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THE STUART COURT MASQUE AND POLITICAL CULTURE

Court masques were multi-media entertainments, with song, dance, theatre, and changeable scenery, staged annually at the English court to celebrate the Stuart dynasty. They have typically been regarded as frivolous and expensive events. This book dispels this notion, emphasizing instead that they were embedded in the politics of the moment, and spoke in complex ways to the different audiences who viewed them. Covering the whole period from Queen Anne's first masque at Winchester in 1603 to *Salmacida Spolia* in 1640, Butler looks in depth at the political functions of state festivity. The book contextualizes masque performances in intricate detail, and analyzes how they shaped, managed, and influenced the public face of the Stuart kingship. Butler presents the masques as a vehicle through which we can read the early Stuart court's political aspirations and the changing functions of royal culture in a period of often radical instability.

MARTIN BUTLER is Professor of English Renaissance Drama at the University of Leeds. He is the author of *Theatre and Crisis 1632–1642* (Cambridge, 1984), and has edited *Cymbeline* (New Cambridge Shakespeare, 2005) and *The Tempest* (2007). He is a General Editor, with David Bevington and Ian Donaldson, of *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*.

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For James and Emily

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Mendoza And, Celso, prithee, let it be thy care tonight
 To have some pretty show to solemnize
 Our high instalment; some music, some masquery.
 We'll give fair entertain unto Maria,
 The duchess to the banished Altofront.
 Thou shalt conduct her from the citadel
 Unto the palace. Think on some masquery.

Celso Of what shape, sweet lord?

Mendoza What shape? Why, any quick-done fiction –
 As some brave spirits of the Genoan dukes
 To come out of Elysium, forsooth,
 Led in by Mercury, to gratulate
 Our happy fortune; some such anything,
 Some far-fet trick, good for ladies, some stale toy or other,
 No matter, so't be of our devising.
 Do thou prepare't. 'Tis but for fashion sake;
 Fear not, it shall be graced, man, it shall take.

John Marston, *The Malcontent*

Have I not seen the pomp of a whole kingdom, and what a foreign king could bring hither also to make himself gazed and wondered at, laid forth as it were to the show, and vanish all away in a day? And shall that which could not fill the expectation of a few hours entertain and take up our whole lives, when even it appeared as superfluous to the possessors as to me that was a spectator? The bravery was shown, it was not possessed; while it boasted itself, it perished. It is vile and a poor thing to place our happiness on these desires. Say we wanted them all: famine ends famine.

Ben Jonson, *Discoveries*

Earl of Essex Tedious orations, dotards on their knees;
 I for one would yawn myself to death.
 Benjamin Britten and William Plomer, *Gloriana*

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Acknowledgements

This book has been a long time in the making. Much of the original research was done in 1990–1, when I was a Fellow of the Woodrow Wilson Center in Washington, D.C., at which time I believed myself to be working on a study of Ben Jonson. A Leverhulme research fellowship in 1994–5 enabled me to rethink the focus and to draft much of the present book, though it was set aside once I became swept up by *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, which took over my energies for ten years. Having despaired of ever reviving this work, an Arts and Humanities Research Council research leave award has allowed me to return to it at last. I am grateful to these funding bodies for their generosity, and to those friends who encouraged me to believe that work which, to me, often felt like old hat was still worth pursuing.

Parts of this book draw on previously published essays. Chapter 4 uses material originally published in Malcolm Smuts, ed., *The Stuart Court and Europe* (Cambridge, 1996); chapters 1 and 6 draw on my contribution to D. Bevington and D. Holbrook, eds., *The Politics of the Stuart Court Masque* (Cambridge, 1998); chapter 7 uses material from P. Lake and K. Sharpe, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (1994); chapter 8 draws on essays in *English Literary Renaissance*, 22 (1992) and 37 (2007), and *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 6 (1993); chapter 9 uses material from J. R. Mulryne and M. Shewring, eds., *Theatre and Government under the Early Stuarts* (Cambridge, 1993), and from *The Seventeenth Century*, 2 (1987); and chapter 10 draws on material published in *English Literary Renaissance*, 13 (1983), and in T. Healy and J. Sawday, eds., *Literature and The English Civil War* (Cambridge, 1990). I am grateful to the editors and publishers for allowing me to rework those essays here.

Versions of these arguments have been trialled in papers at seminars and conferences at the universities of Oxford, Reading, Warwick, Keele, Exeter, Chicago, and Massachusetts (Amherst); at the Institute of English Studies, University of London; the Shakespeare Institute, Stratford-upon-Avon; and the Folger Shakespeare Library. I am grateful to my audiences for their

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A note on procedures

In the early seventeenth century, the English calendar was ten days behind the calendar on the continent, hence dispatches sent home by European diplomats carry dates ahead of those being used in England. English dating was further complicated by two modes of calculus, which marked the new year alternately on 1 January or on Lady Day, 25 March (with dates falling in January – early March expressed in the form 13 January 1603/4). These circumstances impact radically onto the material synthesized in the appendix, so, for the sake of clarity, I have standardized dates, anglicized continental dating, and taken the new year to begin on 1 January.

In this book I refer to Anne of Denmark as Queen Anne. In his biography of Anne, Leeds Barroll points out that she signed herself Anna, and in Scotland was known as Anna, Queen of Scots. However, Anne was the form by which her English subjects generally knew her – for example, she is named on the quarto title page of *The Masque of Queens* as ‘the most absolute in all state and titles, Anne, Queen of Great Britain’ – and so I have continued to use this name. In this I follow *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, which also refers to her as Anne.

All quotations, from literary and non-literary texts, have been modernized and (where necessary) repunctuated. Since many texts are cited from modern-spelling editions, it seems inconsistent not to apply the principle of modernization to all quotations alike. If some are left unmodernized, a misleading impression is conveyed of their historical difference from quotations in modern spelling. The only exceptions are a few instances of citations from account books and the like, which are difficult to translate into modern forms, and where exactness of wording is crucial.

Line and page references for frequently cited texts use the following editions:

Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford, P. Simpson and E. Simpson, 11 vols.
(Oxford, 1925–52)

The Works of Thomas Campion, ed. W. R. Davis (1969)

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A note on procedures

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The Poems of Thomas Carew, with his Masque 'Coelum Britannicum', ed. R. Dunlap (Oxford, 1949)

The Plays of George Chapman, gen. ed. A. Holaday, 2 vols. (Urbana and Cambridge, 1970–87)

The Poems and Masques of Aurelian Townshend, ed. C.C. Brown (Reading, 1983)

At the time of writing there are as yet no satisfactory modern editions of Daniel, Middleton, Shirley, or Davenant, but *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, *The Inner Temple Masque*, *The Triumph of Peace*, and *Salmacida Spolia* are cited from *A Book of Masques in Honour of Allardyce Nicoll*, gen. eds. T. J. B. Spencer and S. W. Wells (Cambridge, 1967); the editors are, respectively, Joan Rees, R. C. Bald, Clifford Leech, and Terence Spencer. *Tethys' Festival* and *The Coleorton Masque* are cited from *Court Masques: Jacobean and Caroline Entertainments 1605–1640*, ed. D. Lindley (Oxford, 1995). Other masques I cite from the original printed texts, silently modernized. Place of publication is London, unless otherwise stated.

Where possible I have referred to aristocrats and monarchs by the titles that they bore during the periods under discussion, but I have occasionally telescoped chronology for the sake of clarity. I have preferred the spelling 'marquis' to 'marquess', on the authority of Fowler's *Modern English Usage* (and given the absence of 'marquess' as a headword in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) – despite what *OED* says under 'Marquis', n.¹, 2).

Court masques, the slight but spectacular dramas that framed hours of festive dancing at the Stuart court, were major social occasions for their aristocratic audiences, and they have been central to historical and literary considerations of the era. However, masques also were undertaken in a wider range of venues, guises, and decades. Masques' participation in emergent news culture, public theater, and pamphlet debate reveals the genre's wide significance not only in the Stuart era, but also during the Interregnum, the Restoration, and beyond. As early opera, masques adapted and carried forward Shakespeare and other Tudor-Stuart dramatists, proving central for the construction of a national dramatic canon. View. Show abstract. Reading the Masque in Political Culture. James Knowles. Pages 1-20. "Vizarded impudence": Challenging the regnum Cecilianum. James Knowles. Pages 21-52. "Crack Kisses Not Staves": Sexual Politics and Court Masques in 1613-14. James Knowles. Pages 53-92. It examines how masques responded to political forces and voices beyond the court, and how masques explored the limits of political speech in the Jacobean and Caroline periods. Keywords. bibliography culture peace politics subject. Authors and affiliations. James Knowles. 1. Brunel UniversityUK. Examines the masques and court festivals staged between 1603 and 1640, demonstrating how they reflected and influenced the Stuart kingship. Court masques were multi-media entertainments, with song, dance, theater, and changeable scenery, staged annually at the English court to celebrate the Stuart dynasty. They have typically been regarded as frivolous and expensive entertainments. Covering the whole period from Queen Anne's first masque at Winchester in 1603 to *Salmacida Spolia* in 1640, Butler looks in depth at the political functions of state festivity. The book contextualizes masque performances in intricate detail, and analyzes how they shaped, managed, and influenced the public face of the Stuart kingship.

Start by marking "The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture" as Want to Read: Want to Read savingâ€¦; Want to Read.Â

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