

Chapter 8

‘Thy sceptre to a trident change / And straight, unruly seas thou canst command’: Contemporary representations of King Charles I and the Ship Money Fleets within the cultural imagination of Caroline England.

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‘Thy sceptre to a trident change / And straight, unruly seas thou canst command’ is a central image from one of the most opulent court masques of the 1630s, *Britannia Triumphans*.¹ Performed at Whitehall on Sunday 7 January 1638, Charles I himself took the chief masquing role of Britanocles, the glory of ‘the Western World, [who] hath by his wisdom, valour and pietie, not onely vindicated his owne, but farre distant Seas, infested with Pyrats’ (Masque Argument). Devised by Inigo Jones, Surveyor of the King’s Works, and William Davenant, Poet Laureate, *Britannia Triumphans* appears to validate Charles I’s well-documented ambition to develop the navy into the most ‘potent’ force ‘for defence, offense, and diversion of any in the Christian world’.² As John Taylor, the ‘Water Poet’, so memorably observed, the nation’s ships were ‘the impregnable Wooden walls of great *Brittaine* and *Ireland* ... the winged flying and floating Castles, forts and fortifications for defence against forraigne invasion & domesticall rebellion’.³ During the 1630s, Charles I made every effort to bolster the navy’s ‘floating Castles’, culminating with the *Sovereign of the Seas*, launched the year before *Britannia Triumphans* was staged. This flagship was lauded by Thomas Heywood in his *True Description of His Majesties Royall and Most Stately Ship* as an ‘incomparable structure’ which ‘hath made an inimitable president for all the *Kinges and Potentates* of the *Christian World*, or else where’.⁴

Charles’s objective was to enhance England’s imperial standing and secure the coast from multiple threats of piracy, rapacious Dutch fishing fleets, and the ultimate fear of invasion,

¹ William Davenant and Inigo Jones, *Britannia Triumphans* (1638) in *Inigo Jones: The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, ed. by S. Orgel and R. Strong, 2 vols (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1973), II, pp. 660-704, ll. 525-6. Subsequent references to this masque will be within the essay and refer to this volume; quotations in italics are as in the text.

² B. W. Quintrell, ‘Charles I and His Navy in the 1630s’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 3.2 (1988), 159-79, (p. 167); see also N. A. M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660-1649* (London: Penguin, 2004, first published 1997), Chapters 26-7.

³ John Taylor, *A Valorous and Perillous Sea-Fight* (London: 1640), p. 44. On Taylor’s life and work, see Bernard Capp, *The World of John Taylor, the Water-Poet, 1578-1653* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

⁴ A. R. Young, *His Majesty’s Royal Ship: A Critical Edition of Thomas Heywood’s ‘A True Description of his Majesties Royall Ship’* (New York: AMS Press, 2006), p. 17.

embodied by the living memory of the Spanish Armada.⁵ Accordingly, as this essay will argue, in the mid-to-late 1630s there was a noticeable focus on the ideal of Charles I as a maritime ruler. This contested ideal permeated through England's wider print and scribal networks, as writers engaged with Charles I's maritime ambitions on both domestic and international fronts, and buoyed the Caroline literary imagination. In particular, Charles I's ship money fleets would become a central image in the furious debates eddying around the increasingly problematic concept of absolute rule. Heywood's *True Description*, which Alan Young suggests was printed to accompany the proposed launch of the *Sovereign of the Seas* in September 1637, in many ways sets out the parameters of this debate.⁶ Heywood himself was so overcome, even by his first glimpse of the unfinished structure of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, that he immediately penned an 'Epigrammaticall rapture', raving:

I should but loose myself and craize my braine,
Striving to give this (glory of the Maine)
A full description.⁷

To Heywood it was unimaginable that this 'incomparable Vessel' would not but 'bee a great spur and encouragement to all [Charles's] faithful and loving Subjects to bee liberall and willing Contributaries towards the *Ship-money*'.⁸

Heywood's hopes were short-lived. In fact, a key undercurrent within Heywood's *True Description* is an attempt to win over those who refused to be properly impressed by King Charles's maritime ambitions.⁹ As this essay will explore, such conflict was defined in the cultural imagination by the ship money trope, which itself spanned genres from the poetry of Edmund Waller, William Davenant, and Thomas Beedome to the plays of James Shirley, William Davenant, and William Strode.¹⁰ This trope reached its height with the court masque *Britannia*

⁵ See Quintrell, 'Charles I and his Navy'; Kevin Sharpe, *The Personal Rule of Charles I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 97-104, 545-52, 596-8, esp., p. 101; David D. Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government, 1616-1642* (Aldershot: Routledge, 1994), Chapters 9-10; Nabil Matar, *Britain and Barbary, 1589-1689* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 2005), Chapter 2; Kenneth R. Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics: Seafaring and Naval Enterprise in the Reign of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), esp., Chapter 6; Richard J. Blakemore and Elaine Murphy, *The British Civil Wars at Sea, 1638-1653* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2018), Chapter 1.

⁶ Young, *True Description*, p. xxi.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

⁹ This is evident from the postscript to the second edition of Heywood's text which lightly glossed over the embarrassment of the *Sovereign of the Seas*'s abortive launch attributing it to 'the breaking of so many Cables, and of a contrary Wind, which hindred the comming in of the Tide to its full height'. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁰ Edmund Waller, 'To the King on his Navy' within *The Poems of Edmund Waller*, ed. by G. Thorn Drury, 2 vols (London: Routledge, 1901); William Davenant, *Madagascar with Other Poems* (London: 1638); Thomas

Triumphans, when Charles I employed the elite stage to blazon his imagined maritime triumphs to the wider world, reinforcing what Julie Sanders has identified as ‘the subtle play of intersection, interaction and influence between public and private (especially) courtly drama’.¹¹ However, even within the masque form itself, the ship money fleets were a contested image. Fissures of unease can be located within Davenant’s masque libretto, which unsettle Inigo Jones’s stunning scenes of Stuart absolutism and maritime ascendancy. Davenant’s text repeatedly urged the need for mutual harmony within the body politic, an especially timely message as England lurched towards Civil War. Yet, by 1642, these maritime fissures had become veritable chasms – evident from seismic events such as Parliament commandeering the ship money fleets, which delivered a severe blow both to the image of the king and the royalist cause.¹² Such sharp reversals of fortune expose the central importance of the idea of maritime Britain in defining and understanding the Caroline nation.

King Charles’s maritime passion had begun as a young boy, fostered by his elder brother Prince Henry’s keen interest in the navy and exploration. In 1610 the celebrated shipbuilder and naval administrator, Phineas Pett, had been commissioned to build for Prince Henry the greatest English warship ever constructed, the *Prince Royal*.¹³ Two years later, on Henry’s untimely death, Antonio Foscarini, the Venetian Ambassador in London, noted how Prince Henry ‘had begun to put the navy in order and raised the number of sailors’.¹⁴ When King

Beedome, *Poems Divine and Humane* (London: 1641); James Shirley, *The Young Admiral* (London: 1637); William Davenant, *Newes from Plymouth* in *The Dramatic Works of Sir William D’Avenant*, 5 vols (Edinburgh and London: Paterson and Sotheran, 1873); William Strode, *The Poetical Works of William Strode (1600-1645) Now First Collected From Manuscript and Printed Sources; To Which is Added The Floating Island, a Tragi-Comedy Now First Reprinted From the Original Edition, 1655*, ed. by B. Dobell (London: privately printed, 1907).

¹¹ Julie Sanders, ‘Caroline Salon Culture and Female Agency: The Countess of Carlisle, Henrietta Maria, and Public Theatre’, *Theatre Journal*, 52 (2000), 449-64 (p. 463). For excellent discussions of *Britannia Triumphans* see Martin Butler, *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 337-41; David Howarth, *Art and Patronage in the Caroline Courts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 68-86; Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 102-6, 131-32, 238-41; Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), pp. 247-51; Lauren Shohet, *Reading Masques: The English Masque* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 1-2, 31-33, 54-57. For responses in private theatre see Sara Trevisan, ‘Mildmay Fane’s Masque *Raguaillo d’Oceano* (1640): Royalism, Puritanism and Sea Voyages’, *Renaissance Studies*, 27, 1 (2013), 34-50.

¹² Richard J. Blakemore, ‘Thinking Outside the Gundeck: Maritime History, the Royal Navy and the Outbreak of British Civil War, 1625-42’, *Historical Research*, 87, 236 (May 2014), 251-74; Blakemore and Murphy, *British Civil Wars*, Chapter 2.

¹³ Catherine McLeod, *The Lost Prince: The Life and Death of Henry Stuart* (London: National Portrait Gallery Publications, 2012), p. 145.

¹⁴ *CSP Venetian, 1610-13*, 23 November 1612, item 692.

Charles acceded to the throne in 1625, he continued this royal patronage of the Pett family, rewarding Pett with a gold chain for bringing Queen Henrietta Maria safely to England on the *Prince Royal*, and embarking upon an intensive programme of ship building which cost over a million pounds.¹⁵ For, as Alan James argues in Chapter 2, ‘the connection between naval power and imperial majesty’ was ‘irresistable’.¹⁶ From 1626 to 1637 several new vessels were launched: *Mercury* and *Spy* (1626), *Henrietta* and *Maria* (1626-7), *Charles* (1632-3), and *Greyhound* and *Roebuck* (1636).¹⁷ As Kevin Sharp has documented, Charles took a personal interest in his naval investment, inspecting the ships as they were built and launching the vessels with great aplomb.¹⁸

The king’s valiant attempt to create a potent navy was vaunted to the wider world through his remarkable warship, the *Sovereign of the Seas*.¹⁹ This completely overreached not only his brother’s flagship, the *Prince Royal*, but all other European vessels. Launched in 1637, the *Sovereign of the Seas* was praised by the Venetian ambassador, Anzolo Correr, as ‘the largest and finest construction ever seen in England’.²⁰ It was popularly known as ‘the EIGHT / Wonder’ and later nicknamed the ‘Golden Devil’ by the Dutch.²¹ Created from over 2,500 great oaks and lavishly ornamented with carvings and gilding costing nearly £7,000 (the equivalent of building a new forty-gun warship), the *Sovereign of the Seas* proudly proclaimed on the emblems of over one hundred cannon that Charles I had ‘grasped firmly’ the ‘sceptre of the seas’.²² Again, thanks to Heywood’s *True Description*, we know that the ideal of the ship of state was engraved on the ship’s hull, which palpably underscored the Stuart belief in absolute rule: ‘He who Seas, Windes, and Navies doth protect / *Great Charles*, thy great Ship in her course direct’.²³ By 1640 the prelate and poet, Henry King, openly marvelled at such significant naval investment:

¹⁵ Quintrell, ‘Charles I and his Navy’, p. 167; Phineas Pett, *The Autobiography of Phineas Pett*, ed. by W. G. Perrin (London: Navy Records Society, 1917).

¹⁶ Alan James, Chapter 2, p. 13.

¹⁷ James H. Sephton, *Sovereign of the Seas: The Seventeenth-Century Warship* (Stroud: Amberley, 2011), Appendix 2, p. 191; see also Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, Chapter 26.

¹⁸ Sharp, *Personal Rule*, 98-9.

¹⁹ The ship’s career has been traced in detail in Sephton, *Sovereign of the Seas*; see also Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, 382-3, 386-94.

²⁰ *CSP Ven*, 1636-9, 9 October 1637, item 311.

²¹ Thomas Cary, inscribed on John Payne’s engraving of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, within Young, *True Description*, Appendix, p. 76.

²² Sephton, *Sovereign*, 15, 85, 105. The exact Latin inscription on each canon read ‘*Carolus Edgari sceptrum stabilivit aquarium*’ which I have translated as ‘King Charles has grasped firmly King Edgar’s sceptre of the seas’.

²³ Young, *True Description*, p. 27. For a fascinating discussion of ‘images of the ship of state, the ship of fools, and the ship of the church’, together with ‘the ship a-drift’ see Clare Jowitt, Chapter 5, p. 6.

what a Royall Navie ... to bestride and mount the tops of those foaming Billowes? What Mountaines of Oake upon those Watery Mountaines? What Wooden Castles to keep the Ocean in awe? Like strong Walls and Bulwarks to repell those Adversaries, who have long made this Kingdome the aime of their Ambition and Revenge.²⁴

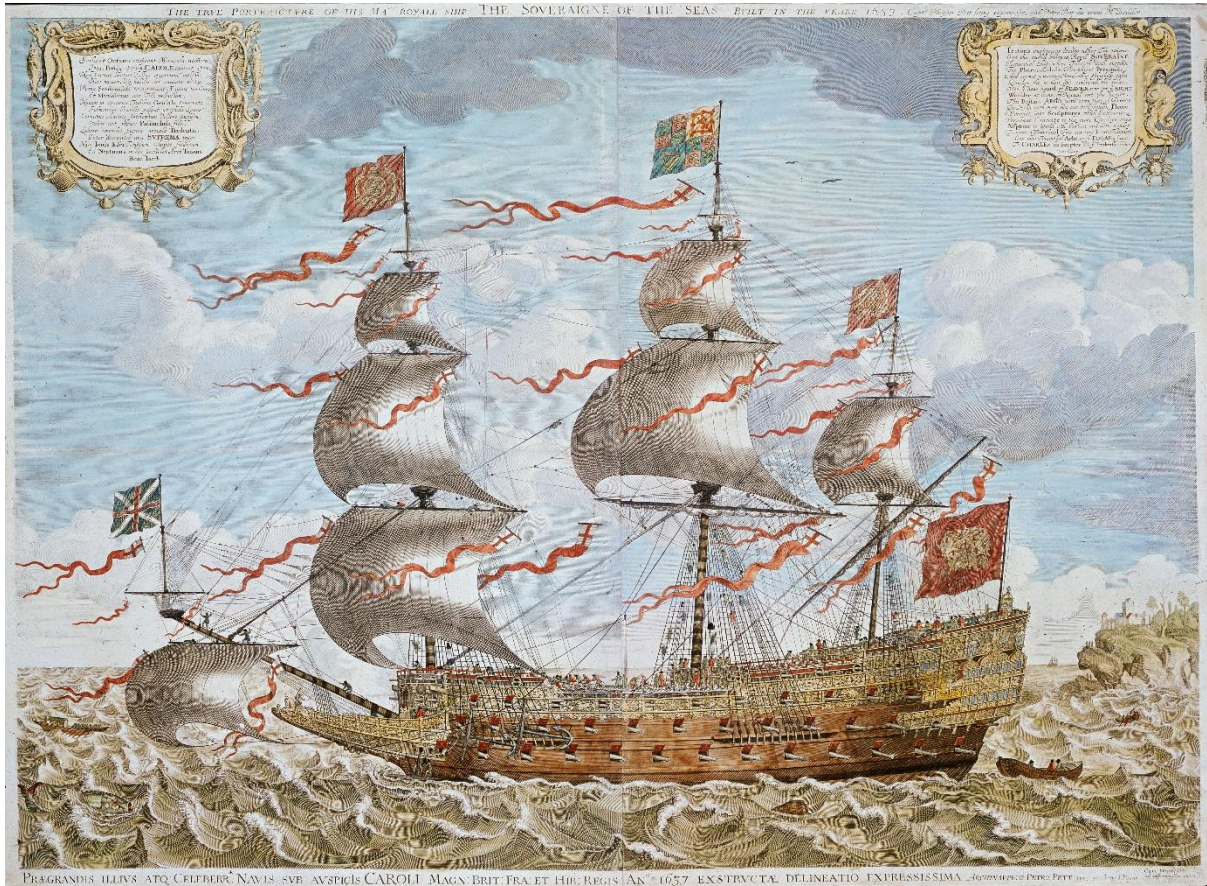


Figure1: John Payne, *Sovereign of the Seas* (1637), © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK.

²⁴ Henry King, *A Sermon Preached at St. Pauls March 27 1640. Being the Anniversary of his Majesties Happy Inauguration to His Crowne* (London: 1640), pp. 52-3.

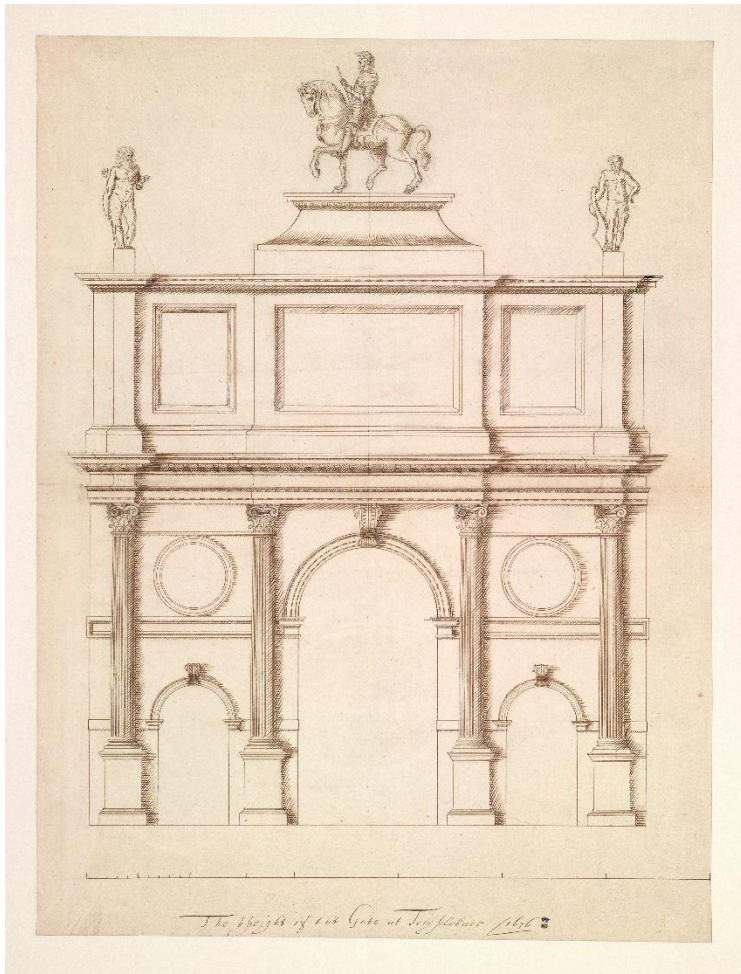


Figure 2: John Webb, Design for a triumphal arch, Temple Bar, London (1638), © RIBA Collections.



Figure 3: Inigo Jones's sketch for the relief carved spandrels for the proposed triumphal arch at Temple Bar, London (1636), © RIBA Collections.

In parallel with this enlarged navy, during the 1630s the image of Charles I as a type of Caroline Neptune became a significant element of the king's royal iconography. This was underpinned and legitimised by the naval success of former English monarchs, in particular King Edgar and Elizabeth I.²⁵ Indeed, John Dee, astronomer, astrologist and advisor to Queen Elizabeth I, had remarked how images of 'the Peaceable king Edgar' with his 'Invincible Sea Strength' had 'streamed down' into his own 'Imagination' as an example for Elizabeth I herself to follow 'for the Godly Prosperity of this British Impire'.²⁶ As Vaughan Hart has pointed out, the representation of Britain as a seafaring nation was central to the designs of both Inigo Jones and John Webb for a proposed triumphal arch at Temple Bar in London. This arch was envisioned as a symbolic celebration of Charles's absolute authority on sea as well as land.²⁷ In Figure 2, a prominent statue of Neptune dominates the left column of Webb's 1638 design whilst, in Figure 3, maritime emblems of shipping feature on the relief panels of Jones's 1636 drawing.

Such triumphant maritime iconography was echoed in the elaborate carvings of the *Sovereign of the Seas*. Thomas Heywood, who had designed the ship's emblems, provided a (lengthy) key to their meaning in his *True Description*. Thus, Heywood eagerly pointed out to his Caroline reader how Neptune 'with his Sea-horse, Dolphin and Trident' appeared in a prominent position on 'the Hances of the waste', whilst 'upon the Beak-head sitteth royall *King Edgar* on horse-backe, trampling upon seven Kings'.²⁸ King Edgar was deemed a rather unusual choice of figurehead for such a mighty vessel. Indeed, Heywood notes how some of the 'figures and Mottoes' which richly adorned the *Sovereign of the Seas* had been 'too liberally taxed' by those who 'doubted of their propriety'.²⁹ Yet, as Heywood explained to those readers 'desirous to understand' their 'imagined obscurity', the ideal of King Edgar, in fact, brilliantly showcased the symbolic qualities which Charles I believed defined his rule.³⁰ James Howell noted how Charles's 'great Ship' was 'nam'd the *Edgar*; [because he] was one of the most famous *Saxon* kings this Island had, and the most potent at sea'.³¹ In 1637, an English translation of William Camden's *Britain* was published which specifically praised King Edgar 'the Peaceable' for his

²⁵ On Elizabeth I, see N. A. M. Rodger, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power in English History', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 14 (2004), 153-74.

²⁶ John Dee, *General and Rare Memorials Pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Navigation* (London: 1557), pp. 55, 58. Richard Hakluyt cites Dee in *The Principle Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation* (London: 1599-1600), pp. 6-9. I am grateful to the reviewer of this volume for this reference.

²⁷ Vaughan Hart, *Inigo Jones: The Architect of Kings* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 78-81. I am grateful to Professor Barbara Ravelhofer for this reference.

²⁸ Young, *A True Description*, pp. 25, 20.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

³¹ James Howell, *Epistolae-Ho Elianae* (London: 1650), 1, p. 222.

refusal to seek out vain-glorious conflict.³² According to Camden, King Edgar was a ‘second Salomon that was, laws-father, Prince of peace, / In that he wanted [i.e. lacked] warres, the more his glorie had increase’.³³



Figure 4: Detail of King Edgar on horseback, from John Payne, *Sovereign of the Seas* (1637), © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, UK.

Such an apogee, of course, neatly chimed with the Stuart regime’s on-going identification with King Solomon, epitomised by Rubens’s apotheosis of King James I on the central ceiling panel of the Whitehall Banqueting House.³⁴ King Edgar’s renown as a maritime ruler was also rehearsed in several contemporary tracts. These ranged from legal texts by Sir John Borough and John Selden which defined Charles’s maritime ambitions, to Thomas Heywood’s more lurid tale of the exploits of two Elizabethan pirates.³⁵ Hence, the apocryphal tale of King Edgar’s prowess on the River Dee in Chester whereby he ensured his maritime sovereignty would become a commonplace. Intriguingly, just as King Charles recognised the visual importance of a fine vessel to flaunt his maritime authority, so, too, King Edgar was depicted by Heywood:

³² William Camden, *Britain, or A Chorographical Description of the Most Flourishing Kingdomes, England, Scotland, and Ireland, and the Ilands Adjoyning, Out of the Depth of Antiquitie Beautified With Mappes of the Severall Shires of England* (London: 1637), p. 230. Accessed via EEBO

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:16125:125

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Roy C. Strong, *Britannia Triumphans: Inigo Jones, Rubens and Whitehall Palace* (London: Thames and Hudson Press, 1980).

³⁵ Gerard Malynes, *Consuetudo, vel Lex Mercatoria, Or the Ancient Law-Merchant* (London: 1622), Chapter 35; John Borough, *The Sovereignty of the British Seas* (London: 1651), pp. 20-2; John Selden, *Mare Clausum* (London: 1635), Book 2, Chapter 12; Thomas Heywood, *A True Relation, of the Lives and Deaths of Two Most Famous English Pyrats, Purser, and Clinton who Lived in the Reigne of Queene Elizabeth* (London: 1639), Chapter 4, unpaginated.

sitting in a new barge for that purpose, hee himsefe tooke the charge of the helme, ... and was the steares-man; and was rowed by eight Contributory Kings which hee commanded ... unto y^e Church of St. *Thomas*, and from thence backe againe to his owne Pallace; to shew that he was sole Sovereigne of so many provinces.³⁶

The diplomat and poet, Sir Richard Fanshawe, nimbly wove this increasingly popular Edgar ideal into his celebratory poem ‘On His Majesties Great Shippe’.³⁷ Fanshawe perceived Edgar’s ‘Empire ore the Sea’ (l. 46) to provide the ‘image of a perfect Government’ (l. 50):

*Where, sitting at the helme the Monarch steeres,
The Oares are labour’d by the active Peeres
And all the People distributed are
In other offices of Peece and Warre* (ll. 51-54).

Thomas Heywood pushed these links between Charles and Edgar further, even suggesting Edgar’s methods of combatting piracy as a paradigm for contemporary policing of the Caroline seas: ‘amongst other of his politicke actions, [he] used in the Summer season to scower Seas with certaine ships of warre, to free the foure Seas of pirats, and robbers, ... by meanes whereof he kept his Land in great peace & quietnes, free from the danger of all forreigne enemies’.³⁸ In particular, Heywood praised Edgar for surprising by ‘Sea a Prince of the *Romans*, whose name was *Maxentius*, who had done many out-rages upon the Ocean, and was the greatest Arch-pirate that those times afforded’.³⁹

The success of Charles’s promulgation of this Edgar trope can, rather ironically, be seen in the repeated attempts by the king’s critics to splinter such an ideal. Richard Bernard, Puritan divine and prolific writer, employed the example of King Edgar to reproach Charles for his lax approach to the holiness of the Sabbath. This was a particularly contentious matter between Laudian and Puritan religio-political factions.⁴⁰ Charles I was frequently criticised for

³⁶ Thomas Heywood, *True Relation*, Chapter 4, unpaginated.

³⁷ Richard Fanshawe, ‘On His Majesties Great Ship’ within Young, *A True Description*, Appendix, pp. 77-9.

³⁸ Heywood, *True Relation*, see Footnote 36 above.

³⁹ Young, *True Description*, p. 21.

⁴⁰ See Nicholas Tyacke, *Anti-Calvinists: The Rise of English Arminianism c. 1590-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987); Peter White, *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Kenneth Fincham, ed., *The Early*

watching plays on the Sabbath; indeed, the king would actually perform *Britannia Triumphans* on a Sunday. Yet, as Bernard slyly reminded his reader, in contrast to King Charles's popish capers, King Edgar had specifically ordered: 'that the Sunday should bee kept holy from Saturday at noon, till Munday morning [...] so zealous were those Princes in those times'.⁴¹ Even more damning, the Puritan polemicist William Prynne, with typical relish, attempted to demolish King Edgar's appeal by denouncing him as 'an incontinent liver', who excelled only in 'deflouring Maids and Virgins'.⁴² For in King Edgar, a Saxon monarch celebrated for his maritime acumen, Charles I had identified a dexterous paradigm from amongst his kingly ancestors: one that could champion Charles's own plans for naval expansion, underscore the visual importance of an exceptional vessel and, when augmented through the figure of Britanocles, suggest the presence of an even loftier Britain on the international stage.

* * *

The extent of Charles's maritime ambitions becomes further apparent from an examination of both the scribal and print networks of Caroline England.⁴³ The king's encouragement of the circulation of documents which supported England's claims of maritime supremacy is well known.⁴⁴ In 1633 the Keeper of the Records at the Tower of London, Sir John Borough, completed his manuscript discussion of 'The Sovereignty of the British Seas', commissioned by Charles himself.⁴⁵ A year later, the Attorney General and the Judge of the Admiralty published a 'Reglement for the Narrow Seas' which insisted on England's sovereignty throughout the

Stuart Church, 1603-1642 (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 1993); Anthony Milton, *Catholic and Reformed: The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought: 1600-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Kenneth Fincham and Peter Lake, eds., *Religious Politics in Post-Reformation England: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Tyacke* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2006); Kenneth Fincham and Nicholas Tyacke, *Altars Restored: The Changing Face of English Religious Worship, 1547-c.1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁴¹ Richard Bernard, *A Threefold Treatise of the Sabbath* (London: 1641), p. 151. Accessed via EEBO http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:102301:82

⁴² William Prynne, *The Antipathie of the English Lordly Prelacie* (London: 1641), p. 227. Accessed via EEBO http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:58789:211

⁴³ See Noah Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation and the Invention of Politics in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Jason Peacey, *Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴⁴ See Thomas Wemyss Fulton, *The Sovereignty of the Sea* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1911), Chapters 6-9; Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, Chapter 2; Quintrell, 'Charles I and his Navy'; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 102-3; David Armitage, 'The Empire of the Seas, 1576-1689', in *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, ed. by David Armitage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 100-24; Blakemore, 'Thinking Outside the Gundeck', pp. 262-4.

⁴⁵ A copy from 1643 survives in National Maritime Museum CAD/D/18, and on Charles's involvement see National Maritime Museum REC/3, fo. 268v; Borough's manuscript was published in 1651, see Footnote 35 above.

North and Irish Seas and the Channel.⁴⁶ In 1635, John Selden's *Mare Clausum*, which Heywood deemed to be an 'exquisite and absolute worke', was finally published.⁴⁷ Selden's text had been written in 1618 as part of a British response to the Dutch humanist and philosopher Hugo Grotius's *Mare Liberum* of 1609. As Philippa Hellowell observes in Chapter 10, 'politico-legal debate concerning the sovereignty of the seas' would be 'developed by various writers throughout the seventeenth century'.⁴⁸ David Armitage reminds us how Grotius's explosive insistence that 'the element of the sea is common to all' was 'taken by English and Scots as an assault on their fishing rights in the North Sea'.⁴⁹ William Welwod, a Scottish juror, had been the first writer in Britain to denounce Grotius's tract as a 'ridiculous pretence' which tended to the 'prejudice of my most worthy prince and his subjects', and was 'suspected as a drift against our undoubted right and propensity of fishing on this side the sea'.⁵⁰ It was no accident that Welwod's *Abridgment of All Sea-Lawes*, first printed in 1613, was republished in 1636 for Caroline readers. The readership of these legal texts was perhaps more restricted than Heywood's pamphlets, especially those published in Latin or circulated in manuscript. Nevertheless, these treatises sought to reinforce, for both domestic and international audiences, Charles I's conviction that (as he put it after dissolving parliament in 1640) 'to live like their King, [he must be] able to defend himself and them, to be usefull to his friends and considerable to his enemies, to maintain the Soveraignty of the Seas, and so make the Kingdom flourish in trade and commerce'.⁵¹

This was not empty rhetoric. Bolstering the navy was supposed to ensure the safety of subjects at home and enhance Charles I's standing amongst international naval powers.⁵² However, the knotty problem of funding the fleets through the controversial ship money levy would become one of the greatest concerns of the political moment, and open up wider

⁴⁶ Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, 136.

⁴⁷ Selden, *Mare Clausum*; Young, *True Description*, p. 25.

⁴⁸ See Philippa Hellowell, Chapter 10, p. 6.

⁴⁹ Hugo Grotius, *The Free Sea*, trans. by Richard Hakluyt, ed. by David Armitage (Indiana: Liberty Fund, 2004), pp. 25, xi. See also Helen Thornton, 'Hugo Grotius and the Freedom of the Seas', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 16 (2004), 17-38; Helen Thornton, 'John Selden's Response to Hugo Grotius: The Argument for Closed Seas', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 18 (2006), 105-128.

⁵⁰ Welwod's critique was published as Chapter 27 of his *Abridgment of All Sea-Lawes* (London: 1613, reprinted 1636); this critique is included within Armitage's modernised text, pp. 65-74, quoting here pp. 65-6. Welwod also published an expanded discussion in Latin as *De Dominio Maris* (London: 1615). See also J. D. Alsop, 'William Welwod, Anne of Denmark and the Sovereignty of the Sea', *Scottish Historical Review*, 59 (1980), 171-4; Martine Julia van Ittersum, 'Mare Liberum versus the Propriety of the Seas? The Debate between Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) and William Welwood (1552-1624) and its Impact on Anglo-Scotto-Dutch Fishery Disputes in the Second Decade of the Seventeenth Century', *Edinburgh Law Review*, 10 (2006), 239-276; J. D. Ford, 'William Welwod's Treatises on Maritime Law', *Journal of Legal History*, 34 (2013), 172-210.

⁵¹ Charles I, *His Majesties Declaration to All His Loving Subjects, of the Causes which Moved Him to Dissolve the Last Parliament* (London: 1640), pp. 13-14.

⁵² See the works cited in Footnote 5 above.

debates surrounding the increasingly unwieldy Stuart ideal of absolute rule.⁵³ Judge Finch wryly observed during John Hampden's notorious ship money case of 1637 that 'we may argue til Doomsday and not sattsiffie the multitude'.⁵⁴ As early as 1635, an anonymous libel nailed to Cheapside Cross attacked ship money as a 'crewell hard Tribute' which reduced the king's subjects to 'Tributarie slaves'.⁵⁵ Yet, as Justice Crawley succinctly argued in defence of the king's position, 'if the Sea must defend the land, why should not the land bee contributories?'⁵⁶

The idea of direct taxes specifically to fund the navy was not new, and the first Caroline ship money levy of 1634 followed older models, with King Charles requiring contributions from inhabitants of coastal towns to finance his naval reforms and ensure the defence of England's coastlines.⁵⁷ It became more controversial in 1635, when the ship money levy was extended throughout the whole country. As the monarch alone had the right to deem when the nation was in danger, Charles I believed he did not need to debate the matter in Parliament.⁵⁸ This effectively transformed a coastal emergency levy into a deeply unpopular yearly tax. Anzolo Correr, the Venetian ambassador, correctly observed to the Doge and Senate that such a tax was 'repugnant to the uses and forms observed by the people up to the present time'.⁵⁹ Many in England were suspicious that there were ulterior motives: as Sir Thomas Wentworth cannily advised Charles in 1637, such a levy had the potential to ensure the "Independent" standing of the monarchy "in wealth, strength and Glory farr above any their projenitors".⁶⁰ Henrik Langelüddecke's examination of the surviving correspondence between those Sheriffs ordered to collect the levy and the Privy Council reveals that opposition to ship money was 'widespread and employed a variety of forms of passive and active resistance'.⁶¹ Grave reports of violence against ship money collectors abounded, and some of the reported objections to the tax veered towards the treasonable. In July 1635, Edward Boys of Bonnington, Kent, was

⁵³ Roger Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts: A Political History of England, 1603-1642* (London: Longman, 1989), pp. 231-3, 265-7; Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 545-95; Austin Woolrych, *Britain in Revolution, 1625-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, first published 2002), pp. 67-71.

⁵⁴ Judge Finch, *Hampden on Ship Money* manuscript, National Maritime Museum, CLU/3, p. 1.

⁵⁵ Cited by Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*, 251.

⁵⁶ 'The Argument of Justice Crawley', Reason 6, *Hampden on Ship Money*, National Maritime Museum, CLU/3, p. 11.

⁵⁷ See Robin J. W. Swales, 'The Ship Money Levy of 1628', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 50 (1977), 164-76; Andrew Thrush, 'Naval Finance and the Origins of the Development of Ship Money', in *War and Government in Britain, 1598-1650*, ed. by Mark Charles Fissel (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), pp. 133-62.

⁵⁸ Clive Holmes, Julian Goodare, Richard Cust, and Mark Kishlansky, 'Debate: Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', *Past and Present*, 205 (2009), 175-237, (pp. 184-5).

⁵⁹ Anzolo Correr to the Doge and Senate, 5 Jan 1635: *CSP Ven, 1636-9*, p. 315.

⁶⁰ Cited by Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*, 251. Millstone's fine analysis of the circulation of ship money manuscripts can be found in Chapter 7 of this volume.

⁶¹ Henrik Langelüddecke, "'I Find All Men & My Officers All Soe Unwilling": The Collection of Ship Money, 1635-1640', *Journal of British Studies*, 46, 3 (July 2007), 509-542 (p. 516).

censured for declaring ‘yf wee have such taxes layd uppon us we must rebell’ whilst, in April 1638, Thomas Mace from Gloucestershire commented: ‘If it be so, that the King must have all, I would the king were dead’.⁶²

In an attempt to confront such vociferous debates, in February 1637, King Charles sought the opinion of twelve judges regarding the legality of the Crown exercising its prerogative powers to raise monies to defend the realm. The judges supported the king. To ensure widespread circulation of this decision, copies of the judgement were held at central courts and read out at assizes in an attempt to shape public discourse.⁶³ However, with the bold appearance in August 1637 of the manuscript libel ‘A Remonstrance Against Ship Money’, Charles I decided to press on in November 1637 with the full-blown trial of a leading ship money offender, John Hampden.⁶⁴ The case reverberated around the central question, as Mr Justice Hutton would argue, whether ‘the people of this Realme are Subjects and not slaves; Free-men, and not villeins; and therefore not to be taxed *De alto & basso*, and at will, but according to the Laws of this Kingdome’.⁶⁵

Charles I would win the case. But, as Archbishop Laud observed, the huge publicity fomented by such a case was damaging as ‘it puts thoughts into wise and moderate men’s head, which were better out’.⁶⁶ Millstone has argued how the ship money case is a fine example of scribal publicity. The scribal texts of the arguments made by both Hampden’s legal team, and the judges Hutton and Croke, circulated far beyond the usual reach of manuscript circles to become ‘some of the most reproduced texts of the decade’ and ‘stand amongst the most powerful critiques of Caroline governance’.⁶⁷ Ultimately produced in print form as pamphlet literature (or what John Nalson would later term ‘the Paper Bullets of the Press’), these arguments about the legality of ship money, as Jason Peacey observes, would reach ‘every corner of the land’ and ‘were consumed across the social spectrum’.⁶⁸

Less remarked upon, but an undoubted by-product of Charles I’s expansion of the navy, funded by this national levy, was the appearance in the mid-1630s of a whole tranche of

⁶² Langelüddecke, ‘Collection of Ship Money’, p. 517. Matters were no easier for those officials overseeing the collection of ship money. Sir Simonds D’Ewes was pricked Sheriff for Suffolk in 1639 to 1640, and had sole responsibility for ensuring the shire’s levy was returned to the Crown despite his own opposition to the tax. See S. P. Salt, ‘Sir Simonds D’Ewes and the Levying of the Ship Money, 1635-1640’, *The Historical Journal*, 37, 2 (June 1994), 253-287.

⁶³ Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*, 257.

⁶⁴ See Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 587-8, 716-30; Richard Cust, *Charles I: A Political Life* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007, first published 2005), pp. 193-4.

⁶⁵ *The Arguments of Sir Richard Hutton* (London: 1641), p. 58.

⁶⁶ Cited by Millstone, *Manuscript Circulation*, 270.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 264.

⁶⁸ John Nalson, *An Impartiall Collection of the Great Affairs of State* (1682), 2, p. 809; Peacey, *Print and Public Politics*, 27.

technical guides aimed at fostering a more widespread understanding of this burgeoning maritime enterprise. In 1636, Captain John Smith's *An Accidence for the Sea* was reprinted. Originally published in 1626 in recognition of the need to train English sailors in the art of naval excellence, the full title marketed itself as 'very necessary' reading 'for all young Sea-men, or those that are desirous to goe to Sea'. Accordingly, it covered everything from the 'Building, Rigging, and Sayling a Man of Warre' and how 'to manage a Navy and Fight at Sea' to an explanation of 'the Charge and Duty of every Officer'.⁶⁹ This fascination with warships, which chimed with King Charles's naval ambitions, was mirrored in Robert Ward's *Animadversions of Warre* (1639). As the frontispiece demonstrates in Figure 5, with its cameo depiction of a fleet in full sail, Ward offered specific advice on battles at sea as well as on land.⁷⁰ Even Thomas Powell's curiously named *The Art of Thriving* (1635), which was effectively a career guide, pinpointed two maritime professions, that of the 'Navigator' and the 'Sea soldier', as being especially tempting for a young man keen to 'drive the world before him, and so mount up to wealth'.⁷¹ According to Powell, 'Questionlesse the better way of thriving is to be a Sea Soldier, In this Kingdome of *England*, being an Island, for that he is more usefull to his Country'. In comparison to a 'Land Soldier', Powell opined that a 'Sea Soldier' would require 'more learning', would be 'certaine of victuals, and wages', and would have the 'chance to have a snap at a booty or a prize which may in an instant make him a fortune for ever'. Appealing to a potential young sea soldier's attraction to danger, Powell clinched his argument with the declaration that 'more valour is required' of the sea soldier 'because the extremity of the place requires it'.⁷²

⁶⁹ John Smith, *Accidence for the Sea* (London: 1636), full title; first published as John Smith, *An Accidence or the Path-Way to Experience* (London: 1626).

⁷⁰ Robert Ward, *Animadversions of Warre* (London: 1639), frontispiece.

⁷¹ Thomas Powell *The Art of Thriving. Or the Plaine Path-Way to Preferment* (London: 1635), sig. A4. Accessed via EEBO

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:15397

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52.



Figure 5: © The British Library Board, Robert Ward, *Animadversions of Warre* (London: 1639), frontispiece and cameo detail.

In the same year, Welwod's reprinted *Abridgement of all Sea-Lawes* had the timely aim of explaining the role of 'every sort of sea-faring persons in every order' ranging from 'Commanders, Iudges, Skippers' and 'Mariners' to 'Merchants, Passengers, Fishers, Ferryers' and 'Watermen'.⁷³ Notably, Welwod devoted a specific chapter to 'War-fare shippes, and of the Captaines and Companies, thereof', where he examined in particular 'the graces & vertues required in them, with their duties, power and preferment'.⁷⁴ Joad Raymond reminds us how pamphlets were often 'recycled' as part of a process of 'pointed allusion' and thereby assumed 'authority in new circumstances'.⁷⁵ This reprint of Welwod's text brought to the Caroline debate on maritime sovereignty, the gravitas of a renowned professor of maths and civil law who, in 1590, had written the first printed treatise on the laws of the sea in Britain.⁷⁶ Moreover, as Welwod's *Abridgement of All Sea-Lawes* had the distinction of being the only response to *Mare Liberum* that Grotius dignified with a published reply, this 1636 reprint adroitly reminded international readers of British fishing and maritime rights while articulating to

⁷³ Welwod, *Abridgement of all Sea-Laws*, 1636 edn, p. 18.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 237, 239.

⁷⁵ Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering*, 165.

⁷⁶ William Welwod, *The Sea-Law of Scotland* (Edinburgh: 1590).

domestic readers the necessity of an effective navy to ensure the nation's sovereignty of the seas.⁷⁷

This maritime expansion even had a spiritual impact. The Reverend Henry Valentine, rector of Deptford and therefore in daily contact with London's shipping and seafarers, spotted a niche in the early modern sermon market and decided to publish a series of sermons for England's mariners, because 'discourses of this nature are few, yet great need have Sea-men of them'.⁷⁸ Alongside his sermons, Valentine, a staunch supporter of Charles I's ecclesiastical and maritime policies, included specially written prayers for sailors before, during and after their voyages, for:

shipping is the very *nerves* and *sinewes*, the strength and security of a nation, and our ships are (and so they may well be) called the walls of our Kingdome. And next to the protection of Almighty God, the wisdom of a gracious King, and the unanimity of the people, they are the lockes of *Sampson* wherein our strength consisteth.⁷⁹

Thus, Charles I's ambition to 'add ye *Trident's* claime' to 'his Sceptre' was rehearsed across scribal and print networks, reflected in the (re)publication of seafaring technical guides, contested by the angry debates regarding the funding of the ship money fleets which reverberated across the nation, and was brought sharply into focus by that gilded flagship, the *Sovereign of the Seas*.⁸⁰ Venerated by poet and prelate, Henry King, as a 'floating / trophy built to Fame', King's fervent hope was that sight of the *Sovereign* - this 'Great wonder of the time' - would unite 'In one aspect two warring / Opposites' and thus:

Enforce the bold disputers to
Obey:
That they, whose pens are

⁷⁷ See Van Ittersum, '*Mare Liberum* versus the Propriety of the Seas'.

⁷⁸ Henry Valentine, *Four Seamen's Sermons* (London: 1635), Epistle Dedicatory. The sermons Valentine published in this book were delivered at annual meetings of the Trinity House of Deptford, a guild of ship-owners and shipmasters of the Thames: see G. G. Harris, *The Trinity House of Deptford, 1514-1660* (London: Athlone Press, 1969). Valentine contributed an 'Elegie upon the incomparable Dr Donne' to the 1635 edition of John Donne's works, *Poems by J. D. with Elegies on the Authors Death* (London: 1635). Valentine's keen support of Charles I is shown in his sermon *God Save the King* (London: 1639), preached on the anniversary of Charles I's inauguration, 27 March 1639, which criticised 'a generation of vipers ... who instead of rejoicing in their king rail at him', p. 15.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁸⁰ Thomas Cary, 'Triton's Auspicious Sound' l. 16 within Young, *A True Description*, p. 76.

Sharper than their swords,
May yield in fact, what they
Denied in words.⁸¹

* * *

Charles I's expansion of the navy, embodied by the ship money fleets, not only anchored this widespread fascination with all things maritime but was itself to become a powerful image in the quest within the Caroline literary imagination to understand the place of the sea in English and British culture. Edmund Waller's poem to 'The King on his Navy', for instance, which Warren Chernaik dates to the mid-1630s, championed the king's vision through a wonderfully vivid image of the fleets in full sail:

Where'er thy navy spreads her canvas wings,
Homage to thee, and peace to all she brings ...
Should nature's self invade the world again,
And o'er the centre spread the liquid main,
Thy power were safe, and her destructive hand
Would but enlarge the bounds of thy command [.]⁸²

William Davenant reinforced this triumphant depiction of the royal navy in his epic romance, 'Madagascar' (written in 1637, published in 1638).⁸³ In this curious dream vision, Prince Rupert, King Charles's nephew, not only effortlessly conquers the island of Madagascar with the aid of the English fleets but subdues the very elements:

[I] saw

The empire of the Winds, new kept in awe

⁸¹ Henry King, 'A Salutation of his Majesty's Ship the Sovereign', accessed via <http://www.poetryexplorer.net/poem.php?id=10078006>, ll. 1-2, 13, 15-16, 55-60.

⁸² Edmund Waller, 'To the King on His Navy' (1636) within Warren Chernaik, *The Poetry of Limitation* (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1968), pp. 145-6, ll. 1-2, 19-22.

⁸³ William Davenant, *Madagascar With Other Poems* (London: 1638), p. 2. Anticipating his text for *Britannia Triumphans*, Davenant specifically likens Charles I to Neptune: 'The Sea is duly held, the proper sphere/ Wherein that Trident swaves, yet, in his hand / It turns strait to a sceptre when on land [.]' ('Madagascar', ll. 42-4). On this poem and other seventeenth-century writings on Madagascar, see also Margarette Lincoln, *British Pirates and Society, 1680-1730* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014), Chapter 6; Edmond Smith, "'Canaanising Madagascar': Africa in English Imperial Imagination, 1635-1650', *Itinerario*, 39 (2015), 277-98.

By things so large and weighty as did presse
Waves to Bubbles ...
The Sea, for shelter hastned to the shore;
Sought harbour for it selfe, not what it bore:
So well these Ships could rule. (ll. 27-33)

Perhaps, however, the potency of the ship money fleets is best suggested from their appearance in the work of lesser known poets. Thomas Beedome's witty reflection 'The Royall Navy' employed the fleets as a metaphor for man's relationship with God:

What's heaven? A haven: what ships anchor there?
Hope, faith, and love, with one small pinnace, feare.
What are those? Men of warre, how fraught? With armes:
What burthen? Weighty, suiting their alarum?
Whose ships? The Kings: what colours? The red crosse:
What ensigns? Bloody from their Princes losse.⁸⁴

Published within *Poems, Divine and Human* (1641), Beedome's adroit intertwining of conventional religious imagery with contemporary references to the fleets is further complicated by the increasingly volatile political situation in Caroline England. Accordingly, in contrast to the victorious images of Heywood, Waller, and Davenant, Beedome wryly reflects on the vainglorious nature of the fleets, and vows instead to 'strike saile' and 'strive to prove / Thy [God's] captive, in my hope, faith, feare and love'.⁸⁵

This hollow note encapsulated within Beedome's poetry resonated more strongly with the treatment of the fleets on the early modern stage. The fundamental question of what a subject owed to 'God, to the king, and to the law' had long fascinated early modern playwrights.⁸⁶ Capitalising on the huge public interest generated by the ship money levy, the fleets quickly became a distinctive device across commercial, elite, and even university theatrical platforms. In September 1636, the fleets featured in William Strode's *Floating Island*, performed before the king and queen at Christ Church College, Oxford. Amongst the

⁸⁴ Thomas Beedome, 'The Royall Navy', ll. 5-10 within *Poems, Divine and Human* (London: 1641). Accessed via EEBO

http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:62385:44

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, ll. 19-20.

⁸⁶ Salt, 'Sir Simonds D'Ewes', p. 282.

audience was Fr George Leyburn. In many ways this Catholic priest, who was risking his life just stepping on English soil, is an unlikely theatre critic. Yet Leyburn deftly pinpoints the text's political allegory: 'Represented [was] a king whos name was Prudentius (you may imagine our most prudent prince) [...] by the passions you may understand the puritans, and all such as are opposite to the courses which our king doth run in his government'.⁸⁷ Leyburn commented specifically on the authority of the fleets and their integral role in maintaining order in the kingdom: for the 'passions' of 'Tumult [...] Debate and Discontent' were only successfully contained when Prudentius (King Charles) ordered his navy to protect the island (Great Britain).⁸⁸ If we turn to the Globe Theatre in 1635, in contrast to Strode's royalist panegyrics, William Davenant's *News From Plymouth* comically portrays the navy as ineffectual: '*wind-bound*' in Portsmouth rather than boldly patrolling the high seas.⁸⁹

In 1637, this more subversive treatment of the ship money fleets deepened with Thomas Coates's serendipitous publication of James Shirley's *The Young Admiral*. Published some four years after its first performance, *The Young Admiral's* focus on the plight of Vittori, a loyal Admiral of Naples, beleaguered by the tyrannical actions of his prince, neatly chimed with complaints against the ship money levy.⁹⁰ William Prynne in his *Humble Remonstrance to His Majesty Against The Tax of Ship-Money* forensically identified the dangers of such a tyrant king:

if your Majesty by your absolute authority, might impose such Taxes [...] on your subjects, [...] then all their Goods, Lands, and Liberties, will be at your Majesties absolute disposition, and then we are not free-borne Subjects but villaines and rascals, and where then are our just Ancient Rights and Liberties.⁹¹

⁸⁷ George Leyburn to Farrington (E. Bennett), 3 September 1636, *Archives At Westminster Cathedral, Series A* 28, p. 523.

⁸⁸ Strode, *Floating Island*, p. 234.

⁸⁹ For a discussion of this play see Claire Jowitt, "To sleep, perchance to Dream": The Politics of Travel in the 1630s', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 44 (2014), 249-64 (pp. 254-5). This treatment of the navy is also in opposition to Davenant's own poetic triumphant maritime vision of *Madagascar* (1638).

⁹⁰ James Shirley, *The Young Admiral* (London: 1637). For a discussion of this play see my essay "A Conflict More Fierce than Many Thousand Battles": Staging the Politics of Treason and Allegiance in James Shirley's Maritime Plays, *The Young Admiral and The Court Secret*, in *James Shirley and Early Modern Theatre: New Critical Perspectives*, ed. by Barbara Ravelhofer (London and New York: Routledge, 2017), pp. 72-85.

⁹¹ William Prynne, *An Humble Remonstrance to His Majesty Against The Tax of Ship-Money Imposed, Laying Open the Illegality, Abuse, and Inconvenience ...* (London: 1641), p. 15. Accessed via EEBO http://gateway.proquest.com/openurl?ctx_ver=Z39.88-2003&res_id=xri:eebo&rft_id=xri:eebo:image:157722:9

In *The Young Admiral*, Vittori finds himself effectively shipwrecked on the horns of a similar dilemma. Repeatedly circling around this vexed question of unjust kingship, Vittori uses the image of a ship tossed in a storm to make sense of his predicament:

... I am in a tempest
And know not how to steer; destruction dwells
On both sides (3.1.354-6)

This terse image brilliantly captures how the sea itself was an especially acute metaphor for such agonising deliberations. For, as the Reverend Henry Valentine reminded his audience in Deptford church and his readers:

the Sea it is an *emblem* of the *world* [...] Here as in the Sea we have our *calmes* of *peace*, and our *stormes* of *persecution*; our *faire-weather* of *prosperity*, and *health*; and our *foule-weather* of *adversity* and *sickness*.
Here some are swallowed up in the *gulf*e of despaire, some are split upon the *rocks* of presumption, & the best men are a little *leakie*.⁹²

* * *

It was in an attempt to plug such ‘leaks’ that Charles I performed the lead role in one of the most sumptuous court masques of the 1630s, *Britannia Triumphans*. Even the title of this masque deliberately invoked Britain’s past naval triumphs through its resonance with James Aske’s poem, *Elizabetha Triumphans*, which celebrated Elizabeth I’s victory against the Spanish Armada.⁹³ But *Britannia Triumphans* also harks back to the triumphant tone of Heywood’s *True Description* of the *Sovereign of the Seas*, where Heywood strove ‘to give the World a true and authentick expression [...] concerning his sacred Majesty[’s ...] absolute dominion over the foure Seas’.⁹⁴ As is now recognised, the Stuart court masque was far more than opulent festivity. Martin Butler has observed how although a masque’s ‘primary purpose was to legitimate the king, they never inertly proclaimed kingly values’. Rather, as we shall discover in *Britannia Triumphans*, ‘they offered an arena in which symbolic solutions could be

⁹² Valentine, *Sermous*, p. 17.

⁹³ James Aske, *Elizabetha Triumphans* (London: 1588); see also Rodger, ‘Queen Elizabeth and the Myth of Sea-Power’.

⁹⁴ Young, *True Description*, p. 24.

advanced for the problems, disagreements, and controversies of contemporary political life'.⁹⁵ The importance which Charles placed on this masquing event is evident from reports by the Savoy agent in London of the king's rigorous practice schedule: 'For two weeks the king has been preparing to dance his masque next Sunday'.⁹⁶ *Britannia Triumphans* literally bristled with references to the John Hampden ship money case, now awaiting judgement over the Christmas period. As the ship money writs made clear, one of the key aims of the levy was to ensure a robust defence of the kingdom with particular regard to the threat of piracy: 'We are given to understand that certain thieves, pirates, and robbers of the sea, [... are] wickedly taking by force and spoiling the ships and goods and merchandises, not only of our subjects, but also of subjects to our friends in the sea which hath been accustomed anciently to be defended by the English nation'.⁹⁷ The parallels are glaring between Charles I and his masquing role of Britanocles, a glorious ruler who had cleansed the seas from Pirates.

Underpinning this image is the contemporary celebration of Charles I as a modern-day King Edgar, who, as we have seen, was also famed for scouring the seas of pirates. Such a performance was all the more spectacular because of a daring expedition in 1637 by British sailors to an infamous nest of pirates, at Salé on the Moroccan coast.⁹⁸ North African corsairs from Salé, as well as Algiers, Tripoli, and Tunis, were the scourge of English shipping.⁹⁹ In the same year that the expedition took place James Frizell noted how 'in the last four years, sixty four ships had been taken with 1,524 captives "sould for slaves"'.¹⁰⁰ Fear of those seemingly irrepressible Salé pirates was so damaging to the king that, in October 1636, the Reverend Charles Fitzgeffrey had openly attacked King Charles from the pulpit for failing to defend or, at the very least, ransom his captive subjects, demanding 'How much hath beene lavishly expended in *Pompes*, in *Playes*, in *Sibariticall-feasts*, in *Cameleon sutes*, and *Proteus-fashions* ...? How many soules might have beene ransomed from that *Hell on Earth*, *Barbarie*, with halfe these expences?'¹⁰¹

⁹⁵ Butler, *Stuart Court Masque*, 5.

⁹⁶ John Orrell, 'The London Court Stage in the Savoy Correspondence, 1613-1675', *Theatre Research*, 4/2 (1979), 79-94 (p. 92).

⁹⁷ Rushworth, *Historical Collections*, 2, p. 257.

⁹⁸ Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, Chapter 7; Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, Chapter 11; Rodger, *Safeguard of the Sea*, 384-6.

⁹⁹ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, Chapters 9-10; Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, Chapter 2; Nabil Matar, *British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563-1760* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), pp. 82-97.

¹⁰⁰ Cited by Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 58. It is not clear if all of these captives were English: see Matar, *British Captives*, 93.

¹⁰¹ Charles Fitzgeffrey, *Compassion Towards Captives Chiefly Towards Our Brethren and Country-men Who Are In Miserable Bondage In Barbarie. Urged and Pressed in Three Sermons on Heb. 13.3. Preached in Plymouth, in October 1636* (London: 1637).

Although a semi-private expedition, formed of a squadron entirely separate from the ship money fleets, the 1637 voyage liberated 302 men and women and damaged Sallé's shipping, albeit temporarily.¹⁰² Charles I was swift to capitalise on this success. When the squadron returned victorious to England, Charles welcomed the commander of the expedition, Captain Rainsborough, as a national hero. As George Glover recounted there was an unprecedented, 'eye-dazzling' parade through London of the freed English captives, together with the visiting Moroccan ambassador, Alkaid Jaurar Ben Abdella.¹⁰³ Attended by 'Thousands and ten Thousands of Spectators', this spectacle was aimed to encourage, as Sir Thomas Wentworth shrewdly remarked to Archbishop Laud, the 'ready and cheerful payment of Shipping Monies'.¹⁰⁴ Ben Abdella was taken to view the *Sovereign of the Seas* as part of his official visit, and the performance of *Britannia Triumphans* at Whitehall was very much the climax of these victorious festivities.

King Charles I offered an undoubted insouciance in answering his critics through the absolute embodiment of what Reverend Charles Fitzgeffrey had damned as mere '*Pompes*': the masque form at its most majestic. With a near three-year hiatus since Queen Henrietta Maria's performance in the last masque, William Davenant's and Inigo Jones's *The Temple of Love*, the anticipation surrounding *Britannia Triumphans* was palpable.¹⁰⁵ In order to protect the magnificent Rubens's ceiling of the Banqueting Hall, Charles had even instructed that a specially created, purpose-built masquing space should be erected.¹⁰⁶ Davenant's published text, which accompanied the masque, specifically directs the reader's focus towards this enormous sense of occasion, zooming in on the presence of Queen Henrietta Maria '*seated under the state*' and noting how '*the room [was] filled with spectators of quality*' (ll. 32-3). With remarkable precision, Davenant isolates the first image to engage the viewer's attention: the proscenium arch which framed the action of the masque and was an unashamed celebration of England's mastery of the seas. Those individuals who had struggled to decipher Heywood's naval iconography carved on the *Sovereign of the Seas* would have found no such impediments here. The reader can effortlessly visualise Davenant's depiction of the two figures sitting astride columns on either side of the stage: a woman, 'in watchet drapery, heightened with silver'

¹⁰² Andrews, *Ships, Money and Politics*, 179-83; Matar, *British Captives*, 93-4. I am grateful to my editors for discussion of the distinction between Charles I's ship money fleets and this semi-private expedition.

¹⁰³ George Glover, *The Arrivall and Intertainments of the Ambassador, Alkaid Jaurar Ben Abdella with His Associate Mr Robert Blake* (London: 1637), p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ Glover, *Arrivall and Intertainments, The Earl of Strafford's Letters and Dispatches*, ed. by W. Knowler, 2 vols. (London: 1739), II, p. 138.

¹⁰⁵ William Davenant, *The Temple of Love* (London: 1635).

¹⁰⁶ Orgel & Strong, *Theatre of the Stuart Court*, p. 16.

holding the rudder of a ship in her hand to signify ‘Naval Victory’ and a man, bearing a sceptre, representing ‘Right Government’ (ll. 39-48). Interestingly, as Figure six demonstrates, Inigo Jones’s iconography echoed Heywood’s naval pageantry as the figure of ‘Victory’ dominated the carvings on the *Sovereign’s* stern.¹⁰⁷

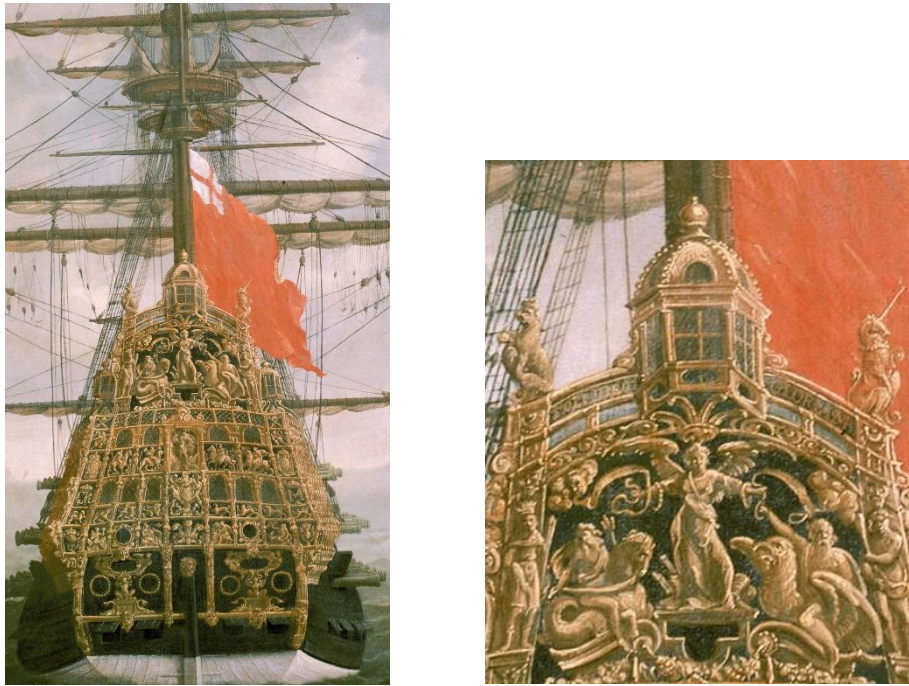


Figure 6: Peter Pett and the ‘Sovereign of the Seas’ (1637), © National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London. Detail of the ship’s stern and the figure of Victory.

Returning to *Britannia Triumphans*, at the bottom of each proscenium arch column prone figures of ‘*captives lay bound*’ (l. 38), which was an obvious reference to Charles’s brazen assimilation of Rainsborough’s recent success in Salé. Across the top of the proscenium stretched ‘*a large frieze with a sea triumph of naked children riding on sea-horses and fishes, and young tritons with writhen trumpets, and other maritime fancies*’ (ll. 50-52). As Davenant’s masque argument explains, the theme of the masque was the transformation of those ‘maliciously insensible’ subjects who stubbornly refused to pay homage to Britanocles’s magnificence. With Charles I performing the role of Britanocles, there are obvious analogies to the king’s own difficulties with those of his subjects angered by the ship money tax. Indeed, the very phrase ‘maliciously insensible’ chimes with the language of royalist tracts. The 1636 memorandum ‘*Consideracons touchinge the shipp-moneyes*’ specifically condemned ‘some malevolent spirits, that Labor to poison and censure the most hon[ora]ble accons, blasting this,

¹⁰⁷ Sephton, *Sovereign*, 94.

[ship money tax] for an imposicon an Innovacon, against the liberty of the subject, and as a barr to parliament'.¹⁰⁸

By 1640, similar phrasing was still being used to target Charles's ship money opponents, with the king dismissing them as malcontents for 'vent[ing] their own malice and disaffection to the State'.¹⁰⁹ In contrast to the ongoing discontent among King Charles's subjects, however, in the masque world of *Britannia Triumphans* Britanocles ultimately quashed such dissent. This vision is empowered by the visual splendour of Jones's stunning scenery, shot through with references to Rainsborough's recent success at Salé, and further enhanced by the actual presence in the audience of the Moroccan ambassador. As Ravelhofer has pointed out, Charles I took a personal interest in the ambassador's position within the masquing room, chiding the Master of Ceremonies, Sir John Finet, the following day for placing him 'so obscurely'.¹¹⁰ Thus, *Britannia Triumphans* allowed Charles I an international platform to present himself to both his subjects and foreign powers as a maritime ruler *par excellence*, whose assumed nautical conquests (as prophesied by Heywood in *True Description*) vindicated the levying of the unpopular ship money tax.

Yet, the very presence of doubting subjects in *Britannia Triumphans* served as a stark reminder that despite the masque's 'noise and shows' (l. 330), neither the ship money fleets, nor the king himself, were unassailable. Inigo Jones's spectacle was commanding, but fissures in Davenant's text (as critics from Martin Butler to Barbara Ravelhofer have argued) create an intriguing dissonance within the masque form.¹¹¹ This is all the more surprising as William Davenant was very much at the heart of the establishment: he signed himself as Queen Henrietta Maria's 'servant' and was awarded the position of Poet Laureate, on the death of Ben Jonson in 1637, for publications such as *Madagascar*.¹¹² Indeed, traditionally, Davenant has been perceived by critics as the theatrical yardstick by which to measure the sycophantic decadence of Caroline drama. Yet, Davenant gently mocked the navy in *News From Plymouth*. Likewise, his plays *Love and Honour* (1635) and *The Fair Favourite* (1638), staged at both the

¹⁰⁸ Cited by Millstone in *Manuscript Circulation*, 254.

¹⁰⁹ Charles I, *His Majesties Declaration*, p. 3.

¹¹⁰ In actual fact, Ben Abdella was sent to the wrong box. He should have been seated 'in a compartment capable of a dozen persons at the left hand behind his majestyes seate' which suggests a sizeable presence and a central view of the spectacle. *Ceremonies of Charles I: The Notebooks of John Finet, 1628-41*, ed. by Albert J. Loomie (New York: Fordham University Press, 1988), p. 242; Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 239.

¹¹¹ See Footnote 11 for details of excellent scholarly discussions of *Britannia Triumphans*.

¹¹² As with this masque where Davenant presents himself on the title page as 'her Majesties Servant'.

Blackfriars Theatre and Whitehall, deftly critiqued the court fashion of platonic love and boldly counselled against the dangers of an overly powerful consort.¹¹³

Perhaps it should be of little surprise that even within the delicate confines of *Britannia Triumphans*, a masque performed by the king at Whitehall to celebrate and promote royal policy, Davenant's libretto weaves around Jones's absolute vision to create a richer, and ultimately, more challenging masque: deftly acknowledging the real divisions generated by the ship money levy, and gesturing towards a solution in the necessity of mutual harmony within the body politic. This is highlighted even in Davenant's introduction to the masque, where he informs the reader how *Britannia Triumphans* had been devised to allow the king to 'recreate' his 'spirits wasted in grave affaires of state' (l. 4). On one level this is merely traditional panegyric: Twelfth Night entertainments were often presented in such terms. Yet, undoubtedly, the John Hampden ship money trial had been a bruising encounter. Questions had been raised over Charles I's increasingly absolute style of government which, whatever the verdict of that trial, would not be easily silenced.¹¹⁴ As was clear even from the celebratory tones of Heywood's guide to the *Sovereign of the Seas*, distrust marked both sides of the ship money debates. Noticeably, in *Britannia Triumphans* the language of falsehood, seeming, and artifice seeps into Davenant's text to repeatedly unsettle the masterful vision of Jones's spectacle.

This textual wariness is most apparent in the chief anti-masque figure of Imposture. From the opening exchange between Imposture and Britanocles's champion, Action, the language between these figures of rule and misrule circles around the checks and balances surrounding the ideal of the body politic. Action condemns Imposture for wilfully misleading his followers: of being a 'Fine, false artificer' (l. 79). Imposture parries by accusing Action of behaving with 'disdain' (l. 84), being 'strangely arrogant' (l.90), and of scorning men. Unusually for the masquing form, Imposture remains on stage when the anti-masque figures of rebellion are traditionally banished. Moreover, Imposture refuses to be cowed even when Bellerophon, the embodiment of Heroic Virtue, is parachuted in on 'a winged' Pegasus. Far from being daunted by this heavenly messenger, Imposture boldly counters:

¹¹³ For a discussion of these Davenant plays see my *Staging the Old Faith: Queen Henrietta Maria and the Theatre of Caroline England, 1625-1642* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018; first published 2009), pp. 158-66, 189-95.

¹¹⁴ Historians remain sharply divided over the nature of Charles's style of government and the response to it. For important contributions on this topic see Sharpe, *Personal Rule*; David Cressy, 'Conflict, Consensus, and the Willingness to Wink: The Erosion of Community in Charles I's England', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 61 (1998), 131-49; Cust, *Charles I*; Mark Kishlansky, 'Charles I: A Case of Mistaken Identity', *Past & Present*, 189 (2005), 41-80; Holmes, Goodare, Cust, and Kishlansky, 'Debate: Charles I'.

T'were easy to subdue if choleric scorn
Might make up confutation without help
Of arguments. (ll. 292-4)

Read against John Hampden's ship money case, where critics of Charles I persistently accused the king of arrogance, of acting beyond his lawful remits and teetering towards the tyrannical, this feisty debate has a distinctive bite. The threat of Imposture's challenge is exacerbated through a surprising manipulation of the masque form. Unusually, Imposture continues his debates after the entries of the anti-masques have been dismissed, which disrupts and distances the heroic impact of Bellerophon's presence. Through this irrepressible figure of Imposture, Davenant gives the 'maliciously insensible' a voice that is especially powerful as it refuses to be easily muted. Such an unexpected mutation of traditional masque conventions allows Davenant to subtly emphasise the Pied-Piper-like power of Imposture, with his 'taking tunes, to which the numerous world / Do dance' (ll. 310-11).

Even more unexpectedly, such subversion creeps into the arguments of Britanocles's own supporters. Bellerophon contemptuously dismisses Imposture's visual display:

Alas, how weak and easy would you make
Our intellectual strength, when you have hope
It may be overcome with noise and shows (ll. 328-30)

Yet, such a critique sits uneasily with the masque form itself, and with Britanocles's role in particular. One could argue that this is precisely the strategy behind Charles I's own assumption of the role of Britanocles, epitomised by his stunning entrance, when he appears in a blaze of light and glory, through the central arch of the Palace of Fame (Figure 7). The full grandeur of Inigo Jones's scenery bolsters Britanocles's spectacular arrival. Heralded by the '*richly adorned*' (l. 490) Palace of Fame rising up from beneath the stage, complete with living statues representing '*Arms*' (l. 501) and '*Science*' (l. 505), Britanocles, 'the treasure of our sight' (l. 515) is urged to 'break forth' (l. 515). Immediately, Britanocles is associated with images of light and moral vision. The Chorus of Poets invokes Britanocles as the lodestar of '*Heroic Virtue*' (l. 518), asking in a powerful crescendo:

What to thy power is hard or strange?
Since not alone confined unto the land,

Thy sceptre to a trident change,
And straight unruly seas thou canst command! (ll. 523-6)



Figure 7: Design for the Palace of Fame, from the courtly masque 'Britannia Triumphans', 1637 (pen & ink on paper), Jones, Inigo (1573-1652) / © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth / Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees / Bridgeman Images.



Figure 8: Masquer with feathers and plume (pen & ink on paper), Jones, Inigo (1573-1652) / © The Devonshire Collections, Chatsworth / Reproduced by permission of Chatsworth Settlement Trustees / Bridgeman Images.

To the eager spectator, the anticipation and fulfilment of such a vibrant royal entrance must have been remarkable. Davenant meticulously notes how first, the fourteen noble masquers appeared, and then, ‘*at that instant*’ (l. 532), the gate of the Palace of Fame opened, and Britanocles stepped out onto the masquing stage, positioning himself directly underneath the figure of Fame and holding the gaze of his chief spectator, Queen Henrietta Maria. Emphasising the sensory nature of the masque form, Davenant offers a detailed description of the masquers’ rich costumes. The striking colour mix of carnation and white fabric skilfully suggests the colours of England’s St. George’s flag, whilst the masquers’ caps, with their ‘*several falls of white feathers*’ (ll. 542-3), effortlessly create an image of the furling froth of the sea. The audience and reader are allowed a moment to absorb this dazzling tableau, as Fame (now hovering in the clouds) and the Chorus together pay tribute to ‘Britanocles the great and good’ (l. 549). Yet, even within this brilliant spectacle, Davenant introduces a moment of jarring tension. As Fame informs us, ‘the wonder’ (l. 554) of Britanocles’s virtue has the disconcerting effect of paralysing his masquers, to the extent that ‘they would to statues grow’ (l. 553). The Chorus of Poets has to literally order the masquers to dance:

Move then in such a noble order here
 As if you each his governed planet were
 And he moved first, to move you in each sphere. (ll. 558-60)

As Kevin Sharpe has pointed out, Davenant’s language of the planets directly echoed the recorded opinion of John Banks, king’s attorney in the John Hampden ship money trial. Banks had championed the royal prerogative by reminding the judicial court that as the king is ‘the first mover among these orbs of ours, and he is the circle of their circumference [...] He is the soul of this body whose proper act is to command’.¹¹⁵ In the masquing hall of *Britannia Triumphans* this vivid image was consummately performed and, indeed, heightened by this initial moment of paralysis, which highlighted the importance of all parts of the body politic moving as one.¹¹⁶ Yet if, as Imposture has argued and as the masque’s ‘jealous sceptics’ (l. 100) have suspected, ‘all but pretend / Th’ resemblance of that power’ (ll. 105-6), this moment of frozen hiatus is also a reminder of how easily the spectacle of government can be ruptured. Fame’s rather effusive rhetorical question to Britanocles, ‘What to thy power is hard or strange?’ (l. 523), is transformed into a more troubling reflection.

¹¹⁵ Cited by Sharpe, *Personal Rule*, 722, Footnote 584.

¹¹⁶ See also Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 102-6.

The answer to Fame's demand would appear to lie in *Britannia Triumphans*'s final vision. It is only when the masque shutters return us to Jones's opening scene of 'Britain' (l. 565) complete with 'English houses of the old and newer forms [...] and afar off prospect of the city of London and the river Thames' (ll. 59-61), that the masquers finally move as one and 'dance their entry' (l. 566). Such a spectacle is all the more potent, as intermingled with those masquers who staunchly supported the king, such as William Cavendish, 3rd Earl of Devonshire, and James Stewart, 4th Duke of Lennox, were powerful families who were increasingly critical of the monarch. Indeed, at least three masquers' noble fathers would later side with parliament.¹¹⁷ Amongst the other masquers, Lord Wharton would become a stalwart parliamentarian whilst the wavering Lord Paget, after initially opposing King Charles, returned to the royalist fold in 1641. Barbara Ravelhofer has argued how just the physical act of dancing collectively can generate formidable fellow-feeling, creating an 'enabling apotropaic practice'.¹¹⁸ In *Britannia Triumphans*, such an esprit de corps is suggested visibly by the arrival of the sea-nymph, Galatea, a personification of the Goddess of Calm Seas.¹¹⁹ Galatea's song emphasises the need for concord and harmony by advocating a reciprocal balance within the body politic which seamlessly mirrors the concord of the dance:

How ev'n and equally they'll meet
 When you shall lead them by such harmony
 As can direct their eares and feet. (ll. 618-620)

The emphasis on the word 'harmony', encircled by the end rhyme of 'meet' and 'feet', softens the more authoritarian undertones implied by 'lead' and 'direct'. Crucially, it is only with the concord of the king and the body politic restored that the masque achieves the reassuring, visual splendour of Jones's concluding scene of safe harbour: '*in the end a great fleet was discovered, which passing by with a side wind tacked about, and with a prosperous gale entered into the haven*' (ll. 623-5).

Unusually for the masque form, as Davenant specifically remarked upon, this maritime scene of success and serenity '*continued to entertain the sight whilst the dancing lasted*' (l. 625), acting as the backdrop for the celebratory revels. In typical irreverent style, Davenant

¹¹⁷ The 4th Earl of Pembroke and the 4th Earl of Bedford were the respective fathers of masquers, Lord Philip Herbert, William Russell, who succeeded his father as 5th Earl of Bedford in May 1641, and Mr Francis Russell.

¹¹⁸ Ravelhofer, *Early Stuart Masque*, 107.

¹¹⁹ Galatea, daughter of Nereus and Doris, was one of the fifty Nereides of Greek mythology: 'galênê' and 'theia' gives the translation 'Goddess of Calm Seas'. See <http://www.theoi.com/Pontios/NereisGalatea.html>

concluded the masque libretto with a valediction to the royal couple, eliding any distinction between Charles and Britanocles by wishing the ‘royal lover’ (l. 633), Charles I, ‘youthful blessings’ (l. 634) to be ‘bettered every night’ (l. 638). Vaughan Hart reminds us how ‘the king’s body was consistently celebrated in Stuart art and propaganda as the exemplar of earthly harmony. As such it became the ideal microcosm and pattern of perfect proportion’.¹²⁰ Thus, George Puttenham in *The Arte of Poesie* likened Elizabeth I to a column: a ‘Gemetricall’ figure ‘most beautifull’, signifying ‘support, rest, state and magnificence’.¹²¹ In *Britannia Triumphans*, King Charles I, stepping out as Britanocles from the central arch of the Temple of Fame, can be seen as the living embodiment of that triumphal maritime arch which was designed in the late 1630s but never constructed. Beneath the dazzle of the king’s performance of Britanocles, Davenant tempers Jones’s absolute vision to suggest the possibility of a harmonious yoking of the body politic.

* * *

The playwright and poet William Habington rather prophetically warned his readers in 1637 that ‘Kings may / Find proud ambition humbled at the sea / Which bounds dominion’.¹²² Charles I was to experience the truth of such a prophecy. Barely eighteen months after the ‘noise and shows’ of *Britannia Triumphans*, Galatea, the Goddess of Calm Seas, appeared to have forsaken England. On 21 October 1639, the navy suffered international humiliation in the infamous Battle of the Downs when the Spanish Fleet was ruthlessly attacked by the Dutch navy in neutral English waters, despite the presence of English naval ships, whose intervention proved futile.¹²³ By 1640, Charles’s bold claim of cleansing the seas from pirates (together with his self-identification with King Edgar, the arch-pirate hunter) had been severely undermined. David Hebb has noted how reports of prestigious merchant vessels such as the *Rebecca* of London being captured in the Mediterranean caused much consternation to London’s mercantile community.¹²⁴ Such anxiety was exacerbated by the publication of Captain Francis Knight’s eyewitness account of his *Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire*,

¹²⁰ Vaughan Hart, ‘Ingio Jones, “Vitruvius Britannicus”’, *Architectural History*, Vol 53 (2010), 1-39, (p. 9).

¹²¹ George Puttenham, *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: 1589), p. 80.

¹²² William Habington’s commendatory poem to William Davenant’s *Madagascar* within A. M. Gibbs, *The Shorter Poems, and Songs From the Plays and Masques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), p. 9.

¹²³ See Blakemore and Murphy, *British Civil Wars*, 1-4.

¹²⁴ Hebb, *Piracy and the English Government*, 267.

Suffered by an English Captive Merchant, complete with a lurid image of a turbaned Turk mercilessly lashing a benighted English mariner.¹²⁵

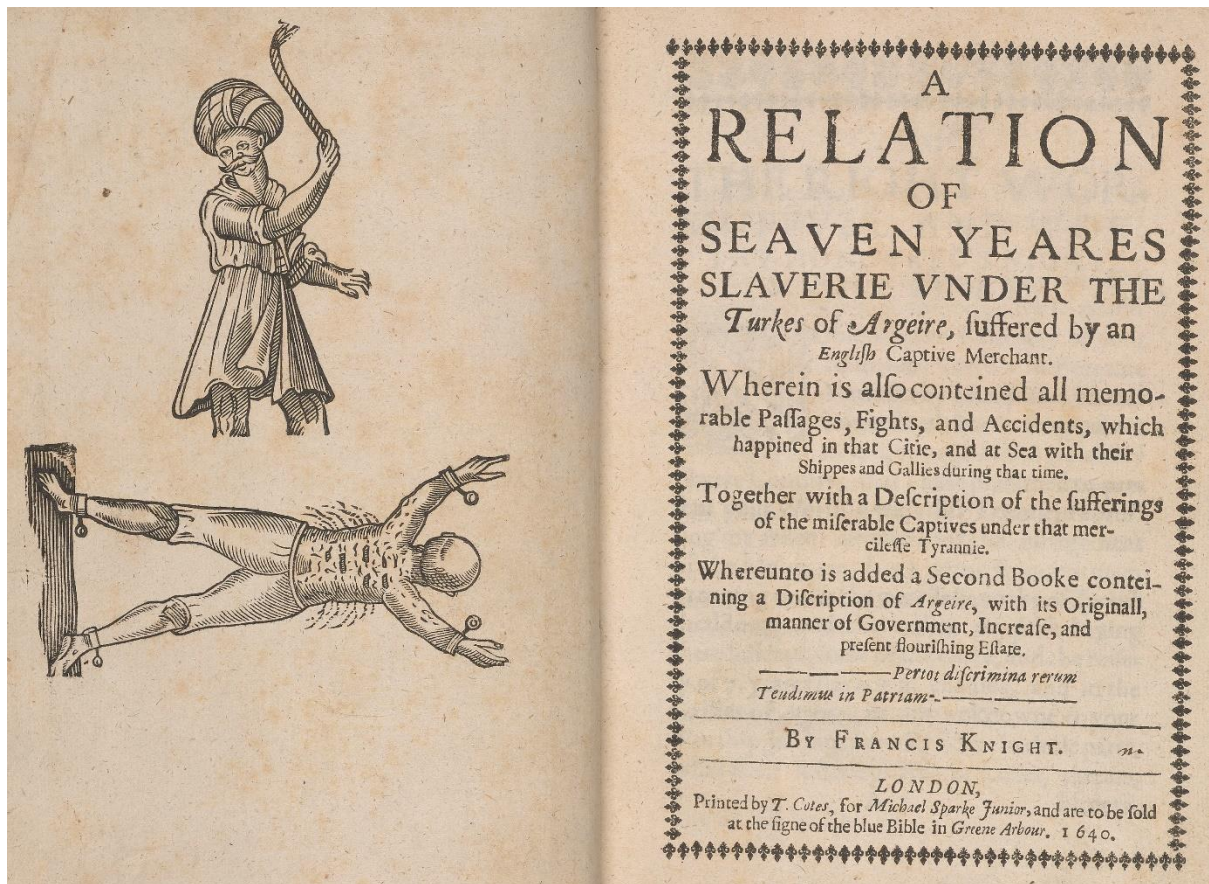


Figure 9: Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire* (London: 1640), frontispiece and title page.

In March 1641, disturbing news reached London that some five thousand English seamen were now held captive in Algiers and Tunis.¹²⁶ This perhaps explains the devastating critique delivered in Parliament by the poet, and former champion of the ship money fleets, Edmund Waller:

the daily complaints of the decay of our Navy tell us how ill ship-money has maintain'd the Sovereignty of the Sea; and by the many petitions which we receive from the wives of those miserable Captives at *Algier* ... it does too

¹²⁵ Francis Knight, *A Relation of Seaven Yeares Slaverie Under the Turkes of Argeire, Suffered by an English Captive Merchant* (London: 1640).

¹²⁶ Matar, *Britain and Barbary*, 65.

evidently appear that to make us Slaves at home, is not the way to keep us from being made Slaves abroad.¹²⁷

Projecting forwards to the summer of 1641, Richard Brathwaite's satirical pamphlet, *Mercurius Britannicus*, contained a short, if ferocious, play depicting the impeachment of those judges who had presided over John Hampden's trial and supported the king.¹²⁸ The transformation of the royal fleet was complete when, in July 1642, parliament commandeered the vessels, apparently with the enthusiastic support of the sailors aboard.¹²⁹ Indeed, by 1650, the anonymous pamphlet *The Commonwealth's Great Ship* flagrantly celebrated the *Sovereign of the Seas* as the Commonwealth's flagship, revising Heywood's 1637 guide to the vessel by excising any reference to Charles I.¹³⁰ As Figure 10's contemporary image depicting the storms of Charles I's reign exposes, maritime Britain offers a unique insight into the cultural imagination of the Caroline nation.



Figure 10: 'Charles I King of Great Britain and England', © Getty Images.

¹²⁷ Mr. Waller, *Of Ship Money, Judges, and Intermission of Parliament*, November 1640. See John Rushworth, 'Historical Collections: Speeches in the Long Parliament', in *Historical Collections of Private Passages of State: Volume 3, 1639-40* (London: 1721).

¹²⁸ For a full discussion of this satire see Martin Butler, 'A Case Study in Caroline Political Theatre: Brathwaite's *Mercurius Britannicus*', *The Historical Journal*, 27, 4 (1984), 947-53.

¹²⁹ Blakemore, 'Thinking outside the gundeck', pp. 254-7; Blakemore and Murphy, *British Civil Wars*, 46-53.

¹³⁰ Anon, *The Commonwealth's Great Ship Commonly Called the Sovereign of the Seas, Built in the Year, 1637 With a True and Exact Dimension of her Bulk and Burden* (London: 1653). See also, James, Chapter 2, p. 13.

As this chapter has demonstrated, playwrights and poets from Heywood to Davenant artfully engaged with these maritime tropes that moved so successfully between playing spaces; deftly linking ships, literature, national, and international identity together and, through the ship money trope in particular, symbolising the failings, possibilities, and ultimately even the legitimacy of Charles I's personal rule. For, as Henry Valentine warned mariners in 1635, an admonition perhaps also aimed at Charles I himself:

Let a ship bee built as strong as art can possibly make her, let her bee laden with gold, silver, and the most precious commodities, let her cary never so many guns, let her beare the name of some dreadfull and hideous monster, yet the winde playes with as a toy, and the waves tosse it as a tennis ball.¹³¹

¹³¹ Valentine, *Sermons*, p. 48.