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Staging kingship in Scotland and England, 1532-1560

“Quhat is ane king?” asks Divine Correctioun in David Lyndsay’s *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* before supplying the answer “Nocht bot ane officiar” (1613),¹ thereby articulating a commonplace of medieval Scottish literature on kingship that the monarch’s duties were owed as much to his people as to the God he deputised for. Herein lay the fundamental difference between Scottish and English versions of kingship. As early as 1320, Scottish ideals of sovereignty were enshrined through the Declaration of Arbroath which recognised the difficulties of centralised government in a nation-state with powerful magnates, asserting that the Scottish king ruled a people — not a land — through a combination of divine providence and common assent. The Declaration states that if the king fails to fulfil his obligations to his subjects he may be removed by them: “Yet if he should give up what he had begun, and agree to make us or our kingdom subject to the King of England or the English, we should exert ourselves at once to drive him out as our enemy and a subverter of his own rights and ours, and make some other man who was well able to defend us our King.”²

Whereas the English political system became increasingly autocratic throughout the sixteenth century, Scotland retained its symbiotic and dialogic mode into the seventeenth century and James VI and I’s ascent to the English throne. However, Jenny Wormald suggests that this was rather by accident than design, a consequence of the fact that “between 1460 and 1625 some 60 years” of Scottish rule “were years of minority” (2007: 13). The death of James V, in particular, “removed the threat of growing autocracy” (ibid.) when he was succeeded by his baby daughter, Mary, in 1542. It was against this unstable and changeful monarchical backdrop that in 1552, Sir David Lyndsay, childhood companion to James and Lyon King of Arms at his court, produced an extensively rewritten version of his earlier interlude performed before the King in 1540, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. This article will consider how the

differences between the political worlds of Scotland and England are manifested in the theatrical works of each, comparing the models of sovereignty displayed in Lyndsay's play with two English dramas from the mid-sixteenth century, John Heywood's *The Play of the Weather* (1533) and Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (1569-70, but possibly performed in 1560 at Cambridge University). It will also consider how the conditions of a 1554 performance of *Ane Satyre* before the newly-made regent of Scotland, Mary of Guise, Dowager Queen and mother of Mary Stewart, both correspond with and resist the ideas of kingship that Lyndsay forwards in his play. The *Satyre*'s foregrounding of a silent monarch gains new resonance during this performance, and it may have been that Mary looked to the play as a means of highlighting her own form of governance.

Scottish models of kingship

In the fifteenth-century Scottish chronicle *The Book of Pluscarden* the author writes that “the king is only the state's vicegerent in the name of the Lord his God, and unless he governs it well he is not worthy of the name of king” (cited Mason 1987: 139). This formulation imagines that the tight bonds between the divine and the earthly are mediated by a king whose concern for the common weal is both a spiritual and political duty for “the more one leans to the public good, the nearer one is to God” (ibid.). Unlike the framework of Divine Right in England, this is not so much a hierarchy as a composite logic of substitution which elides secular and spiritual concerns by figuring “God [as] the soul of the state” (ibid.). In such a formula, the Scottish king is important only insofar as he is God's representative, and thus only so long as he can be seen — and agreed — to be doing God's work. This model of sovereignty differs significantly, Wormald asserts, from “the quasi-religious propaganda used by the English and the French kings” (2007: 18).³

Roger Mason explains that from the medieval period onwards, Scotland's was a monarchy beset by internal and external conflicts that resulted in an ideology of "patriotic conservatism" (1987: 146) in an attempt to retain order in the face of civil war and invasion. According to Mason there was no radicalisation of the Scottish polity until the Reformation, which came some 30 years after it did in England (1987: 149). Political differences between the two countries were brought to the fore after the Union of the Crowns in 1603 when James was roundly criticised for using Scottish methods in the English parliament and at court, as Wormald has incisively examined in her article 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?'. She argues that while there was less constitutional sophistication in Scotland than in England, this lack of legal underpinning did not necessarily lead to an ineffective Scottish government. To the contrary, in Scotland, legislative processes often moved more quickly than in England, unencumbered by procedural obstacles.⁴

In fact the mode in which laws were passed and rapprochement reached between political parties in Scotland can seem fairly radical and not 'patriotically conservative' at all. The ethos of Scottish government was one of debate and argument rather than precedent and law, meaning that parliamentary processes were active, lively and reciprocal. Wormald states that such instances as the argument between James VI and Anthony Melville are frequently misinterpreted by historians as a sign of political backwardness and impropriety: "The point of that debate, in which Andrew Melville seized the King's sleeve, calling him 'God's silly vassal', is entirely lost if it is seen to exemplify the lack of respect with which Scotsmen supposedly treated their kings" (1983: 197). Robust criticism of power was a political expectation. The dominance of flyting as a literary form testifies that this was as much the case at court as in parliament. That Lyndsay himself engaged in such a literary roasting of James V is shown by his *Answer... to the Kingis Flyting* (c. 1535-6) in which he accuses the monarch of sexual incontinence:

Lyke ane boisteous Bull, ye rin and ryde

Royatouslie, lyke ane rude Rubeatour,

Ay fukkand lyke ane furious Fornicatour.

(Charteris 1568: K5v)

Notwithstanding the longstanding relationship between the King and his courtier it is difficult to imagine so blunt a form of counsel at the Henrician Court. Of course, as Sally Mapstone has seminally identified, the *speculum principis* tradition had particular purchase in Scotland during the fifteenth century,⁵ largely because, as Elizabeth Ewan writes, “[Scotland’s] background of threats to independence, long minorities and absent kings” meant that “debates about kingship took on particular relevance” (2006: 32). This was especially true as the king’s jurisdiction expanded from the reign of James III onwards, in a way which challenged the separation of realm from king outlined in the Declaration of Arbroath.

In parliament as at court, the directness evident in Melville’s challenge of James VI demonstrates that the interdependence of the various parts of the Scottish polity was paramount. Change in Scotland was achieved through a dialogue between powers as opposed to diktat. And the relativity of power in Scotland extended beyond the relationship between the king and parliament or king and nobility, with competition between monarchical and burgh authority also spatially inscribed in triumphal entries. In order to manage the challenge to their authority presented by municipal powers, Scottish monarchs might mount a courtly prequel to triumphal ceremonies, as in 1503 when a royal entertainment was staged outside of Edinburgh prior to Margaret Tudor’s entry. Giovanna Guidicini claims that while “courtly language was reserved for outside the city gate — the language would suddenly change inside the city walls, where both James and Margaret performed acts of humility and devotion to the relics and crosses brought forward by local religious congregations” (2011: 46). She goes on to argue that control of the urban border at Edinburgh’s West Port during a number of triumphal entries in

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries evinces the tension between civic and royal authority as a particular feature of Scottish ceremonies.

Scottish political systems thus contrast starkly with the hierarchical and, since Henry VIII, increasingly absolutist monarchy of England. While some of the addresses made to power in Scotland's political and literary spheres may seem surprising to specialists of the Tudor court, they should be interpreted in the light of a Scottish political philosophy which did not view argument, dissension and negotiation as troubling. Such features are bound to inflect sixteenth century Scottish drama when compared to English plays of the same period.

Kingship in Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis, Cambises and The Play of the Weather

The binding up of God, king and commons in the Scottish system of governance is made especially evident by Lyndsay in Part Two of *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. No sooner has the King, Rex Humanitas, established a parliament to reform the various problems afflicting Scotland than his role becomes largely ceremonial as Divine Correctioun begins to organise and direct the political proceedings. Although Rex has initiated the parliamentary process, it is Divine Correctioun who asks the Estates why they have entered the space backwards for instance (2387-2390). Rex then explains that his purpose in calling the parliament is to identify the evils that blight Scottish society. He announces his intention that the beneficiaries of this process will be the Scottish people, claiming that he will root out those that do “the Common-weil down thring [throw down]” (2402). However, his executive power to punish those accused of wrongdoing is immediately undermined by one of the three Estates, Spiritualitie:

Quhat thing is this, sir, that ye have devysit?

Schirs, ye have neid for till be weill advysit.

Be nocht haistie into your executioun,

And be nocht too extreme in your punitioun.

(2406-2409)

There is a suggestive shift from ‘sir’ to ‘Schirs’ here. Presumably the other authority being asked to moderate their response is Divine Correctioun, who castigates Spiritualitie, “It dois appeir that ye ar culpabill, / That ar nocht to Correctioun applyabill” (2414-2416). The use of the word at this point blurs the concept of the word ‘correction’ with the character who embodies it. Correctioun speaks for, and is, correction — in itself, a constituent of the king’s fundamental duty to administer justice within the realm. Indeed the entire opening of the parliament reveals the fact that power is distributed *between* Rex and Divine Correctioun. The authority of Rex over the Estates is imagined as contested by Spiritualitie’s appeal to both characters, while his royal duties are equally as attributed to Divine Correctioun as to himself. Such a reading concurs with Greg Walker’s findings that “At no point in the play is an individual sovereign authority unequivocally in command” (1998:142) and theatricalises the division and interdependence of power in the Scottish polity.

However, while the representation of Rex Humanitas correlates with the divided authority acceptable to Scottish ideals of governance, he further disturbs these ideals when he appears to reduce his role to a mere figurehead and fails to engage with the active parliamentary processes that Mason and Wormald assert are the hallmark of Scottish politics. His spoken contribution to the assembly does not reach beyond a brief stichomythic episode with John the Common-Weill, an allegorical figure representing the people of Scotland. During the exchange of single lines of dialogue from 2442-2450 Rex manages only to elicit superficial bits of information from John, but when he asks him what causes the backwardness of the Estates, the lengthy, reasoned and detailed response John gives is picked up by Divine Correctioun who then weaves the thread of his complaints into the debates that dominate the rest of the drama. The movement between literary forms is significant; the equal to-and-fro of stichomythia may

dramatise the ideal political processes of Scotland but it is superseded by John's effective silencing of the King. Rex's verbal role in the parliament is over from this point. He sits by silently as the polity discuss social and ecclesiastical injustice and decide upon the laws that will redress inequalities and remodel the Commonwealth. The King only speaks up at the very end of the parliament, some 1000 lines later, in order to welcome the Doctour (3347-8) and to ratify the reforms that have been made in his presence, although these already have the status of foregone conclusions: "As ye have said, but dout it salbe done" (3743).

The representation of power in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* thus illustrates the intricate connection between the spiritual and the secular in the Scottish system — Divine Correctioun is after all *divine* — and the authority attributed to the common people. John the Common-Weill's complaints are later augmented by the Pauper whose anecdotes of injustice influence the legal reforms that are introduced. But the play's portrayal of a parliament in which the King is reduced to an emblematic role demonstrates an acute anxiety about sovereignty in sixteenth-century Scotland. This is perhaps not surprising given that the first half of the century had been dominated by infant monarchs, changing regents and magnate factionalism, with James V reigning from the age of seventeen months and Mary Queen of Scots ascending to the throne as a newborn. In order for the debate-driven Scottish system to thrive it was necessary to have a king to engage in argument but, instead, as Gude Counsall laments in Part One of the *Satyre*, "our guiders all want grace, / And die before their day" (580-1). The greater separation of powers meant that it was possible for Scottish politics to operate without an active monarch, but such a situation was far from ideal, and the *Satyre* explores this sovereign absence in the character of the youthful and irresponsible Rex Humanitas.

Unlike in the Tudor interlude, Walker writes that "The body politic in the play is...not coterminous with the body natural (or allegorical) of the prince" (2007: 223) and that the personal reform of the sovereign cannot be directly mapped onto the nation. Change in *Satyre*

must therefore be achieved “through parliamentary legislation and reform” (ibid.). Walker suggests that the multiplication of kingly figures in Lyndsay’s parliament de-authorises the monarch’s powers and destabilises sovereignty in the *Satyre*, writing, “As in the classic New Historicist formulation, power is everywhere and nowhere in the state of the play” (1998: 141). Sarah Carpenter develops this idea in an article which identifies Rex Humanitas and Divine Correction as duplicated figures of monarchy by arguing that “These twinned kings proceed to operate not directly but through a parliament, in consultation with the Three Estates, advised by Gude Counsell and receptive to the complaints of Common-Weill” (2010: 106). For John McGavin, however, the doubling up of authority in both Rex Humanitas and Divine Correction does not necessarily undermine the representation of kingship but reflects instead the nexus of powers that contribute to the notion of sovereignty in Scotland: “Lyndsay dramatises a hierarchy of kingly authority, with God at the top, [and] insists that the force of correction is both divinely derived and native to the earthly king...Lyndsay is defining a reformed royal identity through separating out its component parts and locating them in the spiritual hierarchy from which they take their true unity” (2007: 256-7).

However the duplication and separation of powers in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis* are understood, they are in evident contrast to the representation of sovereignty emerging in English theatre during the same period. In John Heywood’s *The Play of the Weather* for instance, the dramatisation of Jupiter clearly serves as an analogue for Henry VIII and the unprecedented authority that the English monarch would claim on the eve of the Reformation. Unlike a number of Tudor interludes which display a central authority figure and keep the commons off-stage — such as *Magnificence*, *Youth* and *King Johan* — *The Play of the Weather* portrays an array of Tudor estates in its *dramatis personae* of a Gentleman, Gentlewoman, Merchant, Ranger, Wind Miller, Water Miller, Laundress and Boy.⁶ However, the arguments that they make for their varying preferred weather conditions have no effect on Jupiter’s

judgement about what the outcome will be. Despite listening to their suits, Jupiter decides that each person should have some of their ideal weather for at least some of the time, thus “shall ye have the weather even as it was” (1240). This is a power play on the part of Jupiter, and by extension Henry, when seen in the wider context of the Reformation Parliament which had been debating the nature of royal authority since 1529. Whether or not Henry was present at the probable performance during winter 1532/3,⁷ the implied commentary on royal power of depicting a ruler who appears to attend to the needs of his subjects, but ultimately dictates their fates, would have resonated strongly in the political context of the 1530s. The process staged in *The Play of the Weather* reinforces the sovereign’s claims to near-absolute power over the church and state, as well as the distance between the English ruler and his subjects, in direct contrast to the mutuality depicted in *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*.

Such differing political systems are expressed in contemporary representations of sovereignty beyond literature. During a period of stability under James V in the second quarter of the sixteenth century, the Scottish Renaissance began to flourish, with a confident court culture providing suitable conditions for performance of an earlier version of the *Satyre* at Linlithgow Palace in 1540.⁸ James also invested heavily in his palaces during this time, extensively remodelling Linlithgow and continuing the building works started by his father at Stirling Castle to make it a residence on a par with the great Northern European palaces. Henry VIII was also building and renovating his court at this time, developing York Place and Hampton Court, remodelling Whitehall and creating Nonsuch Palace. However politically he was in a much more vulnerable situation than James following the Pilgrimage of Grace and excommunication by the Pope. The break with Rome isolated England from the rest of Europe, and her subsequent autonomy initiated a period of rule that was seen both within and without England as increasingly absolutist and potentially tyrannous. Whilst Henry was seeking alliance with his neighbours in Scotland to shore up his uncertain position, Scotland was in a

position of relative power with a dynastically legitimate king able to pick a wife from among the princesses of Europe. James' choice of a French spouse over an English one sent a strong message to Henry about his intention to be the equal of Europe's leaders rather than England's subordinate.

This intention is signalled not only in James' alignment of himself with the crowned heads of Europe on the heraldic ceiling of St Machar's Cathedral in Aberdeen designed by Gavin Dunbar, but also in the repetition of this alignment in the Stirling Heads that adorned his rebuilt Castle at Stirling. The Head that may represent Henry VIII in this series of roundels is tellingly accompanied by a fierce-looking lion on the subject's shoulders, drawing a bestial correspondence with the furrowed brow of the King. The semiotics of Henry's Head, if it does indeed depict him, therefore point towards a tyrannous construction of the English King. Neither was the notion that Henry was a tyrant an aspect of his post-Reformation identity that James V was afraid to exploit. The platform for ecclesiastical restructuring provided by the Linlithgow interlude of 1540 was seized upon by James as an opportunity to castigate the abuses of the Bishop of Glasgow and his clerics who were warned that they must "reform their factions/fashions and manners of living, saying that unless they so did, he would send six of the proudest of them unto his uncle of England" (cited Walker, 2000: 539). Evidently James was happy to take advantage of the fearsome reputation of Henry VIII for his own ends when necessary. James would, however, be dead by 1542 and the security of Scotland once again in jeopardy as it found itself ruled by an infant monarch for the second time in 30 years.

This divergent understanding of post-Reformation England as being ruled by tyrannical sovereigns, and sixteenth-century Scotland as not being ruled by sovereigns at all, manifests itself in the representation of monarchy in each country's drama. While the latter anxiety is expressed in the near-silent King Humanitas in Part Two of the *Satyre*, a concern about despotism dominates the plays produced in England during the mid- sixteenth century, even

beyond Henry's death. The implicit plea that Heywood makes for moderation in *The Play of the Weather* is succeeded by mid-Tudor tragedies whose themes insistently concern justice, legitimacy, and the sapience of rulers; dramas produced well into Elizabeth's reign such as *Gorboduc* (1561), *Horestes* (1567), and *Cambises*. From its outset, *Cambises* foregrounds the importance of that mitigator against tyranny – wise counsel – with the King telling his counsellor, Praxaspes, within the first fifty lines, “I will not swerve from those steps whereto you would me train” and “Speak on my Counsel; what it be, you shall have favour mine” (37, 47).⁹ When Cambises goes abroad to fight against Egypt, Praxaspes advises that he should leave a proxy in charge “To sit and judge with equity” (54) and the King appoints Sisamnes, for “A judge he is of prudent skill” (57).

However, as soon as he is exalted to a position of power Sisamnes abuses his position, imagining how he might “abrogate the law as I shall think it good” (117). Power is therefore concomitant with its corruption in the play, which is further demonstrated when Cambises also succumbs to a life of vice. According to Shame:

All piety and virtuous life he doth it clean refuse;
Lechery and drunkenness he doth it much frequent;
The tiger's kind to imitate he hath given full consent.

(344-6)

In line with the potentially bestial depiction of Henry in the Stirling Heads, the feline metaphor foreshadows Cambises' degradation to the animal state of tyrant during the course of the play. When Cambises returns to Persia he hears counsel, this time in the form of Commons' Complaint against Sisamnes who has been “taking bribes and gifts, the poor he doth oppress, / Taking relief from infants young, widows and fatherless” (389-90). Rightly, Cambises punishes the judge, however his method of retribution is disproportionate; not only must Sisamnes be executed, he must also be flayed. The King tells the executioner “Dispatch with

sword this judge's life; extinguish fear and cares. / So done, draw thou his cursed skin strait over both his ears" (437-8). Praxaspes tries to assuage Cambises' cruelty after the execution by saying, "Behold, O king, how he doth bleed" (461), but Cambises follows through with his sentence:

In this wise he shall not be left.

Pull his skin over his ears to make his death more vile.

A wretch he was, a cruel thief, my commons to beguile!

(462-4).

Yet Cambises' claim to be acting in retribution for the wrongs committed against his subjects is questionable as this is only the first of a series of cruelties in the play. He goes on to slaughter Praxaspes' son when the counsellor dares advise against his habitual drunkenness: "a blissful babe, wherein thou dost delight; / Me to revenge of these thy words I will go wreak this spite" (509-10). In an apogee of bloodthirstiness, he not only pierces the boy with an arrow, he also cuts out the child's heart and presents it to the father. Cambises then goes on to murder his own brother, Smirdis, for his popularity, Smirdis tautologically recognising on the point of death that "the king is a tyrant tyrannous" (724). Further, Cambises forces an unwilling lady into marriage with him only to kill his new wife when she weeps at his description of two puppies who collaborate to overpower a lion that he has set upon them; a joining of forces she says should have determined his relationship with Smirdis, although the King — described as of "tiger's kind" — is analogised with the lion according to the tropes of tyranny in the text.

The spectatorship of the animal fight exemplifies the erotics of Cambises' despotic court, with the King taking voyeuristic pleasure in the annihilation of his subjects. It is essential, he tells Sisamnes, that he "Receive thy death before mine eyes" (420) and the importance of observing the flaying is emphasised when he repeats shortly afterwards, "I will see the office done, and that before mine eyes" (439). Similarly, after he has penetrated the body of

Praxaspes' son with his arrow, he specifies that the body be maimed further by the removal of the heart and that Praxaspes witnesses the savagery, "Behold Praxaspes, thy son's own heart!" (563). These moments of gory sadism hold an erotic frisson for Cambises who ensures that his merciless murders are viewed both by himself and others. A crucial component of his tyranny is therefore the control that Cambises exerts over the mutilated bodies of his subjects, a voyeuristic thrill which also infects his agents when at their killing of Smirdis Cruelty tells Murder to "Behold, now his blood springs out on the ground!" and Murder recognises that the dead body will please their sovereign, "Now he is dead, let us present him to the king" (729-30).

The desire accorded to Rex Humanitas is, however, the very opposite of the sadistic and gruesome voyeurism that characterises Cambises' counsel-free court. Rex Humanitas' court is one that is amenable to counsel, but one which lacks wisdom, revealed when the youthful and inexperienced King chooses a trio of Vices — Wantonness, Placebo, and Solace — as his advisors in Part One. It is therefore not the eradication of courtly counsel but the King's patronage of the wrong kind that is the problem in Scotland, and this is specifically seen in relation to the king's age and lack of maturity. With its history of minority rule it is no surprise that the popular *speculum principis* literature of Scotland often focussed specifically on the youth of the king, for instance *The Buik of King Alexander the Conquerour* which Nicola Royan contends Sir Gilbert Hay may have written after the minority of James III (1460-69). She claims that the largely positive, if anxious, construction of young rule in this particular 'mirror for princes' is at odds with most fifteenth- and sixteenth-century works on the subject, such as *King Hart* and *The Thre Prestis of Peblis* in which "the youthful royal protagonists go astray under the influence of their vibrant but irresponsible courts, and only after some difficulty are brought in hand" (2006: 80). Janet Hadley-Williams argues that such works "were of most importance to Lyndsay; he offers princely counsel in semi-dramatic guise in six of his

poems, and his panoramic play greatly adds to that pre-occupation and the dramatic devices used to convey it,” furthermore that Lyndsay’s “satire is not ‘general’ but directed to the Scottish king’s responsibility [...] to govern self and realm” (2006: 185, 191).

In this sense Lyndsay’s rendering of *speculum principis* advice can be aligned with other Scottish literary examples, which Joanna Martin asserts are concerned with “the impact of sexual desire on the king’s governance of his realm and therefore establish a connection between the moral order of the self and good political rule” (2008: 1). Rex’s youth is underscored in the play by the fact that he is sexually as well as politically inexperienced, as indicated when Wantonness says he “Kennis na mair of ane cunt/ Nor dois the noveis of ane freir!” (462-3). Solace attempts to lead Rex astray by describing a woman who will make “all your flesche up ryse” (204), advice Rex initially rejects as “counsall odious” (221). Sexual purity is therefore equated with good rule. However, on being introduced by his wayward retinue to Dame Sensualitie, Hameliness and Danger, a physiological change overtakes Rex: “My bodie trimblis, feit and hands, / And quhiles [sometimes] is hait as fyre” (371-2). A stage direction clarifies that women are sirens who call monarchs away from their responsibilities: “*Hear shall the ladies sing ane sang, the King shall lie down among the ladies*” (1033 s.d.). Rex takes to his bed with Sensualitie for “chalmer-glew,” or chamber-glee, leaving the stability of the kingdom to disintegrate in his absence. The theatrical image has historic relevance given Lyndsay’s criticism of James V’s licentious behaviour in his *Answer... to the Kingis Flyting*.

When Rex does re-emerge from bedchamber, his entry into sexuality is accompanied by poor political decisions such as the appointment of Dissait as his Secretary, Falset as his Treasurer, and Flatterie as his Confessor (884-7). Order is restored only through the arrival of Divine Correctioun and Veritie in conjunction with Gude Counsall. The latter acknowledges that his presence has been driven “out of Scotland lang time” (578-9). Part One of the *Satyre* thus produces all of the national problems that require reform in Part Two. The absent or dead

Scottish king is expressed through Rex's somnolence which indicates the monarchy's weakness and defectiveness, envisaged as an indolent sexuality that removes Rex from his duty towards his subjects, so fundamental to Scottish conceptions of sovereignty under the terms of the Treaty of Arbroath.

While both Cambises and Rex Humanitas are effeminised through their actions, then,¹⁰ Rex's disordered rule is of a different tenor. It is not with alcohol and violence but with sexual desire and "young counsall intoxicate" that he is made "effeminate / And gydit by Dame Sensualitie" (1123, 1121-2). His failure of sovereignty reaches its apotheosis when he displaces his kingly responsibilities onto his lover, referring Chastity's punishment to Sensualitie with the words, "Evin as ye list to let her live or die; / I will refer that thing to your judgement" (1438-9). Chastity's contention that Sensualitie "now...rules all this land" is proven by this ultimate act of weakness, characterised by its perversion of precepts of gender and rule as much as its privileging of vice over virtue (1467). His abrogation of responsibility is no less tyrannous in the Scottish text than is Cambises' violent despotism in the English, for Divine Correctioun defines tyranny as the breaking of "justice for feare or affectioun" (1618). It is difficult to imagine the royal reaction when this scene was performed before both a public audience and the newly-instituted Scottish regent, the French-born Mary of Guise, in Edinburgh on 12th August, 1554, particularly in light of the fact that Sensualitie states that she is newly-come from abroad (284-5).¹¹ Indeed, Lyndsay's notion of good rule, while guided by feminine abstractions in the form of Veritie and Chastitie, is distinctly masculine in execution, epitomised by Divine Correctioun and Gude Counsall with his "lyart [grey]" beard (965). It is these characters who will have the most influential voices in the parliament of Part Two. Power is thus seen as most secure when it is bestowed upon elderly males and Rex's poor kingship is constructed by Gude Counsall as a facet of youth, for "good Counsel hastily be not heard /

With young princes” (988-9), a maxim which also implicitly questions the authority of the repeated Scottish child-monarchs in the preceding decades.

The anxieties about sovereignty revealed by Rex’s sleepy carnality are the very antithesis of those signalled by the unchecked, panoptic and dynamic power of Cambises.¹² Rex’s somnolence erases him from sites of political activity. When he withdraws to his bedchamber he enacts a political slumber from which he has to be woken by Divine Correctioun: “Get up, sir King, ye have sleepit enough / Into the arms of lady Sensual” (1695-6). That Correctioun is mistaken for a king by Wantonness and called “Majesty Royal” by Chastitie demonstrates how sexual desire detracts from political consciousness and displaces dynastic kingship in the play — as Divine Correctioun’s rehearsal of a list of flawed, uxurious rulers demonstrates (1705-1716). The reformation of King Humanitas is simultaneous with his acceptance of the wisdom of Divine Correctioun. After a brief struggle for power Rex assents to Correctioun’s authority, “I am content to your counsel t’incline / Ye beand of good conditioun” (1777-8).

However, the end of Part One also raises the question of whether Rex’s transformation has been successful, as instead of reassuming his sovereign powers of jurisdiction, he instead transfers them from Sensualitie to Divine Correctioun: “And here I give you full commissioun / To punish faults and give remissioun” (1780-1). The problem of sovereign weakness is thus not necessarily resolved by the absorption of Divine Correctioun into the court at the end of Part One, and weakness in this text is repeatedly equated with tyranny. In this way, the *Satyre* offers a challenge to the Scottish poetry considered by Martin which concerns “ruling the self in order to rule others” (2008: 6). In this text, personal reform is shown to only unevenly correspond with political change. It may be that the king’s youth and the fact that he has not achieved full bodily and sexual maturity play into the disconnection between the individual and the governing body in the play, serving further to critique the role of the monarch in the

Scottish polity given the prevalence of minorities during late medieval and early modern period.

At the same time, in England, concerns over tyranny also reigned in mid-sixteenth century drama, although in this instance took the form of a brutal monopoly on power. Even the seeming benevolence of Jupiter's invitation of suitor-subjects to his court in *The Play of the Weather* is tempered by the threat inherent to his final judgement that he cannot please all of the people all of the time: "What is this negligence, / Us to attempt in such inconvenience?" (1188-89).¹³ As this survey of mid-sixteenth century drama shows, tyranny appears in markedly different theatrical guises depending on the political context in which it manifests, whether sleepy inattention in the wake of James' death in Scotland, or the dictatorial madness which dominates dramatic representations in the aftermath of Henry's repressive reign.

Satyre, silence, and Mary of Guise

A recent AHRC-funded practice-based research project on the *Satyre* led by Greg Walker — 'Staging and Representing the Scottish Renaissance Court' — staged the first full professional performances of the play since 1554 at Linlithgow Palace in June 2013,¹⁴ and produced a number of discoveries concerning the language, context, and dramaturgy of the play.¹⁵ Of particular note, according to Walker, is a disconnection between Parts One and Two of the *Satyre*: 'it became increasingly clear during rehearsals and performances that it is the arrival of Pauper in the play that marks the definitive shift in its tone and focus' bringing "the allegorical phase of the drama to a shuddering halt" (2013: 12). This is not only a product of the conspicuously detailed reasons given by the Pauper for his descent into poverty during the 'Interlude' which separates the two halves of the *Satyre* — namely the deaths of his family and the subsequent ravishing of his modest livelihood through death duties exacted by the clergy and land-laird — it is signalled by his very entry into the drama, exquisitely crafted by Lyndsay

to occur after Diligence has announced the interval. As Walker notes, the moment marks “a conspicuous grinding of the theatrical gears, a disjunction, [leaving] the audience briefly uncertain whether this is art of reality, design or the disruption of design” (2013: 13). I would add to Walker’s observations that sleep functions as the fulcrum upon which this dramaturgical transformation hinges. While Rex’s sleep in Part One was wholly allegorical, loaded with ideas of sensual and earthly pleasure, kingly negligence and a Scotland in disarray — for instance when Diligence warns the audience that the King “lang tyme hes bene sleipand./ Quhairthrow misreull hes rung thir monie yeiris” (24-5) — the Pauper’s rest in “*the feild*” during the Interlude has no such attached significance (2043, s.d.). His sleep is a natural biological reaction to the wearying pilgrimage he has undertaken to seek justice, and so emblematises the shift from an allegorical to a more realist mode.

The second part of the *Satyre* can thus be seen to engage with the condition of Scotland in a far more direct and radical way than the first — in a more Scottish way perhaps — not via allegory but through theatricalised versions of actual political activity that explore national parliamentary practices almost to the point of tedium. Lyndsay depicts political processes that would have been debarred the vast majority of the original audience by representing in full the assembly’s protracted and complex debates, as well as the reading of the fifteen Acts decided during the course of the parliament. Lyndsay also dramatises aspects of Scottish political behaviour of which the audience would have been more aware, such as the procession of the Estates (albeit backwards) prior to parliament, and the ‘fencing’ of the assembly — the exclusion of all those outside of the parliament through the roping-off of its members — a job that would have belonged to the writer himself as Lyon King of Arms.

Beyond performing the political ceremonies inscribed in the text, ‘Staging and Representing the Scottish Renaissance Court’ also revealed in performance something that contributes significantly to the discussion of kingship, especially with respect to the immediate

context of its performance in 1554. As previously discussed, Rex's near-silence during the Parliament has been problematised and analysed by a number of critics because of its seeming incompatibility with the active parliamentary processes favoured in Scotland. However the actor playing Rex Humanitas in the 2013 productions managed to create a Scottish king in Part Two who, while speechless, was anything but passive. James Mackenzie's version of Rex was rather engaged, conscientious, and theatrically present, occupied with careful and visible listening, whispered extra-textual conversations with his counsellors, while at the same time displaying obvious reactions to what was being discussed by, for instance, physically standing up in support of or in opposition to points of policy. The audience were left in no doubt that Rex had transformed between Parts One and Two into a monarch who cared for his country.

Of course this was a performance choice on the part of Mackenzie and the director, Gregory Thompson, but it is also a salutary lesson to literary critics of the range of interpretative possibilities created through performance that considerably alter the range of meaning of what is etched on the page. Pascale Aebischer has demonstrated as much through her study of the silenced body of Lavinia in a variety of productions of *Titus Andronicus*, writing that "the elision of the rape in the play-text and the subsequent textual silence of the rape victim is made up for, in performance, by the actor" (2004: 26). A purely readerly engagement, however, privileges "Titus' grief in response to the textual gap left by his daughter's violation" whereas "in the theatre, the mutilated rape victim is insistently kept before the audience's eyes for six scenes" (ibid.). In the space left by Rex Humanitas' silence in the *Satyre* Mackenzie's engaged listening may well have echoed the way in which the actor performed the role in 1554, and such a portrayal of royal rule would have attained especial significance in front of Mary of Guise. Historians disagree as to whether Mary's regency in Scotland amounted to *de facto* French rule, or whether she was afforded real agency and wielded considerably more power than the account of her as France's puppet suggests.¹⁶

However, as a Frenchwoman, and a regent, her powers would undeniably have been significantly reduced compared to a legitimate male monarch. Amy Blakeway further argues that her regency for an absentee *adult* monarch “if anything *limited* Guise’s power” compared to other Scottish regents acting in the interests of minors (2015:23).¹⁷ This is what makes Mackenzie’s performance of an active though quiet king so pertinent for Scottish politics at the time of her assumption of the regency.

While it remains impossible to definitively disentangle the political relations underlying the 1554 performance, the various permutations each tell their own fascinating story. Mary of Guise had become Scotland’s regent on 12th April, 1554, four months before the performance, so it is possible that the show was mounted in her honour. Seating was certainly built for her according to an entry in the City of Edinburgh Old Accounts:

Item, payit for the making of the Quenis grace hous under the samyn, and the playaris hous, the jebbetis and skaffauld about the samyn, and burds on the playfeild, careing of thame fra the toun to the feild, and thairfra agane, the cutting and inlaik of greit and small tymmer, with the nallis and warkmanschip of cj wrychts twa dayis thairto, pynoris feis, cart hyre, and uther necessaris, as Sir William M'Dougall, maister of wark, tikket beiris xvj li. v s. iiij d. (Mill 1927: 181)

Vastly more sums of money were spent by Edinburgh Council on the play, with Burgh records from 20th July paying McDougall, “the sowm of xlij li. xij s. iiij d. makand in the hale the sowm of ane hundreth merkis and that to complete the play field now biggand in the Grenesid” and further account entries from 18th August “to content and pay to the werkmn that completit the play feild the sowme of xxxiiij li,” as well as another payment “to content and pay the xij menstrualis that past afoir the convoy and the plaaris on Sunday last bypast xl s” (Marwick, 1871).¹⁸ There are also payments made for the “dennar maid to the playars, iiij li.

xviii s. ij d” (Mill 1927: 181) as well as a compelling entry regarding one Walter Bynnyng in October which mention props that can be explicitly linked to characters from the *Satyre*:

the sowme of v li. for the making of the play graith and paynting of the handseyne and the playaris facis; providand alwys that the said Walter mak the play geir vnderwritten furthcumand to the town quhen thai haif ado thairwith, quhilkis he hes now ressaut, viz., viij play hattis, and kingis crowne, ane myter, ane fulis hude, ane septour, ane pair angell wyngis, twa angell hair, ane chaplet of tryvmpe. (Mill 1927: 182)

If civic authorities lie behind the performance as the accounts suggest, then the portrayal of a voiceless king may be interpreted as a challenge to Mary, a reminder to the old queen that the old problems of corruption and injustice remain and that Scotland requires the unequivocal authority invested in a monarch, rather than a substitute, in order to institute reform. In this scenario, a silent and passive version of Rex Humanitas might have stung the new regent to the quick. However, given that Mary of Guise was also in attendance at the earliest version of the play performed before James V at Linlithgow in 1540, and knew well its critical content and reforming bent, it seems improbable that she would have allowed it to be played without her approval. If Mary herself commissioned or endorsed the revival of the play, then the performance becomes a sophisticated ploy in a political game, re-invoking her association with her popular husband and allying herself with his kingly ability to accept good counsel through the form of drama, thereby modifying the problems produced by her gender and partial power. She also does something rather more radical than James V, or Henry VIII, by extending and exhibiting her ability to accept good counsel to a far wider audience than just the court through the public performance of the play before “ane exceding greit nowmer of pepill” (Charteris 1568: 3). The political significance of this expanded audience is a factor noted by Ian Brown, who writes that in Scotland:

The potential of drama to address controversial public issues robustly had...been recognised and apparently accepted even in a Scotland engaged in pre-Reformation spiritual, intellectual and political turmoil. Lyndsay's play's production history - as an Interlude before the royal court in Linlithgow Palace in 1540 and publicly in a significantly developed and, it would seem, much longer and theatrically more complex form in the playfields of Cupar (1552) and Edinburgh (1554) — and themes — attacking religious and civic corruption — illustrate clearly that drama and theatre could be crucibles for cultural change and so they continued. (2013: 88)

While it remains unclear who authorised this production, the known presence in the audience of Mary of Guise renders her biographers' failure to consider the relationship between the 1554 production of the *Satyre* at the point of the assumption of the regency an oversight.¹⁹ The boldness of the staging of *this* play at *this* moment, in addition to her longstanding relationship with both Lyndsay and his masterwork, suggest that Mary might well have been fundamentally involved with its commission. If not, then the question of why the city of Edinburgh would fund such an enterprise is raised. It could be significant that the play was played “besyde Edinburgh” according to Charteris (1568: 3) suggesting something of the tension between the city and the crown identified by Guidicini with respect to triumphal entries. It might have been that the ambivalence of the political message in this agile satire that concludes “*Stultorum numerus infinitus,*” or ‘the number of fools is infinite’ (4502-4647), made it available to municipal as well as monarchical interests. There is also the possibility of reversing the reading of Mary of Guise’s acceptance of counsel in line with Greg Walker’s sense that “under a regency administration authority was neither unitary nor undisputed” and by representing a widened power base in Part Two, “the play offers the prospect of a powerful

council.” (1998: 152). Such a modelling of power dispersed among and between the polity could thus be seen to serve the interests of the Estates rather than the regent at this moment.

Nevertheless in terms of its staging of sovereignty, the passivity which distinguishes the Scottish king from the English tyrant seems likely to have been reconditioned through performance before a female regent without direct access to a sovereign political voice. Speechlessness, which tends to only read one way on the page, is actually fraught with interpretative range for the performer. If portrayed by the 1554 player of Rex Humanitas in a similar way to James Mackenzie in 2013, Mary of Guise could demonstrate to her subjects that she, too, was listening during the production by adopting the strategy of counsel through drama and accepting the challenging vision of recent Scottish history that Lyndsay proffered. In opposition to Henry’s double in the form of the autocratic and removed Jupiter, Mary of Guise might therefore have aligned herself with the nodding, attentive, whispering Rex Humanitas on-stage, finding a mirror in the reformed and improved monarch in Part Two of the play. By doing so she would have demonstrated to the people and to the municipal authorities of Edinburgh that — no matter what the limitations of her status as a deputy, her nationality, or her gender — she was, at least, no tyrant.

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NOTES

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¹ David Lyndsay, *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*. All subsequent references will be taken from *Medieval Drama: An Anthology*.

² A public domain copy of 'The Declaration of Arbroath' can be accessed via The National Archives of Scotland website, <http://www.nas.gov.uk/downloads/declarationarbroath.pdf> [date accessed 12th September, 2017]

³ For more on the role of constitutionalism as opposed to absolutism in Scotland, see James Henderson Burns. 1996. *The True Law of Kingship: Concepts of Monarchy in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford: Clarendon Press), e.g. 7-10.

⁴ In *Court, Kirk and Community*, she cites the example the king's ability to call a 'convention' rather than a full parliament, writing, "Conventions could meet quickly, not being subject to the 40 day-rule...For political crises, particularly during minorities, they were invaluable," 22.

⁵ See Sally Mapstone. 1986. 'The Advice to Princes Tradition in Scottish Literature, 1450-1500', unpublished DPhil Thesis (Oxford).

⁶ For a film of the play, along with educational and research resources produced during the AHRC-funded project, 'Staging the Henrician Court' (2008-2010), see www.stagingthehenriciancourt.brookes.ac.uk

⁷ The Revels Office accounts for 1528-34 are missing and, even then, information about Tudor interludes is frustratingly difficult to locate in the historic record.

⁸ Though the text of this play does not survive, the 'nootes of the interluyde' included by Sir William Eure in a letter to Thomas Cromwell dated 26th January, 1540, do, and the content bears striking similarities to the *Satyre*. See Walker, 2000: 539.

⁹ Thomas Preston, '*Cambises*'. All subsequent references will be taken from *The Oxford Anthology of Tudor Drama*.

¹⁰ See Rebecca W. Bushnell. 1990. *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political thought and theatre in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press) 63-9.

¹¹ Henry Charteris definitively connects the play and place of production with Mary's attendance, albeit some time after the event, writing of 'the play, playit besyde Edinburgh, in presence of the Quene Regent, and ane greit part of the Nobilitie, with ane exceding greit nowmer of pepill' (1568: 3).

¹² The differing political systems through which monarchy is conceptualised in both English and Scottish drama are brought to the fore in many ways by Shakespeare's 'Scottish' play, *Macbeth*. On the surface, Malcolm seems to have much in common with Rex Humanitas, especially in Part One. Also a youth and a virgin, he plays at being a poor ruler in order to test Macduff's loyalty and integrity, only to ultimately reveal his true sovereignty. However, Malcolm's pretended vices are not the weakness, absence and indolence which emerge as a concern in the drama of Scotland; his lechery, intemperance and cruelty are rather the sins of the English tyrant according

to mid-Tudor drama. What *Macbeth* perhaps exposes, then, is not the English perspective on the problems of Scottish monarchy, but rather the Tudor fear of absolutism and tyranny, refracted through a Scottish lens.

¹³ Jupiter's volatile and changeable nature was brought to the fore at this moment of his performance by Colin Hurley during the 'Staging the Henrician Court' 2009 production. See <http://stagingthehenriciancourt.brookes.ac.uk/performance/scene10.html>

¹⁴ Please visit the project website at www.stagingthescottishcourt.org which contains blog posts, critical essays, a rehearsal blog, filmed interviews with actors, scholars and director, educational materials for schools, as well as a full film of the production.

¹⁵ See Peter Happé, 'Sir David Lyndsay, *A Satire of the Three Estates*: Space, Language – Concepts'. Blog post available at <http://www.stagingthescottishcourt.org/2013/07/>; Eleanor Rycroft. 2016. 'Place and Space on the Late Medieval and Early Modern Stage: The Case of *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaitis*', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 35.2: 247-266; Greg Walker. 2016. 'Blurred Lines?: Religion, Reform, and Reformation in Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis*', in *Staging Scripture, Biblical Drama, 1350-1600*, Peter Happé and Wim Husken (Leiden: E.J. Brill) 42-67; 2014. 'Folly in Lyndsay's *Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis* revisited'. *Theta XI: Théâtre Tudor*: 113-130; 2013. 'More Thoughts about John the Common Weal and Pauper', Open Access essay available at <http://www.stagingthescottishcourt.org/documents/>; 2016. 'Personification in Sir David Lyndsay's *Ane Satire of the Thrie Estaitis*', in *Personification: Embodying Meaning and Emotion*, Bart Ramakers and Walter Melion, eds. (Leiden: E.J. Brill) 234-255; 2014. 'The Popular Voice in Sir David Lyndsay's *Satire of the Thrie Estaitis*,' *Studies in Scottish Literature* 40.1: 39-54; 2013 'The Lost Interlude of 1540', Open Access essay available at <http://www.stagingthescottishcourt.org/documents/>

¹⁶ For the former argument see Elizabeth Bonner. 1999. *The Politique of Henri II: de facto French rule in Scotland, 1550-1554* (Sydney: Sydney Society for Scottish History), and for the latter, see Pamela Ritchie. 2002. *Mary of Guise in Scotland, 1548-1560: A Political Study* (East Linton: Tuckwell). Bonner argues that when Scotland became a protectorate of Henri II in 1548, the French King installed Mary as regent as a cornerstone of his imperial ambitions in England. Henri's control of the situation is revealed most clearly in a portfolio of legal documents sent to him in 1554 by the soon-to-be-deposed Governor, James Hamilton, which state that the Queen Dowager 'sall obtene ane commission of liewtenandrie generale throught all parts of this realme and dominiones thereof or subject therto. Maid by oure souerane [Mary Queen of Scots] with all consents, clausse and solemnities necesshe to the said noble prince [the Governor], to be usit under the charge and obedience of our said souerainis Regents of this realm quhatsoever for sik tyme and space as sall ples the maist cristine King of France' (cited 1999: 99). Bonner also highlights the partnership between Mary and Henri Ceutin, Seigneur d'Oysel, Lieutenant-General of Scotland as appointed by Henri II in 1550, a figure often dismissed by historians as an ambassador but whom Bonner claims assiduously represented French interests in Scotland throughout the 1550s. By contrast, for Ritchie, Mary's reign is characterised by decisive action despite the restrictions placed on her, and was tantamount to a 'personal monarchy... that aimed to reassert royal power and advance the interests of the crown at the expense of local jurisdictions', policies that 'were very ambitious and extremely difficult to enforce – even for a Stewart king' (2002: 6).

¹⁷ For instances where her sovereignty was undermined, see 2015: 24, 232

¹⁸ Accessed online via *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=58529>, [date accessed 12th September, 2017]. It should be noted that the records do not explicitly mention that the expenses were incurred for the *Satyre* but the dates and place of performance map directly onto the accounts found in both Charteris and the Bannatyne Manuscript.

¹⁹ Historians Amy Blakeway and Carol Edington both mention the event in passing: Blakeway, 2015: 134; Carol Edington, *Court and Culture in Renaissance Scotland: Sir David Lyndsay of the Mount* (Amherst, MA, 1994) 66.