“The text and the occasion mingled together make a chequer-worke, a mixture of black and white, mourning and joy”: Visual Elements of the Printed Funeral Sermon in Early Modern England

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It is the intention of this article to draw attention to printed images and visual elements of the sermon in early modern England, which have not constituted a serious area of focused enquiry thus far. Although scholars have long recognised the centrality of the sermon to post-Reformation worship, its printed form and the way it was read has remained a secondary consideration, too often regarded as an inert “postscript” to the original performance. This essay will therefore highlight the visual signals provided for the reader’s interpretation and edification in the preacher’s absence. It brings the printed image in one of the most disseminated religious literatures of the period to the fore, questioning its role in relation to the text and considering its ambiguous status in an era in which the Christian religion was constantly negotiating its relationship with images. Focusing in particular on the portrait of the deceased and the representation of epitaphs in two seventeenth-century funeral sermons, it offers a reinterpretation of these texts as illustrated books which shared fundamental values with the portrait miniature in gift culture, and with the funeral monument in its visual and textual aid to remembrance of the exemplary dead.

Broadly defined as a discourse upon a chosen Biblical text delivered by a preacher to a congregation or auditory, the Protestant sermon in early modern England sought to apply these selected passages to the listeners’


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lives, exhorting them to act upon the lessons learnt in order to achieve salvation (McCullough, “Sermons” 566). Over the past two decades, scholars have devoted considerable attention to this genre of oral text, acknowledging its status as “the era’s most characteristic religious genre” (Morrissey, “Interdisciplinarity” 1112), “the ideal vehicle to express the bibliocentric core of Protestantism” (Pettegree 38) and “the most significant expression of the English church’s values and authority” after the Reformation (Shami 155). In particular, there has been much valuable interdisciplinary scholarship that considers the sermon in light of its original contexts as preached, from a comprehensive overview of preaching in various architectural settings within early modern London (Rhatigan) to an exhaustive reconstruction of the heraldic funerals of Sir William Cokayne in December 1626, with John Donne’s sermon as the centrepiece (McCullough, “Preaching and Context”). However, amidst this outpouring of studies addressing preaching, audiences and circumstances of delivery (in particular, Kirby and Stanwood; Hunt; “Virtual St Paul’s Cathedral Project”), scholarship which centres on the sermon in print is comparatively limited, despite its integral place in the early modern book trade (Green 194; Rigney 204; McCullough, “Sermons” 560). Routinely classified as “static, typeset texts” (Walsham, Providence 282) which were “postscripts” to performance (Ferrell 199), commentators have tended to concentrate primarily upon the logistics of the movement of sermons from pulpit to page (Hunt 131-63; Morrissey, Politics 42-49; Rigney 200-02). Consequently, the minutiae concerning the intended manner in which consumers were to read and interpret these religious texts have only been partially addressed (Lund 147-53).

It is, therefore, the objective of this essay to argue the case for an additional interdisciplinary focus for the early modern sermon; specifically, one which considers the printed sermon as an historical, material artefact in its own right. The quotation in the paper’s title is derived from Edward Rainbowe’s sermon preached at the funeral of Susanna Howard, Countess of Suffolk in 1649. The lugubrious “occasion” and the “text” are not only drawn vividly together with Rainbowe’s “chequer-worke” of “black and white”; such a metaphor is also exploited in the printed version (British Library, E.532.[40.]). The “sad occasion” of the congregation’s meeting, which set “a black and mournfull Preface before the Text” (Rainbowe Br), is represented in print by a solid black rectangle placed before the chosen Biblical text of Ecclesiastes 7:1, inviting contemplation without the preacher’s exhortation (Figure 1). Rainbowe immediately continues by counselling the reader to take comfort from both the text and Howard’s virtuous memory; like the printed
page itself, “[t]he text and the occasion mingled together make a chequer-worke, a mixture of black and white, mourning and joy” (B).

By drawing attention to some of the ways in which early modern printed sermons made use of visual stimuli to guide a reader’s spiritual edification, this paper aims to give prominence to the intrinsic value of a bibliographical and art-historical reading of these religious texts. Such an approach builds upon the typical concentration upon textual imagery.
which lies at the heart of the current scholarship on early modern printed sermons (Hodgson 4-6; Lund 156-57). Furthermore, by highlighting the prevalence of visual forms in a printed text which represents “the core of all Protestant worship” (Pettegree 38), this article seeks to support ongoing debates refuting older arguments for Protestant “iconophobia” and the entrenched perception of the religious persecution of the image in post-Reformation England (Hamling and Willis; Collinson, From Iconoclasm to Iconophobia 8 and 22-29; Barber and Boldrick 6, 9, 20-21 and passim). Tessa Watt, Tara Hamling, David J. Davis and Alexandra Walsham (see works listed in the Bibliography; Walsham, “Idols”), among others, have argued persuasively for a more nuanced interpretation of the manner in which images could operate within a Protestant framework, revealing their presence in diverse contexts from the Protestant household (Hamling) to the Protestant emblem book (Diehl). Nonetheless, within meticulous surveys of the relationship between Protestantism and the illustrated print culture of the era (Watt, particularly 131-50; Davis, particularly 45-69; Walsham, “Idols” 23-27), the printed sermon represents a prolific and somewhat overlooked source which might substantially endorse these claims for a variegated Protestant visual culture in post-Reformation England.

In an essay of minor proportions, an analysis of two particular features of a specific type of sermon must suffice. This essay will therefore focus on the “pictorial migration” (Aston, “Bibles to Ballads” 113; Walsham, “Idols” 45) of two forms of commemorative material culture to two seventeenth-century Protestant funeral sermons: namely, the portrait miniature in The Churches Lamentation for the losse of the Godly by Richard Stock (1614; Bodleian Library, 8° L 100(2) Th.), and the epitaph in Death and the Grave by Thomas Dugard (1649; British Library, 1417.c.19.). Notable for their “blend of biographical detail and exemplary purpose” (Molekamp 44), scholars have made various observations upon the preaching of funeral sermons, within the context of the extravagant visual culture of commemoration, as an exclusive privilege of the social elites of early modern England (Gittings 175-76 and 217; McCullough, “Preaching and Context” 229-31). However, printed funeral sermons, considered as gifts intended to secure noble patronage, have not thus far been subjected to close scrutiny for their active reflection of this culture. These two works have been selected from a period in which published funeral sermons first began to thrive in the book trade (Collinson, “Magazine” 245; Tromly 310-11), with a prominent peak in publication during the Civil Wars and Interregnum (Collinson, “Magazine” 246; Houlbrooke 298). With its striking woodcuts that al-
lude to the portrait miniature in their idiosyncratic construction, *The Churches Lamentation* will be understood as a memorial token of condolence and gratitude for Richard Stock’s bereaved patrons. The carefully annotated portrait of the deceased, situated amongst a series of visual representations of heraldic and personal prestige, also contributed significantly to the didactic value of the sermon for the wider reading public, giving weight to its portrayal of the deceased as a paragon of exemplarity. In his funeral sermon for Lady Alice Lucy, Thomas Dugard portrays her commissioned funeral monument and its epitaphs as a prime example of the deceased gentlewoman’s modesty (Cust). An examination of the reproduction of these epitaphs in the printed sermon-book not only observes the transfer of this message for the benefit of subsequent readers, but also looks closely at their formation as composites of text and printers’ designs, questioning their classification as images.

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Considered tangentially from the perspective of authorship, reception and reputation, portraits of preachers are the most recognised visual element of the early modern printed sermon (Howe 477; Hunt 19; Dixon 465, 468, 473 and 475). Printed portraits of the deceased subjects of funeral sermons, on the other hand, have been little explored and have been regarded, if at all, as curiosities to be mentioned only in passing (Collinson, “Magazine” 245 n. 98). It is possible that this oversight stems from the need for a deeper understanding of the printed funeral sermon as a commemorative artefact within the culture of public gift-giving and patronage (Lund 149). Ralph Houlbrooke (302-03), Paul Seaver (“Puritan Preachers” 131-34) and Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos have taken useful steps in this direction. The latter describes published funeral sermons as “often the product of the relations between clergymen and their lay patrons, to whom a sermon for a deceased relative was presented at their request and as a tribute and ‘return of gratitude’ for their favours” (Krausman Ben-Amos 229). Developing these observations further, an analysis of the portrait of the deceased within *The Churches Lamentation* by Richard Stock, alongside due consideration for the work’s patronage, foregrounds the printed sermon’s affinity with the material gift of the portrait miniature, described by Roy Strong as “an art form peculiarly expressive of Protestant England” (“Introduction” 9). Moreover, it will be suggested that, together with the preceding symbols of family standing and personal achievement, this portrait served
not merely to enhance but to exceed certain biographical elements of this particular sermon.

It was certainly the case that many seventeenth-century Protestant preachers regarded portraiture and biography as “sister arts” (Wendorf 120), their final duty to the deceased being to imitate the painter in this respect. Such connections, as part of the large stock of “figurative embellishment[s] in word painting . . .] appropriated by preachers” (Aston, “Art and Idolatry” 250), were expressed either within the accounts of the deceased in the sermon proper or in the dedicatory epistles to the published sermons. These were often addressed to the preachers’ (prospective) patrons. Gaspar Hickes, in his obsequious epistle to Sir Edward and Lady Frances Barkham, writes of the deceased’s “excellencies, which deserve to be drawn and flourished by the most curious pencil” (A2v). Addressing his congregation at the funeral of Sir John Gayr, Nathaniel Hardy wishes for “time to draw his Picture to the length, and skill to doe it to the Life” (25). Robert Willan, writing to the Right Honourable Anne Bayning, Viscountess of Sudbury, is more confident: “Accept then these lines wherein you may behold so true a Portrayture of your deceased Lord, that those which envyed him cannot object flattery, nor such as lov’d and honour’d him, detraction to the Pencill” (A3v). Finally, Jeremy Taylor takes these metaphors further by intermingling tears of grief with an artist’s palette, presenting Richard Vaughan, Second Earl of Carbery, with his wife’s “picture; drawn in little and in water-colours, sullyed indeed with tears and the abrupt accents of a real and consonant sorrow; but drawn with a faithfull hand, and taken from the life” (A2v). The biographical “portraiture” within the funeral sermon might therefore be profitably placed alongside the “water-colours” of the portrait miniature. Preaching upon the death of Sir Nathaniel Barnardiston, Samuel Fairclough draws the parallels between his own art, manuscript illumination and the related art of limning:

[. . .] I actually perform no more then he that undertook to represent the beams and body of the Sun, onely by making a prick or dot of gold with his pen, in a fair sheet of paper; or that Limner, who having undertaken to draw a most beautifull picture, finding his skill insufficient, cast a vail over the face of it, to cover his own ignorance, as well as the beauty of the piece. (11)

In an insightful article on limning in sixteenth-century England, Katherine Coombs traces the origins of the term as “coming from the Latin ‘luminare,’ to give light”; that is, to illuminate meaning (“Limning” 78). Fairclough’s analogy aptly relates these delicate arts to his central task of deciphering the Biblical text, illuminating its meaning, and succinctly
framing the life of the deceased in such a way that the auditors can learn by example. From these initial accounts, it is possible to draw comparisons between a preacher’s depiction of the illustrious deceased for the benefit of the living and as consolation for his distinguished patrons, and the limner’s highest aims to portray the best moral aspects of the sitter (Hilliard 54) for the edification of an exclusive group of onlookers.

Such a conceit is carried out to its fullest iconographical extent in Richard Stock’s *The Churches Lamentation*, preached at the funeral of John Harington, Second Baron Harington of Exton and published in 1614. Perhaps best remembered today as John Milton’s boyhood minister, London preacher Richard Stock was the Rector of All Hallows, Bread Street from 1611 until his death in 1626 (Seaver, “Stock, Richard” 240). Although little has surfaced regarding the particulars of Stock’s relations with the Harington family (Pebworth 19-20 n. 4), it is notable that this handsomely illustrated text represents the only funeral sermon within Stock’s extremely slim output of publications, suggesting the importance attached to his homage to them. The early demise of Harington, an eminent courtier and close friend of Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, inspired an outpouring of public grief from artists, poets, and the godly clergymen who he had patronised alike (Pebworth 27-31; Strong, *Henry Prince of Wales* 20-22; Healy), and elements from their tributes seem to unite in this printed text.

The title page of *The Churches Lamentation* is immediately followed by an escutcheon containing the Harington family crest (Figure 2). This dynastic symbol comes directly before a double-page spread displaying a fascinating image purporting to represent Harington’s medal commemorating his knighthood (Pebworth 29; Healy), but which also strongly resembles a portrait miniature locket and pendant (Coombs, *Portrait Miniature* 22 and 62). The portrait of Harington, within an “intimate small oval” characteristic of the early seventeenth-century English portrait miniature (Coombs, *Portrait Miniature* 45), is identically proportioned and adjacent to this image, almost as if the two pictures constitute the two opened halves of the locket (Figures 3 and 4). All three images are accompanied by epigrams in both Latin and English contributed by an anonymous author and Harington’s friends, John Playfere and Francis Herring (Robbins 775), summarising the lineage, accomplishments and virtues of “that truly noble, and most hopeful young Gentleman” (Stock title page).

In the epistle dedicated to Harington’s sister, mother and aunt, Stock expresses concern that “any should taxe [him] with flattery” (ar), revealing a major preoccupation of early modern Protestant preachers who were
anxious to avoid charges of “pagan” over-zealous praise of the dead by radical reformers (Willan A3; Tromly 301). At the same time, however, he also wishes to reconcile “the love and honour” that he bore towards Harington with the instructive function of the sermon, “to make evident to others for imitation, that grace which God had made so eminent in [Harington]” (Stock n.p.). As “commemorative aids” (Diehl 56), these printed, annotated images seem to compensate for several omissions made by Stock in the sermon. Dedicating most of his eulogy, which begins at page 61, to an appropriately godly discussion of Harington’s “Sobriety, Justice, [and] Piety” (Stock 71-105), he deigns to “passe by the birth of this honorable person, and his progenitours” (Stock 64), already represented in the “ample Coate” (Figure 2), actively omits “to speake of his education and bringing vp” and declines to “stand vppon his naturall parts of wit, memory, sweetnes of nature [and] habilitie of body” (Stock 66), all depicted in the epigrams underneath Harington’s portrait (Figure 4). The representative portrait miniature jewel also evokes Stock’s intentions for the octavo-format sermon to serve “as a small testimonie of [his] thankefull minde” (a2r); namely, as a token exchanged in favour for the continued patronage of the Harington family. David L. Gants notes that two-thirds of single sermon-books published between 1614 and 1618 were in the larger quarto format (Gants 190; Hunt 169; Morrissey, Politics 42-43). This additional perspective underlines the more personal and intimate nature of this printed sermon.

Their evident value to the work notwithstanding, it is important to recognise that it was clearly necessary to relegate these images to their proper place by means of the accompanying epigrams, which ensured the reader’s correct assimilation of them. Thus, although the “ample Coate speaks auntient vertues praise,” it is determinedly inferior to Harington’s “greater merits” which “nobler trophe’s raise.” This tiny poem hints that these qualities will be divulged for the curious reader, encouraging them to look beyond this initial page. Playfere’s pithy couplets inscribed underneath the representation of the medal direct the reader’s thoughts away from worldly successes – and indeed earthly possessions such as a portrait miniature jewel – and towards heaven (“In cadis illum proxima pene locant”; “[. . .] he climbes beyond the Spheares”). Finally, while Herring presents Harington’s portrait as a beautiful depiction of the features of the deceased (“Aspicis Heronis virtutum, graphicamque figuram”), in which the viewer is able to see the “true likenesses” (“Effigiem verae”) of virtue, nobility, candour and religiosity, he deems it impossible for anyone to “paint” his spirit. Playfere goes even further with this point;
as a “dead picture” which portrays but a Lord, the portrait cannot depict Harington’s soul, and that “[i]f his soules portrait ’were,” it would be able to speak of the achievements and virtues which once characterised the Baron. Ultimately, despite the portrait’s commendable efforts to achieve the limner’s ideal, the reader is firmly reminded that it is still only a “likeness.” These thought-provoking images, placed at the very beginning of the work in order to set up its principal objective to “keep the righteous in a blessed memorial or remembrance [. . .] to make that common to others” (Stock n.p.), also appear to complement the very nature of Stock’s chosen Biblical text around which the sermon is based (Micah...
Figure 4: Richard Stock, *The Churches Lamentation for the losse of the Godly*. London: John Beale, 1614. 8º. Third woodcut after title page. Page size: 164 × 110 mm. With permission from the Bodleian Library, 8º L. 100(2) Th.
The preacher states that the first part of the text is “set downe first vnder a Parable and similitude, which helps both present attention, and future memory, being delightfull” (5). On the other hand, the second part “without parable [. . .] truely enformeth the judgement, being perspicuous” (5). Indeed, a final image, placed at the very end of the printed sermon, requires no explanatory verse. The representation of a coffin draped with a black pall is an unmistakable summation of the occasion and the latter part of the text: “The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none righteous among men” (Stock 1).

Figure 5: Bartholomew Ayte and Isaac James, Sir Thomas and Lady Constance Lucy monument. St Leonard’s Church, Charlecote. Alabaster, marble and oolite. c. 1605. © Hannah Yip

The final part of this essay turns to the representation of what was arguably “the most important kind of church art” made in post-Reformation England (Llewellyn, “Honour” 179) within the printed...
funeral sermon. Thomas Dugard’s *Death and the Grave*, preached at the funeral of Lady Alice Lucy in August 1648 and published in 1649, features various allusions to the funeral monument, from the verbal description of the actual funeral monument of Sir Thomas and Lady Alice (42-43) to the distinctive typographical designs of the first and final pages of the printed text. Like Stock’s sermon, *Death and the Grave* represents the only funeral sermon in Dugard’s published oeuvre. Dugard was Lady Alice’s household preacher for three years (Dugard a r; Cust), an occupation which required considerable dedication as she was an invalid, unable to “visit the House of God” (Dugard 45-46). The Warwickshire gentlewoman was, like Lord Harington, a committed patron of godly preachers (Cust); such was her piety that Samuel Clarke dedicated an entry to her in his *Lives of Sundry Eminent Persons* (Part the Second 140-43), reproducing much of Dugard’s eulogy.

Attention is immediately drawn to the visual elements of the printed page with the intriguing inscription of the names of Lady Alice’s children at the beginning of the dedicatory epistle (Dugard a r). “The Remain’s of that Honorable Pair, Sir THOMAS LUCIE Knight, and the Ladie ALICE his Wife” (Dugard a r) are divided into two adjacent lists according to gender, calling to mind contemporary funeral monuments which would sometimes include effigies of the offspring, separated by gender, on their parents’ tombs. The children would undoubtedly have known about such monuments as their grandfather’s memorial at their family seat in Charlecote, Warwickshire featured this specific arrangement (Figure 5). Identifying the children as the patrons of the published sermon, Dugard writes: “I was in a manner necessitated, as before to the Pulpit, so now to the Press; my former relation to your Noble Familie [. . .] not excusing mee from the one, nor your Pietie toward your dearest Parent from the other” (a r-a v). Dugard’s textual “monument” constructed for the offspring of Sir Thomas and Lady Alice Lucy can be viewed in light of the significance which he accords to “that Magnificent Monument” (42) commissioned by Lady Alice for her husband. Reproductions of the epitaphs from this monument appear as an appendix in the printed funeral sermon (Figures 6 to 8).

The “title page” of the epitaphs is noteworthy in its economical construction. The imprinted borders of Sir Thomas’s epitaph on the verso are clearly visible, thus forming part of the design on this page which represents “THE MONUMENT” to the deceased. Sir Thomas’s epitaph is set out on a double-page spread to facilitate reading of the text, which is taken directly from his original epitaph and recounts his numerous virtues. The shapes of both epitaphs correlate to the originals (Figures 9
and 10), and are outlined by mourning borders which more frequently adorned the title pages of printed elegies and funeral sermons from the 1640s onwards (C.; Sedgwick). The principal departure from the monument, apart from the insertion of “Domina” in Lady Alice’s epitaph, is found in the floral elements which are incorporated into both image-designs. Foliated initials are used in both epitaphs and an arabesque fills the remaining space left after Lady Alice’s considerably shorter epitaph, upon which Dugard had previously placed emphasis in the sermon as a hallmark of her own modesty (“such was her modestie, that [. . . ] shee would not suffer her Epitaph to bear anie proportion with His”, 42). The arabesque is also possibly suggestive of the common con-
ceit of “flowers for the hearse” used by many preachers to characterise their verbal tributes to the deceased (Watson 28; Cartwright n.p.). Indeed, Dugard unleashes a eulogistic spate of floral imagery towards the end of the sermon, describing the gentlewoman as “a choice Garden; not only free from eminent weeds, but richly furnished with all manner of fragrant flowers and delicate fruits” (51). Although Juliet Fleming has underscored the dangers of reading too much into “printers’ flowers” within sixteenth-century texts, which “elaborated, for the first time, an aesthetic order freed from the obligation to signify” (“Printed flower” 187), she concedes that “[i]conic connections” could be established in some later seventeenth-century texts; in particular, funeral sermons with imprinted borders of “death’s heads and hour-glasses” (“Changed opinion” 49).

Taking into account their simple composition of standard printers’ designs and text, it might be difficult to classify these printed epitaphs as images. Yet, their idiosyncratic framing and faithful adherence to the or-

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originals leaves little doubt as to their intended visual representation of the funeral monument. Moreover, as mentioned above, Dugard alludes to the centrality of the “Magnificent Monument” within his exhortation, desiring his auditors – and his subsequent readers – to “expect no more but what may bee a Supplement or addition to [Lady Alice’s] Epitaph” (43). Acquainting his auditors and readers with the virtues “forbidden” by Lady Alice “to make their appearance in that Marble” (45-54), he describes in detail her godly reading and prayer (46-47), the religious upbringing of her children (47-48), and her charitable deeds (48-50). Notably, while the images in The Churches Lamentation served to offset Stock’s abridged tribute to Harington, the restrained epitaph of Lady Alice, which chiefly depicts her devotion to her husband (“Fuisse Conjugis [. . .] observantis-simam”, Figure 8), is highlighted and bolstered by Dugard’s lengthy testimonial. These image-designs therefore constituted reference points for the reader at the end of the sermon-book. Translated into English and placed directly after the original Latin versions, the epitaphs were also accessible to a wider range of readers upon the sermon’s distribution, as compared with the inevitably limited number of onlookers who could read Latin within the parish at Charlecote. While the imposing nature of the marble monument, with Lady Alice’s epitaph at its foot to symbolise her subservience, was unable to translate onto the printed page, it is noteworthy that Sir Thomas Lucy’s epitaph on the double-page spread revealed more words than the original, which is forever partially obscured behind his effigy in real life.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that Dugard’s views on Lady Alice’s birthright, the first and only sentence dedicated exclusively to her in the epitaph, are in accord with Stock’s equivalent omission. “Her Birth was none of Hers: and therefore cannot bee either her Virtue or her Prais” (Dugard 43). By prioritising godly concerns over the worldly attributes of the deceased, Dugard guides the reader’s interpretation of the imminent printed epitaphs in a similar manner to the epigrams inscribed underneath the images in The Churches Lamentation. Further similarities can also be found in the ways in which the illustrative matter of the two sermons seems to complement the preachers’ interpretations of their chosen Biblical texts. Psalm 89:48 (“What man is hee that liveth, and shall not see death? Shall hee deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Selah”, Dugard 1) is, for Dugard, “one of the Psalmist’s Winter-drops; a black line from that Pen, which erstwhile was so filled with Joy” (2). Such imagery evokes once more Rainbowe’s “black and mournfull Preface before the Text”; in Death and the Grave, the black lines from the printer’s
Figure 9: Nicholas Stone and John Schurman, Sir Thomas and Lady Alice Lucy monument. St Leonard’s Church, Charlecote. Carrara marble. c. 1640. © Hannah Yip

Figure 10: Nicholas Stone and John Schurman, Sir Thomas and Lady Alice Lucy monument. St Leonard’s Church, Charlecote. Carrara marble. c. 1640. © Hannah Yip
“Pen” serve to illustrate the sombre verse, occasion and “Winter” of Lady Alice’s life.

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The notoriously popular conception of “puritan barbarism” and widespread iconoclasm, particularly in the post-Reformation and Civil War periods (Parry 6 and 177), has obscured scholarly understanding of Protestants’ appropriation of visual culture in early modern England. Commentators focusing on the seventeenth century have emphasised the “censorious” godly preacher’s antagonistic attitudes towards the Laudian ascendancy that sought to promote a new visual culture of religion (Parry 5), and the propagandistic implementation of sermons, preached and published, to endorse parliamentary attacks on images during the Civil War (Spraggon 50-51). However, these two case studies have revealed that image and design could work in tandem with the text in the printed Protestant funeral sermon of the first half of the seventeenth century, providing models of exemplarity for the instruction of the living. To borrow a phrase from Tara Hamling, these visual elements were not merely decorative but constituted “intrinsically meaningful comments on religious and social concerns” (284). The printed portrait in The Churches Lamentation was analogous to the portrait miniature in its intimate visual depiction of the deceased, who was to be regarded by the common onlooker as an elite paradigm of godliness. Like the original epitaphs, the monumental allusions in Death and the Grave illustrated the Lucy family’s lineage and prestige within the community, but principally served to prompt pious meditation upon the dead as patterns for imitation (Llewellyn, Art 101-2). As bespoke publications, the two sermons clearly exhibit their origins as gifts from indebted preachers to bereaved patrons. This essay has gestured towards a vital consideration for the integral place of the printed sermon within the material and illustrated print cultures of the era. The printed funeral sermon was a record of an event which happened in the past; the hearse and funeral monument could be immortalised on paper by a portrait and a reproduction of the epitaph.

Indeed, a certain tension between the hierarchy of the senses is at play when considering the printed sermon as an oral text once spoken, heard and then adapted to be seen in material form, of which published preachers were very much aware. To “wrap my selfe in dead letters,” wrote Nathaniel Delaune, was to “helpe memorie in those that were
present, and to extend the benefit of God's word to others that were absent” (A2v-A3r). Edward Boteler’s “Sheets” as depicted within his dedicatory epistle to Elizabeth Sheffield, Countess of Mulgrave, constitute a pun on winding sheets and his own printed sheets, which showed “more White in the gracious Life of [her] deceased LORD, then will chequer all the Blacks of his Death and Funerals” (A3v-A4r). Thomas Gataker’s Saint Stevens Last Will and Testament, which includes a winged death’s head and the accompanying motto “SPES ADDIDIT ALAS” (“Hope has added wings”) on its title page, is presented to his friend and fellow preacher Daniel Featley as a “private Monument, to lye by you as a memoriall of [the deceased]” (n.p.), demonstrating the fluidity of the visual, material and textual as forms of memorialisation, and accentuating the funeral sermon’s possibility to serve as a “walking monument [...] in paper to all the World” (Shute A2).

Numerous avenues for further enquiry are still outstanding. This essay has merely hinted at the blurred boundaries between image and typographical design in Dugard’s printed funeral sermon. A detailed analysis which fully unpacks the definition of the “image” in the printed sermon, coupled with a statistical evaluation of its frequency in the formidable volume of material to be examined, has been beyond the scope of this small study. Archival research which investigates, for example, preachers’ extant manuscript drafts of sermons prepared for publication, or printers’ records beyond the Stationers’ Register, might uncover the extent of preachers’ interventions in determining the appearance, and not simply the content, of their printed sermons. While the visual elements of both The Churches Lamentation and Death and the Grave seem to contribute much to the texts in terms of enhancing their content and structure, did these preachers actively collaborate with the printers, poets and anonymous artists also involved in the creation of their printed tributes to the deceased? A forthcoming online database of early modern manuscript sermons, to include preachers’ notes, promises to facilitate such potential endeavours (“GEMMS”). Did ornate woodcuts and engravings indicate the social standing or wealth of the patron, much like the gradations of splendour for contemporary funeral monuments? The intricate woodcuts of The Churches Lamentation, as compared with the relatively modest designs in Death and the Grave, seem to invite further probing into this line of enquiry. And what of the sermons which did not require patronage, or which were published without the preacher’s knowledge or permission? As Rosemary Dixon has demonstrated in her work on sermons printed in the latter half of the seventeenth century, published sermons could also fall into the category of cheaper print
(474-76); further inspection might reveal if there were other particular considerations given to the appearance of these sermons for the wider reading public.

Scope for yet further work lies in the assessment of extant contemporary commentary on these images. As the more sophisticated pictorial representations within Stock’s sermon appeared to require careful verification, it would be fruitful to consider any documented diatribes and criticism against the appealing visual aspect of these particular printed texts. In the prefatory material to Robert Farley’s emblem book of 1638, John Hooper complains of flamboyant bookbindings in which can be discerned “[m]ore of the Carvers than th’Authors skill,” also commenting wryly on the interior: “I Need not praise thy Booke: No more to tell, / Then that it Pictures hath, will make it sell” (Farley n.p.). Research into the presence of printed images as featured in both sermons and popular printed literatures may contribute to an understanding of how and why sermons played such a major role in the commercial success of the religious print industry (Morrissey, “Sermons” 491; Dabbs 225). Arnold Hunt has remarked that the printed sermon was often more intellectually demanding than the sermon as preached (148); there is a strong case to consider the visual elements which stimulated a reader’s contemplation as a significant contribution to these intellectual pursuits. Indeed, the readership of the early modern sermon merits a full-length study in itself. Far from having a negligible afterlife in print, these best-selling texts stirred not only the aural imagination with their rousing evocation of the rhetoric of the past event (Houlbrooke 304), but also, with the visual elements of the printed page, a response which prompted one contemporary commentator to depict a deceased preacher as “living, though long dead, / In this white paper, as a winding-sheet [. . .] Speaking now to our eyes” (Fletcher 20v).

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Hannah Yip


Visual Elements of the Early Modern Funeral Sermon


Sensing the Visual (Mis)representation of William Laud

Rachel Willie

When William Laud (1573-1645) was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, he and his associate clergy defended episcopal authority by citing apostolic inheritance, but apostolic succession, with its appeal to history and lineage, was problematic. In parliamentary debates in 1640, both those sympathetic to the episcopacy and its detractors observed that appeals to apostolic antiquity presented bishops in ways that might be construed as popish. These parallels between episcopacy and the papacy were made more apparent in anti-Laudian pamphlets. In the early 1640s, a series of satirical attacks on Laud were printed and these texts comprise numerous woodcuts. Visual culture flirts with Laud’s image to present a negative iconography. This essay will focus upon *Canterburie His Change of Diot* (1641) to address some of the difficulties in interpreting the relationship between church and state in mid-seventeenth century pamphlets and how visual imagery connects these representations with ideas of popery, regicide and the body politic.

In 1633, William Laud was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury. His actions as one of Charles I’s chief advisers became a cause of tension within church and state. These tensions continued after Laud’s impeachment in 1640 and execution for treason in 1645. His reforms in ecclesiastical worship reenergised disputes that had never been fully laid to rest by the Elizabethan Church Settlement. Central to these discussions were questions regarding the role and prerogative of bishops. In

1 The two main biographies of Laud remain Trevor-Roper and Carlton.

the late sixteenth century, these debates led to the Marprelate controversy where a series of scurrilous pamphlets attacking the bishops were printed by an illegal press (Black, *The Martin Marprelate Tracts*; Raymond, esp. 27-44). In 1641, two of the Marprelate tracts were reissued, suggesting that invective from the 1590s was also pertinent to anxieties regarding godly governance in the 1640s (Hill; Pierce 836). Print proved a fertile space for questioning whether or not there was a place for bishops in church governance.

Critics of episcopacy viewed bishops as a relic of popery and a threat to the reformed church; they sought the removal of bishops as part of further reforms in ecclesiastical governance. Yet others argued that, in England, royal supremacy formed the basis of church hierarchy and in so doing became a means of endorsing episcopacy. Erastianism, which asserted that the State ruled over the church (even in ecclesiastical matters) meant that church and state became inextricably linked and the power of the bishops was limited by royal prerogative. Laud’s reforms in ecclesiastical worship and his perceived Arminian leanings were censured because it was believed Laud was overreaching; this became a contributory factor in parliament’s decision to execute him. Laudian reforms thus drew attention to tensions that had plagued the reformed church in England since its beginnings and, as Tim Harris asserts, recent research highlights that “there was never a Jacobean consensus in the Church” that was destroyed by Laud (625). While some appreciated Laudian reforms, others believed Laud might as well have been a Catholic. Indeed, representations of Laud that circulated in cheap print alluded to his purported papal pretensions. In this essay, I survey a representative sample of anti-Laudian pamphlets, focusing specifically on a 1641 play pamphlet, *Canterburie His Change of Diot*, to show how textual political protest connected to visual culture and the body in mid-seventeenth-century England. As a corollary, this essay addresses some of the difficulties in understanding the relationship between church and state in mid-seventeenth-century pamphleteering.

*Canterburie His Change of Diot*, which has been attributed to the Leveler Richard Overton (Wiseman, *Drama and Politics* 28), is of particular note as it engages with debates, politics and poetics that arose as a consequence of the Reformation and were never fully laid to rest by the Elizabethan Settlement or by Jacobean ecclesiology. It is also unrelenting in the way in which it recasts previous, positive visual representa-

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2 For discussions on how Overton resurrected the persona of Martin Marprelate, see Black, “The Rhetoric of Reaction”; Smith.
tions of Laud – especially those produced by Anthony van Dyck (discussed below) – and transforms the iconography of authority into an iconography of protest. As Helen Pierce has argued, Laud was not the first authority figure to be satirised in pictorial form, but he was the first to be the subject of such sustained visual satire (813). The pictorial attacks in *Canterburie His Change of Diot* are not unique, but the sheer number of specially-commissioned woodcuts used to narrate the text’s satire is remarkable. Printers tended to recycle woodcuts and/or to use images sparingly. Woodcuts were expensive to make and images took up valuable space on the page: since paper and the production of woodcuts would make up a publisher-printer’s biggest outlay, each illustration was used judiciously. The pamphlet amounts to a title page, followed by a blank page and a further six quarto pages that comprise dialogue split into four acts. The first three acts are accompanied by a woodcut and the woodcut that illustrates the third act is replicated on the title page. The images thus present a sense of circularity and deserved punishment as the text narrates how Laud feasts upon the ears of a divine, a lawyer and a physician before he is locked in a birdcage as punishment for his vicious deeds. The woodcuts not only imply a circularity to the narrative, but also present pictorial representations that enact the dialogue upon the paper stage and make the narrative of the play pamphlet comprehensible to consumers with varying levels of literacy.3

*Canterburie His Change of Diot* appears to have circulated widely and it is important to situate this and other pamphlets in the context of the visual culture of the church and ecclesiastical office in the 1630s and early 1640s. Laud himself knew about the attack when incarcerated in the Tower of London and complained about his ill-usage at being represented as locked in a cage (Laud sigs. Aa3r-Aa3v; Pierce 811). Laud was well-versed in visual ceremony and the deliberately facile imagery in the woodcuts combines with the biting satire of the texts to undermine official representations of the archbishop and the visual culture of the Laudian church.

Visualising Office

Laud’s reforms sought a more uniform style of church worship and the extent to which they marked a move away from Calvinist doctrine to

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3 For a fuller discussion of how drama is enacted upon the paper stage through text and through image, see my “Viewing the Paper Stage.”
Arminianism continues to be debated (Walsham). Even Pope Urban VIII appears to have been confused by Laud's spiritual leanings: on 4 August and again on 17 August 1633, Laud was offered (but refused) a cardinal's cap (Laud sig. Gggg4v). Yet Laud's reforms not only affected the modes of worship, but also impacted the very fabric of the church. The positioning of the altar – table-wise or altar-wise – and the addition of an altar rail changed how worshippers moved around the church: church décor not only altered the layout of the church, but also transformed the visual culture of devotion (Fincham, “The Restoration of the Altars”; Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars Restored*). These physical changes to the church, coupled with the official portrait of Laud painted by Anthony van Dyck in 1636 (Figure 1), demonstrate that Laudian reforms were invested in visual imagery and the iconography of office. In representing Laud, the anti-Laudian satire in the anonymous and scurrilous pamphlets amalgamates the visual culture of the church as underpinned by the State with the visual culture of cheap print to enact political protest.

Central to pictorial attacks on Laud is a recognition of his official portrait as a symbol of ecclesiastical office. Van Dyck's portrait of Laud was copied and distributed widely; there are fifty-five extant painted copies of the portrait and Wenceslaus Hollar was commissioned to produce an etching of the painting in 1640 (Pierce 817). Hollar's etching made van Dyck's portrait more readily available and, following Laud's impeachment in December 1640, the image was replicated in anti-Laudian satire. Pierce has argued that Laud perceived the commissioning of this portrait “as both an obligation and an extravagance,” as implied by his only reference to the painting being an observation regarding van Dyck's high fees; this complaint, coupled with Laud briefly alluding to the portrait in his will as being an addition to the Lambeth Palace collection, suggests that the continuity of episcopal office takes precedence over the subject of the portrait (814). Laud thus plays a minor role within the portrait, despite it being of him; instead the picture

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4 For a study that seeks to unearth Laudianism's distinctive artistic characteristics, see Parry. Marsh has explored how worshippers inhabited sacred space.

5 As numerous scholars have observed, the apparatus of drama was used as a form of protest in pamphlets throughout the 1640s, particularly in play pamphlets. This has been connected to the closure of the theatres at the outbreak of civil war in 1642. Thus, at a time when performance was banned, the theatre was reenergised as a form of political protest on the paper stage. However, many of the anti-Laudian play pamphlets predate this ordinance for theatre closure. See Butler; Willie; Wiseman, *Drama and Politics* and “Pamphlet Plays.”
asserts the power and authority invested in the role of the Archbishop. At the Restoration, William Juxon then built upon this iconography by commissioning a portrait that echoed van Dyck’s in posture, costume and organisation (Harmes 184-85).

The notion of the portrait as a visual and material manifestation of episcopal authority runs parallel to van Dyck’s innovations in presenting the visual image of the king. According to Kevin Sharpe, van Dyck transformed pictorial representations of monarchy, conjoining the body natural more closely to the body politic as a way to assert the authority of the monarch. At the same time, van Dyck’s innovations in portraiture crossed political divides. Yet, while van Dyck’s monarchical portraits asserted the power of the monarch, conditions within church and State raised questions about the king’s authority. This culminated in the severing of links between the body natural and the body politic that enabled the regicide to take place in 1649. Furthermore, after Oliver Cromwell was made Lord Protector in 1653, the stances in van Dyck’s monarchical portraits were imitated by artists keen to legitimise the authority of the new regime; Protectorate authority was both undermined and endorsed by unofficial representations and royalist satire (Knoppers 3-8 and passim). This ongoing appropriation of visual imagery demonstrates the fragility of the visual image as an inscriber of authority even as it is used as a means to assert power. Laud’s posture in the van Dyck portrait paradoxically exudes a sense of unease and discomfort as well as nonchalance, which, arguably, makes the instability of the visual image particularly apparent.6

Van Dyck’s portrait of Laud has been described by Sharpe as “almost uniquely austere” in comparison to other portraits that used objects to minimise visually the political and confessional differences held by the subjects of the portraits (Sharpe, Reading Authority 150). The use of objects created the appearance of unity amongst the nobility, but this practice came under increasing pressure as Charles’ personal rule led to more vocal opposition as the 1630s progressed. Laud, however, has no properties to denote his office, which not only contrasts with the idealised landscapes of portraits of royalty and the nobility, but also with previous portraits of Archbishops (Sharpe, Reading Authority 142-51). The gloom of the plain background is punctuated by a rich, sumptuous fabric, but Laud is leaning, almost casually, against some furniture and is dressed in cassock, ruff, surplice, chimere and Canterbury cap. Without

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6 On the influence of van Dyck’s earlier portrait of the Abbé Cesare Scaglia on the composition of the Laud portrait and Titian’s influence on the paintings, see Pierce 816; Jaffé 600; Brown 272-74.
a cross by way of ornament, or a Bible or Book of Common Prayer in
the painting, Laud gazes nonchalantly at the viewer. In previous por-
traits of archbishops in the reformed English church, the properties of
piety were prominent; most noticeably, prayer books and bibles were
often clutched by the Archbishop sitting for the portrait, emphasising
the importance of *sola scriptura* to the Protestant tradition. However, in
the van Dyck portrait, clothing becomes the one means by which Laud’s
worldly position is asserted (Pierce 815-16). This demonstrates how reli-
gious office within the Laudian church was bound up with garments.7

Figure 1: Anthony van Dyck, *Archbishop Laud*, c.1635-1637 © The Fitzwilliam Museum,
Cambridge. Reproduced by kind permission.

7 Bevan Zlatar has explored in detail Elizabethan criticism of religious “uniform” and its
perceived connection to popery (chapter 6). For a study on the centrality of clothing to
eyearn modern culture, see Stallybrass and Jones.
Van Dyck’s visual representation of Laud thus places the authority of the church on the Archbishop of Canterbury through his apparently austere clothing. However, for those in opposition to Laud’s reforms in church worship, ecclesiastical costume – perhaps particularly the more ornate vestments worn during church services – became representative of what they perceived to be the corrupt ceremonial practices of the Church of England. In a text that was reissued in 1637, the Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer and Marian exile, Thomas Becon attacked “Masse-mongers” (sigs. A5r-v). Becon also condemned the “fooles cat [sic]” which is called a Vestment, lacking nothing but a coxcomb,” partly because of how vestments were decorated:

Some have Angels, some the blasphemous Image of the Trinity, some flowers, some Pecocks, some Owles, some cats, some dogs, some hares, some one thing, some another, and some nothing at all but a crosse upon the backe to fray away spirits. (sigs. C12v-D1r)

The reissuing of his attack on the mass in 1637 demonstrates how spiritual and ideological tensions did not disappear as the ecclesiology and the liturgy of the Elizabethan Church Settlement gained acceptance. Instead, these disputes re-emerged in the 1630s (Collinson; Morrissey). By reprinting Becon’s text in 1637 when Laudian reforms were the subject of increasing criticism for their apparently papal leanings, the visual imagery of Laudian church worship is implicitly drawn into Becon’s criticisms. As Antoinina Bevan Zlatar has noted, for Elizabethan reformists, even the apparently austere cap and surplice was construed as the “popes liuerie,” especially when compared to the plain black cassock worn by continental Protestant clergy: in this interpretation of ecclesiastical costume, episcopes in the Church of England become almost indistinguishable from Roman bishops (esp. 134-50). In this wider context, Laud’s portrait is no longer representative of a plain style and a mind focused upon spiritual affairs: it instead becomes a site of discord.

Cheap Print and Visual Protest

Anti-Laudian pamphlets replicated van Dyck’s image, and in so doing re-ascribed its meaning from being an assertion of authority to weakening that authority through the use of satire, invective and parody. Some

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8 Kirby has drawn attention the importance of the political theology of Heinrich Bullinger and Peter Martyr Vermigli to the Vestrian controversy in England (chapter 5).
texts took the basic poise of the primate and embellished it. For example, one woodcut that appears on the pamphlet *Rome for Canterbury* and also on the ballad *Canterbury's Conscience Convicted* (both dated 1641; Figures 2 and 3) uses the image as a way to assert Laud’s alleged papal pretensions.

![Image of pamphlet](Figure 2: RB.31.b.1.(4). *Rome for Canterbury, or a true Relation of the Birth, and Life, of William Laud, Arch-bishop of Canterbury*. 1641. Title page. © British Library Board. Reproduced by kind permission.)
Figure 3: 1475.c.8. Canterbury’s Conscience convicted: or, His dangerous projects, and evil intents, tending to the subversion of Religion detected, etc. 1641. © British Library Board. Reproduced by kind permission.
The texts purport to be a true narrative of the rise and fall of Laud, the circumstances of his life and his imprisonment in the Tower of London for treason. In the woodcut, we are presented with the image of Laud wearing a Canterbury cap. However, he is no longer able to lean on the table next to him as a bishop’s mitre has been placed on it. In the background, the curtain has been replaced by two cityscapes connected by a wide but crooked road. Two men ride on horseback from Canterbury to Rome. Here, the bishop’s mitre is presented as both a symbol of Catholicism and a prized object owned by Laud. The ready and easy way between Canterbury and Rome becomes a means by which Laud’s reforms in church worship are thus presented as leading to a reconciliation between England and Rome and the restoration of Catholicism as the legitimate mode of Christianity in the British Isles.

The woodcut was used again in 1643 in *The Copy of the Petition* (Figure 4). Although the woodcut has had the words “Canterbury” and “Rome” removed, the text develops the theme of Laud seeking greater accommodation with Rome. This time, however, it is asserted that the motive is to make the Church of England more palatable to Charles I’s Catholic wife, Henrietta Maria, and to persuade her to convert. Monarchy is thus brought into dialogue with Laudian reforms to present church and state as working against the religious interests of a Protestant people.

Van Dyck’s image became a template that was redefined and embellished by Laud’s detractors repeatedly in the months following his impeachment. However, the very lack of ornamentation in van Dyck’s portrait and Laud’s appearance in his robes of office ascribes a very particular kind of authority; an authority located within the physical body of the Archbishop and inherited through an unbroken line that extends back to Christ. When Laud was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury in 1633, he and his associate clergy looked to *jure divino* theories as a means of asserting episcopal authority. Rather than deriving their authority from the magistracy and royal supremacy as Erastianism asserted, *jure divino* theories claimed that bishops were established through apostolic inheritance (Harmes 175-76). These theories were relatively uncontroversial in the early Stuart church, but Laud’s reformist programme went further (Tyacke in Fincham 57-58). Laud’s reforms focused upon doctrine and worship, looking to Elizabethan precedent to return the church to its “first Reformation” (Fincham in Fincham 77). This placed pressure on *jure divino* theories: apostolic succession, with its appeal to history and lineage, was not without its problems. In parliamentary debates in 1640, both those sympathetic to the episcopacy and its detractors observed that appealing to apostolic antiquity presented the bishops...
in ways that might be construed as popish (Harmes 181-82). These parallels were even more apparent in anti-Laudian pamphlets in the early 1640s, like *Canterburie His Change of Diot*, the text to which I would now like to return.
The pamphlet opens with Laud negatively commenting on the meal he is to share with a doctor, a divine, and a lawyer. After he dismisses the dishes in favour of some nourishment “after the Italian fashion” (sig. A2v), Laud’s band of fully-armed bishops enter and assist Laud in relieving the divine, the lawyer and the doctor of their ears. Dismembering combines with cannibalism as Laud awaits the ears to be prepared for his consumption. This cannibalistic feast represents mutilation of both the physical bodies of a divine, a doctor and a lawyer and the offices that they represent. Laud’s reforms in church worship lead to the divine’s ears becoming muffled, thereby preventing the Word of God from being received clearly through oratory. This might allude to a frequent complaint amongst the godly that Laud controlled preaching, the number of sermons that could be heard in a week, the length of the sermon and its content (Woolrych 76-83). Unable to elaborate upon scripture and provide their own glosses, the godly lamented that they could not adequately serve their flocks.

Whereas Harris has queried whether there was a “Jacobean consensus,” Anthony Milton has argued that the Jacobean ecclesiastical consensus was an efficient, if conflicting, compromise between different theological traditions, which came under pressure from Laudian reforms (Milton in Fincham 188). In this configuration, it was not so much the Church of Rome, but Papal religion as initiated by the Council of Trent (1545-63) that was deemed corrupt: rather than dismissing the Roman Church, the Church of England returned the church to its pre-Council of Trent status (Milton in Fincham 194-97). Despite looking to Elizabethan precedent, Laudian reforms effectively marginalised some tenets of the Elizabethan Settlement and attacked Jacobean sermon culture.

As Peter Lake has demonstrated, Laud’s control of preaching re-focused worship towards liturgy and ceremony. As noted previously, the very fabric of the church reoriented the godly to worship God with soul and body (Lake in Fincham 165). For Laud, the divine Word, coupled with divine presence amplified through the visual culture of the church was paramount: prayer and preaching prepared people for the sacraments and the sermon played a lesser role in devotion (Lake in Fincham 170). This desire to curb the cult of the sermon was not well-received by the godly, who believed the sermon was the most important part of the service. This cropping of ears in Canteburie his Change of Diot thus connects to debates regarding the status of sermons and how to listen to scripture. The cropping of ears metaphorically enacts the crop-
ping of sermon culture; disfiguring hearing prevents the body of the believer from receiving spiritual nourishment through listening to the service. Yet, in a period where many could not read and so had access to scripture through listening to texts being read aloud to them, muffling the sense of hearing would also prove a serious impediment to receiving the divine Word.9

Laud’s reforms in church worship are thus presented as mutilating divine office, but he is also presented as corrupting medicine and the law. These references had very specific cultural resonances in the early 1640s, which connect to the trial of William Prynne, Henry Burton and John Bastwick in 1637. The trial and the offences that led to it centre around the importance of print as a platform from which to articulate and perform discontent and voice political protest. In 1637, the three men were accused of “Writing and publishing seditious, schismatical and libellous Books against the Hierarchy” (Rushworth sig. T1r). These texts attacked the role of bishops within the Church of England, claiming that they operated beyond their divine jurisdiction and were a threat to the royal prerogative. Although the three presented themselves as defenders of church and state against the arbitrary governance of the Bishops, the very attack on ecclesiastical authority was received as a potential threat to the authority of the king. After a protracted court case in the Star Chamber, the trio were duly found guilty, fined 5,000 pounds each and sentenced to life imprisonment. They were also to have their ears cropped. Prynne, who had already had his ears lightly cropped, been banned from practising law, and sentenced to life imprisonment following a previous libel conviction, had his ears cropped further and SL (“seditious libeller”) branded onto his cheeks (Rushworth sigs. T1r-V3v; Woolrych 81). Prynne’s body in particular thus became a statement of punitive justice: word and image conjoin by inscribing letters upon the mutilated body to present a physical memento of both crime and punishment. The three launched a spirited defence, and, at the pillory, vigorously contested the severity of the punishment meted out to them. The brutality of the punishment, coupled with accounts of the ineptitude of the hangman leading to greater violence against the bodies of the condemned, fostered public sympathy for the men.10

9 Hunt’s groundbreaking scholarship on sermon culture stresses its aural/oral nature.
10 For a contemporary account, see Rushworth Vol. II sigs. V3r-V3v

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In 1641, the Star Chamber was abolished, and with it press censorship collapsed. It was therefore possible to publish seditious texts and attention was refocused on Prynne, Bastwick and Burton. As Joad Raymond has observed, at their trial, the trio made much of the wrongs of Caroline censorship (189). However, they also alluded to their professions: at the pillory, Prynne allegedly stated that “no degree or profession was exempted from [ . . . Laud’s] malice; here is a divine for the soul, a physician for the body, and a lawyer for the estates” (Rushworth Vol. II sig. V3r). The focus is upon the men’s professions – Prynne the lawyer, Burton the divine and Bastwick the physician – and the trio are presented as attending to the legal, spiritual and physical ailments of the nation and as being severely punished for their pains. This idea is appropriated in anti-Laudian tracts: by presenting Laud as feasting upon the ears of a divine, a doctor and a lawyer, the author of *Canterburie His Change of Diot* directly invokes remembrance of the 1637 trial. In the play pamphlet, the bishops assisting Laud to relieve the three men of their ears is symbolic of the criticism that Prynne, Burton and Bastwick levied against the episcopacy and how perceived ecclesiastical overreaching infringed upon kingly authority.

However, Laud’s eating of the ears also exposes tensions between seventeenth-century medical theories and the eating of human flesh. Beginning with the addition of the remains of mummies to cordials and expanding to accommodate ground up bones and the blood of the condemned, human remains were believed to cure a variety of ailments in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe. Working on the premise that like cured like, the vital spirits present in the blood and the ground up remains of other parts of the body were believed to possess healing qualities; corpse medicine was judged to heal by transferring the strength of the deceased to the unwell (Noble; Sugg). In eating the ears of a doctor, a divine and a lawyer, Laud gains physical nourishment from medicine, the law and the church; Laud cannibalises civil, spiritual and anatomical authority and while this may strengthen his body, it weakens the body politic. The act of eating the ears thus becomes emblematic of the perception that Laud seeks power beyond his jurisdiction, and gains it through oppressive measures. The illegality and popish overtones of the action are affirmed by the assertion that the meal is prepared “after the Italian fashion.” Despite the prevalence of corpse medicine in early

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11 Even though censorship effectively collapsed, many of these pamphlets were printed by anonymous publishers, or under pseudonyms such as “the Man in the Moon.” For a thorough exploration of early modern pamphlet cultures, see Raymond.
modern Europe, cannibalism was viewed with disdain: for Protestant polemicists, it was considered a barbaric act practiced by Catholics through the belief in transubstantiation transforming Holy Communion into the body and blood of Christ (Noble 95). Consuming human ears thus becomes a means by which Laud is presented as a Catholic: in following “the Italian fashion,” Laud eschews royal supremacy as the basis of episcopal worship and instead ensures that divinity, law and medicine become muffled and deformed.

The specific body parts that the pamphlet highlights are also significant as it focuses upon the sensory organs of the ears and the nose. The second act of the play pamphlet opens with Laud needing to sharpen his knife. A carpenter refuses to sharpen it, lest Laud removes his ears as well and instead he puts Laud’s nose to the grindstone. While, in the seventeenth century, the semiotics of putting the nose to the grindstone have clear political and ecclesiological resonances focused upon the subversion of authority, here I am most interested in how this image evokes the senses. When Laud laments the carpenter’s cruelty, the carpenter asks: “Were not their eares to them, as pretious as your nostrils can be to you” (sig. A3r). As punishment for mutilating the hearing of his dinner guests, Laud has his sense of smell dulled. This is significant in relation to medieval ideas regarding the senses and religion that continued to hold sway within early modern culture. As Matthew Milner states, although controversial with some reformists, fasting and spiritual exercises were believed to lead to a tighter bond with God through sharpening the senses (The Senses 76, 122-23, 319-21). Giving into the senses could impede spiritual progress, but holding in check sensual appetites and partaking of physical mortification was believed by some to lead to greater unity with God.

In her analysis of Olfaction in the Life of St Francis of Assisi by the eleventh-century Franciscan Friar, St Bonaventure, Ann W. Astell draws attention to spiritual and physical sensory activity and how the senses are spiritualised through grace:

Even as all of the corporeal senses of the glorified body are fundamentally and habitually spiritual, touched as they are from within by the soul’s constant bliss, its contact with God, so too all the physical senses of the still

12 In Boanerges Thomas Scott references a now lost woodcut depicting James VI/I putting the Pope’s nose to the grindstone (sig. D2r) and the satirical print, The Protestant Grindstone (c. 1690) presents William III as putting the Pope’s nose to the grindstone (British Museum 1868,0808.3331). Around 1650, satirical images of Charles II with his nose pressed to the grindstone by Scottish Presbyterians circulated (Norbrook 220).
mortal body can be spiritualized through grace, not habitually, but in individual acts of perception. (100)

The potential for the senses to be glorified along with the body in the afterlife means that grace may move from the soul and affect the senses: spiritual and physical conjoin. By the early modern period, thoughts regarding human anatomy, mind, body and soul had been redefined, but residues of earlier epistemologies still had currency, perhaps particularly in cheap print. Following Pseudo-Dionysius, some medieval and early modern divines associated the sense of smell with the discernment of good or evil, though the Aristotelean hierarchy of sensory experience ranked touch, smell and taste as baser senses. Invisible yet palpable, olfactory experience could make the individual aware of divine or demonic presence and the ability to discern good and bad smells revealed hidden truths regarding identity, morality and godliness. This is taken up in *The Papists politike projects discovered. Or a dialogue betwixt crucifix and holy-water* (1641) where bad smells are associated with the breath of Catholic priests. In considering the breath of priests, the crucifix and the holy water assert that priestly breath is more pestilent than “*anhelitu oris eneant hominess*” – the breath that kills humans (sig. A3v).

The brutal physical humour of pushing the primate’s nose to the grindstone therefore has wider cultural resonances: in being held responsible for dulling the sense of hearing and the ability of legal, divine and medicinal authority to receive God’s word, Laud has transgressed the boundaries of his political and ecclesiastical authority. In punishment for this lack of discernment, Laud has his ability to discern sensually dulled and his lack of discernment is made visible. The senses thus become a site of conflict and of conflict resolution through the carpenter restoring order and meting out punishments. Grinding Laud’s nose metaphorically dismisses apostolic grounds for endorsing episcopacy and reaffirms the notion that Laud’s reforms covertly reintroduce Catholicism. Laud’s associates might have appealed to apostolic inheritance to legitimise the role of bishops, but the carpenter as inheritor of Christ’s trade denies the episcopacy any such authority. Yet putting

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13 Gavrilyuk and Coakley 8; Ashbrook Harvey esp. 169-80. Milner has highlighted how Luther and Calvin in particular “distrusted the senses” (“The Senses in Religion” 91) as they could deceive.

14 Jonathan Gil Harris has shown how bad smells were put to devilish use on the Jacobean stage as the noxious smell of sulphur had long been associated with Satan and hell (esp. 476).
Laud’s nose to the grindstone also draws attention to Calvinist teachings.

In discussing confession and repentance, Calvin makes the following observation:

For we shall see many that will never stick to say that God hath done rightly in punishing them & that their faults are as grievous and grosse as any mens: but yet they will fall to their old byasse againe straight ways. If God hold their nozes to the grindstone by some sickness or by some other crosse: then they make fayre promises. But assone as Gods hand is withdrawn from them: they shewe plainly how there was nothing but dissimulation in them. Therefore whereas wee are here commaunded to confesse our faults: let vs marke well, that wee must have the sayd pureness and uprightness, which is to condemne the euill, in reconciling our selues vnto God. (sigs. K6r-v)

Whereas Calvin envisages God putting the ungodly’s nose to the grindstone as a way to reveal those who truly repent, *Canterburie His Change of Diot* translates the metaphor into a representation of a physical punishment meted out to the false repenter. The play pamphlet ends with Laud’s Jesuit confessor binding up his wounds and sprinkling them with holy water. The suggestion that Laud has a Jesuit confessor gestures to complaints that the Jesuits misused confession as a way to interfere in politics (Bireley 3). Laud is thus presented as enmeshed in a web of political intrigue and further distanced from apostolic tradition through having dealings with the Jesuits. To show both Laud and his Jesuit confessor as having erred, in the final act, we witness the carpenter putting Laud and the confessor into a birdcage.

Locking Laud in a birdcage distances Laud from the reformed church through allusion to devotional practice and to emblems. In 1635, Francis Quarles’s *Emblemes* were printed. This text would prove extremely popular; it went into multiple editions and even influenced domestic interiors (Adlington, Hamling and Griffith 541; Horden). If we consider *Canterburie His Change of Diot* in relation to Quarles’s text, we see that the woodcuts in the play pamphlet not only enact and illustrate the drama presented in the text, but also gesture towards the morally didactic quality of emblems: by reading word and image together, the reader of the play pamphlet is presented with a narrative of just punishment for transgression. However, Quarles’s text also draws attention to the varying qualities of love through using the imagery of the birdcage.
Emblem IV in Book II (Figure 5) of Quarles’s text presents Divine Love as entreating the soul to be free from the follies of the material world; these follies are symbolised by Human Love being chained to a ball and smoking a pipe. The inscription reads, “Quam grave servitium est, quod levis esca parit” (how heavy slavery is that light food [tobacco] can cause), pointing to smoking as a marker of earthly vice that prevents grace. Divine Love clutches an open birdcage to symbolise the freedom of faith. By locking Laud in a birdcage, *Canterburie His Change of Diot* suggests that Laud is tied to the material world and cannot be freed from the follies of his crypto-Catholic beliefs. However, Quarles’s *Emblemes* was developed from two Jesuit emblem books, *Pia desidera* (1624) and *Typus mundi* (1627); the inter-confessional quality of word and image combine with the intertextual resonances of these texts that are in circulation at the same time. The symbolism of locking Laud in a birdcage becomes fractured as a consequence of conflicting meanings feeding into the visual imagery: instead, the focus is drawn to the laughing jester who is outside the cage.

The satire in the anti-Laudian pamphlets appears not to be subtle. However, the final scene (in which the king and his jester laugh at the encaged men) becomes a means through which to realign episcopacy and reassert Erastian views of the relationship between church and State. In 1638, the king’s jester, Archie Armstrong, had been dismissed from the court after Laud complained that he had declared in a Westminster tavern that the Archbishop was “a monk, a rogue and a traitor” (Carlton 154-55). Drawing from Keith Thomas, Andrea Shannon notes that the fool partly served a medicinal purpose in the body politic, using wit to sooth, heal and tell truth to authority; with tensions between the Court and Scotland growing, Armstrong’s words meant the fool ceased to perform this function and instead allowed the wounds within the body politic to fester (esp. 99-101 and 111-12). In this context, the representation of the jester laughing at Laud draws attention to political and ecclesiological disorder. Not only is the jester revenged on Laud, but he also contains the body of Laud: the disruptive force within the body politic is locked away and the king’s authority is reinstated. But the very act of laughter focuses attention on the passions and how laughing is an articulation of emotion.

15 I am grateful to Matthew Steggle for helping me to translate this inscription.

16 Quarles’s engagement with Catholic texts was far from unique. Anthony Milton has shown how Protestant divines read Catholic texts and how the early Stuart Church developed a confessional identity that sat somewhere between Geneva and Rome. See Milton.
As Indira Ghose observes, in his *Treatise on Laughter* (1579), Laurent Joubert pinpoints joy and sorrow as being at the root of laughter:

laughable matter gives us pleasure and sadness; pleasure in that we find it unworthy of pity . . . sadness, because all laughable matter comes from ugliness and impropriety: the heart, upset over such unseemliness, and as if feeling pain, shrinks and tightens. (Joubert 44; Ghose 21)

Joubert’s view that laughter stems from joy and sadness constricting the heart runs parallel with the sense of physical justice being meted out to Laud. The “ugly” actions of Laud in eating the ears of a divine, a lawyer and a physician has led to disorder within church and State that can only
be purged through the releasing of passions elicited by laughter. Yet, as Robert Burton, in his _Anatomy of Melancholy_ noted, laughter not only cures melancholy, but can induce it if the mirth is sustained beyond the point at which the subject of the satire is aware of their absurdity (Shannon 111-12). The emotions in the body and in the body politic are thus tenuously balanced and can easily become imbalanced through words. Emotions, then, can inhibit reasoning and expose flawed judgement.

For Thomas Hobbes, the emotions can prove obstructive to right reasoning, leading people to act against their own interests, or to bring long-term misfortune upon themselves for short-term gain, or to mistake their passions for right reason (esp. chapter 5). The state of nature, Hobbes asserts, is one of war but this conflict can be mediated by subjects accepting the authority of a sovereign and entering into a covenant whereby they accept the rule of the sovereign. Central to this covenant is trust. Trust is a civic virtue, but strength of passion in the state of nature means that contracts alone cannot succeed as “the bonds of words are too weak to bridle men’s ambition, avarice, anger and other passions without the fear of some coercive power” (84; see also Baumgold). Only when words and the passions align can a contract be upheld. Trusting the institution of sovereignty – in whatever form it takes – enables a contract of trust and trustworthiness that accommodates everyone. Trust thus becomes a moral and a civic virtue that underpins the passions, enabling beneficent emotions to be nurtured.

Trust, therefore, lies at the heart of an ecology of ethics, but so too does the sovereign. Undermining the institution of sovereignty destroys the generous passions and encourages the breakdown of civil society. In being perceived as overreaching his authority, Laud could be construed as undermining the authority of the king and pushing the kingdoms ever closer to civil war. Whereas van Dyck ascribed authority onto the monarch’s body through portraiture, in _Canterburie His Change of Diot_ authority is asserted through laughter; in presenting the king and his jester as laughing at Laud’s fate, the bond between the king’s two bodies is strengthened. The laughter purges the king’s body of an excess of passion, thereby restoring order in the body politic and re-establishing the bond of trust between sovereign and subject.

The Politics of Woodcuts

_Canterburie His Change of Diot_ exemplifies a mode of political writing that imagines elaborate and brutal punishments for the beleaguered Arch-
bishop. But the number of woodcuts that adorn this short pamphlet is striking. Taylor Clement has discussed the ways in which woodcuts in cheap print were recycled across texts, becoming “unstable signifiers” that relied upon the text and other paratexts to be cues to their meaning and interpretation (406 and passim). However, in *Canterburie His Change of Diot*, each woodcut specifically addresses an episode in the narrative: the first depicts Laud and his confessor imprisoned in the birdcage, the second represents Laud dining with the lawyer, the doctor and the divine, and the third comprises the carpenter putting Laud’s nose to the grindstone (Figures 6, 7 and 8). The visual image punctuates the words and enables the drama to be enacted on the paper stage. Yet the prominence of the jester in the woodcut on the title page and at the start of act three is particularly noteworthy. Dismissed as Popish, Laudian reforms become contained through laughter and the king’s complicity in this laughter becomes a means by which royal supremacy is reasserted.

The relationship between church and state and the body politic would be revisited throughout the 1640s and 50s. These texts point to the complex ways in which people viewed the relationship between church and State in the mid-seventeenth century and how word and image was used as a form of religious and political protest. In appealing to tradition as a way of asserting a mode of Christianity that was separate from Rome, divines in England did not negate Rome’s influence, but rather brought into focus the difficulties in presenting an independent episcopacy stripped of papal inflections. *Canterburie His Change of Diot* and similar pamphlets demonstrate an anxiety to reaffirm the status of the monarch as defender of the faith and upholder of order within the body politic (regardless of his shortcomings) as a means of offering protection from the perceived evils of popery.
Figure 6: By38a L364 641n. [Richard Overton], *A New Play Called Canterburie His Change of Dout*, 1641. Title page. Used by permission of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
Figure 7: Bs38a L364 641n. [Richard Overton], A New Play Called Canterbury His Change of Diot. 1641. Sig. A2r. Used by permission of Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.
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“On the Picture of the King Charles the First... written in Psalms”: Devotion, Commemoration and the Micrographic Portrait

Andrew Morrall

This essay examines a portrait drawing of King Charles I that has been in the Library of St. John’s College, Oxford, since at least 1662. The drawing is unusual in that the lines with which it is composed are made up of minutely written words, reported by early commentators to contain the Psalms of King David. The implicit relationship thus created between Charles I and the biblical king is compared to other often “curious” memorials to Charles associated with his posthumous cult, and especially to the popular literary “self portrait” of the martyred king, the Eikon Basilike. An analysis of a poem, written as a response to the portrait in 1665, reveals how the image functioned as an object of explicitly Protestant devotion and commemoration and offers insights into a broader mode of micrographic portraiture that was developed to allay concerns about idolatry unleashed by the Reformation. A chain of surviving responses to the portrait under different viewing conditions and altered cultural circumstances between the 1660s and the early eighteenth century further demonstrates an instability and contingency of meaning that attached to the image in the half-century after Charles’s execution. Finally, it is suggested that the interplay between image and script within the portrait – its character as word-picture – is symptomatic of a tendency within an evolving Protestant aesthetic to subject the visual to the written word, one which, over time, was to give rise to a larger form of cultural logocentrism.

The execution of King Charles I of England on 30 January 1649 struck a powerful blow, at home and abroad, against a political establishment predicated upon the divine right of kings. For royalists in England, as for the European ruling classes, it was profoundly shocking – in a way that rocked their whole sense of world order – that a king, anointed by God, could be thus struck down. The profound mark that this event left.

Figure 1: Carstian Luyckx (1623-c.1675), Allegory of Charles I of England and Henrietta of France in a Vanitas Still Life, oil on canvas, 57\(\frac{1}{2}\) x 47\(\frac{3}{4}\) in. (146.1 x 120 cm). Birmingham Museum of Art, inv. no. 1988.28. (Photo: Courtesy Birmingham Museum of Art).
in the European consciousness well into the second half of the seventeenth century is registered in a number of European commemorative images most of which date from after the restoration of Charles’s son, Charles II in 1660. A still life by the Dutch artist, Carstian Luyckx (1623-c.1675), for example, painted probably after Queen Henrietta Maria’s death in 1669 (Figure 1), commemorates both king and queen by situating their printed images amidst stock vanitas symbols: the terrestrial globe suggests Charles’s importance as a world leader, while the skull, with the jaw wrenched from the cranium, recalling Charles’s own violent death, is crowned by a laurel wreath, symbol of glory and worldly accomplishment.¹ A second monument from this period is a remarkable equestrian statue made from chiselled iron by the Nuremberg iron-worker, Gottfried Leygebe, between 1662 and 1667 (Figure 2). It shows Charles II of England as St. George. It was given as a gift by the Archduke of Brandenburg, Friedrich Wilhelm, to Johann Georg II of Saxony, as part of a diplomatic effort to garner support for an international league against France. While not strictly commemorative – it celebrates Charles II’s purported military prowess as a potential ally of their league – one of its points of interest is that the dragon that he is slaying is excreting the head of the recently deposed Lord Protector, Richard Cromwell, whose father, Oliver, had made him heir to the Protectorate. The reference not just to the hydra-headed enemy of the European stage but also to the internal politics of England is enough to show how keenly the political events surrounding Charles I’s execution and the eventual restoration of his heir were watched with interest and anxiety elsewhere in Europe (Falke 92-98). These technically and conceptually sophisticated examples also point to stark differences in the traditions and character of commemorative image-making between those of Continental Europe and mid-to-later seventeenth-century Britain, where, in the wake of the Reformation, of continuing religious discord, and the circumstances of the Civil War, the conditions for artistic training, production, and consumption were very much more limited.

In England, the celebration of the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 was remembered by “the public communal response, the visible joy” that it inspired (Knoppers 68). As Lois Potter has observed, it was also the first opportunity in ten years for public communal mourning of

¹ A number of other vanitas still-lifes that include portraits of Charles I exist, including those by Luyckx’s pupil, Simon Renard de Saint-André (ca. 1669-1677), and the Dutch painter, Edwaert Collier (1642-1708), who made something of a speciality of such royal commemorative portraits. See Minna Tuominen.
Charles I (240-41). Indeed, the public reaction in the immediate aftermath of Charles I’s execution in 1649 had been extremely muted. The crowds were dispersed immediately after the execution. The funeral was a modest affair, the funeral procession was conducted in the dark and the service was private and without an oration. The cost was 500 pounds as opposed to the 50,000 pounds expended for James I (Wedgwood 203-05; Potter 241; Gittings 227, 229-31).

The sense of private mourning that took the place of displays of public grief may explain the often “curious” nature of many memorials
to Charles I (Potter 241-42). These included images of the king concealed in rings or lockets, portrait miniatures or anamorphic portraits which resolved into a face only when seen reflected in a silver tube: works in other words that seem to have been designed for concealment and secret use. It seems that, even for the communities of royalists in exile, grief for the king was essentially a private experience. A portrait of the playwright and theatre manager, Thomas Killigrew, painted by William Shephard one year after the king’s execution when Killigrew was in Venice as the political agent of the exiled Charles II (Figure 3), shows him in the traditional pose of the melancholic, sitting before a portrait of Charles on the wall behind, while on his desk, a copy of the *Eikon Basilike*, the purported collection of the king’s own writings and favourite psalms and prayers, supports a pile of his own plays. Of course, this portrait makes a very public statement about Killigrew’s private devotion.
to his late monarch; indeed, in the 1660s, after the Restoration, it was engraved and even pasted as the frontispiece into at least one of his publications (Killigrew). Yet however much a show of private grief could become a public testament of loyalty, it surely reflects the kinds of private devotion that attached to the cult of the martyred king and which stimulated the production of small-scale portraits, miniatures, and other intimate kinds of memorial art.

Figure 4: Anon., Portrait of King Charles I of England, brown ink and metalpoint on parchment (with blue pigment and shell gold). St. John’s College, Oxford. (Reproduced by permission of the President and Fellows of St. John’s College, Oxford).

It is within this context that we may examine the fortunes of a single image that fell into this category (Figure 4). This is a portrait of King Charles I of England made in brown ink and metalpoint on parchment.
(with possibly later additions of blue pigment and shell gold). It has hung continuously in the Old Library of St John’s College, Oxford, at least since 1662, the date of the first surviving reference to it. Within an oval frame is the inscription “Regno Christo Auspice” (“I reign under the auspices of Christ”). Another inscription below reads: “Serenissimus Potentissimusque Princeps Carolus, Dei Gratia, Britanniae Magnae, Franciae & Hiberniae Rex, Fidei Propugnator &.” (“Most serene and all powerful ruler Charles, by the Grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Scotland, Defender of the Faith”). The king is shown full face wearing a rich lace ruff and gorge. What distinguishes an otherwise fairly prosaic depiction is that the lines of the face, of the hair, the lace ruff and details of the costume, as well as the surrounding bands of script and the spandrels of the outer frame are made up of minutely written words, now all but indecipherable (Figure 5). From the earliest commentators onwards these miniscule sentences have been said to contain either the Book of Psalms, or by some, the Penitential Psalms. This form of picture-writing – or “micrography” – is an art form with an ancient pedigree that can be traced back to an ancient Jewish scribal tradition, in which minute script was written sometimes into abstract borders or initials or sometimes formed into shapes of objects. It reached a high level of development in late medieval Spain and by the sixteenth century the skill had emerged in Christian Northern Europe, where it was taken up by writing-masters, modistes and “penmen” (Sarat and Avrin; Rottau 158-59). Though today in a very faded condition, over the fifty or so years after its creation the St John’s College portrait attracted a considerable number of comments from a variety of viewers. The range of responses allows us to gauge its reception over time and to measure the nature and status of a royal image in the context of changing ideas of theology and governance.

It is not known where or precisely when the portrait of Charles I was made and there are no records of how the college acquired it. The drawing appears to have been modelled on the print by Willem Jacobsz. Delff (1580-1638), printed in Holland before 1638 (the year of the artist’s death), after the portrait by Daniel Mytens of 1628 in the Royal Collection. 1628 is therefore the earliest possible date post quem for the

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2 Conservation report by Jane Eagan, 22 June 2004, held in St John’s College Library. I would like to acknowledge the generous assistance of Catherine Hilliard, former librarian of St John’s College, for sharing her knowledge of the portrait with me, as well as the current librarian, Stewart Tilley and his colleagues for allowing me access to examine the portrait.
drawing. John Evelyn, who visited the college library in July 1654, mentioned several of the college’s curiosities, but not the portrait (Evelyn, *Diary* 3, 108). The earliest reference to the drawing comes in July 1662, in the journal of the Dutchman William Schellinks, which provides a useful description of its context:

> On the 6th July we went to St John’s College and delivered a letter of recommendation to a Mr John Tarbuke, a student, whom we found in the library. He and his companion received us courteously, showed us first the bibliotheca and then the new library, this with a very large and extremely interesting quadrangle, where a bronze statue stands about every gate, one of King Charles and the Queen his wife, lately built by the Archbishop of Can-

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3 The connection was made by Catherine Hilliard.
4 “We went to St. John, saw the Library & the two Skeletons, which are finely close’d, & put together: observable also are the store of Mathematical Instruments, all of them chiefly given by the late A: Bishop Lawd, who built here an handsome Quadrangle.” John Evelyn, *Diary*, 12 July 1654.
The new library or medical and mathematics school is a very long room, which has, as one enters, a large globe on either side and on the far end two skeletons, and a bust of the founder bishop in a niche. From a locked cabinet he showed us some books, Chinese, Arabic, and others, also a fairly large portrait of King Charles I, the hair, the beard, and the lace of his collar, all the psalms of David and some texts from the Holy scriptures, very subtly written with the pen. (95).

It is thus quite possible that the portrait was acquired at some point between 1654 and 1662. Conversely, a notice by Thomas Baskerville, writing in about 1680, described the portrait as “drawne by a penman as far as the bust, containing in the haires of his head, face, beard, & other clothing, the whole booke of Psalmes. Bishop Laud paid the Penman for this,” (193) which might equally reflect an accurate oral tradition within the college.

On the available evidence, therefore, it is not impossible that the drawing was acquired within Charles I’s lifetime; and it leaves unclear how the genesis of the portrait may have related to the cult of King Charles the Martyr that followed his death. Nonetheless, even though the association of contemporary monarchs with King David was a fairly commonplace topos of royal encomium, it is perhaps of significance to the date of its creation and certainly to its later reception that the intimate association between Charles I and the Psalms of King David contained in the drawing was of particular importance to his posthumous cult. This was so in that most popular of all commemorative items, the literary “self portrait” of the martyred king, the Eikon Basilike. The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Maiestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings (Figure 6). This volume, today widely held to have been written largely by Charles and later shaped by the Presbyterian minister and later bishop of Exeter, John Gauden, contained the king’s own apologia for his life and the events of his reign (Lacey 78-81). With its inclusion of his favourite prayers and psalms, it offered a kind of spiritual autobiography. It was being sold on the streets shortly after his execution and according to Francis Falconer Madan, went through 35 English editions in 1649 alone and within ten years had been translated into Latin, French, German, Dutch and Danish (164-66). Both the prayers and the meditations of the Eikon Basilike directly echo the Psalms of David, sometimes very closely, as, for instance, the prayer from Chapter 3 which closes with: “Then let the enemy persecute my soule, and tread my life to the ground, and lay mine Honour in the dust,” an almost direct quotation...
from Psalm 7:5. The author of the *Princely Pelican*, a defence of Charles’s authorship of the *Eikon* (which his detractors immediately called into question), explained this choice of inspiration:

But such was Gods goodnesse ever to him [Charles], as his afflicted soul was never so much depressed, but by repairing to those Rivers of Divine Comfort, the *Psalmes of David*, he became infinitely refreshed: So as, the burden of his grief was nothing so heavy, as the Solace which that Book afforded him, was delightedly stored with all Spirituall Melody.

This it was which induced His Majesty to end every Meditation with a *Psalme*: that as the former lay open to the world his distressed Condition: so by acknowledgement of Gods mercy, and resignation of his will to his all-sufficient Mercy, he might returne Comfort to his thirsty Soul in the conclusion. (*Princely Pelican* 12; qtd. in Wheeler 126)

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5 Compare with the King James Bible verse: “Let the enemy persecute my soul, and take it; yea, let him tread down my life upon the earth, and lay mine honour in the dust. Selah.”
The larger point, however, is the concinnity of intention and tone between the two. The narration of the *Eikon Basilike* follows David of the *Psalms* in presenting no justification of Charles’s royal politics or actions, but asks that God judge him rather on the basis of his piety and sincerity of heart, in the spirit of David in Psalm 7:8: “judge me O Lord, according to my righteousness, and according to mine integrity that is in me.” The success, indeed the extraordinary character of the *Eikon Basilike* in an age of divine kingship, as Elizabeth Sherpan Wheeler has shown, was that it presented not Charles the king, but Charles the man: pious, humanly limited and perplexed that his rule had gone so seriously wrong (127).

As the structure and tone of the *Eikon Basilike* make clear, Charles’s relationship with the Psalms of King David went well beyond mere spiritual reliance or inspiration: it extended to a form of self-identification. As such, and for the light it can throw upon the intentions of the St John’s portrait, it is worth considering what kinds of preconditions made possible the *Eikon’s* remarkable subjectivity, its unprecedented public baring of a king’s soul even to the lowest of his subjects. In part, the quasi-religious mystique that surrounded the contemporary idea of kingship worked effectively to elide, without anachronism, the thoughts and actions of a contemporary monarch with those of a great seer and king of the Old Testament. But another important conditioning factor that made such public self-identification seemingly natural was the position the King David of the Psalms had come to hold within Protestant thought. In an important sense, a strategy was already in play within the Reformation theology of the Psalms that could act as a template for Charles and his supporters – and which formed the basis of the *Eikon Basilike*. As Yvonne Sherwood has demonstrated, the rare instance of a subjective, first person voice within the Bible that the Psalms of David offered, was enthusiastically taken up by the reformers (647-48). Luther proclaimed the book of Psalms the “very hidden treasure of [the] hearts’ feelings,” that recorded the voice, soul and spirit of David (*Psalms* 7). The Psalms, he continued, “give thee not only the outward David, but, more expressively still, the inner David; and that more descriptively than he could do it himself, if he were to talk with you face to face” (*Psalms* 7; Sherwood 648). The importance of this for Luther lay in the contrast with other scriptures and histories, [where] the works and bodily exercises only of the saints are described: you have very few histories which give you the words, expressions, and sighs of the saints, which are the indexes of the state of their mind. (6)
And again, “I had much rather hear David or any such eminent saint speak, than merely see the works or exercises of his body; so, much rather would I know [. . .] the faith” (Psalms 8; Sherwood 648). By thus framing the biblical references to David within the doctrine of Faith versus Works, Luther seemed implicitly to be offering a contrast between the David of the Psalms and the David of the Books of Samuel and Chronicles, where the prophet’s actions and deeds, presented in the third person, appear in a much more compromised light, most famously, in 2 Samuel 11, where he commits adultery (with Bathsheba) and murder (Uriah).

From Luther onwards, Reformed interpreters leaned more heavily towards the penitent David of the Psalms – particularly Psalm 51 – as a means literally to justify the flawed, worldly actions of the David of the Book of Samuel. They found in the contrast between spirit and works thus set up, an exemplary explication of the Protestant doctrines of original sin and of justification by Faith not Works, which, by focusing on David’s spirit within the Psalms, could relegate David’s actions to the external letter.

On this basis, the Psalms became an established model for spiritual autobiography and a resource for many Protestants in which to find connections with their own spiritual lives and consciences. Calvin cast Psalm 51 in this confessional light when he declared that it was a demonstration of how “we may lawfully and freely lay bare before [God] the infirmities which a sense of shame prevents our confessing to men” (Commentary on the Psalms i, p.viii). And similar sentiments were echoed in the French reformer Theodore Beza’s popular explanation of Psalm 51, in Anthony Gilby’s 1580 English translation:

What a rare example is this of so great a king and so worthy a Prophet, that laying aside all humane respect, either of his royall Majesty or private reputation, did not onely suffer the story of that his crime to be put in writing, but even he him selfe wrote a perpetuall testimony of his acknowledging of the fact, thereby to satisfie the whole Church. (127; Sherwood 650)

The Eikon Basilike in effect performed the same confessional function for the actual King Charles. In so doing it fell into what was, by the mid-seventeenth century, a well-recognized Protestant model of penitential spiritual practice. It allowed the king to appeal to God to judge him not on the basis of his deeds but on his sincerity, on his integrity of heart, a position that exonerated him, like King David, from human laws and judgement.
The intimacy offered by the *Eikon*'s textual portrait was replicated in a number of small-scale commemorative portraits that were made after the King's execution and on into the Restoration era. One example, the size of a limned portrait miniature, is actually made of embroidery of an extremely professional quality (Figure 7). A number of surviving versions of this pattern suggest some kind of commercial, serial manufacture. The model for the portrait is the engraved likeness from the *Eikon Basilike* and the link with the cult of the martyr is made further explicit by the embroidered inscription, a quotation from Psalm 18, which thus associates Charles with King David by putting the words of the psalmist into Charles's mouth: “Deus meus est Rypis mea Psa: 18.” The reference is to Psalm 18: 2-3, which invokes God's protection against his enemies:

The Lord is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and
my high tower. I will call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised: so shall I be saved from mine enemies.

While the uncertain dating of the St John’s portrait drawing leaves the original intention to elide the figure of King Charles I with King David of the Psalms unclear, there is vivid evidence to show that the portrait became closely associated with the cult of the martyred king in the years following his execution. This comes in a surviving response to it in the form of a poem, written in 1655 by a scholar of the college and future divine, Jeremiah Wells (1646-1679): “On the Picture of King Charles The First, In St John’s Colledge Library, Oxon, Written in the Psalms.” Such a response is not surprising, emanating from a college closely associated with the royalist cause and whose chief recent benefactor and president had been Archbishop Laud, the discredited first minister of Charles I (Loveman). The poem exists in two versions, the first in an unpublished manuscript (Bodleian f. 363) and a second, slightly amended, in Wells’s anonymously published collection, Poems upon Divers Occasions, printed in 1667.

The poem in effect instructs the reader how to approach the image. The first lines of the first, manuscript, version give the gist of the author’s ecstatic, highly affective, approach: “Wash thy impure feet, and trembling trace/ With wary steps this more than sacred place (Bodleian f. 363). This was amended in the published version to:

With double reverence we approach, to look,
On what’s at once a Picture and a Book:
Nor think it Superstition to adore
A King made Now more sacred then Before.
[. . .]
The Object here’s Majestick and Divine,
Divinity does Majesty enshrine,
Each adds to th’ others luster: such a thing
Befits the Image of a Saint and King.
Each Lineament o’ th’ Face contains a Prayer,
Phylact’ries fill the place of common Hair;
Which circling their belov’d Defender spread
Like a True Glory round his Royall Head.

6 Jeremiah Wells graduated with a BA in 1669 and became a clergymen with a London living in West Hanningfield. In 1670, he married Deb Willett, the former mistress of Samuel Pepys, whose patronage he later sought in obtaining a position as a navy chaplain and, later, in procuring a lectureship at All Hallows, Barking.
His Mouth with Precepts fill'd bespeaks our Ear, 
Summons That Sence too, bids us See and Hear, 
Both are Divine: Blest Moses thus did see 
At once the Tables and the Deity: 
Thus Faith by Seeing comes: Religion thus 
Enamours, when to th' Sences obvious: 
This sight would worke a Miracle on the Rout: 
Make them at once both Loyall and Devout. (1-3)

From the thread of verbal paradoxes, of speaking pictures and texts heard, that runs as an extended conceit throughout the body of the poem and which serves to mirror the word-portrait’s intrinsic visual character, there emerges a sustained meditation upon the idea of divinely-inspired kingship. As in an earlier tradition of religious devotional art, the act of contemplating the saintly royal image is revealed as one of full-blown religious reverence: one that can see the radiance of divinity in a thinly-drawn face and the glory of sainthood (“belov’d Defender”) in an aureole of words around his head. Remarkably, for an aspiring Protestant divine, Wells explicitly commends the act of seeing as a means to piety and faith. Yet it is the nature of the image as word-picture that, as we shall see, allows him to do so.

The image in fact falls within an established category of micrographic portraiture that became particularly associated with a Protestant commemorative tradition. A number of similar portraits of reformers and heroes of the Reformation, notably of Martin Luther and John Calvin, survive from the sixteenth century onwards. The best known practitioners of the genre were members of the Austrian-Bavarian calligrapher-family, Püchler (Roth 174-80). Johann Michael Püchler the Younger, working in Augsburg, produced a number of variants of micrographic portraits of Luther and Calvin as well as other Protestant divines (Figures 8 and 9). These images dealt directly with a problem identified by Margaret Aston regarding the status of portrait images of Protestant reformers that they themselves had commissioned. Aston cited the Scottish Jesuit, John Hay in 1580, who put it thus:

Quhy sall the images of our lord Iesus Christ, of his glorious mother, and of the Apostles, be computed unleasome and unclene, contraire the accustomed use of the kirk, and the images of Calvin, Beza, Jupiter and Venus, quhilks some of yow hes in your cabinets, be compted lawful? (187)

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7 For similar issues around early portraits of Luther, see R. W. Scrihner 14-36.
It was a good point. The Protestant divine, Christopher Hales, who had spent time in Zurich getting to know the leaders of the Swiss reform movement, commissioned six portraits of Zurich reformers from his friend Rudolf Gualter in 1550 after his return home, only to be gently rebuffed because of “the danger that in future a window might be opened to idolatry” as well as the fear of imputations of vainglory in the sitters (Aston 187). Those fears were partly assuaged by adopting older compositional formulae: the portraits of reformers were classically in
half length, holding or pointing to a scriptural page or gesturing in the act of preaching. They were portrayed, in other words, not as themselves, but as mouthpieces of the scriptural Word. As Margaret Aston put it, “The glory of their memory was not therefore their own, but God’s” (191). Aston found this bookish tradition continued in the sepulchral effigies of English divines, who continued even in death to stare out of their marble niches, mouths frozen in mid-speech, one hand on book, the other raised in explication. Püchler’s micrographic portraits of Luther and Calvin followed this same tradition, based as they were on conventional portrait models by Cranach and after Beza’s *Icones* (Geneva 1580), respectively. They, too, show the Reformers either holding a book or preaching. But Püchler’s images go further to offset the fear of idolatry, not merely by the obvious conceit that they are literally
fashioned from words; they also explicitly combined commemoration – giving the events of their subject’s life (contained in the area of their hair) – and an exhortatory function, by including quotations from the book of Wisdom and Jesus Sirach (situated in their clothing). These discrete intentions are explicitly stated in the larger, more easily legible scripts of the surround. Well-known proverbs or mottos associated with the reformer, clearly written below the image, invite the spectator-reader to contemplation and devotion.

Püchler produced further micrographic portraits of the Wittenberg theologians Johann Friedrich Mayer and Philip Jacob Spenler, made sometime between 1686 and 1701, as well as a portrait of the Protestant King and General, Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden (Figure 10). The intrepid traveller, Lady Celia Fiennes, who visited St John’s College library in 1694 and recorded seeing the portrait of King Charles I, also mentioned seeing a portrait of Gustavus Adolphus of Sweden “whose portrait...” she reported, “is represented to the eye in writeing alsoe and contains his whole Life and prowess” (Fiennes 59). Though this particular copy has been lost, it was very probably a version of the same micrographic portrait by Püchler, which also records the events of his life – again in his hair – while his armour contains quotations from the Book of Wisdom, thereby equating him with the wisdom of King Solomon (Roth 176). At the least, Celia Fiennes’s comments suggest the possibility of a link between the portrait of King Charles and this Protestant European micrographic tradition.

The appeal of this kind of imagery to Protestant divines was the same as that enjoyed by the Jewish scribes who had originally developed the genre: it permitted a form of figuration that resisted the suspicion of idolatry or image worship by the virtue of it also being text. Returning to Jeremiah Wells’s contemplation of the King Charles portrait, he was careful, as a good Protestant, to offset just such an accusation at the very outset of his poem when he wrote:

With double reverence we approach, to look,
On what’s at once a Picture and a Book:

---

Nor think it Superstition to adore
A King made Now more sacred then Before.

[...]
The Object here’s Majestick and Divine,
Divinity does Majesty enshrine,
Each adds to th’ others luster: such a thing
Befits the Image of a Saint and King. (1-2)

Wells’s “enshrined luster” suggests another possible meaning intended in the use of the technique. As Leila Avrin has written of Jewish micrographic images, “the scribe was intent on inducing the cerebral condition of alexia, the inability to read the written words . . . the letters seem to melt before one’s eyes” (Sirat and Avrin 51). In the Charles I portrait, too, the letters, even in their original, less faded state, would have been barely legible and, as Wells’s poem implies, would have functioned more as a vehicle of mystical identification and contemplation. The physical words, in their illegibility, act as a material signifier of an invisible divinity. The various near-contemporary accounts of the portrait of Charles I

Figure 10: Johann Michael Püchler the Younger, Micrographic Portrait of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, engraving, 20 x 14.7 cm, Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Inv. No. 304-125. (Photo © bpk / Kupferstichkabinett, SMB / Volker-H. Schneider/Art Resource, NY). Reproduced by kind permission.
indicate considerable confusion as to what is actually there: Samuel Sorbière asserts that they are in Latin (42-43); Robert Plot, in his *Natural History of Oxfordshire* of 1677 described the image as “the written *Picture* of his Majesty King *Charles* the first . . . taking up the whole Book of *Psalms* in the *English* tongue” (276).9 Celia Fiennes thought it was the *Book of Common Prayer* (58). Yet the intention of the text to an ecstatic like Wells seems to have been less legibility than mystical identification between the saintly King and his biblical exemplar. Invisible in plain sight, the Divine Word acts like a genetic code, deeply embedded within the person of the King, its presence clearly palpable, but its substance obscure. The aura of Majesty, as Wells explains, is thereby augmented by the Divine. Indeed, Wells’s ecstatic, almost mystical reactions to the image are striking. An early reader, struck by the lines: “The mad Phanatick, seeing these thy rayes,/ Struck with the light, falls on his face, and prayes,” was prompted to write “fulsom” in the margin (6).10

At another point in his poem, Wells addresses Charles directly, reinforcing and deepening Robert Plot’s understanding of the image as a “written picture.” He analyzes the artist’s use of this word-image duality in claiming that:

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The Artist has Design’d, not Drawn thee here,
Nor is’t a Picture, but a Character:
The Embleme of thy Mind; Posteritie
May hence learn what Thou wert, & They should be. (5-6)
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This leads Wells to further reaches of hyperbole. Art, he says has covered Charles “with a double veil”: “But well has Art, lest our weak Sight should fail, / Cover’d our *Moses* with a double veil” (3). Having grasped the first, outer veil of gross outward appearance,

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Then may’st thou draw the Outer Veil, and pry
Into this image of Divinity . . .
[which is] . . . Lodged in Thee [Charles].
Thy Count’nance does with innate luster shine
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9 “The written *Picture* of his Majesty King *Charles* the first, in *St. Johns College Library*, taking up the whole Book of *Psalms* in the *English* tongue; and the written Picture of King *James*, and the *Arms of England* (as now born) taking up the whole Book of *Psalms* in the *Latin*, in the hands of Mr. *Moorhead Rector of Bucknel*, are pretty *curiosities*, and much admired” (Plot 267-77).

Whose every Feature’s, like Thy Selfe, Divine.
The lines and Thee so like in ev’ry Thing,
That while we see the Psalms, we read the King.
Inabled thus Thy self, Thy self to inspire,
To be at once the Sacrifice and Fire.
Glorious Without, thy Bodie’s ev’ry part
Is fashion’d, as thy Soul, after God’s heart.
Those Parcels of Religion we adore
In Others, are Compleated Here, and More,
That Impresse of the Deity in the Mind
Of Others stampt, we in Thy Body find.
Thy frame so like Divine in ev’ry part,
That thou do not Resemble it, but Art. (4-5)

The sense of the sheer revelatory power of the word inhering within the image is combined with a self-consciousness about the role of “Art,” which for Wells lies essentially in its conceit, in its emblem-like role of concealing and revealing, and its ability, as he goes on to say, of “[i]m-proving both our Piety and Wit” (7).

In the years following Wells’s poem of 1665, the balance between divinity and artful conceit appears to have shifted in favour of the latter as the portrait came to be regarded less as an icon of sacred memory than as a curiosity. This was in part by virtue of its being housed within a famous library, so that it became one of the sights on a well-worn tourist itinerary of Oxford. Changes in the way it was displayed may also have contributed to this. The library, first completed by Archbishop Laud in 1633, was, when Wells was there, only sparsely furnished. Samuel Sorbière, who recorded his visit to St John’s library in 1664, described it thus:

I saw a Fine Library. . . and a large Wainscotted Gallery, wherein I found no other Ornament than the Picture of King Charles I, which they took out of a Cover, and shewed here for a Rarity, because the Hair of his Head was made up of Scripture Lines, wrought wonderfully small, and more particularly of the Psalms of David in Latin. . . .”(42-43)

A report of a visit by Cosimo III, the grand Duke of Tuscany, in 1669, states that “His Highness viewed the library, and the gallery, which, except the cieling, possesses no ornament but a portrait, drawn with a pen, of King Charles I [which is shewn as a curiosity”] (Colvin and Thomas 19). It might have been the sparse conditions of the simply wainscoted rooms in the 1660s, where the drawing was shown in severe isolation, that prompted the opening lines of the unpublished manuscript version
of Wells’s poem, quoted above (“Wash thy impure feet, and trembling trace/ With wary steps this more than sacred place” [Bodleian f. 363.]) A drawing by Dr John Speed (1595-1640), son of the cartographer and a fellow of the college, shows another feature of this otherwise plain setting: two articulated skeletons or “anatomies,” standing on either side of the (north) doorway in pedestal cases (Colvin 74). They had been presented to the college by Speed himself perhaps inspired by similar skeletons, holding moralizing scrolls, which were a feature of the anatomical theatre at Leiden, where they were used for medical demonstrations.

This can be compared to the viewing conditions experienced by Celia Fiennes, thirty years later, in 1694, by which time the Gallery had seemingly accrued more the character of a cabinet of curiosities. She described seeing it thus:

The inner [library] has severall Anatomy’s in cases, and some other Curiosity of Shells Stone Bristol Diamonds Skins of fish and beasts; here they have the great Curiosity much spoken off, King Charles the Firsts Picture, the whole lines of face band garment to the shoulders and arms and garter is all written hand and containes the whole Common prayer, its very small the charater but where a straight line is you may read a word or two; there is another of Gustaus Adolphus whose portraiture is represented to the eye in writing alseoe and contains his whole Life and prowess; there is alsoe the Lords prayer and ten Commandments in the compass of a crown piece, there are also several books of writing on vellum leaves, and one book written in the Chinese Caractor on the Indian barks off trees, there is also a Book of the Genealogies of the kings since the Conquest to King Charles the Second with the severall Coates all gilded very fresh till the two or three last . . ; there was alsoe a fine Prayer book or Mass book of Q. Marias; this was in the new part of the Library which was neatly wanscoated and adorned. (58-59)

By 1694, the portrait seems long since to have lost its commemorative or religious lustre and become a rarity amid other rarities.

It was Joseph Addison who definitively completed the process of emptying the portrait of its religious aura and mystique in an essay on “false wit” in the Spectator, no. 58, dated Monday 7 May, 1711, in which he invoked:

. . . that famous Picture of King Charles the First, which has the whole book of Psalms written in the Lines of the Face and the Hair of the Head. When I was last at Oxford I perused one of the Whiskers; and was reading the other, but could not go so far in it as I would have done, by reason of the Impa-
For all his apparent insouciant amusement of tone, Addison was concerned that certain kinds of wit, such as he found embodied in this portrait’s conceit, were essentially destructive in that they encouraged habits of mind that subordinated rational thought to what he regarded—in this case—as religious enthusiasm and obscurantism. Addison implied that in making words subject and subordinate to the form of the portrait—and he likewise criticized similar kinds of conceit such as verses forming the shape of eggs or altars or wings [aka George Herbert’s “Easter Wings”]—their meaning was obscured and made secondary. Such kinds of pattern poetry were the works of “a kind of Painter, or at least a Designer,” in which “The Poetry was to contract or dilate itself according to the Mould in which it was cast” (247). As Elizabeth Kraft has pointed out, this kind of “false wit” was inextricably linked in Addison’s—the Whig’s—mind to politics. She noted how Addison twice connected the Stuart kings to such examples: the portrait of Charles I, which begins his discussion of examples of patterned poetry; and James I, who is cited as a “tolerable” punster (631-32). For Addison, puns, acrostics, and other forms of word play were further forms of false wit to be deplored.

Addison used the vehicle of the Spectator to advocate—via “true wit”—values of rationality, good sense and propriety. In his critique he was making a case for clarity of thought and expression, values he deemed essential to the proper workings of a modern society. For this to happen, as Kraft puts it, “[t]he body of language, like the body of the king, has to be demystified through a subordination of image to meaning, sign to significance, word to thought” (634). In the chain of responses to the portrait of Charles I, therefore, from an object of devout contemplation of a martyr-king, to a “Great Curiosity,” to finally, the object of an attack in the defence of reason and enlightened government, one sees in the essential instability and contingency of meaning that attached to a royal image a reflection of the cultural turn that England underwent in the half century after Charles’s execution.

Conclusion

What general conclusions, if any, about the nature of the image in mid-to-later seventeenth-century England can be drawn from this very singular portrait? On one hand, Wells’s reactions to it demonstrate the per-
sistence of habits of contemplation and of mystical identification within a Protestant culture that had belonged to a pre-Reformation tradition of religious devotional art and practice. Such kinds of private viewing certainly continued after the Reformation, migrating from cult images of saints to other genres, such as the portraits of reformers noted above, as well as, in England, to the small and intimate format of the secular portrait miniature (Fumerton). Yet even while it drew upon this tradition, the St John’s portrait, in its structural use of words, in its essentially textual character, can be seen as a symptom of a broader characteristic of an emerging Protestant aesthetic that was born of a reformed uneasiness with visual representation: namely, an increasing tendency of visual imagery to be dependent upon text. The portrait of Charles I fits within a reformed understanding of a new relationship between images and texts, which raised the verbal over the visual, and which, crucially, came to see the one in terms of the other. Paradoxically, Charles’s features exist only by virtue of their being literally formed out of words. Indeed, the work’s success as “Art” turns on this fact. This new relationship was ultimately grounded in theological notions about experiencing the Divine and about the nature and limits of representation that had been formulated by the early reformers. It is exemplified in Bullinger’s agreement with Calvin in the Zweite Helvetische Bekenntnis of 1566, to prohibit all representations of God the Father (as well as Christ) on the grounds that:

as God is invisible, omnipresent and eternal spirit, he cannot be represented by any image or picture [. . .]; neither did Christ assume human form in order to serve as a model for sculptors and painters. Instead, in order to instruct men in faith and about divine things and their salvation, the Lord commanded that the Bible be preached (Mk 16, 15).11

Luther, too, in regarding images as adiaphora, as things indifferent to worship or salvation, had declared that “Christendom will not be known by sight, but by faith. And faith has to do with things not seen” (Luther, Werke vii 14; cited in Koerner 210). For the reformers, the sacred was

11 “Weil nun Gott unsichtbarer Geist und unendlichen Wesens ist, kann er auch nicht durch irgendeine Kunst oder ein Bild dargestellt werden; [. . .] Denn obschon Christus menschliches Wesen angenommen hat, hat er das nicht deshalb getan, um Bildhauern und Malern als Modell zu dienen. Er hat gesagt, er sei nicht gekommen, Gesetz und Propheten aufzulösen (Matt. 5.7). [. . .] Damit aber die Menschen im Glauben unterweisen und über Göttliche Dinge und ihre Seligkeit belehrt würden, hat der Herr befohlen, das Evangelium zu predigen (Mk 16, 15), aber nicht zu malen oder mit Malerei das Volk zu lehren” Bullinger 1-5.
invisible. Images by their nature could not possess or communicate the inherently ungraspable nature of the divine; at best, they could serve as material pointers to something ineffable beyond themselves or as moral lessons in scriptural history. Words, by contrast, being immaterial, were deemed inherently closer to an invisible God. As Carlos Eire put it, the Word of God was allowed to “stand as an image of the invisible reality of the spiritual dimension” (316). Wells’s grasp of this concept is clear in his evocation of the stream of divine words emanating from within Charles’s persona, filling his face and hair, encircling his head, halo-like, in a blaze of “True Glory” (“Divinity does Majesty enshrine”).

Out of a theological understanding, where the visual, and with it, notions of visuality, bent to the tyranny of the word, there developed a further notion, widely adopted across the larger visual culture, that visual images might be deemed legitimate only in so far as they were reducible to language. This is implicit in the popularity of image-word combinations in prints, broadsheets, and, paradigmatically, in the genre of the emblem, which became so predominant a form of devotional and educational mnemonics in Protestant practice. For the emblem, in its classic tri-partite form of motto, image and epigrammatic explanation, was not strictly a picture so much as a visual sign. Not being properly pictorial, the emblem provided, rather, a kind of matrix of visual-verbal material that proved a highly effective tool in religious teaching as well as in more broadly educational endeavours. It is significant that Wells placed the St John’s College portrait within this category of works, even though it is the palpable, material presence of the words rather than their literal meaning that is at play in the image. In his formulation, the image is “designed, not Drawn”; it is not “a Picture, but a Character,” an “Embleme” of Charles’ mind.” The element of “wit” in evidence – the clever conceit, the self-conscious artfulness in the play of image and text – so admired by Wells and as strongly condemned as “false” by Addison – was also an essential characteristic of the emblem; indeed, by the 1650s, these qualities had become a necessary component of the period idea of Art, aptly mirrored in Wells’s own poetic style.

In its ability to elicit such a range of responses, from Wells’s mystical contemplation before a quasi-religious monument, to the tourists’ wonderment at the micrographer’s “curious” skill, to Addison’s ironical but emphatic censure, it is clear that the word-portrait of King Charles stood at the cusp of two distinct traditions, of the religious and secular, the mystical and rational, the affective and coolly detached. It was a juncture where one could glimpse the increasing ascendancy of a new Protestant cultural paradigm, which instituted in effect a new ontology
of the visual, and which helped engender over time a decisive shift from image to word within western cultural consciousness and led ultimately to a largely logo-centric culture, whose assumptions about the nature of the image live on into the present day.
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