

**Anti-Catholicism, civic consciousness and parliamentarianism:  
Thomas Scott's *Vox Regis* (1624)**

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**ABSTRACT**

The Anglo-Spanish negotiations for a dynastic alliance which began in 1614 had never been popular among a large section of English Protestants, who felt that their monarch should demonstrate a more active commitment to European Calvinism. Such prejudices increased after 1618 when the Bohemian crisis began and James did not support the Elector Palatine against the Habsburg Empire. The anti-Catholic mood reached its peak in October 1623, when the Prince of Wales arrived in London after his failed journey to Madrid. Many Londoners viewed his return as a victory over Spain and demanded a shift in Anglo-Spanish relations. This article considers the political tract *Vox Regis* (1624), written by Thomas Scott, one of the most prolific anti-Catholic pamphleteers at the time. In this work Scott develops many of the arguments proposed in Parliament in order to persuade James to change his religious and foreign policy. His anti-Catholic attacks vehicle debates on the role of citizens in the Commonwealth and more participatory types of government, in opposition to the crown's appeal to the *raison d'état* and the doctrine of the divine right of kings. Thus, Scott relates anti-papery to civic consciousness, linking his discourse to the humanist tradition and anticipating some of the ideological discussions prevalent in England during and after the civil war.

**KEYWORDS:** Anti-Catholicism, Spanish Match, Civic Consciousness, Parliamentarianism, 1624 Parliament, Models of Kingship.

**RESUMEN**

Muchos ingleses protestantes no vieron con buenos ojos las conversaciones que se iniciaron en 1614 entre España e Inglaterra para promover una alianza dinástica. Al contrario, consideraban que su monarca debía comprometerse de forma más activa con el calvinismo europeo. Tales prejuicios se acentuaron en 1618 después del estallido de la crisis de Bohemia cuando lejos de apoyar al elector palatino frente al imperio de los Habsburgo, Jacobo I adoptó una posición neutral. El sentimiento anti-católico alcanzó su punto más álgido en octubre de 1623 después de que el príncipe Carlos llegara a Londres tras un viaje fallido a Madrid para conocer a su prometida. Muchos londinenses interpretaron su retorno como una victoria sobre España y pidieron un cambio en las relaciones anglo-españolas. Este artículo analiza el tratado político *Vox Regis* (1624), escrito por Thomas Scott, uno de los panfletistas anti-católicos más populares del momento. En esta obra, Scott desarrolla muchos de los argumentos que se habían utilizado en el parlamento de 1624 con la intención de convencer al monarca para que modificara su política religiosa y diplomática. Junto a la crítica anti-católica, el autor introduce un profundo debate sobre el papel de los ciudadanos en el gobierno y aboga por un modelo político más interactivo, en oposición a la defensa que se hacía desde la corona de doctrinas como la razón de estado y el derecho divino de los monarcas. De este modo, Scott vincula anti-catolicismo y conciencia cívica moldeando su discurso de acuerdo con la tradición humanista. Con ello anticipa algunas de las discusiones ideológicas que tuvieron lugar durante y después de la guerra civil inglesa.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Anti-catolicismo, el matrimonio español, conciencia cívica, Parlamentarismo, parlamento de 1624, modelos de monarquía.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The different models of monarchy existing in Early Modern England –mixed or constitutional, absolute, divine-right– have been a focus of analysis in recent scholarship, which has pointed out the contemporary debate on the nature of the monarchical institution and the varied opinions on the role of subjects –or citizens, if we talk in Republican terms– in the nation’s welfare. While some historians have observed a quasi-Republican thinking in Early Stuart England associated with a new interpretation of virtue and true nobility as an active moral commitment to the public good (Collinson, 2003; Norbrook, 1999; Peltonen, 1995; Zaller 2007), other scholars have stressed the use of those same ideas by authors often associated with Absolutism, such as Bodin or King James himself (Sommerville, 2007). Indeed, the common assumption that the Jacobean monarchy was influenced by continental Absolutism has been reconsidered by James Daly, Johann Sommerville, Glen Burgess and Paul Christianson, among others, who have also stressed the differences between absolutist thinking and divine-right theory (Burgess, 1996; Christianson, 1991; Daly, 1978; Sommerville, 2007). These different views, however, agree in one main point, that there wasn’t a general agreement on the nature of authority in Early Stuart England and that both the King and the Parliament often employed similar arguments to arrogate sovereignty.

Thomas Scott’s *Vox Regis* exemplifies this variety of views on royal and parliamentary authority. It supports many MPs’ contemporary demands for a more dynamic relation with King James and questions the monarch’s Absolutism in favour of a more limited model of kingship. It also quotes, paraphrases and comments on James’s interventions in the Parliament of 1624 in which he defended his prerogative from those members who questioned his foreign and religious policy. Though this section of the text is highly critical of the monarch’s words, it is significant as it presents a voice different from the author’s thus underlining the different notions of monarchy existing in the 1620s and the lack of consensus about them.

In this analysis of *Vox Regis*, special attention is paid to those disparate political opinions. Other texts by King James and some royalist authors that help illustrate Scott’s views are also considered. The article is organized into four sections. The first one offers a brief introduction to the socio-political context in which *Vox Regis* was produced, that is, at the culmination of Anglo-Spanish negotiations for the match between Prince Charles and the Infanta Maria of Spain. Some reference is also made to the Parliament of 1624 in which James’s foreign policy became the focus of attacks from many members who espoused a more belligerent attitude towards Catholic Europe. The means employed by King James to silence such criticism are considered as well. In section 2 a short summary of Scott’s life and the circumstances of the production of *Vox Regis* are introduced. Finally an analysis of the frontispiece and the body of the text is included in sections 3 and 4.

## **2. POLITICAL BACKGROUND: 1621-1624**

Charles's arrival from Madrid on 5 October 1623 was celebrated by many Londoners who understood it to be a providential sign in favour of Protestant England. Anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish feeling had increased among a large number of Englishmen, who now identified with the new Protestant heroes, Buckingham and the Prince of Wales. The general mood resulted in a new rigid enforcement of penal laws, allowing for the persecution of Catholics, who were now constantly abused by their fellow countrymen. At court, Buckingham and Charles became leaders of a "patriot" faction characterised by their anti-Spanish feeling. Despite the animosity that many of the "grandees" in this coalition felt for Buckingham, the Prince of Wales was able to persuade them to join the Palatinate cause (1) and counted on a new parliamentary session to dissuade James from any further alliance with Philip IV (Cogswell, 1989: 103-105).

In late February 1624 a new Parliament was expressly called to terminate the marriage negotiations and promote war against Spain. Charles assisted the Duke of Buckingham in his account of the events that had taken place during their trip to Madrid and managed to convince the Commons to provide funding for the war. However, many Lords believed that the country could not finance an offensive against the Spanish power (Kyle, 1998: 611), an opinion shared by King James, who was still trying to discuss the terms for a peaceful restitution of the Palatinate with Spanish diplomats. According to Professor Ruigh, James believed that the Parliament could help him with the negotiations, which explains why he had allowed them to debate his foreign policy (1971: 384). No doubt he was mistaken. Divisions regarding the kind of war England should enter, constant disagreements with the Stuart sovereign, who made clear he would not declare war until he had enough money to fight, and the prejudices of both the King and the Parliament about their respective prerogatives proved major impediments to Charles, Buckingham and most MPs' aims (Durston, 1993: 34-43; Russell, 1979: 145-203; Stroud, 1999: 30-37). Thus, their "idyllic" union proved a fiasco and sessions were delayed with no conclusions. On 29 May 1624 James dissolved the Parliament. Under his rule no war against Spain was ever declared.

Despite his apparent willingness to listen to the Parliament's counsel during the peak of the negotiations for the Spanish match (1621-1624), James tried to control public debate on his foreign and religious policy by issuing a number of proclamations against those people discussing matters of state. His concern about the public discussion of the match negotiations reveals the monarch's fear of violent repercussions such criticism could generate. In Professor Burgess's opinion, "Censorship did not function as an attempt to impose a uniformity of views or to prevent criticism of government policy. It was exercised in circumstances where words were likely to incite people to particular actions [...] It was exercised against, not words as such, but words used in contexts where they could create political and social disobedience" (1996: 7).

James's suspicions justified his determination to persecute anti-Catholic authors and publishers (Baron, 2001; Clegg, 2001; Cust, 1986), as well as his appointment of Sir Francis Cottington, well known for his pro-Spanish sympathies, as an authorizer of licensing and printing from 1621 to 1624. These measures were partly effective and though news about the Palatinate continued to appear, the tone was different and attacks against Spain or the Catholic Church were reduced (Clegg, 2001: 182).

This situation temporarily changed in 1624, when the new political mood generated by Charles's return from Spain and the calling of the Parliament allowed the publication of a significant number of anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic works, now promoted from court and parliamentary circles. The monarch soon showed his concern about such proliferation of anti-Catholic texts as he had not completely abandoned his diplomatic policy with the Spanish Habsburgs. In relation to this, the "Proclamation against seditious, popish, and puritanicall bookes and pamphlets" issued on 15 August 1624 showed the growing number of anti-match works circulating in London and James's desperate attempt to silence them (Larkin & Hughes, 1973: 599-600). Yet, despite his efforts to rule English public opinion, England's ideological polarization was a fact and the King's irenic attempts no longer seemed to be effective.

### 3. THOMAS SCOTT AND THE PUBLICATION OF *VOX REGIS*

Thomas Scott became extremely popular as a Protestant polemicist in the early 1620s. He had graduated in Divinity at the University of Cambridge in 1620 and had become rector of St. Saviour's in Norwich by the end of that year. His first work *Vox Populi* (1620), a satire against the Spanish Council, became a best-seller in London and prompted the persecution of its author, who escaped to the Netherlands where he acted as a preacher to the English army and as a minister at Utrecht (Kelsey, 2009). Backed by the Protestant faction at the English court supporting Frederick and Elizabeth of Bohemia, he published around twenty-five tracts in less than six years in which he claimed against the Habsburgs' policy towards the Elector Palatine and the Dutch. Despite his Presbyterian beliefs, Scott tried to depict himself as a spokesman of Protestantism in England thus appealing to a wide public dissatisfied with James's ecumenical measures.

*Vox Regis* was written and published in 1624 (2). Although it was printed in Utrecht, its numerous reports of Parliamentary proceedings may confirm Scott's contacts with leading politicians and his access to recent news –probably through letters and manuscript collections. In fact, this text incorporates some elements common in journalistic works or news pamphlets popular in these years. Scott, however, uses them not to inform his readership but to support his arguments in favour of a war against Spain. Its publication once the Parliament was dissolved explains its critical mood against the English sovereign, who, according to Scott,

had not kept his promise to his people. Hence, the attack against the match allows for political reflection on the role of monarchs and their interaction with their subjects. Above all, *Vox Regis* is a dissertation on the ideal government in which criticism of Anglo-Spanish diplomacy is given a secondary position.

#### **4. VOX REGIS: ITS FRONTISPIECE**

The author's idea of a perfect government is depicted in the frontispiece of the title page, organized in *motto*, image and text. The author illustrates Protestant England's unity through a vision of the English Parliament in which all political agents are represented. The King's word (*Vox Regis*) appears in the upper part of the image set above the members of his Parliament. His word is enhanced by some flames coming from above pointing to James's divine anointment. The monarch stands at the centre, sitting on the throne and surrounded by all regal symbols: a crown, a sword and a globe. Prince Charles, Elizabeth and Frederick of Bohemia are kneeling in front of him. Elizabeth appears between the two male figures with her arms spread in a demanding gesture. She and her husband seem to be waiting for James's assistance, while Charles mediates between them and their father. On the right side of the picture, a group of noblemen hold their swords ready to fight while a number of clergymen are praying opposite them. The Commons' loyalty and financial support to the Protestant project is symbolized by some standing figures holding hearts and purses in their hands (3).

With this image Scott refers to the formula of the King-in-Parliament, first employed by Henry VIII in order to defend the independence of the realm of England from Rome. According to this, the monarch was divinely anointed but his authority could not be understood without the Parliament. In Robert Zaller's words, "if the King's will could not be constrained by Parliament (any more than the will of either of its houses could be by the other), neither was it separate from it" (2007: 474). The Parliament was the place where the entire kingdom was represented; thus the monarch was contained in the Parliament as he was part of the realm. The frontispiece shows the Palatinate cause as common to all diverse groups; each of them appears to be ready to act as soon as the monarch allows them to do so. A decision contrary to the will of the rest of the Parliament would only underscore James's tyrannical behaviour as he would not be satisfying the will of the entire community but his own private interest.

No doubt the use of this political model in the frontispiece may have been disturbing for James I, who had insisted on the defence of his prerogative in the Parliaments of 1621 and 1624, both of which were extremely critical of his religious policy. In fact, according to Zaller, "since the Henrician reformation, Parliament or in Henry VIII's terms, King in Parliament, had assumed a special and implicitly providential role in the grounding, maintenance, and guidance of England's true church [...] When the care of the church seemed

neglected, Parliament had urged its cause” (2007: 611). Scott employs the King-in-Parliament model not only to persuade James to change his policy, but to remind him that if he does not do so Parliament will do it without him. Thus, behind the picture of an apparently harmonious kingdom the author introduces an implicit menace.

A number of biblical references are also suggested within the illustration, thus providing extra meanings. For instance, the two quotes below the phrase “Vox Regis” and the one above the image of the monarch have been taken from Ecclesiastes (Eccl. 9.10) and Proverbs (Prov. 27.1), which are relevant for their associations with King Solomon (4). Thus, James is indirectly linked to this Biblical model and is prompted to imitate two of Solomon’s three main virtues: wisdom and justice. His third attribute, peace, often used to justify his policy, is omitted and instead, the first two quotations encourage the King to act quickly –“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to doe doe it with thy might (Eccl. 9.10)” and “Presume not of tomorrow for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth (Prov. 27.1)”, which, in this context, can only mean to declare war on Spain.

Likewise, references to the *Book of Daniel* are significant as this work focuses on the monarchs of Israel and debates the question of true kingship. They may then introduce further iconographic constructions of the contemporary sovereign inherited from biblical models. In relation to this, David, one of the main characters in the book is indirectly inferred to be a mirror for James. Indeed, his priestly and regal functions are useful to justify James’s position as the head of the Church. The Stuart monarch –or the royal model Scott wants to promote– is then depicted as an embodiment of religious and political authority, defender of the English state and the Protestant faith.

Finally, the two quotations from the *Book of Judges* (Judg. 5.20; 5.9) reproduce the song of Deborah, a biblical prophet who inspired the Jews to fight the Canaanites. Hers is a song of victory, which supports the belligerent mood of the English Parliament and works as a harangue for its members. Moreover, Elizabeth I had often been associated with Deborah for her militant character against the enemies of the Church. Hence, the allusion to this biblical figure may work as a reminder of James’s duty as a champion of English Protestantism. The nostalgia for Elizabeth’s reign may convey some critical commentaries about the *rex pacificus*.

This criticism is also present in Scott’s “Letter to the Reader”, in which the pamphleteer develops a more conciliatory view of the king-subjects relationship based on mutual collaboration and sincerity. His discourse of frankness (5) reveals an attack on James’s absolutist tendencies and imparts the author’s deliberation on the Commonwealth’s need for good counsel. The monarch must know and be known by his people, listen to them and turn his words into action, as “the words of potent Princes use to be, or ought to be” (2v). This idea is suggested through the metaphor of the horse –the Commonwealth, which may harm the rider –the King– when out of control:

But some iudge it not fit that the people should know their Prince for fear of contempt (knowne things being contemned) or I wot not for what other danger; and these Machiavilians I suppose, using or abusing this comparison, would make the Prince believe (if they could) that his people were Horses in deed and that there were the same odds betwixt him and them, as there is betwixt the Rider and his Hackney. Wise princes know the difference though they use the comparison, and euen Horses will know the Rider by his feeding, dressing, hand, seate, and managing, or let him know they understand their owne strength to his trouble. Reason & Religion are the raines of this Bridle which gouerne the Inferior as long as they be kept in the hand of the Superiour; but being neglected by the one, they are straight reiected by the other, and the Rider exposed to the danger of an uncertaine course and a loose seate. (1r)

This metaphor had been employed by King James in *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (Edinburgh, 1598; London, 1603), with a quite different sense: "That better is to liue in a Common-Wealth, where nothing is lawfull, then where all things are lawfull to all men; the Common-wealth at that time resembling an vndanted young horse that hath casten his rider" (Sommerville 1994: 79). Hence, Scott's use of the horse-riding image, often a symbol of the King's political authority, is troublesome here as it conditions his royal power on his subjects. Its association with Alciatus's emblem XXXV, *In Adulatori Nescientem* (On one who does not know how to flatter) (6), similarly reinforces its admonitory tone by pointing to the consequences of misgovernment (7).

Scott's emphasis on sincerity and his defence of the subjects' active role in government reveal a clear, civic consciousness inherited from sixteenth-century humanism (8). According to J. G. Pocock, humanists developed their civic awareness by enhancing their role as counsellors to the king and defined counsel as an "individual capacity for participation in rule" (1995: 335). Moreover, Pocock associates this interpretation with the Aristotelian image of the citizen, mainly through his linking of ethics with politics (1995: 338-39). Scott frames his discourse against Catholics within this humanistic framework. Accordingly, he adopts his role as a counsellor to the English monarch as a sign of his patriotic commitment to good government in the Commonwealth. This is evident, for instance, in his defence of his most controversial work, *Vox Populi*: "I supposed it my duty, by all meanes to ioyne with the State, in disclosing the nests and couerts of these [English Catholics]. And therefore obseruing herewith the generall feares, discontents, and griuances of the best affected in the State, by reason of infinite disorders, which like weedes ouergrew all the good flowers of the garden, and gaue shelter and reliefe, to hide, and shadow these from the eye of Iustice" (2) (my emphasis).

Scott's arguments contrast with the opinions of many royalist authors, who criticized such debates on James's policy as assaults on his prerogative according to the Tacitean motif of *Arcana Imperii* (the secrets of the state). In their view, subjects cannot question the King's decisions, for they are inscrutable, which explains why they condemned anti-Catholic writings as rebellious works attacking the monarchy (Du Val, 1622: 52-53; Stradling, 1623: 6, 26, 32-

33; Thomas, 1622: 119; Tisdale, 1623: 10). Thus, Scott's inter-textual reference works within a discursive network in which both supporters and critics of the Spanish match not only discussed the advantages and disadvantages of an Anglo-Spanish alliance, but introduced further debates on civic action and freedom of speech.

## 5. *VOX REGIS*: THE BODY OF THE TEXT

The pamphleteer develops the ideas advocated in the frontispiece in the body of the text, which is arranged in two different sections. In the first one, the author discusses the virtues of a good king and casts a number of biblical figures to mirror the monarch. Scott equally focuses on his prophetic mission, which he derives from his duty as a citizen. In the second part of the pamphlet, he introduces a series of speeches by King James in the last Parliament with the intention of challenging the sovereign's policy.

Scott's assumption of a prophetic tone affirms his religious and political commitment (24-28, 42-43). His denunciation of the state's campaign against him emphasizes his spiritual authority and places the question of freedom of speech in a primary position. He insists that he is speaking the truth undeterred by persecution, which fuels further discussion on the danger posed by flattery and evil counsel when censorship is exercised: "Satan knows it concernes Princes especially to know truth; for that their example and command is great meanes to promote it. Therefore he labours to banish it from their presence, and to this end entertaines and armes his Pensioners (Flatterers, those tame Beasts, toothlesse Traytors) to stauie it off with many pretie pretences, colourable enough, being dyed deepe in Hypocrisie, Policie and Court-craft. So we see all men, especially Princes, loue to be praysed: and neuer suspect such as flatter them, though they would, if they should counsel them" (28). The dangerous figure of the flatterer is thus linked with courtly ambition and allows the author to distinguish between court and country values: "They must goe into the Countrey to heare the newes of the Court: because in the Court men dare not speak what they know, and what they ought, for fear of losing that preferment, which the Countrey-man lookes not after. And thus there is such a generall conspiracie against Plainenesse in such places, by reason of the necessarie dependencie that one man hath of another" (31-32).

The country is equated with purity, honesty and lack of self-interest whereas the court is portrayed as corrupt and impossible to regenerate. The courtly world becomes the scapegoat for England's problems mainly because of their alleged Spanish sympathies and relatively moderate view on Protestantism. The anti-Spanish Protestant faction at court is silenced in favour of a dualistic rhetoric that tends to associate country values to the English Parliament—more specifically, the House of Commons—and England's Commonwealth. Consequently, the Parliament is proposed as the only institution that can wisely counsel the monarch and so ensure stability, as "without this Council, the greatest Peere or Officer, yea, the greatest

profest Enginere in State stratagemes, may easily erre upon either hand, many degrees on good gouernment, and so fall into an Anarchy or Tyrannie” (63).

In relation to this, Scott states that Parliament must control the sovereign's actions particularly when a foreign danger might affect the nation. Memories of King John's defeat by foreign and papal forces are recalled to prevent similar conflicts: “Kings then cannot dispose of their crowns without their Peeres & peoples consent: and therefore that gift or resignation [of the Crown of England] is voyd. And as they cannot disposes of their Crowns, so not of their liberties” (12). Scott indirectly alludes here to the imperial character of the English monarchy first introduced into English political discourse by the Act of Restraint of Appeals (1533) which defended England's sovereign jurisdiction and independence from foreign powers. Nonetheless, this reference may also have been troublesome for Scott, as this act also pointed out that the monarch was answerable for his actions only to God. The pamphleteer, though admitting the divine right of the monarch in the frontispiece, says nothing here about his being accountable to English citizens, a point King James had explicitly refused, as it appeared in his work *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*:

The kings were the authors and makers of the Lawe, and not the Lawes of the kings ... the whole subiects being but his vassals, and from him holding all their lands as their ouer-lord, who according to good seruices done to him, changeth their holdings from tacke to feoff, from ward to blanch, erecteth new Baronies, and uniteth old, *without aduice or authoritie of either Parliament or any other subalterin iudiciall seate* [...] a good King, although hee be aboue the Law, will subiect and frame his actions thereto, for examples sake to his subiects, and of his owne free-will, *but not as subiect or bound thereto.* (*My emphasis*) (Sommerville, 1994: 73-75).

Scott not only challenges the King's absolutist interpretation of royal authority, but also accords political relevance to the lower classes: “Truth comes sometimes amongst the vulgar, with whom I conversed. And as Famine is felt first by the Poore; and Frost strikes the Valleys, when higher grounds scape free: So euen the Commons are they, where the disorders of a State & the mischiefes approaching are first felt, and soonest discerned. As Kings are for these, so Kings from these may gather the best and most certain intelligence of their Domesticke affaires” (18). This populist reading of contemporary politics explains his portrait of the good monarch and his emphasis on a discourse of mutuality with his subjects: “Thus on both sides they seemed to haue forgot their duties: the Kinge his, to respect and tender them; the People theirs, to obey him. For the dutie of Prince and people are recipocall: and though no man will or can excuse a people, or iustifie their disobedience (their obedience being of absolute necessitie) yet there may be causes to prouoke them to disobedience, which all wise Princes haue euer shunned carefully; desiring to giue them contentment; though in giuing it, they crost their owne iudgements” (33).

The author complements this paternalistic view of the monarch by a new parallel with King David, who was compelled to punish his rebellious son Absalom and administer justice

(1 Sam 19.5-8) (33). David's commitment to his public duties is presented as a model for James to emulate, for the King, according to Scott, must preserve his public responsibilities over his private needs. A family metaphor is introduced to attack his heir's marriage to a Catholic princess which is viewed as an unnatural act against his subjects. Images of strangeness are evoked to emphasize England's spiritual ruin if the Catholic match prospered: "Princes are married to the Commonwealth & the wife hath power of the husbands body, as the husband of hers: the Common-wealth then hath power of the prince in this point. Their Wiues are to be as Mothers to euerie subiect. And were not he a Foole, that would not desire a Naturall Mother, rather then a Step-Mother? Queenes ought to be nursing Mothers to the Church: Who then would seeke a dry-Nurse, that might haue another?" (13-14). However, Scott's focus may have been redirected here to Anglo-French negotiations, as Charles would end up marrying the Catholic Henrietta Maria one year later.

The second part of the text is quite different in style. Instead of discussing good government and civic duty, Scott now proffers a more objective way to criticize James's alleged political irresponsibility. By using a journalistic technique, he includes apparently faithful reports of the 1624 parliamentary proceedings in order to show that the monarch had not fully kept his word. In this sense, the author considers the most relevant parliamentary interventions with regards to Spain and English Catholics (9). His quotation and commentaries on these interventions by the end of the pamphlet allow an apocalyptic reading of Protestant England's final union against the Papist enemy:

For here, whilst our Ship tost aloft, as high as the Cloudes, saw nothing but Rockes of ruine to light on, and we poore Passengers expected death, and in death what Fish would swallow us & vouchsafe to be our Graue, Tombe, and the Monument of our Miserie, behold a calme, and the sweet sound of that Trumpet, which bad our hopes, and a new Parliament, arise together from the dead. This day seemed then a shadow of the Last, when the Arch-Angell and Trumpe shall proclame a generall Resurrection, and summon the guiltie to appeare at the Barre of Iustice, reuiuing the faithfull, to lift up their heads towards Glorie. (49)

The allusions to the Last Judgement place the 1624 Parliament as the conclusion of England's providential history, according to which Protestants would finally be rewarded. In fact, the motif of the sinking boat had traditionally been used by Protestant emblem authors, such as Stephen Bateman and Georgette de Montenay, who had also interpreted it as a symbol of divine help in moments of distress (Bateman, 1569: N3r; Montenay, 1609: 74-76). The writer's possible allusion to Alciatus's emblem XLIII, *Spes Proxima*, similarly promotes an optimistic vision of contemporary domestic affairs (10). Scott's commentary on James's new conciliatory attitude also supports this potentially happy resolution: "Before this change none could moue him, all humane applications were as if men set their shoulders to a Rock: Nay all endeavour this way, procured more violent and resolute opposition: But now his heart is

moued by God, it moues him, and he moues them, who would but could not moue him before, wils them to make hast, and to be swift in their motion, therby to make amends for former delaies” (50-51).

Nevertheless, this picture may not be used to confirm but to promote a real change of attitude and James's commitment to the patriot cause. For instance, references to disagreements about money and the type of war they wanted to fight are unavoidable (58-59), while sometimes the speeches are not fully transcribed but paraphrased or simply cut off thus revealing Scott's deliberate attempt to suppress some disturbing elements in them –Scott decided to omit the part where James refers to his commitment to recover the Palatinate by peaceful means in his intervention on 8 March, and there is no single allusion to many members' reluctance to declare war despite the general anti-Spanish sentiment in both Houses. Hence, a sense of mutual mistrust cannot be silenced:

And my Lords and Gentlemen, you all shall be my Counsellors that one way or other it hath beene my desire to hinder the growth of Poperie: and I could not be an honest man if I should have done otherwise; And this I may say farther, that if I be not a martyr, I am sure I am a Confessor: and in some sense, I may be called a Martyr also, As in the Scripture Isaack was persecuted by Ismaell by mocking words. For never King suffered more by evill tongues then I have done, and that I am sure for no other cause, and yet I have bin far from persecution. For I have euer thought, that no way more increaseth any religion then persecution. (64)

James's objection to prevailing debate on his policy contrasts with Scott's civic awareness. The King's defence of his peaceful methods clashes with the pamphleteer's previous description of his persecution. James's tolerant attitude to Catholics and his reluctance to accept the parliamentary petition may reveal some sacrifice to placate his people, but not an honest conviction. Scott's only gloss on his text expressly points to such upsetting elements. His references to the Theory of the Two Churches (11) and his allusions to the Antichrist, two topics which had been censured since 1620 (Fincham & Lake, 1985: 198-199), represent a challenge to the monarch's authority and influence the reader's interpretation of the King's words thus exposed as deceitful or mistaken.

The pamphleteer's words of envy and, to some extent, admiration for the devotion of English Catholics to their cause reveal Scott's disappointment with moderate Protestants and his doubts about England's spiritual regeneration: “This is their aduantage, and our disaduantage, that they dare doe any thing for the good of their Religion, though the Lawes, and King, and God be against them; and we dare doe nothing for ours, though both Law, and King, & God be with us” (72). His final appeal to James's wisdom and justice endorses the text with a circular structure that evokes its initial image of union (74). This is the ideal to emulate, but Scott's admonitory and resentful tone prevents any optimistic reading and encourages readers to face obstacles.

## 6. CONCLUSION

To sum up, Scott's work aims to debate new religious and political models. In fact, his attack on Spain and the Spanish match licensed further reflections on the interaction between the King and his subjects and the citizens' direct involvement in foreign and domestic affairs. According to Scott, anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic measures may be considered a victory over absolutist tendencies, which justifies his civic and moral commitment to publish works that may contribute to promoting such policies. His implicit references to Henry VIII and Elizabeth I, as monarchs who had committed themselves to the defence of England's Protestant imperial character, may also be interpreted as attacks against James, a foreign king who, in Scott's views, did not seem to share or understand England's laws and customs.

This may also explain his dangerous portrait of King James as a monarch who had failed to keep his promises to his subjects. For a king who had promoted himself not through visual imagery but through his own words and texts, such a denunciation meant not only that he had been dishonest to his people, but that his royal image was merely an empty façade. The frontispiece and the title of the text, *Vox Regis*, can then only be interpreted ironically, since far from enhancing the King's word, they despise it. Scott's popularity implies that an important number of Englishmen shared this iconoclastic view of royalty, which explains why a Stuart king would be beheaded only fifteen years later.

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## NOTES

1. In May 1618 the Bohemian estates had rebelled against their King and future Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand II and had asked Frederick V, Elector Palatine, to accept the crown of Bohemia. Despite his father-in-law James I of England's advice against such a proposal, Frederick accepted thus challenging the Habsburg power. The Catholic league led by Spain supported Ferdinand against the Protestant rebels who were defeated at the Battle of White Mountain on 8 November 1620. Frederick lost Bohemia and was banished from the Rhine Palatinate. He and his wife Elizabeth went on exile abroad and became popular emblems of European Protestantism (Pursell, 2003).
2. A second enlarged edition of this work was published in Utrecht in 1624; this version is the one analyzed here.
3. In the poem explaining the frontispiece, the Commons offer "Purses, Tongues, Hands and Hearts", which may be revealing as it emphasizes their commitment to the military project by means of their taxes, actual fighting and public defence of the war (tongues). The public debate on James's foreign policy is defended as a sign of loyalty and one more way to be involved in the national prospect. To some extent, this commentary anticipates Scott's defence of civic action later in the pamphlet. The author also employs here four elements traditionally used in royal entries to

- symbolize the subjects' loyalty to their sovereign and the monarch's commitment to their demands. Such is the case, for instance, of Elizabeth I, who was offered "tongues and hearts" in her passage through London the day before her coronation. Hence, a new parallel between the Tudor queen and King James might be implied here.
4. Ecclesiastes was attributed to Solomon, while Proverbs is divided into eight sections, three of which are also attributed to him. Besides, the hypothesis that Solomon compiled the book is plausible as he was known to have uttered proverbs and made his court a centre of wisdom (Livingstone, 2006).
  5. According to the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, the oldest surviving Latin book on rhetoric written in the first century BC, "it is Frankness of Speech when, talking before those to whom we owe reverence or fear, we yet exercise our right to speak out, because we seem justified in reprehending them or persons dear to them, for some fault" (vol. IV, xxxvi, 48, 439). In David Colclough's opinion, this "strategy of presenting what the speaker defines as necessary frankness [is] an antidote to questionably manipulative or devious rhetoric" (2005: 27-28). See Colclough's work for an exhaustive analysis of the discourse of frankness and its connection with contemporary demands for freedom of speech.
  6. Daly and Callahan translate this emblem as follows: "Do you wish to know why the region of Thessaly so often changes masters (dominus) and seeks to have different leaders (dux)? It does not know how to flatter (adulor), or to cajole anyone, a custom (mos) which the court (regia) of every prince (princeps) observes. But like a high-spirited steed (sonipes) it shakes from its back every groom (hippocomus) who does not know how to control (modero) it. However it is not proper for a lord to vent his rage; his only vengeance (ultio) is to order the beast (fera) to suffer a harsher bridle (lupata)".
  7. Scott's apology of popular sovereignty contrasts with the opinion of some contemporary absolutist thinkers who defended James's absolute and perpetual power. For instance, Sir Thomas Fleming, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, stated in 1608 that the monarch's power "hathe no lawe to dyrecte him: he is absolute in warre & peace, & maye Commaunde the subjecte to goe whither he pleaseth" (Hawarde, 1894: 362-63). His words, as many other absolutists', were inspired by Jean Bodin's *The Six Bookes of the Common-weale*, in which he condemned any attempt to arrogate the monarch's sovereignty: "For it is not lawfull for any man-lying of himselfe to inuade the soueraigntie, and to make himself maister of his fellowes, what colour of vertue or iustice soever they pretend" (1894: 218-19).
  8. Professor Moulakis defines this civic humanism as "a variant of Republicanism indicating active, participatory, patriotic citizenship as well as the ethos and educational idea that goes with it". The concept first referred to a political line of philosophy arising in Renaissance Florence, and later used to denote a Republican tradition reaching back to Greece. It finally came to indicate a "political idea opposed to both Classical liberal and authoritarian views of politics" (2002).
  9. These interventions are "The King's Answer to Advice of Both Houses, concerning Treaties with Spain" (51-54), the King's "Declaration to both Houses of Parliament" read on 25 March (55-59), the "Petition against Popish Recusants" issued on 5 April and the King's answer to it on 24 April (61-66). For the full documents, see History of Parliament Trust 1802.
  10. In his emblem XLIII, Alciatus presents this same image of a ship about to sink in a storm. Daly and Callahan translate it in the following terms: "Our state (respublica) is buffeted by countless storms (procella), and there is only one hope (spes) for its future safety (salus); and not unlike a ship (navis) in the midst of the sea (aequor) which the winds (ventus) snatch, it is already breaking up in the salt water. But if the shining stars (sidus), the brothers (frater) of Helen –Castor and Pollux- should appear, good hope restores the sinking spirits (animus)". Geoffrey Whitney's emblem *Constantia Comes Victoriae* (Perseverance a Companion of Victory) allows for a similarly optimistic reading, and emphasises the need to be patient in difficult times (Daly, 1988b: 137).
  11. This theory was elaborated by John Bale and his followers in the sixteenth century. It distinguished two opposed churches which had run parallel throughout history, "one persecuted, but true [the Protestant church], the other false, but powerful [the Catholic church]" (Patrides & Wittreich, 1984: 93-94).

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