of the Kingdome, which came to Invade and invert nature."⁸⁶ So angered by James' "governing by young Counsellors, who had not vertue, but vanity," Edward Peyton concocted a story where James' preference for youth aroused insincere praise from the Spanish ambassador Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, count of Gondomar.⁸⁷ While many concerns about inexperience at James' court or Carr's political power were hyperbolic, his appointment to assist James with secretarial duties following Cecil's death demonstrated that the King regarded him as a significant counsellor. Carr's promotion further

⁸¹ Castiglione, bk. four; Erasmus, *Christian Prince*, vii.

⁸² Thomas Smith, 39.

⁸³ Barton, 98.

⁸⁴ A.D.B., 62; *Cabinet-council*, 33; Aiken, 310; Bacon, "Of Youth and Age"; Botero, *Reason*, 36; Hubert, 48; La perrière, page unnumbered; Vaughan, "of Counsellours."

⁸⁵ *Five Years*, 7; D'Ewes, II 330; Osborn, *Works*, 453; Weldon, *James*, 57; Arthur Wilson, *History*, 54.

⁸⁶ Naunton, 9.

⁸⁷ Peyton, 8-9.

emphasised James' unsuitability for kingship, as "loads that are too heavy for their bearer must bring him to his knees."⁸⁸

Carr's sudden arrival, inexperience, and political power provoked a visceral sense of unfairness among early modern observers. The English peerage more than doubled between 1541 and 1641.⁸⁹ But there were insufficient opportunities to pursue public service. Lawrence Stone estimates that by 1610, 1070 entered Oxford, Cambridge, or an Inn of Court annually, and approximately 200 undertook further education abroad.⁹⁰ The absence of a standing army limited opportunities, and the crown had only 1200 financially worthwhile administrative positions to offer.⁹¹ Mark Curtis argues that, on average, there would be only 327 annual vacancies within the church.⁹²

Unable to find a broker or a patron, the educated and excluded found that Carr represented a flawed system.⁹³ John Day encapsulated this resentment in the *Isle of Gulls* when Dametas dismissed the king's watchtower captains' complaints, stating: "Poor scholars do not like our worship neither; they rail against rich cormorants."⁹⁴ Day objected to defence cuts on the Scottish border and preferred Scots sent home rather than placed into administrative positions.⁹⁵ Increased competition resulted in a heightened sense of restlessness, disillusionment, melancholy, and even disgust from the full spectrum of political commentators, whether committed to civic humanism or had chosen a neo-Stoic withdrawal from public life.⁹⁶

Those chronicling Carr's ascent realised that even those who found employment resented that Carr had not shared their hardships in attaining his positions. School hours were long,

⁸⁸ Seneca, *Dialogues*, 123.

⁸⁹ Linda Levy Peck, "Monopolizing Favour: Structures of Power in the Early Seventeenth-Century English Court," in eds. Elliott and Brockliss, *Favourite*, 56; Stone, *Crisis*, 67.

⁹⁰ Stone, "Educational Revolution," 504-506.

⁹¹ Linda Levy Peck, "Corruption at the Court of James I: The Undermining of Legitimacy," in *After the Reformation: Essays in Honor of J. H. Hexter*, ed. Barbara C. Malament, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1980), 78, Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (London: G. Allen and Unwin, 1982), 26.

⁹² Mark H. Curtis, "The Alienated Intellectuals of Early Stuart England," *Past & Present* 23 (November 1962), 28.

⁹³ Peck, "Government Policy," 41; Perry, *Culture*, 85; Stone, "Educational Revolution," 56.

⁹⁴ *Isle of Gulls*, Scene III 22.

⁹⁵ Dietz, 109; Coomber 46.

⁹⁶ Levy, "Bacon," 104; McCrea, 34; Steppat 30.

teaching poor, and discipline severe.⁹⁷ Grammar schools imposed challenging expectations, with classical texts read multiple times with critical passages memorised or doubly translated.⁹⁸ Acceptance into Cambridge's Emmanuel College required six years of university study, three languages, and impeccable Protestant credentials.⁹⁹ It took Robert Heath, a later disgruntled client of Carr, 29 years of study to be accepted to the bar.¹⁰⁰

The most socially elite educational institutions were the popular Inns of Court, whose minimal discipline produced the Jacobean system's most disaffected opponents.¹⁰¹ Recent scholarship has moderated the long-held belief that the Inns were "nurseries of the legalist opposition to the early Stuarts."¹⁰² Nevertheless, the Inns functioned as centres for neo-Stoic thought and libel creation.¹⁰³ John Selden, Edwin Sandys, John Hoskins, and Edward Coke all positioned themselves as opponents of Roman civil law, which they believed threatened the sovereign place of the king in Parliament.¹⁰⁴ Those who attended the Inns deemed Scots like Carr, barred from attendance, uninstructed in the unique character of common law, unsuitable for political office.¹⁰⁵ The recalcitrant Simonds D'Ewes exemplified how the Inns imbued a sense of English exceptionalism.¹⁰⁶ Even those outside the Inns, such as Weldon or Osborn, were ideologically attached to the common law defenders.

⁹⁷ Morgan, 175, 191, 201; J. A. Sharpe, *Early Modern England: A Social History 1550-1760* (London: Edward Arnold, 1987), 264; Vaughan, "That schoole-masters should have large stipends."

⁹⁸ Jewell, 54; Kelso, 128; Mack, *Rhetoric*, 13-14, "Rhetorical Training," 200-204. The same standards applied in Scotland (Whyte, 241).

⁹⁹ Morgan, 248.

¹⁰⁰ Kopperman, 9.

¹⁰¹ Freyja Cox Jensen, "Intellectual Developments," in ed. Doran and Jones, *Elizabethan World*, 515; Stone, "Educational Revolution," 53.

¹⁰² Wilfrid R. Prest, *The Inns of Court under Elizabeth I and the Early Stuarts, 1590-1640* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1972), 220-222.

¹⁰³ Stephanie Elsky, *Custom, Common Law, and the Constitution of English Renaissance Literature*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 4; McRae, *Satire*, 33; Corrine C. Weston, "England: ancient constitution and common law," in eds. Burns and Goldie, *Political Thought*, 374-378.

¹⁰⁴ Levack, "Ideology," 222-226; Louise Brown Osborn, *Life, Letters and Writings of John Hoskyns, 1566-1638*, (New Haven: Yale University Press), 1937), 20, 34; Sommerville, *Politics*, 90-108; For common law beliefs and anti-clericalism see John Morgan, 265. For Spenserian poets connection to the Inns see O'Callaghan, *Spenserians*, 17-18.

¹⁰⁵ Keith M. Brown, "Anglicization," 555; Brian P. Levack, *The Formation of the British State: England, Scotland, and the Union: 1603-1707* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 186.

¹⁰⁶ McGee 27-28, 111-117.

Stories of Carr's unjustified rise and unparalleled preeminence did not just appeal to the disgruntled elite. The trades and the guilds dominated London, and two-thirds of male inhabitants undertook an unpaid apprenticeship of eight years under their master's control.¹⁰⁷ Most anti-Scottish opinions emanated from these yeomen and artisans. Increased competition for employment caused by London's 3000 annual migrants meant that by 1603, day labourers' wages had decreased 29% from a century earlier.¹⁰⁸ *Eastward Ho!* demonstrated urban workers' resentment at the unjustified courtly promotions when Touchstone self-aggrandised:

And as for my rising by other men's fall; God shield me!
Did I gain my wealth by ordinaries? No! By exchanging of
gold? No! By keeping of gallants' company? No! I hired me
a little shop, sought low, took small gain, kept no debt-book,
garnished my shop for want of plate, with good wholesome
thrifty sentences.¹⁰⁹

Court rejects tapped into the dissatisfaction through news networks, which left the public "knowing a good deal that was unpleasant about the Court."¹¹⁰ To invent a story of the instant promotion of an inexperienced courtier rather than outline his nine-year service was guaranteed to create a negative impression, regardless of Carr's execution of his responsibilities.

Negative portrayals of Carr's intelligence became nationally significant after the King assumed Cecil's secretarial responsibilities in July 1612, with Carr as his assistant. The decision created bemusement, but the King sporadically executed direct governance.¹¹¹ The arrangement was to be a temporary expedient while alternatives were found for Sir Thomas Lake, the uniformly disliked, anti-Scottish, Catholic understudy of Cecil.¹¹² The Venetians, who hoped for the promotion of the English ambassador Sir Henry Wotton, thought little of Carr's abilities; hardly surprising when they held the new secretary to be pro-Spanish.¹¹³ Wotton and Sir John

¹⁰⁷ Jewell, 50, 88.

¹⁰⁸ Steve Rappaport, "Reconsidering Apprenticeship in Sixteenth-Century London," in eds. Monfasini and Musto, *Renaissance Society*, 239, 245.

¹⁰⁹ *Eastward Ho!*, Act I Scene I, 43-49.

¹¹⁰ Bellany, *Scandal*, 112; Cust, "News," 61.

¹¹¹ *Downshire*, III, 337, 344; *Mar & Kellie*, 40; Wotton, *Letters*, I 123.

¹¹² *Buccleuch*, I 113, 131; Sanderson, *Aulicus*, 108; Weldon, *James*, 17.

¹¹³ *CSPV*, XII 377, 488.

Chamberlain cavilled Carr's performance, and the King also expressed frustration at Carr's tardiness transacting his responsibilities.¹¹⁴

Nevertheless, negative diplomatic correspondence needs to be balanced by understanding the underfunded, isolated and often ignored emissaries accustomed to Cecil's highly organised secretariat.¹¹⁵ These ambassadors wished their compatriot, Sir Ralph Winwood, to assume the secretaryship.¹¹⁶ Although criticism existed, Carr's performance was not universally condemned. Sir John Throckmorton with the English garrison in Flushing and William Trumbull in Brussels assessed Carr positively.¹¹⁷ Despite later accusations of chaos, the Jacobean diplomatic service muddled on, and Carr's nondescript performance generated little comment.

Much suggested that Carr held an intellect and cultural preferences similar to his courtly contemporaries. While Coke did not catalogue Carr's library during arraignment proceedings, his multifarious collection of paintings, hangings, jewellery, and furniture confirmed Professor Albert Braunmuller's assessment that Carr had independently cultivated an avant-garde taste.¹¹⁸ Although possibly a goodwill gesture from Northampton, the Chancellor of Oxford University, Carr was invited to become a patron and member of the college.¹¹⁹ The invitation also recognised that following Cecil's death, Carr assumed his responsibilities as a significant literary patron, sponsoring the great authors Jonson, Donne, Daniel, and Chapman between 1612-1615.¹²⁰ His support of Chapman, Thomas Heywood, and the then-unknown William Davenant from his limited means, with no hope of political rehabilitation following his 1622 release from the Tower, showed his literary patronage represented a genuine intellectual interest.¹²¹ Carr's moves to become an autodidact garnered little admiration. These attempts embodied Francis Bacon's

¹¹⁴ *CSPDJ*, LXX 141, LXXI 154, *Downshire*, IV 203; *Mar & Kellie*, 40-41; Winwood III 422.

¹¹⁵ Maurice Lee, "The Jacobean Diplomatic Service," *American Historical Review* 72, no. 4 (July 1967), 1264-66; Alan G. R. Smith, "Secretariats," 493-501.

¹¹⁶ *CSPDJ*, LXXIV 198, 319; *Downshire*, IV 205.

¹¹⁷ *Downshire*, III, 285, IV, 224.

¹¹⁸ Braunmuller, 230; *Loseley*, 406-412; Peck, *Consuming Splendour*, 217. Timothy Wilks disagrees with Braunmuller's assessment ("Picture Collection," 168).

¹¹⁹ *CSPDJ*, LXXI 165.

¹²⁰ Eckhardt, 57-58; James Knowles, "'To raise a house of better frame': Jonson's Cecilian Entertainments," in ed. Croft, *Early Cecils*, 183-192.

¹²¹ Braunmuller, 239-246.

dismissal of those who learn to “hold credit with their masters, because their study is but to please them and profit themselves.”¹²²

Bishop Goodman found Carr a “wise, discreet gentleman” who consulted with the antiquarian, Sir Robert Cotton, for common law precedents. Cotton’s biographer, Kevin Sharpe, found his subject respected Carr as a reformer.¹²³ Carr’s interests in the East India Company, and secretarial directives revealed an independent command of English policy aims, especially on Irish affairs.¹²⁴ He showed insight in September 1613, advising Trumbull that his discursive complaints prevented the King from redressing his fundamental concern on compensation for expenses.¹²⁵ The first accusations of a “feeble brain” coincided with Coke’s accounts of Carr’s dependency on Overbury at his 1615 trial.¹²⁶ Carr’s appeal, in Latin, for leniency from James attested to a heuristic intelligence. Carr discredited the porous evidence assembled against him and coopted James’ arguments that the King was the foundation of English law. Furthermore, he produced precedents of royal clemency for “traitors and strangers” who committed crimes of a greater magnitude.¹²⁷ Nothing suggested that Carr was exceptionally gifted or had untapped potential. What is remarkable is that someone with such an undistinguished record of public service and academic patronage saw later authors regard him as a threat to the state.

Carr and the Union

This thesis’ first chapter explained the English southern elite’s revulsion for Scottish borderers. That the English imagination applied those anti-borderer prejudices to the remainder of that nation’s inhabitants explains much of the malevolence directed at Carr. England was a localised, closed society obsessed with its superiority.¹²⁸ Neo-Stoicism fueled nativism; immigrants were seen as societal outcasts who “seek remedy of this inward wound by motion

¹²² Bacon, “Of Wisdom for a Man’s Self.”

¹²³ Goodman, 215; Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton, 1586-1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 135.

¹²⁴ *APCE*, 1613-1614 134; *Buccleuch*, 119-120; *Downshire*, IV 83, 133, 411-412, 449.

¹²⁵ *Downshire*, IV 195.

¹²⁶ Oxon, 169.

¹²⁷ Anonymous, *Truth brought to Light by Time*...comp. Sir Walter Scott (London: T. Cadell, W. Davies, 1809). 356-57.

¹²⁸ Berry, 88; Conrad Russell, “1603: The End of English National Sovereignty,” in eds. Burgess et al, *Accession*, 6; Wormald, “Gunpowder,” 158, “Identity,” 162, “Union,” 18.

and trudging from place to place.”¹²⁹ Comprehensive legislation protecting native citizens’ preeminence supported the profound dislike for foreigners.¹³⁰ In particular, there was little desire for contact with the “uncircumcised Scots, more nasty and mangy,” more suitable for conquest, not cohabitation.¹³¹ Pan-European fears of northern invaders contributed to English antipathy, along with their insecurities about historical failures to conquer a “Dunghil then a Kingdome.”¹³² The English blamed Scottish indolence for their comparative poverty, which produced an “unnaturall ravening and greedie desire of forreine things.”¹³³ These preconceptions explain the disquiet James’ accession generated and why the Union aroused so much hostility.

In 1596, Robert Persons drew anti-Scottish prejudices into a broader discussion when he warned a Jacobean succession would see the “filling of the Realm with Strangers, and dividing to them the Dignities, Riches and Preferments of the same.”¹³⁴ Person’s prophecy became self-fulfilling, as the size of James’ retinue that accompanied him south in March 1603 invited comparisons to Jean Bodin’s tyrant who “surrounds himself with foreign guards.”¹³⁵ To the English, the “swarms of needy Scots the king had brought in to devour like locusts the plenty of this land” offered a microcosm of what would transpire if the proposed Union occurred and became a perennial complaint throughout James’ early years.¹³⁶ Despite James’ attempts to contain the practice, there were sporadic outbreaks of violence and frequent duels between Scottish and English courtiers.¹³⁷

¹²⁹ Lipsius, *Constancy*, 21-23. See also Seneca, *Dialogues*, 103, 117-118.

¹³⁰ Hale, “Sixteenth-Century Explanations of War and Violence,” *Past & Present* 51 (May 1971), 10; Mayer, 29-31; Pittock, 20.

¹³¹ Osborn, *Tragicomedy*, Act I Scene III 20. See also *Tom Tell Troath*, 451; *Scotland Characterised*, 358-360; Hayward, *Henrie III*, 62; Holinshed, 5.

¹³² *A Cat may Look*, 42-43. See also Botero, *Reason*, 88; *Bussy D’Ambois*, Act IV Scene II 30; Thomas Wilson, 8, 14. For English claims the Scottish King remained their vassal see Roger A. Mason, “The Reformation and Anglo-British Imperialism,” in *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* ed. Roger A. Mason (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 163.

¹³³ Holinshed, 8; Sir Antony Weldon, *A Perfect Description of the People and Country of Scotland*, (London: J.S., 1659), 1, 17. See also *Modern Account of Scotland*, 122, 126; *Scotland Characterised*, 358; Giovanni Botero, *Relations of the Most Famous Kingdomes* (London: John Haviland, 1630), 116.

¹³⁴ Persons, *Succession*, 174.

¹³⁵ *Union of England and Scotland*, 55; Bodin, 61, 63.

¹³⁶ Hutchinson, 64. See also Akrigg, *Letters*, 318; CSPV, XII 15; Frankland, 10; Goodman, 61, 99; Lingard, 88; Osborn, *Works*, 452, 468; Peyton, 26; Weldon, *James*, 18.

¹³⁷ The most referenced example was a March 1612 brawl at the Croydon races. See *A Cat May Look*, 49; Anonymous, “Upon the Scottes,” earlystuartlibels.net, e1, accessed 10 February 2022; CSPDJ, LXVIII 123; D’Ewes, 324; *Tragicomedy*, Act I Scene I, lines 83-86, *Works*, 454. Bruce Galloway argues this incident’s frequency in primary accounts indicated physical altercations were rare (139).

Playwrights sniped at the perceived interlopers. The authors of *Eastward Ho!* were interrogated by the Privy Council after they proposed the forced migration of Scots to Virginia.¹³⁸ In Daniel's *Philotas*, the Persians at Alexander's court are analogous to the bedchamber Scots as "they divide the spoyle, and pray for power / And none at all respect the publike good."¹³⁹ Scottish domination of royal largesse inhibited James' planned integration of the two nations' elites.¹⁴⁰ The failed homogenisation cannot be blamed entirely on James' uneven generosity. James' 1604 promise to Parliament that he would not appoint Scots in judicial or administrative positions left only the bedchamber to reward his Scottish followers. Even so, while his Scottish court was staffed by 800, James appointed just 149 Scots throughout his entire English administration.¹⁴¹

James had little prospect of achieving support for the Union from the broader governing class, who later turned their opposition against Carr. So few exemplars existed of nations successfully merging that advocates used as a model the fictional conjunction of the Trojans and the Sabines in Virgil's *Aeneid*.¹⁴² Against the deep-set Anti-Scottish prejudice, supporters of the Union offered only a common language, a rejection of papal control, a shared mythic founder, and an absence of geographic barriers.¹⁴³ These threadbare similarities confronted numerous issues thrown up by the alternatives of an incorporative or federal union. As Scots were barred from studying common law in English institutions and the Scottish constitution was not taught, both nations' commissioners lacked a holistic understanding whilst creating the *Instrument of*

¹³⁸ *Eastward Ho!*, Act III Scene III 38-45. See also Levack, *British State*, 195; Marcus, *Shakespeare*, 35. The play lacked a license (Dutton, "Censorship," 85).

¹³⁹ Daniel, *Philotas*, Act I Scene I 75-76. For an alternative interpretation see Cadman, "Philotas," 379.

¹⁴⁰ Peck, "Corruption," 90, *Patronage*, 38, Brian P. Levack, "Toward a More Perfect Union: England, Scotland, and the Constitution," in ed. Malament, *Hexter*, 58.

¹⁴¹ Keith M. Brown, "Anglicization," 552, *Noble Power*, 181; Amy L. Juhala, "An Advantageous Alliance: Edinburgh and the Court of James VI," in eds. Goodare and MacDonald, *Sixteenth-century Scotland*, 343, "Household and Court," 305-306. Jenny Wormald found James' employed 158 Scots ("Identity," 158).

¹⁴² *Union of England and Scotland*, 43, 56; Bacon, *Union* 37; John Hayward, *A Treatise of Union of the Two Realms of England and Scotland*. (London: Felix Kingston for Cuthbert Burby, 1604), 38. For the lack of exemplars see J. H. Elliott, "A Europe of Composite Monarchies," *Past & Present* 137 (November 1992), 61; Conrad Russell, "Composite monarchies in early modern Europe: The British and Irish example," in ed. Alexander Grant, *British History*, 180-182.

¹⁴³ *Union of England and Scotland*, 47; Bacon, *Union*, 33-34; John Gordon, *England and Scotland's Happiness....*, (London: V. Simmes for William Aspley, 1604), 4; Holinshed, 18; "Speech, 16 March 1604," 135; Pont, 5-7, 28; John Russell, "A Treatise on the Happie and Blissed Unioun," in eds. Levack and Galloway, *Union*, 78.

Union.¹⁴⁴ The English exaggerated common law's timelessness whilst incorrectly finding civil law as the basis of Scottish statutes. The misrepresentation of both nations' jurisprudence obstructed debates over whether laws should be fused or whether a uniformity/conformity of legal systems was possible.¹⁴⁵ Alongside constitutional concerns, the Commons raised issues concerning trading privileges, naturalisation, diplomatic status, theological differences, and even the new state's name.¹⁴⁶

Such barriers to any settlement would perhaps always have been insurmountable, yet the King mishandled the crown's campaign for unification. Taking the carefully orchestrated customary welcome as a spontaneous acclamation for his reign's promise, James pursued ending plural kingship with haste.¹⁴⁷ His case for Union delivered to the Lords in March 1604 focussed on his benefaction rather than detailing his aims or potential advantages for England.¹⁴⁸ While a not universally shared opinion, some Parliamentarians felt the measures Elizabeth took in overriding Henry VIII's will no longer applied once the danger of a Catholic queen vanished. They thought they had been conciliatory enough overriding statute and common law in acquiescing to James' accession.¹⁴⁹ The crown's reliance on pompous imagery and equivocal treatises about a "union of love" instead of a blueprint for integration prevented MPs reconsidering their preexisting views on the two nations' respective status.¹⁵⁰

While there was initial pride in Scotland, one of their own assumed both kingdoms' crowns, the prospect of Union became equally unwelcome.¹⁵¹ Sir Thomas Craig of Riccarton, a

¹⁴⁴ Joel J. Epstein, "Francis Bacon and the Issue of Union," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (February 1970), 123; Levack, *British State*, 96.

¹⁴⁵ Burgess, *Ancient Constitution*, 126; Levack, *British State*, 88-96; Conrad Russell, *King James VI/I and His English Parliaments*, eds. Richard Cust and Andrew Thrush. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 131, 138.

¹⁴⁶ Neil Cuddy, "Anglo-Scottish Union and the Court of James I, 1603-1625: The Alexander Prize Essay Proxime Accessit," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 39 (1989), 112, "Loyalties," 127; Sybil M. Jack, "National Identities within Britain and the Proposed Union in 1603-1607," *Parergon* 18, no. 2 (January 2001), 885-86, 99; Levack, *British State*, 7, 38-39, "Perfect Union," 59.

¹⁴⁷ Doran, "Polemic," 218-221; Parry, 9-16; Judith M. Richards, "The English Accession of James VI: 'National Identity', Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England," *English Historical Review* 117, no. 472 (June 2002), 521.

¹⁴⁸ "Speech, 16 March 1604," 135.

¹⁴⁹ Floyd-Kay, 51-52, 70; Paul E. J. Hammer, "Royal Marriage and the Royal Succession," in ed. Hamilton, *Renaissance Literature*, 60; Conrad Russell, "Divine Rights in the Early Seventeenth Century," in eds. Morrill et al, *Public Duty*, 116.

¹⁵⁰ Keith M. Brown, "Union?" Anglo-Scottish Relations before the Covenant," in ed. Smout, *Anglo-Scottish Relations*, 51. Parry, 16; Wormald, "Creation," 184, "Identity," 153.

¹⁵¹ Roger A. Mason, "Multiple Monarchy," 411; Wormald, "Marriage Partner," 79.

supporter of monarchical authority and the lead Scottish commissioner, recognised a union's economic opportunities while understanding his larger neighbour would subsume Scottish institutions.¹⁵² Still, in *De Unione Regnorum Britanniae Tractatus*, Craig found that for the union to be successful, the two kingdoms required "an equality of dignity."¹⁵³ Frequent English defamatory statements between 1604-1607 cooled support for the project.¹⁵⁴ Those north of the Tweed realised that there could be no federal amalgamation while the English fixated on an incorporative union founded on ideas of an imagined conquest.¹⁵⁵ Most Scots had no interest in creating a pan-British elite. English resistance to increased Scottish opportunities added to that nation's nobility's reluctance to bear London's high prices and the potential loss of control over their kinsmen.¹⁵⁶ They were more subtle than the English opponents. Still, the Scots ultimately refused to give up their independence and the accompanying French commercial privileges to conjoin with a contemptuous former enemy.¹⁵⁷

Despite disinterest, James attempted to cajole the 1607 parliament into further consideration of his pet project. Rectifying his previous address's vagary, he stoked his audience's egos by insisting on the superiority of English institutions before calling for a 'perfect union.'¹⁵⁸ Despite admitting previous errors and taking a conciliatory tone, his claim "by a Clarke of the Councill I governe Scotland now, which others could not doe by the sword" went over poorly.¹⁵⁹ The statement not only awoke fears at James' lack of culpability in trampling his former subjects' liberties, but he overlooked the speech's contradictions.¹⁶⁰ Claims to have brought Scotland under control and "dealt bountifully with them that had so long served me" raised questions over how the bedchamber Scots necessitated continued English funds.¹⁶¹ In reality, James' boasts were hollow. He needed to maintain the pretence that the Scottish nobility

¹⁵² Craig, 440.

¹⁵³ *ibid*, 461. See also Roger A. Mason, "Scotland, Elizabethan England and the Idea of Britain," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 14 (2004), 283.

¹⁵⁴ Jack, 88; Levack, *British State*, 28, 194; McCabe, "Panegyric," 33.

¹⁵⁵ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom?*, 79-80; Cuddy, "Union," 115; Macinnes, 36-37; Wormald, "Union," 25.

¹⁵⁶ Keith M. Brown, "Anglicization," 559; Cuddy, "Reinventing," 67; Jenny Wormald, "The Creation of Britain: Multiple Kingdoms or Core and Colonies?" *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 2 (1992), 176..

¹⁵⁷ Levack, *British State*, 158; Roger A. Mason, "1603: Multiple Monarchy and Scottish Identity," *History* 105, no. 366 (2020), 411; Russell, "Sovereignty," 2.

¹⁵⁸ Burns, *Monarchy*, 261.

¹⁵⁹ "Speech, Last Day of March 1607," 177.

¹⁶⁰ Burgess, *Absolute Monarchy*, 102; Wormald, "Union," 31.

¹⁶¹ "Speech, Last Day of March 1607," 166.

still had free access to their monarch. Thus, he would not risk creating a disaffected faction of former courtiers.¹⁶² James could not grasp that Britain, like most European states, could contain several systems of law.¹⁶³ His lack of constitutional imagination aided Parliament's hope for James to abandon his vainglorious project.

There was no sense of celebration when the Commons blocked the *Instrument of Union*. Though the King scraped only a handful of concessions from the 1607 parliamentary sessions, opponents remained anxious their actions merely delayed a union.¹⁶⁴ In the 1590s, European Catholics warned England "will it prove Scottish in the end" if James succeeded to the throne.¹⁶⁵ For those who denounced Union, James expressed worryingly similar views arguing that his project, "when it is born, though it then be a perfect Child, yet it is no Man; it must gather Strength and Perfection by Time."¹⁶⁶ In rejecting the legal Union, Parliament surrendered the future form of national integration to a King who viewed the Union as necessary for providential and personal fulfilment. Rumours of a new parliament to be summoned in York and arrests of those who actively opposed the project sustained fears of Union by decree.¹⁶⁷

Carr's rise antagonised those smarting about the Union's continued progression despite considerable efforts to prevent it. When advocating for the Union, James assured Parliament that the Scots "have already [been] reasonably rewarded, and I can assure you that there is none left, whom for I mean extraordinary to strain my self further."¹⁶⁸ This unfulfilled promise made Carr symbolic of the King's perfidy, giving critics another reason to exaggerate his preferment. Calvin's Case of 1608 frustrated English nationalists when the judiciary ruled that subjects' natural allegiance belonged to their sovereign rather than the laws of their birth nation.¹⁶⁹ The case secured Carr English property rights, yet he was not subject to English law, creating the very ambiguity the Union's rejection was to have prevented. Godfrey Goodman wrote about Carr: "He did utterly dislike the bold carriage and importunity of the Scots.... he did desire to

¹⁶² Croft, "Jacobean Court," 144; Wormald, *Community*, 185, 226.

¹⁶³ Elliott, "Composite Monarchies," 54; Levack, *British State*, 18; Russell, "National Sovereignty," 6

¹⁶⁴ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom*, 88; Galloway, 141; Russell, *Parliaments*, 128;

¹⁶⁵ Verstegan, 44.

¹⁶⁶ William Cornwallis, (page unnumbered).

¹⁶⁷ *CSPV*, X 491.

¹⁶⁸ "Speech, Last Day of March 1607," 165.

¹⁶⁹ Keith M. Brown, *Kingdom*, 88; Cuddy, "Loyalties," 131-133; Russell, "Sovereignty," 3, *Parliaments*, 124, 138.

ingratiate himself with the English.”¹⁷⁰ A stubborn insistence he was “naturalised as well by affection and meritt towards it as by lawe” made Carr representative of the English inability to remove Scottish influence.¹⁷¹

To observers, linking the two nobilities through marriage appeared to be a principal means for James to affect his Union extra-legally.¹⁷² Between 1603 and 1642, 23.5% of all Scottish peers’ spouses were English women.¹⁷³ Pro-union imagery featured in the wedding masques of the period.¹⁷⁴ Literary historian Kevin Curran argues that the iconography of a new Britannic state reached a crescendo at James Hay and Honora Denny’s spectacular 1607 marriage, where Thomas Campion’s *The Lord Hay’s Masque* equated the physical climax of their wedding night with the political climax of national merger.¹⁷⁵ Despite the benefits marriage offered in promoting a greater sense of harmony between his two kingdoms, James had limited enthusiasm for the continued promotion of these pairings. Brian Levack attributes his loss of interest to a lack of suitable applicants following the 1607 decision to limit further Scottish additions to the court.¹⁷⁶ For Jenny Wormald, English peers’ recalcitrance to allow a Scottish husband for their daughters cooled James’ alacrity in finding English brides for his countrymen.¹⁷⁷ Before 1688 English nobles rarely took a Scottish wife, with the “unusual fecundity of our women” insufficient to offset the smaller northern dowries.¹⁷⁸

James’ early interest in his young courtiers’ love affairs may have been a personality quirk rather than fulfilling visions of national consolidation. In his youth, his favourite work was Terence’s *Phormio*, and it is easy to see James’ identification with the enigmatic title character. Phormio’s ability to outwit unscrupulous pimps and disapproving fathers to secure romantic

¹⁷⁰ Goodman, 215.

¹⁷¹ J. E. Egerton, “King James’s Beasts,” *History Today*, 12:6 (1962), 455.

¹⁷² Kevin Curran, *Marriage, Performance and Politics at the Jacobean Court*, (London: Routledge, 2016), 36-57; Lori Anne Ferrell, “The sacred, the profane, and the Union: politics of sermon and masque at the court wedding of Lord and Lady Hay,” in eds. Cogswell et al, *Popularity*, 46; Floyd-Kay 77.

¹⁷³ Keith M. Brown, “Anglicization,” 573

¹⁷⁴ *ibid* 569; Marcus, *Shakespeare*, 34; Wormald, “Union,” 24.

¹⁷⁵ Kevin Curran, “Erotic Policy: King James, Thomas Campion, and the Rhetoric of Anglo-Scottish Marriage,” *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 7, no.1 (Spring/Summer 2007), 57. That Campion held doubts on the Union’s success see David Lindley, “Campion’s ‘Lord Hay’s Masque’ and Anglo-Scottish Union,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (Winter 1979), 4.

¹⁷⁶ Levack, *British State*, 187

¹⁷⁷ Wormald, “Marriage Partner,” 76, “Gunpowder,” 161.

¹⁷⁸ Keith M. Brown, “Anglicization,” 569; *Kingdom*, 46; Curran, *Marriage*, 46.

matches had the youths assisted declare, “I’ve never seen a cleverer man than Phormio.”¹⁷⁹ The King’s visitations to couples’ bedrooms the morning following the wedding night suggested a degree of prurience in his intervention in their wedding arrangements.¹⁸⁰

In early 1609 it came to public attention that Carr intended to marry Anne Clifford, countess of Pembroke, the sole surviving child of George Clifford, third Earl of Cumberland.¹⁸¹ With Carr’s parents deceased, and James’ presentation of the young man as his closest companion, the King had a moral obligation to act in loco parentis in conducting the complex arrangements that surrounded marriages between the elites.¹⁸² The potential match was more complicated than most due to Clifford’s protracted lawsuit against her uncle, Francis Clifford. Cumberland feared his daughter would be unable to defend his estate from significant debtors. He ignored common law to bequeath his demesne to his younger brother, with Anne awarded £17,000 compensation.¹⁸³ Despite years of litigation, Clifford remained an attractive marriage for England’s most powerful families. The treasurer, Thomas Sackville, first Baron Buckhurst and first earl of Dorset, began negotiations for his grandson Richard in 1607. In 1608 Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford produced a generous counteroffer and almost came to terms with Lady Cumberland on behalf of his youngest son Francis.¹⁸⁴ Even with the newfound security of Sherbourne, Carr could not compete with the wealth and lineage of these two families.

For the King, any benefits offered by an Anglo-Scottish wedding were not commensurate with the hostility an interjection on Carr’s behalf would create from two of England’s preeminent peerages. He also held no interest in alienating Francis Clifford, the Lord Lieutenant of Northumberland, in whose favour he decided in 1616. There was also the intransigence of Lady Cumberland. Clifford’s biographer Richard Spence felt that Carr was the best candidate to ensure

¹⁷⁹ Terence, *Phormio*, ed. Robert Meltby (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), Act IV, 593. See also Pollnitz, *Princely Education*, 278; Warner, lix.

¹⁸⁰ Barry Coward and Peter Gaunt, *The Stuart Age: England, 1603-1714*, (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 131; Hammond, 129.

¹⁸¹ *CSPDJ*, XLI 491; McClure, *Chamberlain*, I 280.

¹⁸² Bray, “Male Friendship,” 9; Lawrence Stone, *Road to Divorce: England 1530-1987*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 57.

¹⁸³ Lady Anne Clifford, *The Memoir of 1603 and the Diary of 1616-1619*, ed. Katherine O. Acheson. (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Editions, 2008), 21; Stephanie Elsky, “Lady Anne Clifford’s Common-Law Mind,” *Studies in Philology* 111, no. 3 (Summer 2014), 522.

¹⁸⁴ John Pitcher, “Negotiating a Marriage for Lady Anne Clifford: Samuel Daniel’s Advice,” *The Review of English Studies* 64, no. 267 (2013), 772, 778.

that the King assisted Anne in her lawsuit.¹⁸⁵ But Lady Cumberland was wary. James seldom intervened in legal matters, and if he did secure the estate for his favourite's wife, nothing could stop him transferring the title from wife to her husband. Personally, Lady Cumberland may have balked at her daughter marrying Carr, given her father was Francis Russell, whom Thomas Ker allegedly murdered. Thomas Sackville's sudden death in 1608 and his son Robert's terminal illness created the potential for conflict within the royal household. Rather than the Sackville property enter wardship, Prince Henry requested to act as ward over his friend Richard. With his son involved in the affair, the King had good reason to be relieved at the resolution of the matter through Clifford's February 1609 marriage to Richard Sackville.¹⁸⁶ Despite this plethora of reasons why Carr was not preferred, Clifford's biographer, Gordon Thorburn, claimed Anne rejected Carr as, "To him, life was a jest with no space for intellectual activity."¹⁸⁷ This denigration of Carr's character does not explain why Clifford, well-read, tutored by Samuel Daniel, an expert in common law, and a devout Calvinist, maintained friendships with Carr and Frances Howard, supporting the pair throughout their imprisonment.¹⁸⁸

Carr and the Great Contract's failure

Devised to ease England's deplorable financial situation, Cecil's Great Contract of 1610 became James' second significant legislative failure. The Contract aimed to eliminate royal debt through subsidies worth £600,000 before the Commons provided an annual income of £200,000. In exchange, the crown would surrender the monopolies Parliament found most egregious, along with obsolescent feudal revenue sources.¹⁸⁹ Because Carr entered the public consciousness after the legal Union's failure, he symbolised community frustrations at James' refusal to accept multi-national kingship. In the Contract's negotiations, Carr manifested widespread fears of favourites' undue influence by allegedly undermining the King's confidence in Cecil's proposal. In November 1610, possibly at Overbury's behest, Carr purportedly used agents to stir

¹⁸⁵ Richard T. Spence, *Lady Anne Clifford: Countess of Pembroke, Dorset and Montgomery (1590-1676)* (Stroud: Sutton, 1997), 20.

¹⁸⁶ Clifford, 21-23; Jessica L. Malay, "The Marrying of Lady Anne Clifford: Marital Strategy in the Clifford Inheritance Dispute," *Northern History* 49, no. 2 (September 2012), 261; Spence, 20.

¹⁸⁷ Gordon Thorburn, *Lady Anne Clifford: 1590-1676*, (Stroud: Fonthill Media, 2020), 50.

¹⁸⁸ Clifford, 69, 87, 90, 171.

¹⁸⁹ Pauline Croft, "several speeches," 252; Dietz, 134; David L. Smith, 107; Raymond Joseph Teichman, "King James I, Parliament and the Great Contract," (PhD diss., Loyola University of Chicago, 1973), 103.

intolerable anti-Scottish rhetoric to ensure James' first Parliament's acrimonious dismissal.¹⁹⁰ As with other stories, conjecture about Carr's intervention exaggerated his political influence in 1610. Other than a scapegoat for the government's inability to persuade the Commons to enact the royal legislative agenda, he played a negligible role in the events surrounding the Great Contract.

That Carr's subterfuge undermined Cecil's scheme needs to be counterbalanced by the distaste the project generated throughout 1610.¹⁹¹ Opposition did not just emanate from the House. Apprehension arose from Home, Northampton, and Sir Julius Caesar, who would suffer financially if the Contract were adopted, about whether sacrificing the King's ancient privileges justified the additional income.¹⁹² Even if there were greater ministerial unity, the crown held limited influence over the Commons, with only 62 MPs simultaneously holding positions within the household.¹⁹³ In May 1603, James elevated several Elizabethan Privy Councillors to the peerage who facilitated his succession. The resultant reduction of Councillors in the Commons from six to two limited royal control in the first Jacobean Parliament.¹⁹⁴ The Middlesex MP and deputy-treasurer Sir Julius Caesar's 1607 appointment to the Council sought to impart steel to royal advocacy. But his ability to manage the House only shone compared to his compatriots, the ageing Elizabethan stalwarts Sir Thomas Parry and Sir John Herbert.¹⁹⁵

Despite limited support, Cecil promised James the strongest preparation possible, and both Houses warmly received his 9 February outline of the session's purpose.¹⁹⁶ Yet, the hastily

¹⁹⁰ Catherine Drinker Bowen, *The Lion and the Throne: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke, 1551-1634*, (London: H. Hamilton, 1957), 323; Eric N. Lindquist, "The Failure of the Great Contract," *Journal of Modern History* 57, no. 4 (December 1985), 638, 642; David Harris Willson, *The Privy Councilors in the House of Commons, 1604-1629* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1940), 127, "Summoning and Dissolving Parliament, 1603-25." *American Historical Review* 45, no. 2 (January 1940), 283-284.

¹⁹¹ Croft "Jacobean Court," 146.

¹⁹² Croft, "Elizabeth to James," 59; Cuddy, "entourage," 207; "Union," 118, "King's Chambers," 133; Russell, "Parliamentary History," 5. Linda Peck found Northampton supported Cecil despite his misgivings (Northampton, 79, 199-203).

¹⁹³ Thomas Cogswell, "The Human Comedy in Westminster: The House of Commons, 1604-1629," *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 2 (April 2013), 386. Derek Hirst finds up to a third of the Commons were courtiers or office-holders (83).

¹⁹⁴ Stephen Hollings, "Court Patronage, County Governors and the Early Stuart Parliaments." *Parergon*, no. 6 (1988), 125; Peck, "Merchant Grievance," 534, Russell, "Parliamentary History," 25.

¹⁹⁵ Merritt, 234; Willson, *Privy Councillors*, 58, 83.

¹⁹⁶ John Cramsie, *Kingship and Crown Finance under James VI and I, 1603-1625*, (Suffolk: Boydell et Brewer, 2002), 94.

compiled address contained miscalculations that prevented a conducive settlement.¹⁹⁷ Cecil's dissembled justification for James' generosity towards the Scots undercut his previous argument that a "hydra of evils" led to the King's insolvency. His assessment of government impecuniosity emphasised the injudicious spending of the first years of James' reign and gave Parliament a negotiating advantage.¹⁹⁸ Additionally, Cecil reminded members of grievances concerning wardship and the 1607 impositions without outlining whether they were part of negotiations.¹⁹⁹ Secure that the crown could ill-afford their dismissal and unconvinced by pleas for urgent finance to assist the Protestant cause in the disputed Jülich-Cleves succession. The Commons formed committees to consider their negotiating position carefully.²⁰⁰ Eventually, they adopted an immovable position: any settlement would abolish the Court of Wards and remove additional tenure rights.

Lack of a clear initial bargaining position or proposed additional taxation sources created frustration at perceived mutual foot-dragging as each considered the other's proposals.²⁰¹ The suggested £5000 compensation to Cecil for the loss of Mastership of Wards presented a conflict of interest to the Commons.²⁰² Cecil passing responsibility for redressing government overspending to the less endowed members had not sat well.²⁰³ With progress stalled, the King addressed both Houses of Parliament on 21 March. While personally satisfied with his speech, it again revealed an inability to convince his audience to fulfil the session's aims.²⁰⁴ Rather than rationalising the Contract's necessity, James contradicted previous statements made whilst cajoling for the Union, that England held "the best of any Law in the world," by now calling for its reform.²⁰⁵ His justification for his liberality toward the Scots was unnecessary as the Commons had not questioned his right to guerdon his countrymen, just using English funds for this purpose. Later in May, at a delicate point in the negotiations, the King again exposed his

¹⁹⁷ Croft, "Elizabeth to James," 58.

¹⁹⁸ Croft, "several speeches," 256; Foster, II 16-17.

¹⁹⁹ Foster, II 26.

²⁰⁰ Coward and Gaunt, 135; Clare Jackson, *Devil-land: England under Siege, 1588-1688* (London: Allen Lane, 2021), ch. 6; Russell, *Parliaments*, 76.

²⁰¹ Lindquist, "Great Contract," 626, 645; Rabb, 142; Teichman, 115-118.

²⁰² Lindquist, "Salisbury," 26; Prestwich, *Cranfield*, 37.

²⁰³ Cogswell, "Human Comedy," 375; Croft, "Introduction," xix, "Reputation," 52; Teichman, 208.

²⁰⁴ Francis Bacon, *The letters and the life of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding (London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts, 1868), 154; Croft, "several speeches," 252.

²⁰⁵ "Speech, "Last Day of March 1607," 162; Foster, II 61. The official version adds to the parliamentary record: "for a King of England to despise the Common Law, it is to neglect his own Crown" (*Vox Regis*, 11).

limitations in working in concert with the Commons, proclaiming, “You cannot so clip the wing of greatness, If a king be resolute to be a tyrant, all you can do will not hinder him.”²⁰⁶ The King and Treasurer’s incomprehension of the required practicalities did not necessarily doom the Contract. Still, it meant it could never be enacted in their envisaged timeframe.

The close-minded and obstructive parliamentarians also contributed to the Contract’s failure. Almost immediately, Cecil regretted not holding fresh elections in the winter of 1609-10. The Commons remained fixated on overturning the impositions the crown added to the Book of Rates in 1607, confirmed by the 1608 Bates Case.²⁰⁷ Their inability to look past these perceived unsanctioned taxes meant that they failed to appreciate the Contract intended to increase revenue without further testing the royal prerogative. The Commons’ persistent suggestion of increased recusant fines was insufficient to equip the multiple courts of the royal family or solve engrained English financial problems.²⁰⁸ Although it looked like an agreement had been reached shortly before the summer break on 23 July, this proved illusory. Less than 100 members attended the session, and they could not agree on how the £200,000 should be levied.²⁰⁹ Parliament added to the ill feeling through their delayed and churlish vote of just a solitary subsidy and a fifteenth for Henry’s investiture as Prince of Wales, curtailing the occasions scale.²¹⁰ Beneath the arguments for precedent and equality, the real issue was that MPs simply did not want to pay.

As MPs drifted back to Westminster in the autumn of 1610, the momentum built before the adjournment evaporated. Members claimed scant support for the Contract in the localities, especially in areas unaffected by purveyance.²¹¹ After Julius Caesar showed James surrendering his feudal privileges produced a net gain of just £85,000, the King’s scepticism increased.²¹² Frustrated by the Commons’ lack of urgency, additional clauses and convinced (not unreasonably) that he was getting the deal’s worse end, the King upped his conditions. On 6 November, he required a further £500,000 to the supply granted in July. The final negotiated

²⁰⁶ Foster, II 105.

²⁰⁷ Ronald Hutton, 60-61; Maija Jansson, *Proceedings in Parliament 1614 (House of Commons)*. (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1988), xix; William Klein, “The ancient constitution revisited,” in eds. Phillipson and Skinner, *Discourse*, 34.

²⁰⁸ Coward and Gaunt, 150; Prestwich, *Cranfield*, 38; Teichman, 110.

²⁰⁹ Eryll Dickinson, 172; Alan G. R. Smith, “Great Contract,” 121; Rabb, 150.

²¹⁰ Lindgard, 96; Pagnini, 264; Rabb, 158.

²¹¹ Dietz, 138-139; Rabb, 59, 163; Russell, *Parliaments*, 85.

²¹² Bacon, *letters*, 202.

figure was additional to revenue sources James surrendered.²¹³ These new terms provoked disgruntled speeches culminating in Parliament forbidding further negotiations on 9 November.²¹⁴

Carr's involvement in events leading up to the failure of the Contract was not apparent. Alastair Bellany suspects that Carr may have worked on Home's behalf to undermine Cecil.²¹⁵ But this rests on a single indeterminate line buried in the September 1610 state papers when Home offered Carr "Thanks for his friendly offices with the King in a certain suit."²¹⁶ While Home opposed the Contract, he had no motive to oppose Cecil as, by 1610, the two held a beneficial coexistence or even friendship.²¹⁷ As Carr earned nothing from purveyance nor held a wardship, he had no personal interest in the matter. Even if he, like Home, objected to the project, there is a significant gulf between holding doubts and raising James' ire by disrupting proceedings.

Despite the Contract's collapse and dwindling attendance, the hope of further subsidies meant Parliament remained in session. On 23 November, a succession of assaults targeting James' governmental management ended the previous eight months measured tenor. Sir Nicholas Fuller and Peter Wentworth zeroed in on the impositions and the King's failure to improve moral standards. John Hoskins and Sir Thomas Beaumont then returned to the bedchamber Scots.²¹⁸ Displeased with the new tone, James adjourned Parliament to 29 November, then 6 December, before ordering a February prorogation.²¹⁹ It is these anti-Scottish speeches, which historians have attributed to Carr or Overbury's influence, stemming from Sir Thomas Lake informing Cecil on 4 December, "all this heat...is moved by Sir Robert Carre."²²⁰

The case against Carr again inflated his powers. Firstly, Carr could not have placed agents in the House, as two days before the inflammatory speeches of 23 November, James ordered Lake to investigate anti-Scottish sentiment in the Commons. The request stemmed from

²¹³ Foster, II 315-316.

²¹⁴ *ibid* 316-323.

²¹⁵ *ODNB*, s.v. Carr, Robert, earl of Somerset.

²¹⁶ *CSPDJ*, LVII 633.

²¹⁷ Bacon, *letters*, 222; Goodman, 40.

²¹⁸ Gardiner, *Debates*, 142.

²¹⁹ *CSPDJ*, LVIII 653.

²²⁰ *CCP*, XXI, 263.

a 16 November meeting he held with 30 members to address potential grievances. Though no minutes were taken, somebody suggested that the King's hesitance to relinquish wardship control was to marry young females to Scots.²²¹ Frustrated at the proposition, James ordered Lake to search the Privy Council for members encouraging further discussions about wardship.²²² As the 16 November meeting was scheduled hours before it occurred, Carr could not have primed any agents he was operating.

It was not the 23 November anti-Scot speeches that hardened James against continuing the Parliamentary session. Beaumont moderated his sentiments to parity issues, and Hoskins did not explicitly say that it was the Scots "who draw out of this cesterne as fast as wee fill it."²²³ Instead, Peter Wentworth's speech that compared James to King Jehoram sent the King into an apocalyptic rage as it invited comparisons between Mary Queen of Scots and Jezebel, the mother of the Israelite King.²²⁴ If Carr used Beaumont and Hoskins as agents, he concealed his involvement wisely, both long having noisily fashioned themselves as defenders of the English constitution.²²⁵ The two attended the 16 November meeting with the King. With no permission to represent the Commons, the breach of precedent created a furore at the House's 21 November resumption.²²⁶ Rather than paid agents, Beaumont's and Hoskin's 23 November speeches reaffirmed their credentials as representatives of the public interest. It was equally possible that both goaded the King to end the session before Christmas.

That Carr instigated Beaumont and Hoskins to make anti-Scottish statements stretched credibility when establishing a link between the two men and the young courtier. As Carr recently patronised Benjamin Rudyard, it is possible but unprovable that the poet could have introduced his friend Hoskins.²²⁷ Even with a connection, Hoskins' 1614 imprisonment for further anti-Scot speeches indicated he required little prompting to espouse xenophobic

²²¹ Foster, II 338.

²²² *CSPDJ*, LVIII 645.

²²³ Foster, II 344; Gardiner, *Debates*, 145.

²²⁴ *CSPDJ*, LVIII, 650, 653. Samuel Gardiner is clear that Wentworth compared James to King Rehoboam (*Debates*, 144).

²²⁵ Andrew Thrush, "Crown Finance and Reform: The Legacy of the 'Addled Parliament,'" in eds. Clucas and Davies, *Crisis*, page unnumbered.

²²⁶ Gardiner, *Debates*, 138.

²²⁷ *CSPDJ*, LVIII 654; Louise Brown Osborn, 75; Schleiner, 155-156.

sentiments.²²⁸ Carr's link to Beaumont, a Leicestershire mining magnate, was difficult to rationalise. Carr did not have the finances in 1610 to ensure his involvement remained secret and his instructions followed. This alleged chicanery was a tremendous risk as it offered an ideal opportunity for any English MP to discredit the honour of a bedchamber Scot. How Carr benefited from Parliament's termination or tarnishing Cecil's reputation was unclear. That the two shared a rivalry represents a habit of historians to view the King's favour as binary.

The final indication that Carr's involvement was unlikely is that Lake used him as a patsy after the under-secretary inadvertently had the King question Cecil's loyalty. Relieved the parliamentary session ended, the King was avuncular as he dined with Lake at Royston on 1 December, poking fun at himself and his Scottish companions. Lulled by the King's jocularly, Lake let slip that Cecil had received some private intelligence from "seditious spirits" who wished to "send home those Scots that so much consumed their supplies."²²⁹ A reference to an anonymous letter sent to Haddington, who forwarded it to Cecil in late November, which was indeed seditious, if not openly treasonous.²³⁰ The treasurer kept the letter from the King, although he must have mentioned it to Lake as he prepared with his undersecretary for the 30 November Privy Council meeting.

The King's humour turned the following morning as he upbraided Lake demanding all intelligence be handed to Home as "traitors were to be discovered and punished."²³¹ Always sensitive to potential loss of favour, Cecil tried to forestall the King's displeasure by falsely claiming Lake mistook what he heard.²³² Cecil's dissimulation was only partially successful. Although the King reassured the treasurer that he believed in his "faith and honesty," he took the opportunity to criticise his recent "passionate and strange discourses."²³³ Plausibly, when James returned to his private chamber, news of concealed anti-Scot intelligence triggered a visceral reaction from Carr, who lobbied for more vigorous action. It is also possible that the intense,

²²⁸ Samuel Rawson Gardiner, *Narrative of the Spanish Marriage Treaty* (London: Camden Society, 1869), 18; Peck, "Merchant Grievance," 549; Questier, 355.

²²⁹ *CCP*, XXI 263.

²³⁰ *ibid*, 261-262.

²³¹ *ibid*, 262.

²³² Croft, "Bureaucrat," 93, "Jacobean Court," 138; Duncan, 225.

²³³ *CCP*, XXI 265.

corrosive jealousy royal privacy generated saw Lake select Carr as a scapegoat for the monumental blunder he made.²³⁴

Conclusion

If Carr engineered a disruption to the Commons, his subsequent actions do not demonstrate a play for political power. Carr received an apology from Lake and used Cecil's temporary embarrassment to extract a further Sherbourne payment.²³⁵ Yet, the Great Contract's collapse was not a springboard for his political career. James took out his frustrations at the session's failure with a mild rebuke of Cecil. Still, his premier civil servant was too valuable to be demoted, and the treasurer's hegemony remained intact.²³⁶ Not until 1611 and his elevation to viscount did Carr become politically active. Here Carr compensated for his insecurities around his public perception, education, and ethnicity, by creating a faction comprised of men who conceived themselves as protectors of English liberties against royal encroachment. The juxtaposition of an alliance between a reputedly over-indulged favourite with the vociferous opponents of the Union and Great Contract also resulted from those outside Cecil's clientage needing to unify.

Even after signalling he wished to be considered a political figure, Carr remained ancillary to actual power, remaining a cultural construction of a Machiavellian royal favourite. In Carr's faction, the noted Essexians, Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton, Sir Henry Neville and Sir Robert Killigrew joined Overbury. They hoped Carr could secure them an audience with James to call a new Parliamentary session under Neville's control to produce a vote of supply.²³⁷ Carr's first foray into the political world was unsuccessful. Neville squandered the chance Carr provided through an inflammatory lecture to the King, and it is inconceivable why Carr continued to push for his further advancement. Consistently pro-Spanish, yet surrounded by Protestant advisors, Carr's actions in 1611-1612 are too self-interested to support

²³⁴ Perry, "Access," 1064; Perry and Walter, 89; Starkey, "Intimacy," 221.

²³⁵ *CCP*, XXI, 270; *CSPDJ*, LVIII 654

²³⁶ Croft, "Jacobean Court," 146;; Lindquist, "Salisbury," 25-32;; Loomis, 144. For those who find Cecil suffered a demotion after the Great Contract's failure see Beer, *Just Desire*, 196; Cuddy, "entourage," 173; Peck, *Northampton*, 52.

²³⁷ *Buccleuch*, 101; McClure, *Chamberlain*, I 358-359; Andrew Thrush, "Personal Rule of James I, 1611-1620," in eds. Cogswell et al, *Popularity*, 85.

the idea he was a constitutionalist.²³⁸ In 1613, Carr underwent an awkward decoupling from his former followers when he aligned with Northampton. But his diverse literary and political circles meant neither did he become a fervent Divine Right devotee.

²³⁸ Questier, 345.

Conclusion

By Cecil's May 1612 death, Carr's court brokership with its accompanying presentation as the King's closest companion: created a perception that he was a prominent advisor. Carr's reputation for extraordinary influence reflected contemporary paranoia about royal favouritism rather than a measured evaluation of his actual power. Carr's domestic role suited James, so he largely placated his favourite's desire for further responsibility. English positions were ceremonial, and James limited Carr's Scottish opportunities following George Home's 1611 death. Thus, in 1612 Carr was a well but not exceedingly compensated member of the Jacobean system. The previous year, prompted by his secretary Thomas Overbury, Carr made his first forays into politics but avoided disturbing Cecil's still robust power. Within three years, James' and Carr's relationship deteriorated to where the two men barely spoke. Carr's early years of service best reveal the reasons for this breakdown, not Buckingham's arrival at court or revelations of Overbury's murder.

Traditional explanations which used Carr's rise to explain his decline riffed upon Bussy D'Ambois' protest at being summoned to court "So no man riseth by his real merit.... / Man's first hour's rise is first step to his fall."¹ But as the first chapter explains, Carr's first hour occurred in 1598. If the tiltyard accident transpired, it did not prompt Carr's promotion. Republicans applied Chapman's denouncement of French absolutism to the Jacobean court. They portrayed James as injudiciously promoting Carr and then callously discarded him when the favourite's rivals ensnared the King with the comely George Villiers.² Instead, Carr in 1612 better embodied Chapman's Chabot, who feared jealousy from those of "the imperfect eye.... will not rise / Above the middle region he was born in."³ Carr's status gradually improved, but he primarily fulfilled a bedchamber role. Cecil's successful execution of his responsibilities meant that James did not concern himself with direct supervision of governance. But Cecil's concentration of power created an experience deficit among the king's other advisors. Carr felt himself to be a viable candidate to fulfil the treasurer's former responsibilities following Cecil's death.

¹ *Bussy D'Ambois*, Act I Scene I 139-141. See also *Eastward Ho!*, Act II Scene II 82.

² Goodman, 224-225.

³ *Admiral of Chabot*, Act I Scene I 140-142.

Conclusion

However, courtiers who sought further political power faced difficulties in the early seventeenth century as the preceding decades built implacable hostility toward those perceived as upstart advisors. Audiences' receptivity to the stage Machiavel saw this archetype applied by pamphleteers, chroniclers, libellers, and eventually the first generation of historians of the Jacobean era. Tacitus' rediscovered denunciations of Tiberian decadence inspired neo-Stoicism, which gave a philosophical heft to anti-court bitterness. Alongside these intellectual trends, the ever-popular courtesy books, many produced by Essexians or Henry's devotees, provided other standards court figures could transgress.⁴ The combined notions in all these works supported perceptions of Carr as a typical court 'flatterer.' These views persisted even though no acquaintance identified flattery as part of the character of Carr, who, as a borderer, was raised to reject complaisance.⁵

Alongside general apprehension about courtiers' influence, characteristics unique to Carr singled him out as the courtly anathema between 1607-1615. While not the only Scot in English administrative roles, Carr's stubborn Anglicisation infuriated those who wished for a pre-1603 separation. Despite his family's centrality in Scottish politics, to opponents, the unennobled Ferniehirsts cheapened the political positions he received. Trained at court between 1598-1607, his absence of a formal education presented another means to show him out of step with elite values. Although never confirmed in portraiture, authors capitalised on his effeminacy and youth to suggest that James' desires influenced the distribution of rewards. Of James' advisors, Carr was best suited to function as a vessel for finely honed anti-court tropes and sentiment.

As England neared the Civil War, Stuart detractors further maligned the never-beloved James. Carr's 'otherness' made him a cypher for anti-Jacobean ideas. Consistent portrayals of James emphasised a lack of manly vigour and described his government as chaotic and factionalised. Accusations of a degenerate and profligate court culture created unsubtle implications of a sodomitical relationship between the two. For some, James' pacifism, particularly his refusal to be drawn into the Thirty Years War, betrayed English honour. James' reluctance for European intervention, combined with his tolerance of loyal English Catholics, meant the Calvinist attracted imputations of Popery. Carr held no perceptible religious views and

⁴ Lawrence 116-117.

⁵ Wotton, *Letters*, 21-22.

valued peace with Spain, which saw him characterised as an unquestioning enabler of the King's hated foreign policies.⁶ Likewise, James struggled to convince critics of his belief in and adherence to English constitutionalism. Again, Carr supported general denunciations with the baseless accusation that he undermined proceedings in the 1610 parliament.

Beyond the malice directed toward him, Carr's limited power base hindered his moves into an administrative role. In a political system underpinned by kinship ties, Carr had not secured the lucrative positions required for a robust patronage network. While made a Scottish Privy Councillor, Carr's family saw scant rewards, and his influence north of the border paled to the Chancellor, Dunfermline.⁷ Nor had he established an English bailiwick. Cecil's influence meant Carr's supporting clientele comprised the collection of political outsiders who congregated with Overbury at the Mermaid Tavern.⁸ The Essexians: Winwood, Neville, Southampton, and Edmund Sheffield, first earl of Mulgrave, attached themselves to Carr due to exaggerated perceptions of the favourite's influence. James had limited interest in these men, which created a lasting feeling of betrayal, even as Carr advocated for Neville and Winwood.⁹

Eventually, Carr infiltrated the highest tier of governmental rewards, but it caused him to forget his court role. His ascendancy came through Northampton's guidance, whose anxieties saw him cultivate Carr as a bedchamber advocate.¹⁰ Carr's association with one of England's preeminent noble houses revealed his secondary position within the Jacobean system. His association with the Howards exposed the limits of what could be gained within the bedchamber. No longer content with royal handouts, Carr's brazen patronage requests frustrated James. Carr's new connections saw him break a fundamental brokership tenet: to not operate within one milieu.¹¹ Advocating solely for the Howards made Carr less beneficial for a 'universal king' whilst arousing enmity from the family's Protestant adversaries. Once he achieved better-rewarded positions, Carr failed to understand the boundaries between public service and personal gratification. An irritated Northampton scolded Carr for "sucking satisfaction by private persons

⁶ Peck, *Northampton*, 213.

⁷ *RPCS*, X 157-158.

⁸ Duncan, 227

⁹ Cuddy, "entourage," 211.

¹⁰ Peck, *Northampton*, 214.

¹¹ Kettering, *Patrons*, 4; Kevin Sharpe, *Cotton*, 128. The term Howards is used but this does not include, Thomas Howard, earl of Arundel.

Conclusion

out of subjects' fortunes," and James reprimanded him over the lack of defence preparations during his custodianship of the Cinque Ports.¹² Carr forgot that his power rested on his access to the King, and clients complained of his lengthier absences from court.¹³

A key focus has been to demonstrate the growing objections to Carr establishing his political career would have overwhelmed many; nevertheless, Carr buckled under the pressure. He triggered a disagreement between the Spanish and Venetian ambassadors and then overstepped instructions when arranging the potential match between Prince Charles and Maria Anna of Spain.¹⁴ The negotiation's collapse following the September 1614 Armada Scare saw Carr scapegoated, which, combined with him undermining the new Secretary, Sir Ralph Winwood, meant he no longer received foreign dispatches.¹⁵ The King publicly blamed him for mishandling the suppression of Robert Stewart's May 1614 Orkney rebellion, and church officials upbraided him for his light treatment of recusants.¹⁶ Northampton's June 1614 death removed his restraint of Privy Councillors' behaviour.¹⁷ The newfound rapaciousness of the Treasurer Suffolk, his disliked father-in-law, added to Carr's worries about his administrative failures.¹⁸ Always sensitive to accusations of bribery, concerns over Suffolk's corruption and his dwindling influence caused Carr to request from James a preemptive pardon in July 1615.¹⁹

The rift between James and his court broker occurred well before Anne and Carr's other enemies purportedly installed Villiers as Carr's replacement. In July 1614, James attempted to refocus Carr by appointing him Chamberlain, but Carr failed to take the hint.²⁰ Although he controlled domestic appointments, Carr did not understand that assuming Cecil's powers required relinquishing bedchamber tasks to a trusted surrogate. After showing minimal concern at the King's November 1614 riding accident, James decided that Carr's political interests necessitated a new court broker.²¹ As he enjoyed the well-supported Villiers company, he

¹² *CSPD*, XI 289, 291.

¹³ *CSPS*, XI 242.

¹⁴ Cuddy, "King's Chambers," 150-154; Wotton, *Letters*, II 43.

¹⁵ Gardiner, *Marriage Treaty*, 15, 33, "Certain Letters," 158-165; Senning, 200-209, 216; Kevin Sharpe, *Cotton*, 132-133.

¹⁶ *CSPD*, XI 294; Chambers, I 458; Frankland, 6-7.

¹⁷ Cuddy, "entourage," 213

¹⁸ Lindley, *Howard*, 87.

¹⁹ Akrigg, *Jacobean Pageant*, Bellamy, *Scandal*, 70; Stone, *Crisis*, 444; Willson, *James*, 338.

²⁰ *CSPD*, XI 244.

²¹ Akrigg, *Letters*, 337.

seemed a suitable replacement.²² Carr opposed the new arrival rather than cultivating an alliance or taking Villiers' promotion as a signal to attend to his former responsibilities. However, that the two shared an indelible antipathy reflected conceptions of a faction-riven court rather than historical reality. Villiers had no reason to engage in open conflict when Carr was already imploding. The new arrival later advocated for Carr's eventual release from the Tower and would visit him at his home in Chiswick.²³

By 1615 James' patience had expired; Suffolk and Carr's lack of policy initiatives made his broker's increasingly snippy attitude more intolerable.²⁴ Writing in early 1615, James admonished Carr for his "fiery boutades" and "continued dogged sullen behaviour," imploring him to reconsider his "passion, fury, and insolent pride."²⁵ While the letter enflamed those seeking evidence of a sexual relationship, it unequivocally demonstrated that James believed Carr had no option but to accept he had been adequately rewarded and to display the reciprocity of affection expected between friends.²⁶ He responded to James' newfound critiques frostily, forgetting the critical tenet of courtiership: "never be obvious or opposite to the pleasures of his Prince, so they be honest and warrantable, for otherwise he may quickly fall from the favour and affection."²⁷ By 1615, he still believed himself insufficiently rewarded. James' decision to grant a raft of exemptions to the French at the Cinque Ports in November 1614 rankled Carr, who only received the temporary custodianship in June.²⁸ It ultimately made little difference as he lost the position to Lord Zouch in the summer of 1615, along with the Chamberlainship to Pembroke.²⁹

Shortly after Carr's birth, Justus Lipsius, whose philosophy so inspired Carr's detractors, explained: "Do you not know that the tallest trees, which are many years a growing, are cut downe in an houre?"³⁰ While Carr's court career ended suddenly, it is unjustifiable to classify him as a 'tallest tree'. He spent fourteen years attaining a position of moderate influence in

²² Roger Lockyer, *Buckingham, the Life and Political Career of George Villiers, First Duke of Buckingham, 1592-1628* (London: Longman, 1981), 16-17; Mar & Kellie, 59.

²³ Seddon, *Holles*, III 387-388.

²⁴ Cuddy, "King's Chambers," 152.

²⁵ Akrigg, *Letters*, 336-337.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 337. See also Alison V. Scott, *Selfish Gifts: The Politics of Exchange and English Court Literature, 1580-1628*. (Madison (NJ): Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2006), 128.

²⁷ *Most Magnificent James*, 118.

²⁸ *CSPS*, XI 239, 260.

²⁹ Cuddy, "entourage," 215.

³⁰ Lipsius, *Six Bookes*, 36.

Conclusion

managing access to the King, only to squander his opportunity to insist on a role to which he was unsuited. Nevertheless, Lipsius' idiom offers a better explanation of Carr's career than traditional narratives of a "shooting star, burning with intense brightness and heat but then consumed by that which nourished it."³¹ The idea he suffered a precipitous decline also needs to be balanced against alternatives if he had remained in Scotland. Despite accruing debts and bitterness at his treatment following his 1622 release, Carr lived comfortably on his £4000 annual pension and the £900 rent from his restored barony at Winwick at London's Chiswick Estate.³²

Ultimately, Carr was a man so ordinary that Francis Osborn did not even provide him with a leading part in the play centred on his downfall. If not for his marriage to Frances Howard and murder conviction, he would have featured in the historiography no more frequently than Fenton, Hay, Lennox, or any of James' Scottish companions. The lasting significance of his career was how some took such a nondescript courtier to deduce, "we cannot read of any that ever was so great a favourite as Somerset."³³ The understanding of an administrator as innocuous as Carr holds value in understanding how England lurched towards Civil War a generation later. That he featured so heavily in early Jacobean histories reflected the monomania around favourites. Carr is therefore indispensable in explicating how the careers of Thomas Wentworth, first earl of Strafford, and William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, meant that by 1640 the governing class openly challenged the principle of a monarch being able to select their advisors.

³¹ Bergeron, *Homosexual Desire*, 69.

³² *ODNB*, s.v. Carr, Robert, earl of Somerset; *CSPS*, XI 415.

³³ D'Ewes, 410.

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