MANUSCRIPT CIRCULATION AND THE INVENTION OF POLITICS IN EARLY STUART ENGLAND

In the decades before the Civil War, English readers confronted an extensive and influential pamphlet literature. This literature addressed contemporary events in scathingly critical terms, was produced in enormous quantities, and was devoured by the curious. Despite widespread contemporary interest and large numbers of surviving copies, this literature has remained almost entirely unknown to scholars because it was circulated in handwriting rather than printed with movable type. Drawing from book history, the sociology of knowledge, and the history of political thought, Noah Millstone provides the first systematic account of the production, circulation, and reception of these manuscript pamphlets. By placing them in the context of social change, state formation, and the emergence of ‘politic’ expertise, Millstone uses the pamphlets to resolve one of the central problems of early Stuart history: how and why did the men and women of early seventeenth-century England come to see their world as political?

NOAH MILLSTONE is Lecturer in Early Modern History at the University of Bristol.
CAMBRIDGE STUDIES IN EARLY MODERN BRITISH HISTORY

Series editors

JOHN MORRILL, Professor of British and Irish History, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Selwyn College
ETHAN SHAGAN, Professor of History, University of California, Berkeley
ALEXANDRA SHEPARD, Professor of Gender History, University of Glasgow
ALEXANDRA WALSHAM, Professor of Modern History, University of Cambridge, and Fellow of Trinity College

This is a series of monographs and studies covering many aspects of the history of the British Isles between the late fifteenth century and the early eighteenth century. It includes the work of established scholars and pioneering work by a new generation of scholars. It includes both reviews and revisions of major topics and books which open up new historical terrain or which reveal startling new perspectives on familiar subjects. All the volumes set detailed research within broader perspectives, and the books are intended for the use of students as well as of their teachers.

For a list of titles in the series go to www.cambridge.org/earlymodernbritishhistory
MANUSCRIPT CIRCULATION
AND THE INVENTION OF
POLITICS IN EARLY STUART
ENGLAND

NOAH MILLSTONE

University of Bristol
For my parents
## Contents

| List of figures | page viii |
| Acknowledgements | ix |
| Note on dates | xi |
| List of abbreviations | xii |

1 Introduction 1

**PART I CONDITIONS OF PRODUCTION** 23
2 The social life of handwriting 25
3 Tuning the instrument 55
4 Performance and parliament 94

**PART II SUBJECTS AND SUBJECTIVITIES** 127
5 Bristol's revenge 129
6 Historians of the present 165

**PART III THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE STATE** 195
7 The antiquary and the malcontent 197
8 The drift of the personal rule 238
9 The ill-affected 275
Conclusion 316

Select Bibliography 325
Index 347
Figures

2.1 Examinations stemming from the Seller libel. TNA SP 16/109/34. page 27
3.1 County contributions 1614–15 vs. subsidy payments (average of 1610 and 1621). 84
3.2 Diocesan contributions 1614–15, percentage over or underperformance vs 1621 subsidy payments. 85
3.3 Selected individual contributions 1614–15 as equivalent number of 1621 subsidies. 86
3.4 Marlborough contributions 1614–15 vs subsidy assessments (average of 1610 and 1611). 88
4.1 Commons’ declaration, February 1629. TNA C 103/34. 98
4.2 Pamphlet texts per parliament. 98
4.3 Pamphlet texts per session adjusted for session length in weeks. 99
4.4 Numbers of copies of texts by parliament as percentages of the whole sample. 101
4.5 Percentages of titles vs percentages of copies, by parliament. 102
4.6 ‘Official’ and ‘unofficial’ copies of the same text. HALS MS XII.B.18. 108
8.1 Written copies of the judges’ arguments, January–June 1638. 267
10.1 Straffords Plot Discovered (1646). Houghton EC65 H100 646s. 322

viii
Acknowledgements

I have many people to thank.

Scholars have been generous with time, ideas, and references; I am particularly grateful to Taylor Aucoin, Alex Barber, Peter Beal, Richard Bell, Alastair Bellany, Lloyd Bowen, Vikki Carr, Will Cavert, Megan Cherry, David Coast, Ben Coates, Tom Cogswell, Rachel Cosgrove, Richard Cust, Cesare Cuttica, Joshua Eckhardt, Tony Grafton, Simon Healy, Maija Jansson, András Kisséry, Chris Kyle, Mordechai Levy-Eichel, David Magliocco, Noah McCormack, Yair Mintzker, Eric Nelson, Nathan Perl-Rosenthal, Michael Questier, Gary Rivett, Bill Sherman, Peter Stansky, Daniel Starza-Smith, Laura Stewart, Christopher Thompson, and Vanessa Wilkie. I owe special thanks to the Animals of Dissertation Writing, Lydia Barnett, Suzanne Duchacek, Jeff Miner, Corey Tazzara, Liz Thornberry, and Nick Valvo. The manuscript was largely revised at the Center for History and Economics at Harvard University, and I am grateful to Ann Blair, Ben Golub, Johannes Haushofer, Daniel Jütte, the late Mark Kishlansky, Rachel Leow, Giora Sternberg, Richard Tuck, Alexia Yates, and particularly Emma Rothschild for welcoming me.

For probing questions, I am grateful to James Vernon, Noah Feldman, Mike Braddick, Paul Cavill, and Ethan Shagan. I thank Peter Lake for his advice, enthusiasm, and generosity. I owe a great debt to my teachers and mentors, Casimir Adler-Ivanbrook, Patricia Rosof, Cam Grey, Alan Macinnes, Steve Pincus, Priya Satia, Carolyn Louise Chappell, Keith Baker, Philippe Buc, Jason Peacey, Paula Findlen, and above all my tireless supervisor David Como, who has spent a decade watching this project mature. Various chapters were transformed by the advice of Tom Cogswell, Mark Kishlansky, and Steve Pincus; for reading the whole manuscript, I am grateful to Nick Popper, Corey Tazzara, and the series editors.

This book was made possible thanks to generous financial support from Stanford University, the Anglo-California Foundation, the Council of...
Acknowledgements

Library and Information Resources, the Institute of Historical Research, the Institute for Humane Studies, the North American Conference on British Studies, the Huntington Library, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Mellon Foundation, the Center for History and Economics at Harvard University, and the Faculty of Arts at the University of Bristol. I am especially grateful to the Institute of Historical Research for support and encouragement over many years.

I have visited nearly three dozen libraries and archives, and found the staff everywhere to be learned, helpful, and kind. But for extraordinary pains, I thank the staff of the Beinecke Library, the John Rylands Library, and the Surrey History Centre.

I would like to thank my brother David; my parents, Chaya and Daniel; Isidore, for patience; and Carina, for love and support.
Note on dates

Dates are given Old Style (the Julian calendar) unless specified as New Style (the Gregorian calendar), but with the year taken as beginning at 1 January.
Abbreviations

Beal, In Praise of Scribes  

Beinecke  
Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, New Haven.

Bellany, Politics of Court Scandal  

BIHR  
Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research.

BL  
British Library, London.

Bodleian  
Bodleian Library, Oxford.

CD 1629  
Wallace Notestein & Frances Helen Relf, ed. Commons Debates for 1629 (Minneapolis, 1921).

CKS  
Centre for Kentish Studies, Maidstone.

Cogswell, ‘John Felton’  

CP  
Hatfield House, Hatfield, UK, Cecil Papers.

CRO  
Cornwall Record Office, Truro.
List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CUL</td>
<td>Cambridge University Library, Cambridge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DUL</td>
<td>Durham University Library, Durham.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EHR</td>
<td><em>English Historical Review</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folger</td>
<td>Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, DC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HALS</td>
<td>Hertfordshire Archives &amp; Local Studies, Hertford.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HJ</td>
<td><em>Historical Journal</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HL</td>
<td>Huntington Library, San Marino.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLQ</td>
<td><em>Huntington Library Quarterly</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HLS</td>
<td>Harvard Law School Library, Cambridge, MA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HMC</td>
<td>Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houghton</td>
<td>Houghton Library, Cambridge, MA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HRO</td>
<td>Hampshire Record Office, Winchester.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITL</td>
<td>Inner Temple Library, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JBS</td>
<td><em>Journal of British Studies</em>.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
xiv

List of abbreviations

JMH Journal of Modern History.
JRL John Rylands Library, Manchester.
Lambeth Lambeth Palace Library, London.
LMA London Metropolitan Archive, London.
MS Manuscript.
NAL National Art Library, London.
NRO Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton.
NUL Nottingham University Library, Nottingham.
Ornsby, ed. Correspondence of Cosin George Ornsby, ed., The Correspondence of John Cosin, D. D. Lord Bishop of Durham:
List of abbreviations

Together with Other Papers Illustrative of His Life and Times, 2 Parts. Surtees Society (Durham, 1869–72).

PA Parliamentary Archives, London.


Senate House University of London Special Collections, London.


SHC Surrey History Centre, Woking.

### List of abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archives, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRHS</td>
<td><em>Transactions of the Royal Historical Society</em>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCL</td>
<td>University College London Special Collections, London.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WSHC</td>
<td>Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre, Chippenham.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>