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978-0-521-81495-9 - Literature, Satire and the Early Stuart State

Andrew McRae

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## LITERATURE, SATIRE AND THE EARLY STUART STATE

Andrew McRae examines the relation between literature and politics at a pivotal moment in English history. He argues that the most influential and incisive political satire in this period may be found in manuscript libels, scurrilous pamphlets, and a range of other material written and circulated under the threat of censorship. These are the unauthorized texts of early Stuart England. From his analysis of these texts, McRae argues that satire, as the pre-eminent literary mode of discrimination and stigmatization, helped people make sense of the confusing political conditions of the early Stuart era. It did so partly through personal attacks, and partly also through sophisticated interventions into ongoing political and ideological debates. In such forms satire provided resources through which contemporary writers could define new models of political identity and construct new discourses of dissent. This book will be of interest to political and literary historians alike.

ANDREW MCRAE is Senior Lecturer in the School of English at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *God Speed the Plough: The Representation of Agrarian England, 1500–1660* (Cambridge, 1996) and *Renaissance Drama* (2003), and co-editor of *The Writing of Rural England, 1500–1800* (2003).

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## *Acknowledgements*

This book began as a more general study of Renaissance satire, but developed into the first of two projected books when I discovered the sheer wealth of relatively untouched material relating to early Stuart politics. As a consequence, I am particularly grateful to the institutions that afforded me the time and resources in which to make those decisions and pursue those interests. In the early phases of research, which demanded a lot of time in archives around the world, I was generously supported by the Australian Research Council and the University of Sydney. More recently, I have received assistance from the University of Exeter and the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

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## *Conventions*

Much of the research on which this book is based involves libels: licentious poems on individuals and political events, which were typically circulated anonymously in manuscript form. Since most of these poems are difficult to access, and many have never before been published, I have co-edited (with Alastair Bellany) an edition of them, which will be published electronically as 'Early Stuart Libels: An Edition of Political Poems from Manuscript Sources', in *Early Modern Literary Studies* <<http://purl.oclc.org/emls/emlshome.html>>. Consequently, for ease of cross-referencing between the book and the database, all citations of poems here include (either in the text or footnotes) a first line, and all poems in the database are searchable by first line. As in the database, I make no claims to be providing a definitive text of any poem. Since these poems circulated widely, and were often altered in the process, the goal of identifying original texts is not only extremely difficult but also of uncertain value (given that this study is less concerned with questions of authorial intention than with texts as they circulated). So, while the database provides the necessary information for researchers who wish to compare different versions of a particular poem, the book typically focuses on just one version, as it was read and copied by contemporaries.

The editorial method employed with primary material from both manuscript and print sources is identical to that used in the database, and is intended to provide texts which are at once reliable and readable. As a result, standard scribal abbreviations and contractions are expanded without comment, and conflation of u/v and i/j are routinely modernized. In all other respects original spelling and punctuation are retained.

When citing printed texts published in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, the place of publication is London unless otherwise stated. Biblical quotations are from the Authorized (King James) Version.

## *Abbreviations*

Beinecke	Beinecke Library, Yale University
Bodleian	Bodleian Library, University of Oxford
BL	British Library
CSPD	<i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series</i>
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DNB	<i>The Dictionary of National Biography</i> , ed. Sir Leslie Stephen and Sir Sidney Lee (22 vols., London, 1917)
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library
Huntington	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino
NLS	National Library of Scotland
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i> , 2nd edn, prepared by J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner (20 vols., Oxford, 1989)
<i>Poems and Songs</i>	<i>Poems and Songs Relating to George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham; and his Assassination by John Felton</i> , ed. Frederick W. Fairholt (Percy Society, London, 1850)
'Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript'	'Poems from a Seventeenth-Century Manuscript with the Hand of Robert Herrick', ed. Norman Farmer, <i>Texas Quarterly</i> , 16.4 (1973), supplement
PRO	Public Record Office, London
Rosenbach	Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia
STC	<i>A Short Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland . . . 1475–1640</i> , compiled by A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 2nd edn (3 vols., London, 1976–91)