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978-0-521-88354-2 - The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture
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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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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore, São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press

The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521883542

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First published 2008

Printed in the United Kingdom at the University Press, Cambridge

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data

Butler, Martin,

The Stuart court masque and political culture / Martin Butler.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-521-88354-2

1. English drama – 17th century – History and criticism.
2. Theater – Political aspects – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
3. Masques, English – History and criticism.
4. Politics and literature – Great Britain – History – 17th century.
5. Great Britain – Court and courtiers – History – 17th century.
6. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1603–1649.

I. Title.

PR678.M3B88 2008

792.60941'09032—dc22

2008026925

ISBN 978-0-521-88354-2 hardback

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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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serious and provocative responses. Particular thanks go to colleagues at the University of Leeds, who have heard a lot of this in our research seminar over the years.

I have benefited considerably from the presence of a small masque industry at Leeds. David Lindley was working on this subject long before I arrived, and has been a marvellous inspiration and example. He read many early drafts, and his advice has been endlessly valuable, searching, and generous. In some ways this book is merely an extended conversation with him. I have also been fortunate to work with Karen Britland, first as Ph.D. supervisor, then as colleague on the Cambridge Ben Jonson, on which we laboured literally side by side. I have learned a huge amount from her, and am profoundly grateful for her thoughtfulness and loyalty. Amongst other colleagues, I have greatly valued the help and advice of John Barnard, Michael Brennan, Jerry Brotton, the late Inga-Stina Ewbank, David Fairer, Paul Hammond, Markus Klinge, Tom Lockwood, James Loxley, Syrith Pugh, and Jane Rickard. Amongst our students, I am particularly indebted to Susan Anderson and Lindsay Godson.

Beyond Leeds, I am conscious of three major debts: to Stephen Orgel, who read several chapters and encouraged me to continue; to James Knowles, for many interesting titbits and stimulating conversations; and to Kevin Sharpe, for his supportiveness even though we disagree over many things. It has been a privilege to read admirable work by Sophie Tomlinson, Sarah Poynting, Barbara Ravelhofer, Clare McManus, Gabriel Heaton, and Kevin Curran before it reached publication. Their ideas have helped greatly in giving focus to what I wanted to say. It is a privilege, too, to work again with Sarah Stanton, one of the heroines of British drama publishing.

Many other friends and colleagues have assisted with advice, references, off-prints, and ideas. I salute Bernadette Andrea, Jayne Archer, John Astington, Leeds Barroll, Anne Barton, David Bergeron, Jacques Berthoud, David Bevington, Keith Brown, Janet Clare, Liz Clarke, Tom Cogswell, Richard Cust, Anne Daye, Ian Donaldson, Mrs Janet Freeman, Caroline Hibbard, Lynn Hulse, Elliott Kendall, John Kerrigan, Peter Lake, Ted Leinwand, Leah Marcus, Ted McGee, Kate McLuskie, David Norbrook, the late John Orrell, Graham Parry, Ross Parry, John Peacock, Tim Raylor, Glyn Redworth, the late Conrad Russell, Jeanne Shami, Malcolm Smuts, Simon Thurley, Peter Walls, and Blair Worden. To all, my thanks. All the errors of fact and interpretation that remain are mine.

Finally, Jane, James, and Emily have kept this work in proportion and provided the continuity which so often it lacked. I cannot thank them enough for their love and patience.

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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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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).