# *Introduction*

The quatercentenary of Elizabeth's death has provided a focus for historians and other commentators to reappraise, as much as celebrate, Elizabeth's queenship. Specialised monographs and essay collections, biographies by leading academic historians as well as popular writers, reissues of popular biographies, David Starkey's three-part television documentary and the exhibition at the National Maritime Museum, London, have attested both to the continuing debate Elizabeth excites and her popular appeal.[1] She came seventh in the BBC's 'Great Britons' contest in 2002, one of only two women in the top ten.[2]

Yet, in contrast to works that were issued in 1958 to mark the quatercentenary of her accession, the picture recent works have painted of Elizabeth, particularly in academic circles, has been darker than that portrayed by Sir John Neale, Sir Roy Strong and others.[3] Whereas, for Neale and Strong, Elizabeth was a genuine champion of Protestantism, who ruled effectively over an increasingly prosperous and politically and culturally significant realm, adored and celebrated by her subjects, for more recent historians Elizabeth's reign was troubled and its legacy more so. Though Geoffrey Elton attacked Neale's interpretation of Elizabethan

1 Michael Dobson and Nicola J. Watson, *England's Elizabeth* (Oxford, 2002); Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (eds.), *The myth of Elizabeth* (Basingstoke, 2003); David Starkey, *Elizabeth: apprenticeship* (London, 2000); Susan Doran, *Queen Elizabeth I* (London, 2003); Carol Levin, *The reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke, 2003); Levin (ed.), *Elizabeth I: always her own free woman* (Aldershot and Burlington, VT, 2003); Jane Dunn, *Elizabeth and Mary: cousins, rivals, queens* (London, 2004); Alison Plowden, *Elizabeth I* (Stroud, 2004); Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (London, 1992); Alison Weir, *Elizabeth the queen* (London, 1999). A second volume, following his *Elizabeth I: apprenticeship*, is due from David Starkey in 2005.

2 The other was Diana, Princess of Wales, who came third. BBC Press Release, 25 Nov. 2002, http://www.bbc.co.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/stories/2002/11_november/25/greatbritons_final.shtml.

3 J. E. Neale, 'November 17th', in Neale, *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1958), pp. 9–20; Roy Strong, 'The popular celebration of the Accession Day of Queen Elizabeth I', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 21 (1958), pp. 86–103.

parliaments,[4] the first significant assault on Elizabeth's queenship was Chris Haigh's *Elizabeth I*, which argued that Elizabeth was, if an astute politician able to manipulate council, court and subjects through courtly love, emotional blackmail and propaganda, also an indecisive and vain monarch. She was both a bully and weak, who created many of her own problems, whether this was by conciliating conservative religious opinion too much at the beginning of her reign or allowing both council and court to become a dangerously narrow clique in her final years.[5] This negative picture has been developed further, increasingly highlighting the political and religious fissures between Elizabeth and her leading subjects. John Guy has pointed to the significant differences in political beliefs between Elizabeth and many of her councillors, like Burghley, Leicester and Walsingham.[6] Patrick Collinson and Stephen Alford have demonstrated that, in conjunction with conflicts over political issues, these differences created tensions over the issues of marriage and succession, with councillors willing to invoke quasi-republican ideas to provide remedies and to force Elizabeth into action.[7] Collinson, Peter Lake, Brett Usher, Thomas Freeman and others have highlighted the continuing conflict between Elizabeth and moderate puritans over the perceived failure of the religious settlement of 1559 to reform the church fully.[8]

4 G. R. Elton, 'Tudor government: the points of contact. I. Parliament', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 24 (1974), pp. 183–200; Elton, 'Tudor government: the points of contact. II. The council', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 25 (1975), pp. 195–211; Elton, 'Tudor government: the points of contact. III. The court', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, fifth series, 26 (1976), pp. 211–28 and all reprinted in Elton, *Studies in Tudor and Stuart politics and government* (4 vols., Cambridge, 1974–92), III, pp. 3–57; Elton, *The parliaments of England, 1559–1581* (Cambridge, 1986); Elton, 'Queen Elizabeth', *Studies*, I, pp. 238–46; Elton, 'Arthur Hall, Lord Burghley and the antiquity of parliament', *Studies*, III, pp. 254–73; Elton, 'Piscatorial politics in the early parliaments of Elizabeth I', *Studies*, IV, pp. 109–30.

5 Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (Harlow and London, 1988; revised edn, 2001).

6 John Guy, 'The rhetoric of counsel in early modern England', in Dale Hoak (ed.), *Tudor political culture* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 292–310; Guy, 'The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I?', in Guy (ed.), *The reign of Elizabeth I: court and culture in the last decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–19; Guy, 'Tudor monarchy and its critiques', in Guy (ed.), *The Tudor monarchy* (London and New York, 1997), pp. 78–109.

7 Patrick Collinson, 'The monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester*, 69 (1987), pp. 394–424; Collinson, 'The Elizabethan exclusion crisis and the Elizabethan polity', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 84 (1993), pp. 51–92; Stephen Alford, *The early Elizabethan polity: William Cecil and the British succession crisis, 1558–1569* (Cambridge, 1998).

8 Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan puritan movement* (Oxford, 1967) and countless subsequent works including 'The downfall of Archbishop Grindal and its place in Elizabethan political and ecclesiastical history', in Peter Clark, A. G. R. Smith and Nicholas Tyacke (eds.), *The English Commonwealth, 1547–1640* (Leicester, 1979), pp. 39–57; Peter Lake, *Moderate puritans in the Elizabethan Church* (Cambridge, 1982); Lake, *Anglicans and puritans? Presbyterianism and English conformist thought from Whitgift to Hooker* (London and Boston, Mass., 1988); Brett Usher, 'The

Despite this plethora of publications, there remains room for further studies of Elizabeth and her reign. Much academic research around the recent anniversary has focused on Elizabeth's posthumous reputation and image rather than the nature of her queenship. Michael Dobson and Nicola Watson have explored different depictions of Elizabeth in printed histories, fiction, drama, film, opera, television and art from 1603 to the present.[9] A collection edited by Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman has reassessed contemporary and posthumous perceptions of the queen in texts like John Foxe's *Acts and monuments* (commonly known as the 'Book of martyrs') and William Camden's *Annals* as well as popular perceptions (that her opposition to clerical marriage was a bar to ecclesiastical preferment).[10]

Conversely, crucial questions about Elizabeth's queenship, the nature of court politics and policy-making, the extent to which political issues were discussed outside the court and how Elizabethans perceived their queen and her governance, remain disputed or unanswered. John Neale's and Conyers Read's influential readings of Elizabethan governance – that it was based on social connections and was divided by factionalism – have been challenged. Simon Adams demonstrated that the near-contemporary sources on which Neale and Read based their arguments – Camden's *Annals* (Books 1–3, 1615; Book 4, 1629) and Sir Robert Naunton's *Fragmenta regalia* (1641) – were infused with personal agendas and modelled on classical styles. He has also shown that factionalism was absent from the court until the disruptive influence of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, was felt in the 1590s – a position with which many historians agree.[11] Yet, revisionist history largely failed to deal with the wider questions raised by Neale and Read: the role of social connections and

deanery of Bocking and the demise of the Vestiarian Controversy', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 52 (2001), pp. 434–55; Thomas S. Freeman, '"The reformation of the church in this parliament": Thomas Norton, John Foxe and the parliament of 1571', *Parliamentary History*, 16 (1997), pp. 131–47; Freeman, 'Providence and prescription: the account of Elizabeth in Foxe's "Book of martyrs"', in Doran and Freeman (eds.), *Myth of Elizabeth*, pp. 27–54; Caroline Litzenberger, 'Defining the Church of England: religious change in the 1570s', in Susan Wabuda and Caroline Litzenberger (eds.), *Belief and practice in Reformation England* (Aldershot, 1998), pp. 137–53.

9 Dobson and Watson, *England's Elizabeth*, passim.

10 Doran and Freeman (eds.), *Myth of Elizabeth*, passim. The specific essays mentioned are those by Thomas S. Freeman, Patrick Collinson and Brett Usher.

11 Simon Adams, 'Favourites and factions at the Elizabethan court', reprinted, with postscript, in Guy (ed.), *Tudor monarchy*, pp. 253–74; Natalie Mears, '*Regnum Cecilianum*?: a Cecilian perspective of the court', in Guy (ed.), *Reign of Elizabeth*, pp. 46–64; Paul E. J. Hammer, 'Patronage at court, faction and the earl of Essex', in Guy (ed.), *Reign of Elizabeth*, pp. 65–86; Hammer, *The polarisation of Elizabethan politics: the political career of Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, 1585–1597* (Cambridge, 1999). The main exception is Susan Doran in her *Monarchy and matrimony: the courtships of Elizabeth I* (London, 1996).

ideology in politics. With the exception of Haigh's *Elizabeth I* – which outlined instances where Elizabeth took counsel from individuals, including those who were not privy councillors[12] – Elizabethan politics was increasingly seen in Eltonian, institutional terms. The privy council was identified as the central advisory and policy-making body, even when research by David Starkey, George Bernard, Eric Ives, Cliff Davies, Steve Gunn and Penry Williams re-emphasised the importance of social connections in early Tudor governance *vis-à-vis* Elton's 'Tudor revolution in government'.[13] Instances of informal counselling, highlighted by Haigh and others, were conceived in terms of exceptions to the rule, often means by which Elizabeth consciously isolated herself from the council whose opinions conflicted with hers.[14]

Similarly, though the work of Paula Scalingi and Constance Jordan has shown that contemporary debate on royal power was dominated by the issue of female monarchy in the second half of the sixteenth century, there is little consensus about the role gender played in Elizabeth's queenship.[15] Feminist historians, such as Allison Heisch, Mary Thomas Crane, Mary Hill Cole and Anne McLaren, have argued that gender was the defining force in Elizabeth's reign. According to Crane, Elizabeth played with gender conventions to wrong-foot her counsellors; Heisch, Cole and McLaren have seen Elizabeth more as a prisoner of her gender.[16] In her

12 Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, ch. 4.

13 Michael Barraclough Pulman, *The Elizabethan privy council in the fifteen-seventies* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA, 1971); Alford, *Early Elizabethan polity*, passim. Compare with David Starkey, 'Court and government', in C. Coleman and David Starkey (eds.), *Revolution reassessed: revisions in the history of Tudor government and administration* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 29–58; Starkey, 'Representation through intimacy: a study in the symbolism of monarchy and court office in early-modern England', in I. Lewis (ed.), *Symbols and sentiments: cross cultural studies in symbolism* (London, 1977), pp. 187–224 (both reprinted in Guy (ed.), *Tudor monarchy*, pp. 189–213 and pp. 42–78 respectively); Starkey, 'Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the privy chamber, 1485–1547', in Starkey *et al.* (eds.), *The English court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London and New York, 1987), pp. 71–118; G. W. Bernard, *The power of the early Tudor nobility: a study of the fourth and fifth earls of Shrewsbury* (Brighton, 1985); Eric Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford, 1986); C. S. L. Davies, *Peace, print and Protestantism, 1450–1558* (London, 1976); S. J. Gunn, *Early Tudor government, 1485–1558* (Basingstoke and London, 1995); Penry Williams, *The Tudor regime* (Oxford, 1979).

14 Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, ch. 4; Pulman, *Elizabethan privy council*, passim though especially pp. 52–3.

15 Paula L. Scalingi, 'The scepter or the distaff: the question of female monarchy', *The Historian* (USA), 41 (1978–9), pp. 59–75; Constance Jordan, 'Woman's rule in sixteenth-century British political thought', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 40 (1987), pp. 421–51; Patricia-Ann Lee, 'A bodye politique to governe: Aylmer, Knox and the debate on queenship', *The Historian* (USA), 52 (1990), pp. 242–61.

16 Allison Heisch, 'Queen Elizabeth I and the persistence of patriarchy', *Feminist Review*, 4 (1980), pp. 45–56; Mary Thomas Crane, 'Video and taceo: Elizabeth I and the rhetoric of counsel', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 28 (1988), pp. 1–15; Mary Hill Cole, *The portable Queen:*

increasingly influential work, McLaren has suggested that Elizabeth's gender forced her to redefine her queenship in 'extraordinary' and providential terms: as a corporate activity, executed jointly by her and her male counsellors.[17] In contrast, while acknowledging that gender formed part of the politico-cultural milieu of the age, Patrick Collinson, John Guy, Stephen Alford and others have all identified religion as the key factor. Elizabeth consistently refused to resolve the central problems the regime faced: reforming the church fully and securing a Protestant succession, to prevent the accession of Mary Stuart and the reconciliation of England to Rome. Simply, Elizabeth remained under constant pressure to live up to Protestant expectations that her accession had inspired.[18]

Gender has also influenced more recent studies of public discourse on or during Elizabeth's reign. Carole Levin's *'The heart and stomach of a king'* has analysed popular public debate of Elizabeth's queenship, concluding that ordinary Elizabethans shared the concerns of her most eminent privy councillors: Elizabeth's failure to follow gender expectations by marrying and having a child to succeed her. The strengths of Levin's study are that she has sought to examine popular knowledge and discussion of major political issues and has implied that such debate was independent of elite discourse in the court and council. It contrasts with earlier work which has defined public debate as directed by the council to 'bounce' Elizabeth into action, whether this involved planting speeches in parliament or commissioning pamphlets, such as John Stubbe's *The discouerie of a gaping gulf* (1579) against the Anjou match.[19] However, Levin's study is also problematic because she assumes a consciousness and deliberate manipulation of gendered imagery by Elizabeth and her

*Elizabeth I and the politics of ceremony* (Amherst, 1999); A. N. McLaren, *Political culture in the reign of Elizabeth I: queen and commonwealth, 1558–1585* (Cambridge, 1999).

17 McLaren, *Political culture*, esp. pp. 6–8, 23–35, 43–5.

18 Collinson, 'Monarchical republic', pp. 402, 407; Guy, 'The 1590s', pp. 1–19; Guy, 'Tudor monarchy and its critiques', pp. 93–100; Alford, *Early Elizabethan polity*, passim. For a detailed discussion of Elizabethan historiography since Neale and Read, see John Guy, 'Elizabeth I: the queen and politics', in W. R. Elton and John M. Mucciolo (eds.), *The Shakespearean international yearbook. 2: where are we now in Shakespearean studies?* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 183–202.

19 M. A. R. Graves, 'The management of the Elizabethan House of Commons: the council's "men-of-business"', *Parliamentary History*, 2 (1983), pp. 11–38; Graves, 'The common lawyers and the privy council's parliamentary men-of-business, 1584–1601', *Parliamentary History*, 8 (1989), pp. 189–215; Graves, 'Elizabethan men of business reconsidered', *Parergon*, 14 (1996), pp. 111–27; Graves, 'Thomas Norton, the parliament man: an Elizabethan MP, 1559–1581', *Historical Journal*, 23 (1980), pp. 17–35; Graves, *Thomas Norton: the parliament man* (Oxford, 1994); Patrick Collinson, 'Puritans, men of business and Elizabethan parliaments', *Parliamentary History*, 7 (1988), pp. 187–211 (reprinted in Collinson, *Elizabethan Essays*, pp. 59–86); Collinson, 'Exclusion crisis', pp. 76–8.

subjects that is disconcertingly and anachronistically modern. It also fails to distinguish between different types of participants in debate – ambassadors, Catholic polemicists, puritan clergymen, yeomen and labourers – and denies that other issues, like religion, had equal or greater importance.[20]

Levin's work, therefore, leaves important questions about the nature of Elizabethan public debate unanswered: who participated in debate, why and what did they say? Moreover, the significance of these questions has grown since the publication of an English translation of Jürgen Habermas's highly influential work on the public sphere, *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit* (*The structural transformation of the public sphere*).[21] Though Habermas's definition of the public sphere, and his identification of the late seventeenth century as its birth date, have been widely challenged, there remains a reluctance to date the emergence of a public sphere in England earlier than the early or mid-seventeenth century.[22] Preliminary research on the existence of public debate in Elizabethan England points to the need to reconsider these issues fully and in detail.

This study attempts to answer these questions. It grew out of my doctoral work on Elizabeth's final marriage negotiations, with Francis, duke of Anjou, brother of Henry III of France, between 1578 and 1582.[23] In the course of reconstructing the negotiations and exploring how they could help us define the nature of politics and political culture in the much-neglected mid-Elizabethan period, two things struck me. First, an examination of the process of the negotiations in 1579 drawn from memoranda principally in Burghley's archive, suggested that Elizabeth not only took a more active role in policy-making than some recent studies had suggested, but that the privy council did not take the leading advisory role. Rather, Elizabeth appeared to select individual councillors whom she trusted to discuss the marriage separately from formal conciliar meetings. Moreover, related issues and incidents, such as attempts to secure the release of the former Scottish Regent, the earl of Morton, in 1580–1, suggested that Elizabeth took counsel from those who were not

20 Carole Levin, '*The heart and stomach of a King': Elizabeth I and the politics of sex and power* (Philadelphia, PA, 1993).

21 Jürgen Habermas, *The structural transformation of the public sphere: an inquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, trans. Thomas Burger with Patrick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., 1989).

22 The most important collection of essays is Craig Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); see also pp. 24–5, nn. 53–6 for further references.

23 Natalie Mears, 'The "personal rule" of Elizabeth I: marriage, succession and catholic conspiracy, c.1578–1582' (Ph.D. thesis, St Andrews, 1999).

privy councillors, such as her Scottish agent, Thomas Randolph, often privileging their advice over that given by councillors.[24]

Second, my re-evaluation of the circumstances surrounding the publication of John Stubbe's controversial pamphlet against the marriage, *The discouerie of a gaping gulf* (1579), raised questions about the extent to which public political debate was organised by the regime. It proved difficult to ascertain close connections between Stubbe and Leicester and Walsingham, often regarded as the commissioners of the pamphlet. Closer connections existed between Stubbe and Burghley, through Burghley's secretaries, Vincent Skinner and Michael Hickes, who were Stubbe's friends and contemporaries at Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn. These connections appeared to be confirmed not only by the possibility of an earlier collaboration between Stubbe, Skinner and Hickes on *The life off the 70. Archbishopp off Canterbury presentlye sittinge Englished* (1574), but by apparent references in *A gaping gulf* to memoranda by Burghley and Sussex now extant in Burghley's archive. Equally, however, a reconstruction of Stubbe's political assumptions, his education, religious commitment and his earlier forays in print – including his collaborative work with Skinner and Hickes – made the likelihood that Stubbe was commissioned to parrot the words of others less convincing. Rather, it appeared that Stubbe wrote the pamphlet because of his own concerns about the marriage and his belief that he could counsel the queen or comment on political issues. It raised the possibility that a forum for public debate existed in Elizabethan England.[25]

These two themes form the basis of this study. On the one hand, therefore, I have sought to explore the nature of Elizabethan court politics – both policy-making and wider political debate – and of Elizabeth's queenship, to test the extent to which the methods I found characteristic of the late 1570s and early 1580s were evident earlier in the reign. On the other, I have attempted to expand the model of public debate I identified with Stubbe across a broader social and geographic canvas. Therefore, chapter 2 seeks to answer the questions posed by Neale and Read about the nature of Elizabethan court politics; chapter 3 discusses the specific question of whether Elizabeth's queenship, and court politics, were shaped by her gender or by other factors. In what often felt like a 'book of two halves', chapter 4 attempts, in part, to connect the discussion of

24 Ibid., chs. 3 and 5.
25 Ibid., ch. 4; Natalie Mears, 'Counsel, public debate, and queenship: John Stubbs's *The discoverie of gaping gulf*, 1579', *Historical Journal*, 44 (2001), pp. 629–50.

court politics to the examination of public debate. Having established in the previous two chapters that the court was the main forum for policy-making, chapter 4 explores ways in which political issues were discussed at court aside from direct counselling by Elizabeth's trusted advisers. Chapter 5 lays the foundation for examining the nature of public debate by surveying how news circulated in England, Wales and Ireland; the nature of public debate itself is explored in chapter 6. Though both the issues of debate, and the factors which may have encouraged participation, are highlighted in chapters 5 and 6, chapter 7 focuses on how a variety of Elizabethans understood and perceived Elizabeth's queenship.

In what appeared to be an increasingly ambitious project, especially concerning the nature of public debate, a number of points have underpinned my approach. First, my methodological approach to Elizabethan politics has been to combine study of real politics with political culture, part of what has been termed 'New Tudor Political History'.[26] Influenced by political theorists and historians, like Quentin Skinner, John Guy, Patrick Collinson and others, I have increasingly understood Tudor politics as the interplay between people, institutions and ideas. Therefore, I have found it necessary to explore the social, educational and ideological background of political actors in order to understand how they perceived the Elizabethan regime, the issues facing it and their own responses. Second, though this study was initially conceived to concentrate on the mid-Elizabethan period, which has been rather neglected, it grew to consume the first decade of the reign too. Indeed, it covers what John Guy has identified as the first of two coherent periods into which Elizabeth's reign can be divided, 1558–1585/7.[27] This was partly born out of the availability of sources: a number of crucial pieces of evidence on political discourse at court and in the country dated from the 1560s, while corresponding material for the 1570s could be rare. My desire to explore the origins of what I perceived to be a more active style of leadership by Elizabeth was also important. However, whilst not the primary focus of this study, the result has been to enable me to reconsider Guy's arguments about the coherence of the so-called 'first reign' and pursue reservations about these arguments which I had experienced during my doctoral research.

Third, I have found it more useful to define the court in terms that lie between David Starkey's very narrow definition and the much wider ones

26 John Guy, 'General introduction', in Guy (ed.), *Tudor monarchy*, pp. 1–10.
27 Guy, 'The 1590s', pp. 1–19.

of Perez Zagorin and Malcolm Smuts.[28] Whilst Starkey's emphasis on the royal household, and in particular on the monarch's personal body servants in the privy chamber, ignores the nobility and gentry who were physically attendant at court but lacked official positions, Zagorin's inclusion of all county officials, and Smuts's of courtiers' London houses and the Inns of Court, seems too liberal. Though there were close connections between the court and the counties, on which Tudor governance relied, a blanket inclusion of all officials conceals the differing levels of contact individuals had with the queen and her immediate regime. In turn, this blurs differences in access to, and involvement in, political debate at court which, as will be shown in later chapters, could be practically and ideologically distinct from that in the counties. Rather, when I talk of the court, I refer to the royal household and those aristocrats and gentry, male and female, who were resident or attendant at the royal palaces for at least part of the year. This has been estimated to be approximately two-thirds of the nobility and as many as fifty to sixty gentry families in the early and middle years of the reign.[29] I see the court as a collection of individuals – some with official positions, others without – rather than as an institution or a physical space, circumscribed by the palace walls or dictated by proximity to Elizabeth. Hence, individuals became courtiers because they were attendant, in one way or another, on the monarch but did not cease to be courtiers when they returned to their estates or went abroad on official business. One of the most important, and interesting, aspects of the court and its relationship with public debate is the permeable barrier between the two, a permeability created by courtiers who were able to traverse or occupy the different physical spaces of the royal palaces and the counties. To explore this more accurately, however, we need to think of the court as a collection of individuals and to use the term 'courtiers' more readily than 'the court'.

Fourth, perhaps unsurprisingly for a former student of St Andrews, I have also attempted to take a 'British' approach. It has become increasingly clear, thanks to the work of Jane Dawson and Roger Mason, that leading Elizabethans, like Burghley, perceived politics in 'British' terms, looking at the strategic and ideological problems and benefits posed by

28 Starkey, 'Representation through intimacy', pp. 187–224; Starkey, 'Court and government', pp. 29–58; Starkey, 'Intimacy and innovation', pp. 71–118; Perez Zagorin, *The court and the country* (New York, 1969); Malcolm Smuts, 'Cultural diversity and cultural change at the court of James I', in Linda Levy Peck (ed.), *The mental world of the Jacobean court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 99–112.
29 Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, pp. 65, 107.

constituent parts of the British Isles.[30] If their work has informed my understanding of Elizabethan court politics, then I have also attempted to translate this to my exploration of public debate. I have consciously tried to explore public debate in England, Wales and Ireland, even if, because of the imbalance of evidence, England has assumed the lion's share. Irish debate in particular seems to make important correctives to our current understanding of early modern discourse and point to some important avenues of research.

Fifth, though Peter Lake's and Michael Questier's recent study of the public sphere, *The anti-christ's lewd hat*, has demonstrated how much information on the dissemination and reception of printed texts can be gained from the texts themselves – something that I had recognised in reading countless pamphlets in the British Library – I have chosen to try and reconstruct the nature of the public sphere by identifying real readers and real participants, through book inventories, booksellers' accounts, cases of seditious and slanderous words etc.[31] Sixth, having outlined how I use the term 'court', it seems equally imperative to delineate how I have used a number of different labels for the public sphere and public debate in the course of the following exploration – though I discuss explicitly what we should call the Elizabethan public sphere at the end of chapter 6. I use 'public sphere' to denote the concept of the public sphere and as an initial term to refer to the Elizabethan public sphere prior to defining exactly what we should call it, or (with the adjective 'Elizabethan') as a short-hand to signify that I am referring to the concept of the public sphere in relation to the Elizabethan period. I use 'public discourse' to denote an unsituated discourse, a common theme debated by a variety of people who were not always aware of each other's existence. Conversely, I use 'public debate' as an umbrella term to refer very generally to the act of discussing political issues by those who were not members of the court.

Finally, this study is not concerned with conceiving the public sphere, as Habermas and others have done so, in terms of an essential prerequisite of liberal-democracy and one of its major causes. Thus, it does not seek

30 Jane E. Dawson, 'William Cecil and the British dimension of early Elizabethan foreign policy', *History*, 74 (1989), pp. 196–216; Roger A. Mason, 'Scotching the Brut: politics, history and national myth in sixteenth century Britain', in Mason (ed.) *Scotland and England, 1286–1815* (Edinburgh, 1987), pp. 60–84; Mason, 'The Scottish Reformation and the origins of Anglo-British imperialism', in Mason (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish political thought and the union of 1603* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 161–86.

31 Peter Lake with Michael Questier, *The anti-christ's lewd hat: protestants, papists and players in post-Reformation England* (New Haven and London, 2002).