

Majesty and Music in Royal Worship: The English Chapel Royal, 1558–1625

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This article revises interpretations of the post-Reformation English Chapel Royal as a place for the performance of ‘conservative’ or ‘traditional’ forms of the Book of Common Prayer and establishes its importance as a space for negotiating Protestant royal worship. By detailed analysis of the sound and appearance of royal chapels under Elizabeth I and James VI & I the Chapel Royal is emphasised not for its anticipation of a Laudian ascendancy, but its sensitivity to the ceremonial boundaries of the reformed Church of England, and ability to negotiate a form of Protestant majesty in royal worship.

The Chapel Royal dominated the visual and aural religious culture of the post-Reformation English court. As the ecclesiastical institution responsible for the daily liturgical observances of the royal family, household and courtiers, the ‘ceremonious Protestantism’ of the Chapel Royal was a regular feature of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English court life.¹ It was also crucial in resolving the crisis of the post-Reformation English court: how could a doctrinally Calvinist monarchy

BL = British Library, London; *JBS* = *Journal of British Studies*; TNA = The National Archives

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¹ Simon Thurley, *Palaces of revolution: life, death and art at the Stuart court*, London 2021, 202.

engage with a ceremonial and 'Catholic' European ritual landscape? Elizabeth's negotiation, and James's continuation, of the sonic and material aspects of royal worship between the demands of Protestant churchmen and councillors and the levels of visual and aural majesty required of an early modern court provided a crucial point in the articulation of the royal supremacy and the ritual performance of reformed English monarchy.

The early modern Chapel Royal is best known for fostering a protective musical culture and maintaining an especially magnificent (and occasionally controversial) performance of liturgy and ceremony.² The silver-gilt cross placed on the communion table of Elizabeth's royal chapels in the 1560s, polyphony of English church music sung by the Chapel Gentlemen and choristers and altar-wise communion table are all familiar to students of the post-Reformation Church. Set against the Calvinistic ideal for a church interior of whitewashed walls, dismantled organs and metrical psalms, Chapel Royal worship appears especially 'conservative' in its performance. Scholars such as Bryan Spinks and Simon Thurley have associated the ceremony of Chapel worship with the policy of church beautification proposed by proto-Laudian churchmen like Lancelot Andrewes (chapel dean between 1618 and 1626) and Richard Neile (Clerk of the Closet between 1603 and 1633).³ By making a closer examination of the musical and visual aspects of worship in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal, this article will contextualise the apparently proto-Laudian changes to royal chapels implemented in the late 1610s and 1620s in a broader pattern of continuity in Protestant royal worship, negotiated from Elizabeth's accession.

The importance of ceremony to the articulation of royal power and establishment of political legitimacy has long been recognised, and arguments have been intricately developed and nuanced since the memorable formulations of Clifford Geertz (that 'power served pomp, not pomp power') and Norbert Elias, who argued for the role of ceremonial in bolstering royal authority and limiting the autonomy of nobles.⁴ Analyses by Malcolm Smuts, Dries Raeymakers and Jeroen Duindam have emphasised the instability of these ceremonial power relations, described by Duindam as a 'constant tug of war between the various groups and segments within the elite, in which the monarch frequently tried to achieve an equilibrium

² Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The later Reformation in England, 1547–1603*, Basingstoke 1990, 25; Patrick Collinson, *Elizabethan essays*, London 1994, 113.

³ Bryan Spinks, 'Durham house and the chapels royal: their liturgical impact on the Church of Scotland', *Scottish Journal of Theology* lxxvii/4 (2014), 379; Simon Thurley, 'The Stuart kings, Oliver Cromwell and the Chapel Royal, 1618–1685', *Architectural History* xlv (2002), 239.

⁴ Clifford Geertz, *Negara: the theatre state in 19th century Bali*, Princeton 1980, 13; Norbert Elias, *The court society*, trans. Edmund Jephcott, Oxford 1983, 42.

that placed him outside of and therefore above other parties'.⁵ The Elizabethan and Jacobean court has often been characterised as a contest between Puritan critics and 'Anglican' defenders of the institutional Church, in which the monarch's agency has been greatly contested.⁶ Anthony Milton has argued that in Charles I's Chapel Royal this ceremonial space did not act as a meeting-ground for a diverse range of theological opinion or as a theatre of 'royal sacramentalism', but rather a space which could be controlled by ceremonial traditions, where defences of reverence to the royal person and to God's represented divinity in ecclesiastical space might awkwardly meet with one another.⁷ This article extends these arguments to understand how the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal offered a potent symbolic space for negotiation and compromise with 'hotter' Protestant voices within the Church of England, and those who expected a continuation of pre-Reformation Tudor majesty.

Since the 1990s, assessments of religious culture at the Elizabethan and Jacobean court have undergone important revisions. Peter McCullough has provided a detailed illustration of the patterns of court sermons, emphasising how anti-Catholic sermons (under Elizabeth) and militant Protestant preachers (under James) were part of a pattern of rhetoric designed to bolster the royal supremacy.⁸ Meanwhile, Kenneth Fincham, Nicholas Tyacke and Margaret Aston have illustrated the variation of iconoclastic concern among English Protestants and the material consequences of this change.⁹ Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis have recently emphasised the importance of temporal and spatial contexts and patronal identities to Protestant objections regarding religious images in public and domestic worship.¹⁰ Similarly, the soundscapes of Protestant England

⁵ Malcom Smuts and George Gorce, 'Introduction', in Marcello Fantoni, George Gorce and Malcom Smuts (eds), *The politics of space: European courts, ca. 1500–1700*, Rome 2009, 25; Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks, 'Introduction: repertoires of access in princely courts', in Dries Raeymaekers and Sebastiaan Derks (eds), *The key to power? The culture of access in princely courts, 1400–1750*, Leiden 2016, 12; Jeroen Duindam, *Myths of power: Norbert Elias and the early modern European court*, Amsterdam 1994, 194.

⁶ See Nicholas Tyacke, 'Anglican attitudes: some recent writings on English religious history, from the Reformation to the civil war', *JBS* xxxv (1996), 139–67.

⁷ Anthony Milton, "'That sacred oratory": religion and the Chapel Royal during the personal rule of Charles I', in Andrew Ashbee (ed.), *William Lawes (1602–1645): essays on his life, times and work*, Aldershot 1998, 84–5.

⁸ Peter McCullough, *Sermons at court: politics and religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean preaching*, Cambridge 1998, 97.

⁹ Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars restored: the changing face of English religious worship, 1547–c.1700*, Oxford 2007, 354; Margaret Aston, *Broken idols of the English Reformation*, Cambridge 2016, 816

¹⁰ Tara Hamling and Jonathan Willis, 'From rejection to reconciliation: Protestantism and the image in early modern England', *JBS* lxii/4 (2023), 946.

have also undergone reassessment: Willis has emphasised the local diversity of parish and cathedral worship, and Katherine Butler has recognised the political and diplomatic significance of private and public music-making at the Elizabethan court.¹¹ This article builds on these works, and clarifies the congregational experiences of Chapel Royal worship in order to emphasise the importance of the process of aural and visual negotiation with commentators within and without the established Church of England in reaching an acceptable (or at least tolerable) form of Protestant majesty.

At its broadest function, the Chapel Royal was the body of singing-men and priests who said and sang divine service for the monarch and their household, and travelled with them on progresses, albeit in reduced number.¹² Its tapestries, vestments and plate often travelled with the court, though larger items, like the controversial cross, could remain *in situ*, as during the summer of 1559.¹³ Constitutionally, the Chapel Royal was as part of the royal household, similar to a royal peculiar and therefore exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, answering solely to the monarch. It was distinct from other royal peculiars such as St George's Windsor (where there also existed a private chapel within the royal apartments) and Westminster Abbey, but frequently exchanged personnel and performed joint services. Court chapels, meanwhile, were the physical spaces occupied by the Chapel Royal while the monarch was in residence.¹⁴ On James's accession to the English throne, the Scottish Chapel Royal continued in Holyrood, though it was institutionally distinct from its English counterpart. This article is primarily concerned with English court chapels, especially their provisions for musical performance and the appearance of the sanctuary, which formed the main visual point of congregational focus.

Unlike the churches of Protestant magistrates in the city states of Zurich and Geneva, or the electoral court chapel of the Palatinate from the 1560s, the English Chapel Royal had to meet the ceremonial requirements of an anointed monarch alongside the expectations and influence of reform-minded Protestants. As such, royal liturgical practice was full of contradictions. Elizabeth and James's protection and patronage of religious artwork and music were enshrined by their injunctions (like Elizabeth's prevention of unofficial iconoclasm in 1560) or their theological writings (James was 'no Iconomachus', according to his 1609 *Premonition to all most mightie monarches*), to the frustration of iconoclastically-minded bishops and leading

¹¹ Jonathan Willis, *Church music and Protestantism in post-Reformation England: discourses, sites and identities*, Abingdon 2010, 57; Katherine Butler, *Music in Elizabethan court politics*, Woodbridge–Rochester, NY 2015, 80.

¹² Dustin M. Neighbors, "'With my ruling': agency, queenship and political culture through royal progresses in the reign of Elizabeth I", unpubl. PhD diss. York 2017, 178.

¹³ Aston, *Broken idols*, 749.

¹⁴ Milton, 'That sacred oratory', 69.

ministers.¹⁵ By treating the musical and visual culture of the Chapel Royal separately, with sensitivity to the distinct theological objections of reformers to excessive musical and visual splendour in worship, and the various points at which such complaint was vocalised in the six decades under analysis, an attentively contextualised image of this apparently contradictory royal institution will be established.

The first half of this article will consider the sonic performance of services in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel, with an exploration of contemporary views on the role of church music from commentators within and without the Chapel, the practical provision of music-making accoutrements and music's ceremonial function. It will not consider surviving compositions but less regularly discussed aspects of the sonic enhancement and direction of chapel services and occasions of state. The second half will assess the visual and material accoutrements of the sanctuaries of English court chapels, recognising their aural context and examining how the appearance of the communion table might be negotiated, how religious images in cloth and glass might be altered, and the importance of the royal body to the performance of Protestant royal worship. By analysing these two important sensory aspects of liturgy and ceremony at the post-Reformation court, the appearance and sound of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal will be established to have been part of a carefully negotiated and constructed form of Protestant royal worship, continued and monitored throughout both monarchs' reigns, rather than something only heightened in response to warming diplomatic relations with Spain and the advent of proto-Laudian churchmen.

The sounds of royal worship

The sound of worship in English court chapels was designed to meet the expectations of majesty for the divinely appointed Governor of the Church of England. The choir of the Chapel Royal, some thirty-two men strong from the mid-sixteenth century, was the largest and best funded institutional-liturgical body of singing-men and priests in England. Though smaller than its Spanish (forty men in 1580), French (forty-three men in 1612) and Danish (forty-seven men in 1588) counterparts, it frequently impressed visiting travellers and diplomats.¹⁶ For example,

¹⁵ *Tudor royal proclamations, II: The later Tudors (1553–1587)*, ed. Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, London 1969, 146–7; James I, *The works of the most high and mightie prince, James by the grace of God king of Great Britaine, France and Ireland, defender of the faith &c.*, London 1616 (RSTC 14345), 303.

¹⁶ Pablo L. Rodriguez, 'The court chapels of the Spanish line: from King Philip II to King Charles II', in Andrew H. Weaver (ed.), *A companion to music at the Habsburg courts in*

the four Venetian envoys visiting England in 1575, forbidden from attending due to the hardline position on non-attendance of Protestant services preached by post-Tridentine Catholic authorities, instead gathered around the door of the royal chapel in the royal apartments at Windsor to hear the service inside.¹⁷ This music was, however, objectionable for a number of ‘hotter’ Protestants within the Church of England, and much of the contemporary commentary on church music has been quoted by historians and musicologists at length as evidence of a hostile culture against the frivolity and splendour fostered at court.

Most Protestant complaints about church music focused on the clarity of the word. As the 1572 *Admonition to parliament* declared, ‘organes and curious singing’ (polyphonic music: multiple voice parts singing multiple texts) threatened to detract from congregations’ understanding of God’s word, and should be forbidden.¹⁸ Such opinions were not always marginal: only seven years earlier, polyphonic music and organs escaped a church-wide ban in the Convocation of 1563 by only one vote.¹⁹ However, views on church music could take individual courses. William Whittingham (elder of the Geneva congregation, a leading figure in compiling the Geneva Bible and dean of Durham cathedral between 1563 and 1579) was, according to his contemporary biographer, ‘very carefull to provide the best songs and anthems that could be got out of the Queen’s Chapel to furnish the quire withall, himself being skillfull in musick’.²⁰ Given Whittingham’s hostility to vestments (a matter over which he was willing to be deprived, though he died before this could happen), his employment of a Chapel Royal repertory indicates that he was happy to conform on other matters. The performance of Chapel music at Durham is also witnessed in *Dobsons drie bobbes* (1607), the memoirs of a chorister during Whittingham’s incumbency as dean. The author recalls how, amongst a series of misadventures, he used the fictitious arrival of music manuscripts ‘with a diversitie of descant, lately set forth by Maister Bird Doctor of our Arte’ to summon his truanting peers back to the cathedral to secure the

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Leiden 2020, 100; Peter Bennett, *Music and power at the court of Louis XIII: sounding the liturgy in early modern France*, Cambridge 2021, 56; John Bergsagel, ‘Music at the Danish and Swedish courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries’, in E. I. Jouri and Jens E. Olesen (eds), *The Cambridge history of Scandinavia*, Cambridge 2016, 620–1.

¹⁷ *Calendar of state papers and manuscripts existing in the archives and collections of Venice, and in other libraries of northern Italy*, ed. Rawdon Brown and G. Cavendish Bentinck, London 1890, vii. 525.

¹⁸ *An admonition to parliament*, Hemel Hempstead 1572 (RSTC 10847), sig. Bvr.

¹⁹ Stephen Bicknell, *The history of the English organ*, Cambridge 1998, 44.

²⁰ ‘Life of Mr William Whittingham, dean of Durham, from a MS. in Anthony Wood’s collection, Bodleian Library’, in May Anne Everett Green (ed.), *The Camden miscellany*, London 1870, iv. 23.

favour of the singing-master.²¹ The transmission of compositions by Chapel Gentlemen to provincial cathedrals during the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century was a well-established practice.²² However, if some of the music heard in Elizabeth's Chapel was acceptable to a Calvinist minister, we might further reconsider just how elaborate the service music heard by courtly congregants was in post-Reformation England. By exploring the language, style and ceremonial function of the music heard in Elizabeth's and James's Chapel Royal, this section will illustrate how an increasing emphasis on the clarity of the word, an appreciation of ceremonial function and the potency of royal patronage produced a form of sonic royal worship largely acceptable even to 'hotter' Protestant ears, like those of Dean Whittingham.

The services of the post-Reformation Chapel Royal were sung exclusively in English.²³ There is no record that the *Liber precum publicarum Ecclesiae Anglicae* (1560) was used in the Chapel Royal, only the 1559 Book of Common Prayer. The Latin compositional output of Chapel Gentlemen was more likely intended for private Protestant (or perhaps crypto-Catholic) devotional purposes in elite households. Spiritually conservative noblemen provided most of the financial backing for Thomas Tallis and William Byrd's collection of Latin motets, *Cantiones quae ab argumento sacrae vocantur* (1575), for example.²⁴ Exclusively English music at services in the Chapel Royal is confirmed on several occasions. The earliest example of this is found in 1565, when the earl of Sussex was required to translate the 'hymns and anthems' for the Habsburg envoy, Baron Adam Zwetkovich, at a 'special choral service': something that would not have been required had the music and prayers been in Latin.²⁵ This occasion, though part of the failed marriage match between Elizabeth and Archduke Charles II, might have also offered a subtle diplomatic opportunity, allowing Sussex, a chief proponent of the match, to provide a generous gloss on the Prayer Book service. At the 1601 Epiphany service at Whitehall, similar arrangements were made for a visiting Florentine

²¹ Anonymous, *Dobsons drie bobbes: sonne and heire to Skoggin*, London 1607 (RSTC 6930), 88.

²² John Morehen, 'English church music', in Roger Bray (ed.), *Music in Britain: the sixteenth century*, ii, Oxford 1995, 96.

²³ Latin sermons were heard on the two recorded visits of Christian IV of Denmark, but services appear to have been in English: 'Calendar of sermons preached at court during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, 1558–1625', digital supplement to McCullough, *Sermons at court*, 128.

²⁴ Denis Collins, "'Discomfit them, O Lord, that trust in their own multitude": a new editorial approach to the Tallis-Byrd cantiones sacrae', *Musicology Australia* xxviii/2 (2016), 173.

²⁵ Victor von Klarwill, *Queen Elizabeth and some foreigners: being a series of hitherto unpublished letters from the archives of the Hapsburg family*, trans. T. H. Nash, London 1928, 234.

nobleman, Duke Virgino Orsini, and the Russian envoy Grigori Mikulin. Orsini and Mikulin sat in the royal closet (a richly decorated, raised and enclosed gallery-pew divided into the monarch's side and the consort's side by a partition, with windows, at the west end of English court chapels), having received special invitation to see 'how in our religion we pray to God, and how in our country the Communion service is sung'.²⁶ During the service, officers of the closet explained to Mikulin, who was sitting in the consort's closet (and presumably also Orsini, in the monarch's) that the choir was 'singing the Psalms of David'.²⁷ While Orsini was made to do public penance in the Duomo on his return to Florence, public moments of Anglo-Florentine diplomatic intimacy may have helped to further encourage reports of the break down of a Spanish-Florentine alliance, and the growing intimacy of the city-state with Henri IV's France, to which England was also allied.²⁸ English services continued under James, and similar translation services were likely carried out by courtly officers for the visiting Spanish, French and Polish ambassadors to the St George's Day services of 1615, 1616 and 1620.²⁹ While ensuring the understanding of all English Protestant attendees and therefore meeting any concerns regarding the translation of services and the Gospel, the use of English in the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal also clearly had great diplomatic potential, heightened by the spatial intimacy of the royal closet.

Amidst the range of commentaries on church music produced by early modern Protestants, a series of instructive reflections are found in the writings of Gentlemen of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal. *A plaine and easie introduction to practiccall musicke*, by Thomas Morley (Chapel Gentleman 1589–1602), urged church singers, through a didactic dialogue, to 'study how to vowel and sing clean, expressing their words with devotion and passion whereby to draw the hearer ... to the consideration of holy things'. Morley's Master continued: 'leaving out the ditty (words) and singing only the bare note' will 'show the nature of the music but never carry the spirit'.³⁰ Such a view reflected the same emphasis on textual clarity with a degree of controlled elaboration expressed by Richard Hooker, whose ideal was that music in worship 'drowneth not [the words] utterly, but fitly suteth with matter altogether sounding to the prayse of God'.³¹ Jacobean Gentlemen expressed similar views:

²⁶ Leslie Hotson, *The first night of Twelfth Night*, London 1964, 188.

²⁷ *Ibid.* 189.

²⁸ *Ibid.* 212.

²⁹ John Finett, *Finetti philoxenis*, London 1656 (Wing F.947), 25, 34, 79.

³⁰ Thomas Morley, *A plaine and easie introduction to practiccall musicke*, London 1597 (RSTC 18133), 179.

³¹ Richard Hooker, *Of the laws of ecclesiasticall politie: the fift booke*, London 1597 (RSTC 13712.5), 76.

Richard Allison (Chapel Gentleman between 1589 and 1609/10) echoed the view of ‘that auncient Father Martin Luther’, that ‘there is no Arte comparable with Musicke’ and that, like theology, it could produce a ‘quiet and chearefull minde’.³² If Allison does not comment on musical style, his concern with the affect of church music illustrates a continued awareness of the importance of suitable music in worship, echoing the fears of ‘hotter’ Protestant critics.

One such critic, who found preferment to the Chapel Royal by the early 1590s, was Anthony Anderson (Gentleman from 1591 and sub-dean of the Chapel between 1592 and 1593). Twenty years earlier, Anderson declared in 1573 that the sort of music ‘with all its chaunting notes and changing keyes, is farestranged from the good like of god’. Rather, liturgical music should be in ‘hart and mouth joyned in one consent of grateful harmonie’.³³ Anderson warned, with reference to Matthew xv.8, that inappropriate emphasis on musical technicality might lead God to believe that ‘This people worship me ... with their lippes, but their hartes are fare from me.’³⁴ As sub-dean, Anderson would have been responsible for selecting service music, in discussion with the Chapel organist and Master of the Children.³⁵ While a degree of variation is identifiable between Anderson and some of his colleagues regarding the positive potential of more elaborate musical-liturgical settings, and his views on church music may have shifted, a shared concern with the clarity of the text and an appropriate balance between voice and instrument is nevertheless identifiable. With other liturgical establishments undergoing greater investment in their musical provisions around the 1590s, emphasis on the clarity of the text provided an important common ground for those men involved in the administration of the Chapel Royal and performance of its services to negotiate musical compromises and satisfy their shared theological concerns.

Despite the absence of any service lists for the repertory of the Chapel Royal under Elizabeth or James, some conclusions regarding musical style can nevertheless be drawn. The 1560s saw a period of musical experimentation, when composers sanitised pre-Reformation texts and recycled melodies to sufficiently furnish Prayer Book services. Although several services and anthems were provided for the 1549 and 1552 services under Edward, this *corpus* relied as much on new works, like Thomas Tallis’s short and textually distinct anthem *If ye love me*, as it did the *contrafacta* of

³² Richard Allison, *An howres recreation in musicke, apt for instrumentes and voyces*, London 1606 (RSTC 356), sig. A2r.

³³ Anthony Anderson, *An exposition of the hymne commonly called Benedictus*, London 1574 (ESTC 567), sig. Aivr.

³⁴ *Ibid.* sig. Avr.
³⁵ *The cheque books of the Chapel Royal, with additional material from the manuscripts of William Lovegrove and Marmaduke Alford*, transcription and ed. Andrew Ashbee and John Harley, Aldershot 2000, i. 82.

men like Thomas Causton, who set pre-Reformation melodies by Chapel colleagues John Taverner and Thomas Tallis, and contemporary French chansons, to English biblical texts.³⁶ Other recycled melodies have been noted by Edmund Fellowes, who speculated that the lessons intoned in cathedrals and the Chapel Royal by the Epistoler and Gospeller (usually selected from among the junior singing-men) may have retained the same inflexions as the Sarum Rite, the familiar intonation offering textual clarity and recognition alongside the sonic power of sung English phrases compared with the idiosyncrasies of the spoken word.³⁷

Although much of the precise detail regarding the content of Chapel services is yet unknown, caution should be exercised before dismissing the possibility of Causton's settings having been used in royal worship, as some musicologists have done by evidence of their smaller number of voices or technically 'inferior' settings.³⁸ Although the Chapel Gentlemen totalled thirty-two and choristers twelve, it was exceptionally rare for all the men and boys to attend services at the same time. Most services, even those on Sundays, would have seen around fifteen to twenty men present, possibly fewer, according to the monthly rota of attendance formalised and codified in 1603, but presumably employed earlier.³⁹ This small number would have been further decreased by lateness and unexplained absences, though it is possible that this trend was decreased by the introduction of fines of between 4*d.* and 2*d.* in 1603/4, with provision made for the sub-dean to fine any truant Gentleman as he 'shall thinke fit to laye upon him'.⁴⁰ Pieces with fewer voice parts than one might expect may have also been performed at significant state events. For example, John Mundy's three-part setting of Psalm ciii, 'Blessed art thou that fearest God', was heard at Anna of Denmark's churching in 1605, indicating the continuity of aural emphasis on the clarity of the sung text from the 1560s into James's reign.⁴¹ Although congregational associations may have differed in each of these contexts, between familiar melodies of pre-Reformation sacred music (some composed by the Gentlemen of the Chapel themselves) and assertions of Stuart dynasty-making after the successful delivery of the first royal child born in England for nearly seventy years, congregations would have been struck by the textual clarity of the

³⁶ John Milsom, 'Causton's contrafacta', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* cxxxii/1 (2007), 4, 19. For an account of the stylistic development of Chapel music see Peter le Huray, *Music and the reformation in England, 1549-1600*, Cambridge 1967, and Peter Philips, *English sacred music, 1549-1649*, Oxford 1991.

³⁷ Edmund Fellowes, *English cathedral music from Edward VI to Edward VII*, London 1941, 21-2.

³⁸ Milsom, 'Causton's contrafacta', 2, 26.

³⁹ Larger numbers were seen at coronations and the funerals of sovereigns, when numbers of Gentlemen present could reach thirty-three, as at Anna's funeral in 1619: TNA, LC 2/5, fos 44v-45r.

⁴⁰ *The cheque books*, i. 111-12.

⁴¹ *Ibid.* i. 96-7.

music, performed by men alert to the theological dangers of miscalculating the balance of instrument and voice in divine service.

Chapel services were also public theatres of royal display and majesty. Instrumental to enhancing the drama of royal ceremonial was the use of the Chapel organ and court musicians. The ‘fine organ mainly of gilt silver with large and small silver pipes’, recorded by the Bavarian nobleman Lupold von Wedel at Hampton Court in 1585, had a counterpart in each royal chapel. Also attracting a considerable degree of controversy during the early 1570s (when, beyond complaint in the *Admonition to parliament*, ‘hotter’ Elizabethan bishops ordered cathedrals like Lincoln and Peterborough to limit the performance of organ music, or removed the instrument altogether, as at Worcester in 1560), the organ also played a key role in state ceremonial.⁴² Although organs accompanied the choir during solo sections of verse anthems and certain services, the chapel organ (alongside instrumentalists, usually viols, cornets and sackbuts) is regularly noted in isolation from voices during extraordinary services.⁴³ It was only ‘after the music’ that ‘a prayer was offered by a bass singer’ for the royal family at the 1623 ‘Spanish Match’ solemnisation.⁴⁴ At Anna’s 1605 churching, unaccompanied full anthems were sung before and after the sermon, and it was only after the second anthem that ‘an Offertorye [was] to be played’.⁴⁵ Similar patterns of instrumental ‘framing’ can be seen in Elizabethan royal ceremonial: John Bull played the offertory at the Easter communion service in 1592 as Elizabeth processed to her traverse in order to receive the eucharist.⁴⁶ No other organ music is recorded in sub-dean Anderson’s account of the service. Instead, organs (and other instruments) appear to have largely fulfilled a ceremonial function: framing liturgical action with splendid blasts and bows from pipes and strings, alongside their musical role of pitching the choir and accompanying solo voices during the performance of verse anthems.

A striking example of simultaneous voice and instrument at a Chapel service is recorded at the 1565 christening of Edward Fortunatus, son of Princess Cecilia of Sweden and Christoph Marquis of Baden, when the service was ‘begun by the Gentlemen of the Chapel and the Cornets’.⁴⁷ Beginning services with a sudden blast of instrumental or vocal sound was typical of Tudor and Stuart royal ceremonial, though it is significant

⁴² Stephen Bicknell, *The history of the English organ*, Cambridge 1998, 49.

⁴³ John Harper, ‘Sonic ceremonial in sixteenth-century English liturgy’, *British Institute of Organ Studies* xxxv (2011), 17.

⁴⁴ Michael Caspar Lundorp, *Laurea austriaca*, Frankfurt 1627, 773.

⁴⁵ *The cheque books*, i. 96–7.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 55.

⁴⁷ John Leland, *De rebus Britannicis collectanea*, ii, ed Thomas Hearne, London 1770, 691.

that accounts of later occasions note the absence of the choir. At the 1623 ‘Spanish Match’ solemnisation, the ‘musick of the Organs without voices’ was used to herald the arrival of James and the Spanish ambassadors, stopping once they entered the chapel, with James making his way to his traverse in silence, and all congregants’ eyes focused on the royal and ambassadorial bodies.⁴⁸ The inverse of this dramatic utilisation of instrumental music was witnessed at the only English royal baptism of Elizabeth’s or James’s reigns, that of Princess Mary at Whitehall in 1605. The canopied royal child was processed through the royal apartments in ‘generall silence, neither voyce nor Instrument was heard in the way’. When the procession reached the doors of the court chapel, and the child was received by the dean of the Chapel and archbishop of Canterbury, ‘[a]t the same instant did the Organest beginne and continew playing aloude until the Child was placed in the Traverse’.⁴⁹ This was an adaptation of pre-Reformation Tudor ceremonial, which ordered that when the christening finished, ‘[a]ll the torches shalbe lighted. The Trompettes shall blowe. The Chappell shall syng as it hath byn accustomed in that case’.⁵⁰ While simultaneous voice and instrument was regularly heard in performance of verse anthems in chapel services, moments of sharp sonic distinction between instrument and voice could be used to potent dramatic effect. Although the poor survival of accounts of Chapel services necessitates some caution, the pressures on organ music during the 1570s may have represented an important crisis point, prompting a negotiated shift in Chapel ceremonial culture designed to magnify and frame the ceremonial action while going some way to meet the musical and theological anxieties of contemporary Protestants within courtly circles.

The sights of royal worship

The sanctuary was the most visible and theologically sensitive space in the post-Reformation Chapel Royal. While the retention of an altar-wise communion table framed by pre-Reformation glass (at least at Whitehall and Hampton Court), and adorned with silver gilt plate, including a cross in the early years of Elizabeth’s reign, might suggest traditional impulses, contextualised analysis of the appearance of some key aspects of the chapel sanctuary helps to revise this view. By viewing the sanctuary as a ‘cooperative and complete environment’, something informed equally by the contextualised contributions of visual and aural features, this section helps to further revise predominating over-statements regarding the

⁴⁸ TNA, SP 14/149, fo. 33r

⁵⁰ BL, MS 71009, fo. 28r.

⁴⁹ *The cheque books*, i. 94.

‘conservatism’ of the post-Reformation Chapel Royal.⁵¹ Rather than a space preserving relics of the old religion, where a cross was maintained, as Patrick Collinson claimed, until at least 1586, Elizabeth and James carefully deployed religious accoutrements, art and the royal body in their Chapels Royal to reconcile critical tensions over the question of appropriate visual (and aural) splendour in sacred spaces, even in the context of a royal chapel.⁵²

The controversy over the Chapel cross began at the end of 1558, when a range of prominent churchmen, from moderates who conformed under Mary to recently returned Genevan exiles, petitioned Elizabeth for its removal. In the summer of 1559, Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury-elect, appealed ‘honestly to the queen, for divers reasons to remove them [the cross and candlesticks]’, and Richard Cox, bishop of Ely, ‘dare[d] not minister in your grace’s chapel, the lights and the cross remaining’.⁵³ Cox preached ‘with trembling conscience’, and reminded his twenty-five-year-old queen that God ‘forbade both the making of images, and the worshipping of them also’.⁵⁴ These objections, and a disputation on the matter held in the January of 1559/60, had some impact: though the cross remained, Elizabeth melted or sold 8,907 ounces of pre-Reformation and Marian church plate in 1560, a move equally appreciated by the cash-strapped English treasury.⁵⁵ Only three crosses remained in the jewel-house thereafter, weighing 106, 73 and 22 ounces respectively. Only one of the crosses (the smallest) was ‘wanting the crucifix’, as recorded in 1559. The larger two had crucifixes at least in 1559–60, and the largest was ‘broken’ by 1574.⁵⁶ The damage was likely sustained during the controversy of the 1560s, in either 1562 when Robert Dudley removed the cross and candlesticks, or in 1567 when the cross was removed for the last time, indicating the extent to which the appearance of Elizabeth’s crosses could depend on the violent outbursts of her godly courtiers.⁵⁷

On 25 October 1567, ‘an Englishman’ (thought to be Patch the fool, acting on Sir Francis Knollys’s orders) cast the cross and candlesticks from the communion table, for which he was eventually pardoned (‘being mad’) though Elizabeth maintained a smaller cross in her

⁵¹ Katherine D. Scherff, *The visual liturgy and ritual artifacts in medieval and early modern studies*, London 2023, 12.

⁵² Collinson, *Elizabethan essays*, 113.

⁵³ Strype, *Annals of the reformation*, i/1, 260.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.* i/2, 500–1.

⁵⁵ *Jewels and plate of queen Elizabeth I: the inventory of 1574, edited from Harley MS. 1650 and Stowe MS. 555 in the British Museum*, ed. A. Jefferies Collins, London 1955, 24.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.* 307.

⁵⁷ *The Zurich letters*, ed. Hastings Robinson, Cambridge 1842, i. 173.

closet.⁵⁸ By 24 December 1567, the cross was ‘not again erected in the Chapel, but a piece of tapestry with a crucifix, some candlesticks and salvers were placed on the altar’.⁵⁹ This remained the scheme of Chapel worship until 1642, though the tapestry was not always present, and its subject might vary. Although Parker’s complaint to William Cecil, written on 6 February 1570/71, that courtly gossip suggested that he might ‘think it expedient [that] it [the cross] should be restored’ has traditionally been read to suggest the brief return of the cross in 1570, Parker’s use of the future subjunctive ‘should be’, alongside his unclear syntax elsewhere in the letter, suggests that the cross was not restored at Whitehall following its removal in 1567.⁶⁰ The removal of the cross, at a time when England ceased to entertain Lutheran alliances or the prospect of a Habsburg marriage alliance, not to mention the wider ‘hardening’ of attitudes towards the cross from the 1570s, marked by a series of punishments for recusants in possession of the offending item, highlights the unbearable sensitivity of the matter.⁶¹ Further, the fact that the cross was not removed by royal order, but individual action (though the precise motivations and orders behind this activity remain unclear), reveals some of the limits of monarchical agency in negotiating the devotional space of the Chapel Royal.

Although Elizabeth’s acquiescence with this order relieved many of her courtiers and churchmen, memory of the cross remained potent. In 1582, fifteen years after it was removed, and by which point anti-Catholic persecution had rapidly increased in England, the Jesuit Gregory Martin pointedly asked his Protestant readers whether it was idolatry ‘when the Crosse stood many yeres upon the Table in the Queenes Chappel’.⁶² Although the Puritanical William Fuller separated his 1585 treatment of this ‘foule idoll’ from his assault on the images ‘of the Trinity, the Saints, and Apostles’ in Elizabeth’s Chapel Royal, indicating that controversial reactions to the offending item were not entirely silenced by Elizabeth’s acquiescence, the silence of figures closer to the central establishment indicates the moderate success of this policy of negotiation in placating episcopal and conformist commentators.⁶³

⁵⁸ *Calendar of letters and state papers relating to English affairs, I: Reserved principally in the archives of Simancas*, ed. Martin A. S. Hume, Cambridge 1892, 682; Peter Heylin, *Cyprianus Anglicus*, London 1668 (Wing H.1699), 15.

⁵⁹ *Calendar of letters*, 690.

⁶⁰ *Correspondence of Matthew Parker, comprising letters written by and to him, from A.D. 1535, to his death, A.D. 1575*, ed. John Bruce and Thomas Thomason Perowne, London 1853, 378; John Strype, *The life and acts of archbishop Matthew Parker*, London 1711, 310.

⁶¹ Aston, *Broken idols*, 772.

⁶² Gregory Martin, *A discoverie of the manifold corruptions of the holy Scriptures by the heretikes of our daies specially the English sectaries*, Rheims 1582 (RSTC 17503), 50.

⁶³ *The second part of a register*, ed. Albert Peel, Cambridge 1915, ii. 53.

The tapestry erected over the communion table of English court chapels appears in brief flashes of splendour throughout James's reign. While it is not again recorded in detail under Elizabeth, in 1611 a 'cloth of gold, with a cross and some fine effigies of our Saviour and Saints' was set up behind the communion table during the Garter service held at Windsor chapel.⁶⁴ It is unclear how often the passion was depicted during Chapel services, though it seems to have been popular enough for a new tapestry to be commissioned in 1621, as revealed by Sir Thomas Knyvett's much quoted memorandum that an order had been made for the 'amaking' of a 'silver crucifix to ... hange' in Whitehall chapel.⁶⁵ Although further details about the commission have not yet been found, it is likely that the item was ordered in anticipation of the Spanish match, and the quality of visual worship expected of a royal court hosting a Habsburg princess. The passion was not the only religious scene to hang behind the Chapel communion table. In 1613, Whitehall chapel was decorated with 'very riche hangings, conteyning a part of the storie of the Actes of the Apostells' for the wedding of Elector Frederick of the Palatinate and Princess Elizabeth.⁶⁶ Though identifying the tapestry is difficult, the Henrician set of the life of St Paul (purchased in 1538–9 for £3,095) seems a likely candidate, offering a particularly fine (and expensive) Pauline counterpoint to the Petrine threat of Rome, complementing the Protestant marriage alliance taking place below.⁶⁷ An indication of the regularity with which Chapel tapestries were changed is indicated in William Prynne's *Canterburies doome* (1644). While Prynne's citation of Sir Henry Mildmay's testament was mistaken in claiming that Charles I's erection of a crucifixion tapestry over the Whitehall communion table 'was never there used since King H. the 8. his Reigne', it is significant that this claim could be readily accepted by men who likely experienced, or at least heard about, the appearance of the Jacobean Chapel Royal.⁶⁸ Partly indicative of the selective memory of Parliamentarians, Mildmay's report also indicates how James (and perhaps Elizabeth) may have utilised the flexibility of tapestries containing religious images in their court chapels, reserving them for particular state occasions and displays of courtly splendour.

The substitution of a gilt cross for a crucifixion scene (and other biblical scenes) depicted in metal thread was a master-stroke of royal negotiation

⁶⁴ *Calendar of state papers relating to English affairs in the archives of Venice*, ed. Horatio F. Brown, London 1905, xii. 236.

⁶⁵ *The Knyvett letters (1620–1644)*, ed. Bertram Schofield, London 1949, 56.

⁶⁶ *The cheque books*, i. 172.

⁶⁷ Thomas P. Campbell, *Henry VIII and the art of majesty: tapestries at the Tudor court*, New Haven 2007, 238.

⁶⁸ William Prynne, *Canterburies doome*, London 1646 (Wing P.3917), 68.

which simultaneously met Protestant anxieties and heightened articulations of English royal wealth and majesty. By the end of the sixteenth century, and beginning of the seventeenth, a more tolerant position regarding the presence of religious images in places of worship was openly articulated by clerical and lay commentators. While moderation was encouraged, Richard Hooker declared in 1597 that Christians had biblical precedent to 'build and bewtifie these corruptible Sanctuaries [so that] the deerely redeemed soules of the people of God may be edified'.⁶⁹ Writing regarding gentry chapels and lay patronage in 1612, Henry Peacham distinguished between religious images which were 'ad Historicum usum' (for historical use, and therefore safe), and 'ad cultum' (to worship, and therefore idolatrous).⁷⁰ Although these views were not mainstream in the 1590s, the increasing number of Calvinistic churchmen who were willing to fund church beautification by the 1620s, such as bishop John Williams of Lincoln, reveals how such investments in the Chapel Royal might be explained as acceptable and appropriate. The fact that such a change appears to have largely placated Elizabeth's ministers and councillors in the 1570s, however, is a significant shift which has not received as much attention as the continuing complaint of 'hotter' Protestants like William Fuller. The deployment of Henrician tapestries in the Chapel Royal allowed Elizabeth and James to offer a regulated range of devotional images to their councillors, bishops and courtiers, which were sufficiently splendid to also permit participation in a European-wide courtly culture of display. Only by the tighter redrawing of confessional boundaries in the 1630s and '40s were tensions surrounding these tapestries given explosive expression, in which Chapel Royal practice became a convenient example of precedent or scandal.

The windows of post-Reformation English court chapels were filled with pre-Reformation glass, which received royal protection until their destruction in 1649. While Elizabeth's protection of stained glass in 1560 is usually cited as an example of her affinity for the art form, James's support is often cited at the end of his reign, with his defence of Bishop Samuel Harsnett of Norwich's renovation of the windows at St Peter Mancroft as 'nothing but the Pictures of the Apostelles and such like as I have in myne owne chappell'.⁷¹ While James's explicit support of parochial church beautification may have been heightened by his increased enthusiasm for material conformity in both kingdoms after his 1617 progress to Edinburgh, his preference for stained glass in a royal context is found in an earlier and more surprising example. Between Michaelmas 1603 and 1604, 5s. was paid to Leonard Fryer, Sergeant Painter, 'for the washing and cleansing of the picture of o[u]r ladie in the Chappell' at

⁶⁹ Hooker, *Of the laws of ecclesiasticall politie: the fift booke*, 25.

⁷⁰ Henry Peacham, *Graphice: or, The most auncient and excellent art of drawing and limming*, London 1612 (RSTC 19508), 12.

⁷¹ BL MS Harleian, 59, fo. 136r-v.



Figure 1. Nuremberg School, 'Design for an English perpendicular window (Vidimus)', Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art, Edinburgh (unknown date).

Whitehall.⁷² As Margaret Aston has reminded us, 'cleansing' an image often referred to the process of removing whitewash from a window, which was formerly applied to obscure or 'spot' church images to meet iconophobic concerns.⁷³ At some point during her reign, Elizabeth decided to whitewash the Whitehall chapel east window. Though the precise date of this is lost in the frequent payments made to the royal glaziers for general whitewashing found throughout the Elizabethan works accounts, iconophobic pressures clearly extended beyond concerns over the gilt cross, and moved Elizabeth

⁷² TNA, E 351/3239.

⁷³ Aston, *Broken idols*, 630.



Figure 2. Reconstruction of the Hampton Court chapel east window: Hilary Wayment's identification of panels in his 'Twenty-four vidimuses for Cardinal Wolsey', *Master Drawings* xxiii/xxiv/4 (1985/6), 503–17, 569–87; Workshop of Erhard Schon, 'Album of twenty-four watercolour vidimuses', *Musees Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels*, Inv. 1868 (unknown date), plates 5, 6b, 7, 16a, 16b–c, 17a–c.

to alter the appearance of her court chapel more than has been previously realised.⁷⁴

Whitehall and Hampton Court Palace chapels maintained finely applied crucifixion scenes in their east windows until their destruction at the hands of Parliamentarians in 1645.⁷⁵ Two sets of related vidimuses have been identified by Hilary Wayment as intended for York Place (later Whitehall) (see [Figure 1](#)), and Hampton Court (see [Figure 2](#)).⁷⁶ The only recorded changes to these scenes were made in 1536, when at Hampton Court the figures of SS Anne and Thomas Beckett were removed, owing to the political and religious winds of change in the late Henrician court.⁷⁷ Other figures, including a

⁷⁴ TNA, E 351/3200–38.

⁷⁵ Hilary Wayment, 'Wolsey and stained glass', in S. J. Gunn and P. G. Lindley (eds), *Cardinal Wolsey: church, state and art*, Cambridge 1991, 121.

⁷⁶ Idem, 'Twenty-four vidimuses for Cardinal Wolsey', *Master Drawings* xxiii/xxiv/4 (1985/6), 506, and 'Wolsey and stained glass', 118.

⁷⁷ Idem, 'Twenty-four vidimuses', 508.



Figure 3. ‘Illustration of his majesty in England signing the Spanish Marriage treaty, 1623’: Michael Caspar Lundorp, *Laurea Austriaca*, Frankfurt 1627.

cardinal (Wolsey) and St Peter wearing a triregnum (both in the east window), and God the Father, also with a triregnum, crowning the Blessed Virgin Mary (on the south side), would likely also have been removed, owing to their incompatibility with expressions of the Royal Supremacy. Likewise, the four figures in each corner of the Whitehall window (clockwise: St Peter, St Paul, St Thomas Beckett and St William of York) may have been altered and replaced by more suitable figures. James’s 1603–4 alteration to the windows in Whitehall chapel included 40s. paid to Leonard Fryer for inserting a superscription and ‘altering a picture in the Chappell and made it Joseph’ indicating a possible targeted amendment of the east window.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the remaining images proved conveniently splendid visual accompaniment to the aural and material majesty witnessed elsewhere in English royal chapels. Alongside the more obvious points of royal image-making, such as the king, queen and princess at prayer in the lower left-hand side of the east window of Hampton Court, the religious scenes themselves could be utilised in politically fraught moments of diplomatic encounter. According to an account of the 1623 ‘Spanish Match’ solemnisation ceremony, held in Whitehall chapel, and shown in the accompanying engraving (see Figure 3), after the articles had been sworn and the service had ended, James showed the Spanish ambassadors

⁷⁸ TNA, E 351/3239.

the windows depicting the passion and the Virgin, declaring them ‘witnesses that I will fulfil what I have done and promised’.⁷⁹ Though this anecdote is found in a retrospective account, the rest of the passage accords with contemporary eye-witness reports, and the exchange indicates that James understood the potential of this religious artwork to form a common confessional understanding to further aid his diplomatic endeavours for an Anglo-Spanish marriage alliance. James’s more explicit encouragement of religious images in and out of royal worship might, in the context of his earlier restoration of the Virgin in Whitehall window, not only be taken as evidence of the self-confidence of a theologian-king, but a significant shift in the visual culture of the Chapel Royal. Though anathema for Puritanical commentators, and therefore something Elizabeth appears to have lived in tension with, James’s willingness to emphasise this important visual aspect of royal worship helps to further revise conceptions of James as a monarch disinterested in religious artwork and hopeless at diplomatic negotiation, revealing instead the importance of the Chapel Royal in emphasising James’s particular brand of sacred and secular kingship.

More important to the visual culture of the Chapel Royal than the mimetic depictions of religious scenes in metal, fabric and glass, was the presentation of the royal body. For most courtly or civic congregants who experienced Chapel worship, the monarch would have only occasionally been witnessed at extraordinary ceremonies, services of state or communion days, which occurred around four times a year.⁸⁰ Those standing in the ante-chapel could see the sanctuary and quire (potentially obscured, depending on the position of the observer, their height, the height of those around them and the yeomen of the vestry who guarded the passage into the body of the chapel), but not the royal closet. The royal closet was an elaborately decorated royal pew, raised above the antechapel, with a direct view of the sanctuary below.⁸¹ The facade was only visible to those seated in the chapel stalls, which comprised the Gentlemen of the chapel, gentlewomen seated by rank on the three forms of the southern (decani) stalls, and men on the northern (cantoris) stalls, with bishops and earls on the third form, barons and viscounts on the second and privy councillors and officers on the first (see Figure 4).⁸² The physical elevation of the monarch and their presentation to only those of high rank, mirrored the stratified forms of access recorded in the Solomonic tabernacle, and provided a direct secular counterpoint to the traditional sacral associations of the east end. James was particularly keen to enhance these Solomonic associations. His redecoration of Stirling

⁷⁹ Lundorp, *Laurea Austriaca*, 773.

⁸⁰ Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 43; McCullough, *Sermons at court*, 71.

⁸¹ In Scotland, the monarch did not sit in a royal closet, but a chair of estate, directly beneath the pulpit: McCullough, *Sermons at court*, 28.

⁸² Fincham and Tyacke, *Altars restored*, 43; McCullough, *Sermons at court*, 71.

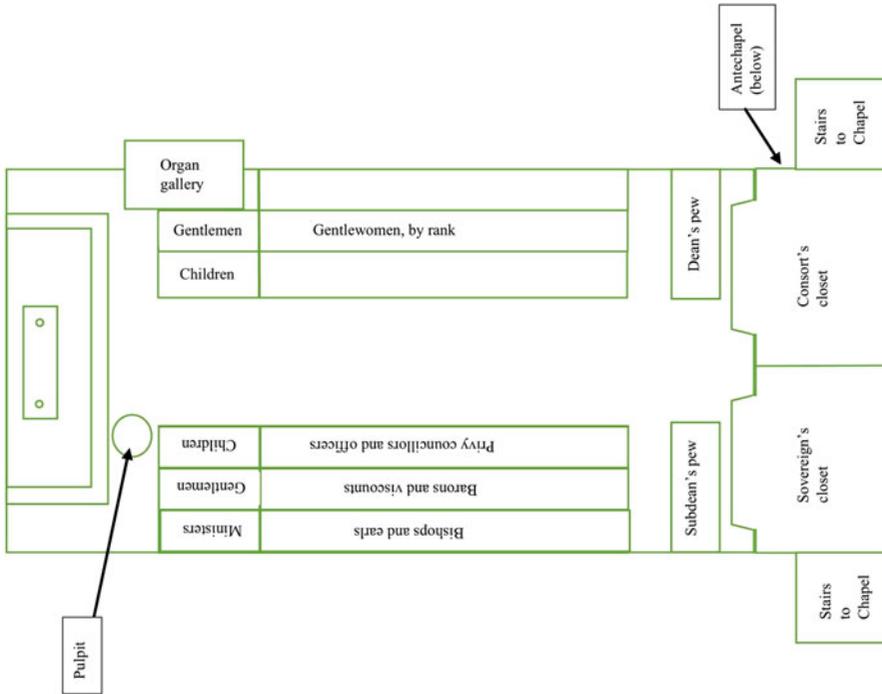


Figure 4. Conjectural plan of the Chapel Royal, based on that of Peter McCullough, *Sermons at court*, 15.

Chapel for the baptism of Prince Henry in 1594 was an explicit emulation of the proportions and icons described in Ezekiel xli.15–20, and his later renovation of the Greenwich chapel closet in 1623–4, moving its heterodox setting on the north (monarch's) and south (consort's) sides and decorating the new facade with gilt cherubs bearing palm leaves above five gilt and engraved columns, reveals how the appearance of the royal closet could be co-opted to suit individual monarchs' stylistic associations.⁸³

Framed by bright colours, Tudor iconography and the royal arms, only visible to those of higher status, the monarch's body was transformed into a visual reminder of the royal supremacy and was only occasionally brought into the full view of the congregation. The monarch would, during ceremonies of state or communion services, process from their closet and take their place underneath a 'traverse', according with

⁸³ James Sherrington Jago, 'The dissemination and reassessment of private religious space in early modern England, 1600–1660', unpublished PhD diss. York 2012, 44; TNA, E 351/3257; William Fowler, *A true account of the baptism of the most high and mighty prince, Henry Frederick*, Leith 1764, 4; Ian Campbell and Aonghus Mackechnie, 'The "Great temple of Solomon" at Stirling castle', *Architectural History* liv (2011), 91.

customary displays of honour and personal reverence granted to secular rulers. This form of royal display, highlighted in Henrician processions and Caroline dining practices, was especially effective in drawing congregational attention towards the royal body.⁸⁴ One example is found at Easter 1593, when Elizabeth, kneeling under her traverse, showcased her ‘holy aspect’ to ‘mighteye adde comforts to the godly beholders’.⁸⁵ The spectacle of the monarch receiving communion was sufficiently diverting to provide pickpockets like John Selman (who was apprehended on Christmas Day 1611, as James was receiving the eucharist) with the opportunity to work the courtly crowds.⁸⁶ Positioned at the east end, an active participant in the divine service, and granted further honour and visual focus by the presence of a red or gold velvet canopy, the monarch provided a further legitimising quality to the surrounding religious images and music otherwise regarded as controversial or unacceptable by their semi-sacral presence and carefully monitored appearance and style.

The musical and visual culture of the post-Reformation Chapel Royal was defined by its negotiations of the tensions between the expectations of material and sonic splendour in royal worship, and the iconophobic anxieties of prominent Protestant churchmen and courtiers. This did not create, as some histories of the English Reformation have suggested, a precursor to Laudian church beautification, but rather a carefully negotiated compromise which simultaneously controlled and limited the style and presentation of sacred music and religious art, while maintaining the sufficient standard expected of a princely court claiming international significance through finely tuned services and anthems and the timely deployment of richly embroidered tapestries. Though heavily contested in the 1560s, debates over the sound and appearance of Chapel worship began to settle by the 1580s after Elizabeth reached an uneasy compromise with her leading churchmen and Protestant councillors, and a more mature post-Reformation culture of visual and musical royal worship was allowed to develop.

This article has also highlighted some of the problems with viewing the late 1610s and early 1620s as a watershed moment for the Chapel Royal. Although James might have indicated a more explicit interest in a marriage alliance with Spain and begun to renovate his court chapels, care must be

⁸⁴ Fiona Kisby, “‘When the king goeth a procession’: chapel ceremonies and services, the ritual year, and religious reforms at the early Tudor court, 1485–1547”, *JBS* xl/1 (2001), 61; J. S. Adamson, ‘Introduction’ to J. S. Adamson (ed.), *The princely courts of Europe: ritual, politics and culture under the ancien régime, 1500–1750*, London 1999, 30.

⁸⁵ *The cheque books*, i. 55.

⁸⁶ *The arraignment of John Selman, who was executed neere Charing-Crosse the 7. of January, 1611*, London 1611 (RSTC 22182a.5), sig. B3r.

exercised before suggesting proto-Laudian influences. A far broader and more tightly contested relationship characterised the sound and appearance of Elizabeth's and James's Chapel Royal, in which the influence of churchmen, including the dean of the Chapel, seems to have been part of a more complicated balancing act of expectations, rather than the somewhat simplistic shift between Calvinistic to 'avant-garde conformist' impulses in 1617–18. Although individual court chapels might receive alterations to their fabric, these changes were often associated with broader developments in the performance of liturgy in the Chapel Royal, effected by the semi-itinerant nature of the Tudor and Stuart court.

The sounds and sights of the Elizabethan and Jacobean Chapel Royal were not designed to placate Catholic commentators, nor were they emphasised to oppose Protestant nonconformist enemies of the royal supremacy. Rather, Elizabeth undertook, and James continued, the project of navigating an expression of royal worship based on forms of pre-Reformation Tudor ceremonial, which could respond to contemporary concerns and criticisms within the framework of direct royal authority. This did not mean that criticisms enacted instant change, but rather formed a continuing relationship between council, commonwealth and crown in which the sonic and material accoutrements of royal worship could find points of compromise acceptable (or tolerable) to at least the monarch, their council and prominent members of their court and episcopate. This occasionally necessitated broaching new theological ground by action rather than finely tuned theology and could at times break out into moments of open dispute, but Elizabeth and James nevertheless found forms of royal worship which suited their tastes and habits, while also meeting the expectations of splendour and majesty central to the early modern European court.