Introduction

John Husee, the 'indispendable right-hand man' (Grummitt, 2004) of Arthur Plantagenet Lord Lisle, deputy of Calais, sent his master a letter in early January 1537. In it, he reported the ongoing rebellion in the north of England, the appointment of Cardinal Pole and the wedding of the Earl of Sussex to Mary Arundell – some were reportedly 'sorry for the gentlewoman's sake' (Byrne, 1981: 241). Husee closes his letter with a more local concern, relating to recent passports – documents permitting travel for a specific purpose, time and place – that Lisle had signed and approved as King Henry VIII's representative in Calais (Example 1). Husee's concern was linguistic:

1.   I have seen passports which your lordship hath signed and sealed, wherein is written 'as you tender our pleasure', reciting the same words over ii or iii times, which I think passed your lordship unware; but surely he that writ them wist not well what he did, for though your lordship mean no hurt, it might chance, if it come to some men's hands or sight, they would scan the same to the worst. It shall be requisite, after my poor judgement, that your lordship peru[se] them better from henceforwards

                         (John Husee to Arthur Plantagenet Lord Lisle, 14 January 1537. Byrne, 1981: 241)[1]

Husee's warning appears to have been heeded as subsequent passports bear no trace of the problematic expression (Byrne, 1981: 241–2). But why might the five-word phrase 'as you tender our pleasure' have triggered such alarm? Lisle's use of the expression does not present problems of comprehension: its meaning is transparent and relatively benign, urging the recipient of the passport to respect the sender's protocols and wishes. What is at issue are the social associations, the indexical meanings, of the lexico-grammatical form of the instruction that, since the late fifteenth century, had been used in the official documents of the reigning monarch (OED Online). The semi-formulaic expression occurs as a stock phrase in royal proclamations and royal correspondence throughout the Tudor period. The textual power of the Tudor

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[1] My thanks to Graham Williams for alerting me to this example.

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monarchy is the focus of this book: a period of history that commenced with
the defeat of Richard III at Bosworth by Henry VII in 1485, with the crown
passing to his son Henry VIII in 1509 and then to Henry's children: Edward VI
(r. 1547–53), Mary I (r. 1553–8) and Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603). Husee's letter
suggests there was a shared consensus that some forms of language and text
were the preserve of the monarchic elite – a socially formulated notion of a
language variety, or register (Agha, 2005), that was bound up with the
character, institution and power structures of Tudor royalty.

This study explores the verbal and visual features associated with English-
language royal texts, and their role in the construction and signification of
royal power and authority, appraising what might be termed the vernacular
'royal voice' of the Tudor monarchy. The working definition of power in this
study focuses on the ability of one agent (e.g. a monarch) both to do things
themselves and to elicit action in third parties (e.g. a subject), following the
etymological roots of the word (OED Online; Bolander, 2013: 35). This may
include the instruction for the delivery of a letter, which is subsequently
handed to its recipient, or in determining the immoral and illegal value of
vagrancy and begging. In the latter, power extends to the ability to 'define
social reality' (Gal, 1995: 178), shaping how others perceive the world and
their place within it. In either case, power is a communicative, interactive
phenomenon: it is something that is constructed and achieved in discourse
(Thornborrow, 2002: 8). External, institutional structures may enable power to
be more readily construed and effected – such as common-sense ideologies
that present social hierarchies as the natural order of things (Hall, 1982: 65),
including a monarchic system – but the realisation of power in the world
relies on its creation and actualisation in discourse, spoken and written,
through which it is perceived as legitimate and authoritative. Power and
language are thus closely connected, not only in the terms of what is said
but *how* something is said and whether that utterance compares to social
models and interlocutor expectations of how such an utterance should *be* in
such a situation. Inappropriate language use, perhaps reflective of speaker
competencies, can weaken and even threaten the successful construction of
power, as seen, for example, in the perceptions of 'language legitimacy'
regarding 'proper' and 'improper' varieties, such as African American Eng-
lish or Kurdish (see Reagan, 2016).

In exploring the royal voices constructed within Tudor texts, code choice is
thus meaningful. The institutions of sixteenth-century England were multilin-
gual, reflecting the complex histories of invasions, migrations and literacies.
However, the present study focuses specifically on English royal documents
and the varieties therein. In previous centuries, English carried less capital and
worth (in written contexts, at least) than commonly used alternatives, such as
French and Latin. However, the sixteenth century is a significant period for the

emergence of English as a written language and its associated improving social status. The multilingual practices of the preceding centuries, in which a royal message for a sheriff might be spoken in French by the king, written in Latin by the clerk and spoken in English by the messenger to the sheriff (Clanchy, 2013: 208), were becoming less typical. Although English can be found in civic records and the London law courts in the fourteenth century (Gramley, 2012: 99–100), its role in royal written texts, as opposed to translated oral messages, became standard practice in the late fifteenth century. Early English royal texts were derivative of their French and Latin counterparts (which continued to co-exist alongside the English documents), but they also established an English tradition of their own. Robert Beale's formula book (BL Add MS 48018) is one illustration of how English epistolary exemplars were collected to guide future text production.

There are also other considerations driving an analysis of a vernacular royal voice in this period of English history. The development of an English royal bureaucracy coincides with the expansion of written English into other prestigious domains that had previously been the preserve of Latin and French, such as vernacular Bible translations. The growth of the English written language at this time is part of an emergent ideology, in which an orderly and fully equipped language would entail a society with corresponding attributes, with efforts made to improve the capacity of English for specialised and eloquent expression (Shrank, 2000). Increases in textual documentation and literacies also informed developments in how language itself was conceptualised; utterances were increasingly understood as something static, asynchronous and autonomous, set apart from their speaker (or writer) (see arguments in Fox, 2000; Warvik, 2003). The late fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries therefore witness interrelated developments in the use of English, a context in which royal texts play contributing parts.

Structure of the Book

My investigation of royal discourse engages with two categories of material: 'authentic' and 'appropriated' documents, with the discussion following this bipartite categorisation. Following an overview in the present chapter of the methodological approach and the texts compiled for the investigation, Part I focuses on authentic royal materials. Chapters 1–3 examine characteristics of royal correspondence, describing and evaluating the material and linguistic dimensions of holograph and scribal letters sent by the Tudor monarchs. Chapter 4 considers royal proclamations: texts issued in print for public audiences. The authentic texts span private/public, manuscript/print dimensions, providing breadth to the collected evidence concerning the effects of royal language in the period. In Part II, attention turns to examples of imitation

and appropriation of royal discourse. Chapter 5 discusses metacommunicative references to royal texts in the correspondence of royal subjects. Chapter 6 looks at three case studies of feigned royal authority, exploring the role of the documents (and their material and verbal forms) issued as part of the individuals' assumed identities. The evidence provides a sense of public awareness of the textual properties of royal documentation and their association with power and royal status. Chapter 7 looks at royal discourse representation in correspondence, and Chapter 8 considers the same discursive feature in a selection of sixteenth-century historical chronicles, looking at how the language of the monarch was used and framed in texts intended for wide audiences, situated at the interface of artistic license and evidence-based accounts of historical events. The texts explored in Part II provide a private/public, manuscript/print mirror of the authentic texts in Part I, providing complementary viewpoints on how royal language was perceived and appropriated during the Tudor period (1485–1603).

Text, Power and Tudor Iconography

In setting out the groundwork for the theoretical concepts and methodological approaches that underpin the exploration of royal voices in Tudor England, another example of royal discourse provides a useful and complementary perspective to the example of Lisle's passport. The following extract (Example 2) comes from the end of a scribal letter sent by Henry VIII to Silvestro Gigli, bishop of Worcester, in 1517.

2.   Fail ye not to accomplish this our commandment, as ye will avoid our displeasure, at your peril; how ye shall further order yourself in the disclosing and soliciting of the premises, ye shall be advertised by such letters as the said cardinal of York now directs unto you, the contents whereof we will that you as effectually follow, as though it proceeded of our self and by our writing.
              (Henry VIII to Silvestro Gigli, Bishop of Worcester, January 1517. BL
              Cotton Vitellius MSB III f.122)

The extract, taken from the end of the letter, exemplifies the close connection between the royal persona and the verbal–visual properties of the texts that they issue. It comprises a two-part directive. First, the recipient is to comply with the instructions provided earlier in the text or risk incurring the monarch's 'displeasure'. The specifics of Henry's ill favour are not stated, and its persuasive function relies on shared knowledge of the structures of power between a king and his subjects. Secondly, the recipient is to comply with directives contained in another letter, sent by Thomas Wolsey. Significantly, these are to be treated as if they are equivalent to letters from the king himself. This instruction implies a hierarchy of text, or of textual provenance, in which

royal texts carry the greatest (legal, divine) authority over their recipients to bring about the desired response (i.e. compliance). The assertion of authority draws on the connection between the king's body 'of ourself' and the king's texts 'by our writing'. The reference to the king's person is synecdochic, offering a conventional shorthand for the monarchic institution at large. The reference to the royal person may also allude to oral instructions (either directly from the king or from his messengers), which are contrasted with written messages, such as correspondence or warrants. The letter thereby sets up an equivalence between the provenance of a royal document and the royal document itself. The power of the monarch is textual.

The study of authority in royal Tudor texts therefore hinges upon the socially distinctive provenance of the (named) author, and the bidirectional relationship between this status, the texts' functions and the linguistic and material features selected for communication. Whilst monarchy represents 'the most personal system of government' (Hicks, 2014: 8), in the early modern period, royal status was a combination of personal rule intertwined with the power of the divine and the laws of the realm. A king or queen was appointed by God to oversee and ensure the prosperity of their people, and their divine purpose was achieved through the effective management of local and central political groups (Gunn, 1995: 23). Kings and queens were understood to be vessels or intermediaries between the human and celestial dimensions of existence (Oakley, 2006: 15–16), and medieval and early modern English monarchs had a 'recognizably sacred aura', as witnessed in the practice of laying hands to cure scrofula, the king's evil (Oakley, 2006: 122). Monarchic authority also had a legal basis. Traditionally, social power was located in the possession of property (*dominium*). Within the medieval feudal system, for instance, each lord had a 'quasi-political authority' of rule (Burns, 1992: 18–19). Kingship was thus also 'the principal mode' of 'political lordship' (Burns, 1992: 13). By the sixteenth century, following the transgressions of Richard II, who rejected English law to demand unquestioning compliance with his royal will (Oakley, 2006: 122), and the upheavals of the ensuing civil wars, there was a growing impetus for an accountable version of kingship, where the right to rule was not derived solely from a divine source but where the monarch was also accountable to their subjects (Oakley, 2006: 125). Tudor monarchic power, however singular in source, only had weight in governance through the consensus of parliament (Burns, 1992: 63).

Tudor kingship was therefore a combination of theoretical ideas and political practice. The theory of the king's two bodies provided the legal justification for the continuity of monarchy and the relationship between the individual king and the corporation of the realm. The theory posits a corporeal conception of royal authority: a king has two bodies, the 'body natural' and the 'body

politic'. The 'body natural' is the king's mortal body, fallible and human. The 'body politic' is the office and institution of the king (and kingship) (Kantorowicz, 1957: 9). Whilst both bodies are conjoined, the 'body politic' is superior, animated via the mortal body of the given king. The theory afforded a legal legitimacy to the facet of monarchy that relied on the spiritual: the king was 'immortal, invisible, ubiquitous, never under age, never sick and never senile' (Kantorowicz, 1957: 271), despite the contrary evidence of the mortal bodies of the kings themselves – especially acute to Tudor subjects in the aftermath of the turmoil of the fifteenth century. From the legal theory arose a 'traditional decorum' that differentiated 'official actions from the private feelings of the monarch' (King, 1985: 83). Yet monarchs were expected to show good character in their natural body that equivocated the majesty of the body politic, requiring qualities associated with theological (priest), judicial (judge) and martial (knight) social roles (McGlynn, 2014: 153). Kings were required to be just and to lead their people, maintaining the equity of the law (Burns, 1992: 154–5).

The political systems surrounding Tudor monarchic rule were complex and combined traditional systems with new innovations in government, such as the Privy Council (Gunn, 1995: 52, Morris, 1999: 39). The rise of the principal secretary as a premier role among the sovereign's councillors, a position held by men such as Thomas Cromwell and William Cecil, is also a significant development of the period and attests to the role of documentation and communication in the management of the realm (Gunn, 1995: 53). And management, as Jones (2015) argues, is a key term: the Tudor monarch relied on their subjects' goodwill to maintain control and stability. The common weal relied on the rich and poor working for the reciprocal benefit of the other (i.e. as landowners and tenants). In practice, the monarch, as the head of church and state, had to work to maintain a social reality that bore some resemblance to the ideal. Social networks and chains of influence were a vital part of this process, allowing a court-based monarch to wield influence over their more remote subjects via trusted officials and other third parties (Jones, 2015: 13). This networked approach became increasingly important following the Reformation, when the crown seized the lands previously belonging to the Church – in effect becoming a local as well as national landlord to those subjects. As Gunn (1995: 28) puts it, 'the king's voice suddenly carried more weight'. Strategies for ensuring the goodwill and allegiance of local officials included moral coercion via the social capital of honour in one's 'service to king and commonwealth' (Gunn, 1995: 43), the threat of punishment (Gunn, 1995: 45) and financial exchange, either through the monarch's right to induce forced loans in times of need, such as war (Gunn, 1995: 136), or through the systems of patronage that operated at the court (Morris, 1999: 21).

The maintenance of these networks, the conveyance of the monarch's will and the expression of the desires of the people relied on communication. The spoken word was at the heart of sociopolitical matters; yet this is near impossible to trace. Some insights can be gleaned through archival absence; for example, it is likely that Elizabeth I relied on the persuasive power of speech to maintain her courtiers' loyalty, given the dearth of written evidence of notes and messages to those at the court (Jones, 2015: 8; for some rare examples, see May, 2004,). Other semiotic strategies, such as public display via progresses and corporal punishment, were also ways of communicating the monarch's authority to the people (Jones, 2015: 101). The array of surviving written documents issued in the name of the reigning sovereign, which sought to determine the social reality of its named author and recipients, provides one of the most comprehensive sources of evidence of the networks of royal power in the period. Whilst there are many languages used in the Tudor archives, the English texts span an appreciably broad range of genres, including sermons, letters, printed pamphlets and proclamations, which were issued to the commons, local officials and (less infrequently but not insignificantly) courtiers. As Sharpe asserts:

> we must treat all [Tudor] locutions and writings as texts artfully composed with the aim of persuading. Whether they bear both his or her portrait or arms as a frontispiece, the royal name on the title page as author, or the imprimatur of the royal printer, all texts that circulated as royal represented regality and – whatever royal wishes to the contrary – initiated a textual dialogue about kingship. (Sharpe, 2009: 43)

One side of this dialogue comprises the official texts of state: the letters and proclamations that were distributed across the realm that 'spoke' in the monarch's voice and in their name to encourage the loyalty of their subjects. The other side of the dialogue, which could be both critical and compliant, includes texts that reproduce and appropriate the voice of the authentic texts, as seen in the example of Lisle's passports. These appropriating texts are part of the vast matrix of Tudor self-promotion that constitutes such a distinctive part of the networked management of the realm.

Official Royal Representation

Self-glorification is 'designed always to translate into practical politics and projections of power that are very real and ultimately tangible' (Woodacre and McGlynn, 2014: 2). In the early modern period, monarchs had various techniques through which to construct their power and authority, including rituals and ceremonies (birth, marriage and death), images of the body (coins, portraiture, woodcuts), pastimes and practices (sport, literature), physical and geographic properties (clothing, jewellery, architecture), and also the

thousands of royal texts now extant in the archives. It is thus useful to consider how the strategies of royal promotion operated and co-existed in the period to see how the specifically textual power of the monarch fits within the broader sociopolitical contexts of self-glorification.

A key concept of self-glorification is royal magnificence, the 'external sign of intrinsic power' whereby a lavish outward appearance was preferable to modesty (Anglo, 1992: 6). Such magnificence could be achieved through direct symbols such as clothing, jewellery, food and drink. For a king to deny himself such adornments would be to deny his own social rank – an argument that was made to Edward VI by William Forrest in his 1548 verse 'The Pleasaunt Poesye of Princelie Practice': 'Hys power, peereles, without peere must appeere' (cited in Anglo, 1992: 7). Similarly, the architecture and internal organization of the monarch's residences was intended to inspire awe. Upon entering, a visitor would negotiate a sequence of chambers, through which they had to earn the right to proceed to the next (Hicks, 2014: 13). The royal court (the people and the place) was a site of personal expression: 'the environment where the king took his pleasures, not just religious and sexual, and where he found like-minded company' (Hicks, 2014: 20). Other direct strategies of royal magnificence include ceremonies, such as the accession and progresses, which demonstrated the monarch's position in the social hierarchy and instigated subject loyalty (Anglo, 1992: 9). They were designed to inspire awe without allowing subjects to become too familiar with their monarch – something which might be detrimental to the preservation of the king or queen's divine otherness. Sightings of the royal body for the general populace would have been socially significant and yet based on something typically insubstantial: the monarch seen from a distance, perhaps only fleetingly, through a mass of bodies and backs of heads.

Indirect representations of royal power were the more typical way for a subject to encounter their monarch. Iconic representations, such as portraiture, and symbolic significations, including devices and coats of arms, are evident across a range of media (see King, 1989; Aston, 1993; Petrina and Tosi, 2011). Coinage was a vehicle for the daily promotion of royal power: Henry VII's oversized 'sovereign' coin was a very literal display of the weight and value of his royal power. Portraiture, stained glass, broadsides and pamphlets were other vehicles for royal self-glorification – propagandic (to use an anachronism) image and text that could draw analogies with characters from Christianity and classical mythology to foreground characteristics of the Tudor king or queen, such as the equation between Henry VII and the Old Testament's King David, who united his kingdom and therefore offered the first Tudor monarch a divine as well as secular legitimacy (King, 1989: 35). The sword and the book, representing the duality of royal authority, were symbols used across the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI and Elizabeth I. During the Catholic reign of Mary I,

the sword remained, but the book was transferred back to papal jurisdiction
(King, 1989: 102). Images were considered effective for the promotion of
royal authority because of their inclusivity. As Stephen Gardiner wrote in a
letter to Vaughan in 1547, 'The pursivant carrieth not on his brest the Kinges
name written in such letters as a few can spell, but suche as all can reade . . .
being great known letters in images of three lyons' (cited in Anglo, 1992:
17). The issue, design, and success of Tudor royal promotion should not be
seen as a fully coherent strategy (Montrose, 1999: 108). However, the crown
sought to control the symbols of royal power through the (somewhat circuit-
ous) implementation of its own authority. For example, Henry Howard, Earl of
Surrey, was executed in 1547 for using parts of the royal arms and thereby
insinuating his own royal lineage and claim to the throne (Brigden, 2004).
Defacing royal symbols was likewise treasonous (Montrose, 1999: 112). In
Elizabeth's reign, a proclamation was drafted to prohibit the use of any royal
image other than from a source approved by the court, although the fact it was
not issued suggests doubts about the effectiveness of state control in this area
(Montrose, 1999: 109).

Despite the breadth of the media and strategies of iconography, Anglo
(1992: 119) argues that both the monarch's person and the associated iconog-
raphy would be unrecognised by the illiterate majority: 'we know a great deal
more about these kings and queens than did even the best informed of their
subjects' (Anglo, 1992: 1). Although indirect representations, through which
subjects 'read and heard and 'saw'' (Sharpe, 2009: 21) the monarch via a
mediated verbal or visual representation, were more widespread, Anglo sees
the literacies of the populace as a limiting factor. 'The architectural embellish-
ments, illuminated manuscripts, gems and paintings' so often presented as the
keystones of Tudor iconography were never intended 'for the uncouth gaze of
the multitude' (Anglo, 1992: 112). They were intended to flatter the monarch,
not persuade the majority (Anglo, 1992: 125). Subsequent work has refined
Anglo's view, suggesting that Tudor royal glorification worked in both direc-
tions via the social networks that connected court to county hall. The expan-
sion of iconic imagery in the period, and the growing desire of subjects to
possess some 'material emblem' of royal authority, such as a portrait or coat of
arms 'evidences the power of representation in creating the affective political
economy that was the psychological underpinning of the idea of the common-
weal in Tudor England' (Sharpe, 2009: 29). As semiotic substitutes for the real
thing, these iconic objects acquired social meaning in their own right, offering
a contact point with both the royal person and royal power.

Within this system of self-glorification, texts undertaking royal representa-
tion were sites for engagement, appropriation and dissent by *all* subjects
(Sharpe, 2009: 50), each of whom could engage as was possible given their
social background: '[a] language of signs in early modern England was by no

means the monopoly of the elite' (Sharpe, 2009: 49). For example, communal reading practices and mixed modalities of a printed book helped readers with differing literacy levels to engage with a text. Practices of interpretation, in which a reader would automatically look to a larger institutional system, such as the Bible, to provide an explanatory frame, would allow readers to engage with and evaluate the symbolic dimensions of royal texts and associated media.

One quality that characterises many of the texts and objects employed for royal glorification is the heterodiegetic positioning of the subject towards their sovereign. In such cases, the audience was encouraged to gaze upon the (glimpses of the) monarch, whether visually or verbally constructed, and appreciate their authority as so depicted. However, royal texts can also evoke a more dialogic engagement between subject and monarch: texts that were anchored in, or close to, the subjectivity of the king or queen, constituting a verbal mediation of the royal will, and therefore representing – verbally and visually – their royal authority. Among this kind of text can be included official letters and proclamations, which were composed with specific purposes and audiences in mind. Their success as royal texts hinged on the acceptance of their royal authority. For a noble in the northern counties receiving a letter, or for subjects in the south-west hearing a proclamation, whilst the recipients may have made a mental connection with a portrait, pamphlet or other image, the construction of a royal person and the evocation of the royal prerogative was first and foremost a local (and substantially verbal) process, derived from the text's construction and depiction of a 'royal voice'. And, consequently, that northern noble or the south-west subjects could respond to this textual signal, or symbol of authority, by appropriating, endorsing or distorting the qualities of that voice and thereby legitimising or undermining its power.

The King's/Queen's English

The concept of a 'royal voice' is not, in itself, a new idea. Its longevity in English culture is evident in the notion of 'the King's/Queen's English'. The phrase first developed in analogy with the phrase 'the king's coin', and early modern texts reflect this connection: a character with a stammer is described as 'clipping the Kings English' in the anonymous play *Looke about you* (1600) (cited in OED Online). Thomas Wilson's *Arte of Rhetorique* (1553: 86) is the first attested example of the expression ('These fine Englishe clerkes, will saie thei speake in their mother tongue, if a man should charge them for counter-feityng the kynges English'), a criticism that Robert Cawdrey would later paraphrase in his reader's epistle to the second edition of his monolingual dictionary *Table Alphabeticall* (1609: A3). Wilson uses the term as part of his