

# “I am Head and Gouvernour of all the People in my Dominion”: An Analysis of the Speech Delivered by King James I in the London Parliament in 1604

Bálint Radó

Whig historiography has always maintained that King James I (1603-1625) was a theoretician of absolutism. It is for this reason that Whig “hagiography” has underlined that the MPs were eager to thwart the ruler’s absolutist policy. My chief aim in this article is to prove that in his speech in 1604 the Sovereign did not express any absolutist ideas. In order to be an absolutist political thinker one has to claim that neither the Parliament nor any other organ can have a share in legislation. “*Princeps legibus (ab)solutus est*” is how the Roman lawyer Ulpian formed this principle in the Antiquities. The ruler is not bound by human laws; he stands above them; he is the only source of laws in his realm. *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* written by James when he was King “only” in Scotland, (i. e. King James VI) provides a good ground for comparison. Thereby the obvious differences between the two aforementioned works of the ruler will be made clear.

The first London Parliament summoned by King James (VI) I gathered on 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1604. There is a wide agreement among historians that the new English King made a mistake when he ennobled his old friend Cecil, thereby depriving himself of determinate support in the House of Commons as in this way Cecil became a member of the House of Lords (Houston 37). In the first session of the Parliament the House of Commons vehemently attacked the institutions of wardship and purveyance (Houston 35). It was also, the MPs who dealt with the Buckinghamshire case, which was a matter where the validity of two competing candidates was at stake (Hirst 854). According to the records of the House of Commons the King gave a command to this House “as an absolute King” that the above-mentioned matter be discussed with the Lords (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 53). In the same work Roger Lockyer maintains that by making use of the word “absolute” he did not mean more than that his right to the throne was unquestionable and that he would exploit all the rights which had been enjoyed by his predecessors (53). He also argues that the MPs were more afraid of an intervention by the Lords than of the choice of the monarch’s words. What is more, an MP went as far as proposing to beg his Majesty to be present at the joint session with the Lords (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 53). It is commonly known that the other significant issue of the parliamentary sessions of 1604 and 1607 was the project of the King to unite England and Scotland. He discussed this issue in detail in the speech I will examine now.

The King starts his speech with an allusion to the 1603 London plague. After this he tells his audience that he had altogether three (a recurring number in his writings and speeches!) reasons for making the decision to call the Parliament (Sommerville 132). The first one is in itself a “most full and necessary ground and reason for conuening of this Assembly“ (Sommerville 132). First and foremost, James must give thanks to the people. He enumerates the merits of the deceased Sovereign. Furthermore, he assures the Parliament now “assembled to represent the Body of this whole Kingdome” of his gratitude for having “declared and embraced” him as the people’s “vndoubted and lawfull King and Gouverneur” (Sommerville 133). The phrasing is of utmost importance here: “it pleased God to call your late Soueraigne of famous memory [...] out of this transitory life” (Sommerville 132) but evidently it was Providence as well who “in the fulnesse of time” decided that after the death of the Queen James should occupy the throne of England, indeed “by [...] Birthright and lineall descent” (132). These are no mere pious expressions but evidence of the theory of the divine right of kings. It requires further investigation as to whether the speeches of King James I at Parliament had anything to do with absolutism at all. It will also have to be examined in what sense the ruler makes use of the term “Soueraigne.”

One can point out that James exploits the theory of the divine right of kings. It is exclusively in God’s hand to decide who should be an heir to the throne, and whom He appoints as “vndoubted and lawfull King and Gouverneur” (Sommerville 133). The sole fundament of the ruler to come to the throne is the will of Providence, which expresses itself in birth, life, death, and descent. No man can interfere here. The right of the people is, as in the case of papal elections, the *acclamatio*, and behold how much the people are pleased with the new King! It is very interesting that James inserts this concept of his own succession allowing no interference for the people into this friendly, indeed grateful text. Yet the message is clear: God has decided for James, he is the natural heir, the hereditary and legitimate King. All that Parliament can do is to “declare and receive” (Sommerville 132) him. This “reception” is certainly by no means identical with any kind of necessary approval. It is the joyful acknowledgement of the God-willed order of nature and legitimacy.

As the formula “God by my Birthright and lineall descent” (Sommerville 132) does not mean anything fundamentally new in this speech—after all, it is especially *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* which furnishes similarities (“[...] by birth, not by any right in the coronation, commeth to his crowne [...] For at the very moment of the expiring of the king reigning, the nearest and lawful heire entreth in his place...”) (82)—we can state the same of the expression “viue Image” (132). The King has the intention to make his audience feel his “inward thankfulness” through this “Image.” However, since he does not mean to limit himself to flattering utterances about his gratefulness, he goes on to discuss the other two main reasons for convening this Parliament in order to give this “viue Image” in “deedes” and everyday work (Sommerville 133). The image given in this way as a present, he assures, consists of “mine actions of thanks [...] inseparably conioyned with my Person” (Sommerville

133). This image is the “King and Gouvernour” himself, i.e. the “Head.” The other element of the organic analogy, however, emerges as soon as the first paragraph: the Parliament represents the “Body” of the realm (*regnum*). The theory of image-icon-*eikon* is evident in the great work written by James, the *Basilikon Doron*, so there is no need to explain it here.

By virtue of God’s grace, will and decision James VI, King of the Scots became King James I of England, too. The divine will was received by the new subjects with great joy and happiness, which is the basis for the “harmonie of your hearts” (Sommerville 133). “*Quid ergo retribuam?*” (Sommerville 133), James now asks himself, definitely not alluding to anything like a decision of Parliament but the “*acclamatio*.” His answer is clear: he promises his own work and activity for the sake of the *salus populi* instead of mere lip services which he “naturally” (Sommerville 133) detests. It is a further kind of reciprocity as *The Trew Law* furnished examples for this as well. As at the end of the major and indeed only Jacobean writing on divine right absolutism, at the outset of his first speech in the London Parliament the picture of harmony between the careful ruler and loving and obedient subjects appears.

The King, as we have seen, was selected by God “in the fulnesse of time” for his office. Therefore he is a gift and blessing of the Lord for the benefit of the harmony and welfare of the entire community. The blessings certainly originate from God, but their mediator is God’s chosen and anointed servant, the King. All his blessings God bestows on the people in the “Person” of the King (Sommerville 133). In this one can definitely identify the revival of the medieval concept which held that God was present in the ruler *presentaliter* (Ullmann 122). Furthermore, all that is good and blissful descends on the people as subjects from God via the King as a *donum Dei* (Ullmann 124). Just like the *aequitas*/equity of the *Basilikon Doron*, so *pax*/peace is carried by the person of the monarch. What does James say of the latter? “The first then of these blessings, which God had ioyntly with my Person sent vnto you, is outward Peace: that is, peace abroad with all foreine neighbours” (Sommerville 133). Here James must have been thinking of the prolonged wars with Spain in the second half of Elizabeth’s reign which he was to put an end to with the London peace treaty in August 1604. We should bear in mind his motto, “*Beati pacifici*.” It is true that the King kept repeating with pride and joy that he was the “*Rex pacificus*” in Europe (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 138). To be sure, this has to do with much more than making peace. The term “the Peace is my Person” (Sommerville 133) leads us back to the image of the King in the *Basilikon Doron* who is “divine” by grace. Christ, the “Prince of Peace,” has His celestial blessings and peace represented in the mundane “King and Gouvernour.” “Peace” came for England in the person of the King. On 9th August, 1604 peace could be achieved in the London treaty because England had already been filled with peace by means of the succession of James.

The King alludes to the fact that he has been happy enough to maintain peace with his neighbours (Sommerville 133). Then he goes on to enumerate the multiple blessings of peace which the people of a country can enjoy (Sommerville 134). He promis-

es never to breach peace, nevertheless in times of “necessitie” he will resort to a forceful defence of the *regnum* he is in charge of (Sommerville 134). To judge whether there is necessity or not has always, and traditionally, been a part of royal prerogative rights (the right to declare war and make peace) yet it has also belonged to sovereignty. It is very much true in the case of Hobbes, so that there it is finally the right which the people living in the state of a war of everybody against everybody else (*bellum omnium contra omnes*) transfer to the would-be sovereign. Next to the prerogative of deciding over war and peace we can detect in the Jacobean pledge the God-given ability of the King in service of the *utilitas publica* to judge when there is *necessitas*, and when and what serves the “weale” of the public good of all the subjects. On the other hand, here James names one of the key features and preliminary conditions of just war (*bellum iustum*) extensively treated in Thomism. The King also has to pray for peace to the King of Kings. James actually does so here, in the beginning of his speech, by repeating King David’s prayer (Sommerville 134). He gives “The word of a King” (Sommerville 134) as a pledge to continue to strive for peace in future times, too. Still, one might add, even the Prince of Peace has brought a sword with Him. When James maintained that “a secure and honourable warre must be preferred to an vnsecure and dishonourable Peace” (Sommerville 134), he is not a war-monger. He does not even simply revive Luther’s teaching based upon the parable of Christ about the King who wants to wage war but first makes an estimate. Here King James protects as an undoubtedly natural thing the divine eternal justice. He, the King is the “*Iustitia Mediatrix*,” as can be read in the work of Ernst Kantorowicz (107). If it is not based on justice, peace cannot be real.

All these hold true of the inner peace which James identifies as God’s second great blessing bestowed on his person (Sommerville 134). It is evident that he calls the internal wars, the “Civill Warres” more cruel and first of all, much more “vnnaturall” (Sommerville 134) than “warres abroad” (134). This is a logical consequence of the meaning of the word “natural.” It can hardly be natural if the natural subjects of a natural King fight a war against each other. The different members of the same “Body” mentioned earlier cannot fight against one another. This would be just as much unnatural as an attack against the King.

King James has brought internal peace for England “in a double forme” (Sommerville 134). One might say that he identifies one peace with the personal and another one with the real union. The personal union of Scotland and England began when in the person of King James (VI) I a ruler came to the throne in England who was a “descent lineally” (Sommerville 134) of Henry VII. This is again a recurrence of the idea of the God-willed hereditary monarchy. Especially when choosing a name for his elder son, it became clear how important it was for James to connect divine legitimation to the “loynes” of Henry VII, who had established the Tudor dynasty. This is now underlined by James’ words professing the priority of birth (Sommerville 134). It is evident from his biography that a whole series of royal marriages paved the way for James Stuart’s eventual succession in London in 1603. However, he refers to Henry

VII in this speech as a ruler whose succession to the throne ended the miserable inter-nal wars in 1485 because he united “the two Princely Roses of the two Houses LANCASTER and YORKE” (Sommerville 134). King Henry VII married Elizabeth of York and in 1489 he concluded a peace with the Spaniards in Medina del Campo. It is almost inevitable for James now to allude to the striking similarities of the two royal foreign policies. What he emphasizes, however, is that the peace-bringing Henrician union is now “reunited and confirmed” (Sommerville 134) in his natural and lawful heir by lineal descent. He is the heir who has come to the crown “iustly and lineally” (Sommerville 134), who brings the long-awaited peace to his country again. His person is in fact a guarantee for more. “But the Vnion of these two princely Houses is nothing comparable to the Vnion of two ancient and famous Kingdomes, which is the other inward Peace annexed to my Person” (Sommerville 134-35).

One can hardly be taken by surprise that the King starts his arguments for the union of the two countries with a reference to common sense or, as he puts it, “naturall and Physicall reasons” (Sommerville 135). The word “naturall” can now be understood in its scientific sense as well. After all, James sets out to persuade his audience by means of an example of mountains built up by hills as well as simple arithmetic: forty thousand soldiers are twice as many and twice stronger than twenty thousand (Sommerville 135). The truth is that in reality Scotland was economically much weaker than this fifty-fifty impression given by James. Jenny Wormald (160-77) and John Miller (217-18) have already treated this question. Barry Coward states that the majority of Englishmen did not look upon the union from the point of view of Jacobean statistics and did not consider the two countries equal (136). Still, James vehemently depicts the strength of his native country compared to which the union of the undoubtedly “great Principality” (Sommerville 135) of Wales with England dwindles in importance. Also, James naturally resorts to the historical example of the eventual union of the kingdoms, the heptarchy (Sommerville 135). It cannot be mere chance, either, that the royal author does not restrict himself to the level he calls “naturall appearance” but he leads us from nature to the Creator as “it is manifest that God by his Almightye prouidence hath preordained it [the union] so to be” (Sommerville 135). Here he alludes to the similarities in language, religion, and traditions. The Creator conjoined the two countries by means of a common sea and the lack of any natural border between the two (Sommerville 135).

James writes that he carries the union “in [his] blood” (Sommerville 135). One could hardly look for a better example of the theory of divine right kingship than the metaphor of a predestined blood by God. Providence “vnited, the right and title of both in my Person, alike lineally descended of both the Crownes” (Sommerville 135), as he makes perfectly clear. In what follows we come to the territory of the theological language proposed by Glenn Burgess (130): “What God hath conioyned then, let no man separate. I am the Husband and all the whole Isle is my lawfull wife. I am the Head, and it is my Body. I am the Sheperd and it is my flocke” (Sommerville 136). James expounds these parables of Christ one by one. He is not very original in doing

so, referring to the unnatural states of polygamy, a “divided and monstrous Body” as well as the divided flock. Nonetheless, these are images of common currency due to the easily understandable theological phraseology James is employing. Take note that by theological language Burgess does not mean the academic language of theology but the proximity to the unambiguity of sermons from the pulpit (133).

Having read this part of the parliamentary speech one has to give credit to Lockyer, who claims that James did not count upon any resistance against his plan. He thought of it being in perfect harmony with God’s will and the interests of the subjects of both countries alike (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 52). The truth is that the project of the union was most fiercely opposed in the House of Commons, although the MPs were backed in this by a number of Lords. S. J. Houston takes into account the achievements of James regarding the union (38) but these would exceed the first session. From the point of view of my further investigation it is of primary importance that the Commons were most afraid of the annihilation of English laws in case the name “Great-Britain” would be introduced (Lockyer, *The Early Stuarts* 163).

In any case, in the eyes of James the union of the two kingdoms was natural since it reflected the will of God. His double reference to the heptarchy makes me think that the historical title “*imperator omnium britannorum*” did not escape his attention. On the coin issued to commemorate the coronation of 1604 one could see the inscription “*Caesar Augustus Britanniae*” (Lockyer, *James VI and I* 51). Yet we can read a more interesting and comprehensive self-definition in this speech. He says “that as Honour and Priuiledges of any of the Kingdomes could not be divided from their Soueraigne, So are they now confounded and ioyned in my Person” (Sommerville 136). This is the appearance in Jacobean political theology of the theory that monarchy, as such, essentially serves the maintenance of privileges. Royal order and privileges in the monarchy have always been looked upon as strongly interrelated: the royal order is the most privileged and at the same time all the privileges originate from it. This certainly does not mean that the King can arbitrarily revoke the privileges once and for all, as it is exactly them that form the basis of monarchy. Peter Robert Campbell maintains the following about the presence of this theory in 17<sup>th</sup>-century France: “Privileges were the fundamental facts of life in seventeenth-century France. They were recognised in law and by generations of traditional practice. The notion of privilege itself was unassailable and in the eyes of society the monarchy existed to defend privilege, as this was a part of its obligation to uphold good order in the state” (9).

If we take into account the context of praising outer and inner peace, as well as that of their blessings in which the above-mentioned words of King James were uttered, we can take it for granted that he looked upon the “gifts” “which [he has] brought with [him]” (Sommerville 137) with the personal union as privileges strongly connected to the traditional order of the *regnum*. For him, these gifts are indispensable parts of the monarchy, so his succession in England is not a novelty but a God-ordained perfection. In view of the above context I deem it necessary to refer to the Biblical and christological parallelism: the new command of Christ (John 13:34) is in

fact the fulfillment of an old law (Matthew 5:17). Through Christ, the Commandments of the Old Testament receive their actual meaning, as the blessings inseparably connected to the person of James make the privileges indispensable for the maintenance of the kingdom, and the order based on these perfect.

In James' view the very corner-stone of this order is "the profession of trew Religion" (Sommerville 138). He claims to have always persisted in it (Sommerville 138) and considers it to be the beginning of all celestial and "all wordly blessings" (137) alike. What is more, the ruler rather underlines the wordly blessings as he looks upon the religions present in England from a Hookerian point of view. Indirectly, he lays claim to the catholicity of Anglicanism when he makes mention of the "falsly called Catholike(s) but trewly Papist(s)" (Sommerville 138) religion. He at least calls Catholicism a religion which he denies in the case of Puritanism although the followers of the latter "doe not so farre differ from vs in points of Religion" (Sommerville 138). Yet he calls them a sect. If we consider the fact that with the exception of Separatist Congregationalists, also called Brownists, all the Nonconformist branches clearly professed themselves to be members of the Church of England (Langdon 2), the estimation of James is excellent: the Dissenters only had serious ecclesiological reservations regarding the fabric of the Established Church. On this basis James calls them "Puritanes and Nouelists" who are "ever discontented with the present gouernment & impatient to suffer any superiority, which maketh their sect vnable to be suffred in any wel gouerned Commonwealth" (Sommerville 138). On the one hand, it is a revival of the Tudor idea of the "very and true comonveale" (Kontler 47), on the other, it is the declaration of the Jacobean "no bishop, no king"-policy. The expression "Nouelists" is especially remarkable.

We have to agree with W. H. Greenleaf, who discusses that James conceived of all novelties as unnatural disorder (60). Not unlike Hooker, he considered all the forced and futile novelties in Church matters and in liturgical order as attempts to disturb and overthrow the valid order of the Church of England and the state. One of the best examples for this is precisely the first speech of James in the London Parliament. James was sensitive to all novelties which ignored the liturgical practice of High Church Anglicanism such as the abandoning of making the sign of the cross, bowing down when hearing the name of Jesus or genuflection prior to the administration of the Sacrament. These liturgical elements had a crucial importance in the Arminian movement (Peck 116). One has to say that in this respect the ecclesiastical policy of James I did not at all follow the ecclesiastical principles James VI put forward in the *Basilikon Doron* where he demanded the greatest possible freedom in liturgical questions; indeed, he called it a basic principle (Sommerville 19). This is why we have to pay special attention to his letter written on 29th October 1603 to John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was very much hostile to Puritanism. This letter is published in extenso by G. P. V. Akrigg as the King's 98th letter (216-17). In the last paragraph of this letter, James draws the attention of the high-priest, who died in 1604, to the fact that especially when administering the sacraments some ministers omit certain parts of the agenda. In this

paragraph, of not more than two sentences, he makes use of the word “novelties” twice, and indeed, in an absolutely negative sense (Akrigg 217).

In his first London speech in Parliament King James I resorts to the word “Noueltie” (Sommerville 140), and not merely the term “Novelists.” To be exact, he speaks about the inclination for novelties by means of which the Puritans become “factious stirrers of Sedition and Perturbers of the common wealth” (Sommerville 140). James cannot tolerate any disturbance of the peace he has brought in his person to England. The “perturbers” do have an inclination to disrupt this peace, which is a reflection of celestial harmony. Both the word “factious” and “noveltie” as well their derivatives will re-emerge in the *Eikon Basiliké* of Charles I. There the former expression is directly employed to condemn the actions of those who are in pursuit of their own, personal and partial interests without any inhibitions. “Innovation” had a very negative connotation, unlike “reformation,” which was meant to maintain and even strengthen the original essence.

King James does not allow perturbation of the order of the state either for Puritans or “Papists.” In the way in which he delineates his policy concerning the latter we have every reason to see a pattern for the *Triplici nodo*. James gives thanks to God that he could be bred in the true (i.e. Protestant) religion and he pledges to persist in it because he “found it agreeable to all reason, and to the rule of my Consistence” (Sommerville 138). I have to note here that to whatever extent we could become accustomed to the fact that the King finds the terminology of natural law dear to his heart (Linda Levy Peck mentions the same thing [8]), it is conspicuous that this time it is exactly his own confession of faith where he refers twice to his conscience and not to the Word of God. What is more, for the third time he makes use of the expression “my private opinions” (Sommerville 139). It is remarkable to read about the principle of the *certitudo subjectiva* instead of the *certitudo objectiva*, which he treated in his *Flugschrift* called *Premonition*. It is interesting even if the general atmosphere of his speech leaves no doubt that he implicitly thinks of his conscience as rooted in the *Verbum Dei*.

On what basis can I claim that this speech is a forerunner of the *Triplici nodo* in his policy towards Catholics? We have to realize that just as in the polemical writings, James underlines that he does not want to force anybody against his or her conscience. It is exactly the context in which he mentions his own conscience, which he does not want to, and cannot force on anyone else (Sommerville 139). It is another matter that he acknowledges his own religion as the perfect one and certainly not Catholicism, although here he gives voice to his deep conviction that “I acknowledge the Romane Church to be our Mother Church although defiled with some infirmities and corruptions as the Iewes were when they crucified Christ” (139). Accordingly, Catholics err but the King does not even think of any constraint in any matters of doctrine, he prefers persuasion (Sommerville 139). In one respect, however, he cannot be tolerant. This is the matter of wordly obedience, well-known from the polemical treatises. He tells his audience about this, too: “my politike gouernment of the Realm for



the weale and quietnes thereof” (Sommerville 138). James makes it clear: what he demands of all his subjects without any respect to religion does not in the least concern conscience. Practically, the King projects the Oath of Alleageance introduced after the Gunpowder Plot, yet to come at that time. He intends to make a difference between those subjects who are benevolent but “superstitious” because misled by their teachers and the perturbers and plotters (Sommerville 139). However, he will surely punish those members of the clergy who maintain the teaching of the right of the Pope to dismiss the ruler or even allow his assassination. Clerics of this kind have no place in his kingdom (Sommerville 140).

Two aspects need to be emphasized here. First, in his argument of condemning the Pope’s right James expressively refers to the Holy Writ, the Word of God, although he explains his views in detail only in the treatises. It is to be noted that he does not regard the polemy over papal primacy to be his chief task, which is a logical standpoint if we consider what he has just said. Although he tells his audience nothing friendly about the Pope and he mentions that the bishop of Rome regards himself to be the head of the Church, he calls his own Protestant religion “the Trew Ancient Catholicke and Apostolike faith” (Sommerville 140) when he treats the theses of Thomist political theology regarding the Pope. At the same time it cannot be a surprise that a ruler of Calvinist conviction in that confessional age lets all his “Popish” subjects know that England can never ever return to Catholicism. Even if the King does not persecute them, his yielding attitude must not be misinterpreted by anyone. King James I cannot give up the aim and claim to further the “true faith.” Otherwise he would be in collision with his own conscience (Sommerville 141). This serves on the one hand to appease his audience at Parliament, while on the other it presents a task for the bishops present. They are addressed by James in his speech: they have to do everything they can to promote the aim that all the subjects of the King can enjoy full rights in the body politic. This reminds us of what the ruler was happy about earlier: the Head and the majority of the members are of the same faith (Sommerville 138). James now resorts to the parable of Jesus to strengthen his bishops: there will be some who will join the other workers in the vineyard in the last hour of the day (Sommerville 142). Well, King James seems to have fatherly love, understanding, and tolerance towards his “misled Papists.”

The other aspect worthy of consideration is James’ remark about law and natural reason. When expounding on the papal standpoint, and his policy towards Catholics, he declares that common sense is “the rule of Law” (Sommerville 139). Also, he thinks of the Catholic doctrine of resistance as a revolt against the “naturall Soueraigne Lord.” The first idea can be understood as the definition of the *lex naturalis*.

To find out whether the King conceived of his own authority in an absolutist vein at all one has to examine the relations of the law of nature, English common law, and Parliament. In order to be able to do so one has to provide an overall picture of all the speeches at Parliament: how the King thought of the relations and roles of the ruler and Parliament. This is the matter he treats in one of the paragraphs of his first speech

(Sommerville 142). He unambiguously acknowledges the legislative right of Parliament, “The third reason of my conuening of you at this time [...] [is the] making of Lawes” (Sommerville 142). In the following sentence, however, he writes according to the old principle which says that one certainly has to think of a joint legislation of King and Parliament. He simultaneously reminds himself, the Lords, and the MPs that in order to make laws a common preliminary deliberation is needed. Therefore it is not advised for the Parliament to make too many laws at the same time. The differentiation between a “lawfull King” and a “Tyrant” is known from his works written as a Scottish King. The same distinction is made in this speech, too (Sommerville 142). I can detect the most conspicuous expansion in meaning in the fact that all that had a consequence for the prince in his former writings such as the demand that public good should stand above anything else and private interest should be pushed back now emphatically concern the King and Parliament alike. The only difference is that the King is only responsible to God whereas Parliament is answerable both to God and the King. At the same time James makes the vow “in the presence of God, and of this honourable Audience” that with the assistance of God he will always keep in view the *bonum commune*, the *common weale* (Sommerville 143). At any rate, the King and the entire Parliament will face the Lord together one day. In James’ opinion the members of Parliament, though they be “Iudges and Magistrates vnder mee” are at the same time “mine Eyes and Ears” too (Sommerville 142). Kantorowicz maintains that the King is not merely bound to the natural law in its transcendental abstraction but also in its concrete manifestations which safeguard the privileges and rights of the subjects (148). This leads us back to what James said about the privileges in the first half of his speech. The King received his authority from the Creator, i.e. the *lex naturalis*, both in the sense of the necessary and natural character of his *officium*, and therefore he reigns by divine right, both personally and by virtue of birth. The mediator of all divine grace is the King, all the privileges are linked to him including the right of Parliament. Nevertheless, or rather exactly because of this he as Head and the members together form the exclusive fountain of all positive law in the *regnum*.

By way of summary I can maintain that in this speech of his James I implicitly mentions one of the crucial features of the theory of the King’s two bodies: the body politic, the *corpus politicum* stands for the community of King and subjects. His speech at Parliament therefore differs considerably from what he had said in *The Trew Law* about the Parliament, notwithstanding the superficial similarities. There the subjects merely crave the laws (Sommerville 18), whereas in his speech of 1604 the Parliament unambiguously makes laws. I have to say that from this point of view this speech conspicuously reflects the views put forward in the *Basilikon Doron* where the Scottish Parliament has the right to make laws yet they have to comply with the “insight” of the King. It is justified to call attention to the continuity between the *speculum principis* written originally for the instruction of Henry, Prince of Wales, and the first speech delivered in the London Parliament. This furnishes a further rea-

son why it was exactly the *Basilikon Doron* which King James selected for introducing himself in England.

In his speech at Parliament James writes about the common contemporary definition of tyranny when he states, just to underline the validity of his own government that the tyrant “doeth thinke of his Kingdome and people are only ordained for satisfaction of his desires and vnreasonable appetites” (Sommerville 143). From the 13th century, the tyrant is someone who trespasses against the laws of the country, who does not govern the country for the benefit of the subjects and in the interest of the common weal (*bonum commune, utilitas publica*) but according to his own personal interest, jeopardizing the safety of the subjects in their lives and properties (Sashalmi 53). King James, however, does not only promise that he will do all he can for the “welfare” of his subjects but also repeats the words of the Gospel according to St. Luke (Luke 17:10) when he says that however much good he does for his people, he fulfills his duty for “*Inutilis servus sum*” (Sommerville 143).

The first parliamentary speech of King James I is not characterized by any kind of absolutist political thought but by the main features of the idea of divine right. At the end of the speech he talks about the principles he considers when distributing offices and dignities, so he returns to the idea of privileges. Here he mentions one of his analogies which in my opinion can be viewed as the chief idea of the whole speech. The analogy reminds us of the picture that can be found in the Book of Ezekiel (47). “[...] being so farre beholding to the body of the whole State I thought I could not refuse to let runne some small brookes out of the fountaine of my thankfulnessse to the whole for refreshing of particular persons that were members of that multitude” (Sommerville 145). The King, if he deems right, can reward some or many. The entire state lives by means of his fountain, the source of which is actually the Creator Himself who placed the King in his service (Sommerville 144). The animating water—the “brook”—unites the whole political community in which Head and members, Shepherd and flock, husband and wife have to live in perfect harmony according to the will of God. God’s will coincides with that of the King. This harmony is the basis of the clearest desire of King James, the union of England and Scotland. James is the source of divine grace in the united monarchy in a way that he makes the laws together with the members of the “*corpus mysticum et politicum*,” his “*eyes and ears*” animated by them. It becomes evident from this speech of his that joint legislation is a necessity dictated by the *lex naturalis*. It will need further examination as to how this necessity was based on English common law.

## Works Cited

- Akrigg, G. P. V., ed. *Letters of King James VI and I*. Los Angeles-London: Berkeley U of California P, 1984.
- Burgess, Glenn. *The Politics of the Ancient Constitution*. New Haven-London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1996.

- Campbell, Peter Robert. *Louis XIV*. London: Longman, 1995.
- Coward, Barry. *The Stuart Age. England 1603-1714*. London: Longman, 1996.
- Greenleaf, W. H. *Order, Empiricism and Politics. Two Traditions of English Political Thought 1500-1700*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1964.
- Hirst, Derek. *Elections and the Privileges of the House of Commons in the Early Seventeenth Century: Confrontation or Compromise? Historical Journal* 18. (1974): 851-62.
- Houston, S. J. *James I*. London: Longman, 1995.
- Kantorowicz, Ernst Hartwig. *The King's Two Bodies. A Study in Medieval Political Theology*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1957.
- Kontler, László. *Az állam rejtelmei. Brit konzervativizmus és a politika kora újkori nyelvei*. Budapest: Atlantisz, 1997.
- Langdon, George D. *A Pilgrim Colony: A History of New Plymouth 1620-1691*. New Haven-London: Yale UP, 1973.
- Lockyer, Roger. *The Early Stuarts: A Political History of England 1603-42*. London: Longman, 1989.
- . *James VI and I*. London-New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 1998.
- Miller, John, ed. *Britain. Absolutism in Seventeenth-Century Europe*. New York: St. Martin's P. 1990. 195-223.
- Peck, Linda Levy, ed. *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991.
- Sashalmi, Endre. *Autokrácia vagy abszolútizmus? Folyamatosság és változás az orosz hatalmi ideológiában Jozsif Volockijtól Nagy Péter haláláig*. Diss. Debrecen, 1997.
- Sommerville, Johann P, ed. *King James VI and I: Political Writings. Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1994.
- Ullmann, Walter. *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages*. London: Methuen, 1961.
- Wormald, Jenny. *Court, Kirk, and Community. Scotland 1470-1625*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1991.