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*The Creation of State Anniversaries: James VI and I and the Politics of Thanksgiving**

The three Stuart kingdoms of the seventeenth century were unique in Europe for the creation of religious anniversaries ordered by the state for general observance in all places of worship.[1] In 1688, England and Wales had four annual commemorations: thanksgiving days for the sovereign's accession (on dates varying by reign), the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605 ('Gunpowder Treason day', 5 November), and the restoration of the monarchy in 1660 (29 May), together with a fast day marking the execution (or 'martyrdom') of Charles I in 1649 (30 or 31 January).[2] Protestant Ireland had five anniversaries, with a thanksgiving for the defeat of the Catholic rebellion of 1641 (23 October) added to the commemorations adopted from England. Scotland had three annual thanksgivings: for Gunpowder Treason day and the Restoration, and its own distinctive celebration of the sovereign's birthday. The official religious (though not civil) observances in Scotland ended in 1690,[3] but in England and Wales and in Ireland both the religious and the civil observance of the anniversaries remained prominent public occasions until most were abolished by royal and parliamentary orders in 1859. In England three anniversaries still have a residual existence: in the Church of England's services and prayers for the anniversary of the sovereign's accession, in its revival of the anniversary of Charles I's

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1. D. Cressy, 'The Protestant Calendar and the Vocabulary of Celebration in Early Modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, xxix (1990), pp. 31–52, at 31, comments on English exceptionalism in this respect, although the same point applies to Scotland and Ireland. Like the Stuart kingdoms, the Protestant Danish and Swedish empires and United Provinces marked major events with particular 'prayer days', but before the nineteenth century none had religious anniversaries. We thank Paul Douglas Lockhart for advice about Denmark, and see N.C. Kist, *Neerland's Bededagen en Biddagsbrieven* (2 vols, Leiden, 1848–9), and P. Ihalainen, *Protestant Nations Redefined: Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches, 1685–1772* (Leiden, 2005).

2. If 30 January was a Sunday, always a festival for the Church of England, the fast was moved to the next day. Editions of the original texts for each of the religious anniversaries are provided with commentaries in *National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation,* IV: *Anniversary Commemorations, Additional Material and Indices, 1533–2023*, ed. P. Williamson, N. Mears, A. Raffe and S. Taylor, Church of England Record Society (forthcoming 2025) [hereafter *National Prayers*, IV].

3. Many presbyterians disliked religious anniversaries in principle, especially after their enforcement by bishops from 1660. Following the 1689 revolution and the restoration of presbyterian church government, the Scottish parliament repealed the hated act for observance of Restoration day, and religious services for the other two anniversaries lapsed. In Edinburgh, at royal military establishments, and in some towns their civil celebration continued into the nineteenth century.

martyrdom as a 'lesser festival',[4] and in the popular celebration of 'bonfire night' on 5 November.

The annual religious and political commemorations in early modern England and Ireland have featured in numerous historical and literary studies. These studies have taken two main approaches. One, best exemplified in much-cited social histories by David Cressy and Ronald Hutton, focuses on the popular festivities and the civic and corporate ceremonies which developed for the annual thanksgivings, with their 'vocabulary of celebration': ringing of church bells, cannon- and gunfire, bonfires, fireworks, illuminations, feasts, considerable consumption of alcohol, and, in Ireland, parades.[5] The second approach makes use of contemporary writings and especially the special sermons that were expected on each of the anniversary days, which provided opportunities for preachers to connect past causes for thanksgiving or repentance with the religious, ecclesiastical and political issues of their own times. Substantial numbers of these English and Irish anniversary 'political' sermons were published, and their texts are now prime sources for analyses of religious and political ideas, and for the literary-historical genre of sermon studies.[6]

4. Services for accession day are still attached by royal order to the Book of Common Prayer, and prayers and scriptural readings for the occasion were added to *Common Worship* in 2008; Charles I's martyrdom was restored to the Church of England's calendar in 1980, and has an optional collect in *Common Worship*.

5. D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (1989; Stroud, 2004), and D. Cressy, 'The Fifth of November Remembered', in R. Porter, ed., *Myths of the English* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 68–90; R. Hutton, *The Rise and Fall of Merry England: The Ritual Year, 1400–1700* (Oxford, 1994), chs 5–7, and R. Hutton, *The Stations of the Sun: A History of the Ritual Year in Britain* (Oxford, 1996), chs 27, 39; J. Sharpe, *Remember, Remember the Fifth of November: Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot* (London, 2005); J. Kelly, '"The Glorious and Immortal Memory": Commemoration and Protestant Identity in Ireland, 1660–1800', *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy: Archaeology, Culture, History, Literature*, xciv C (1994), pp. 25–52; J. McConnel, 'Remembering the 1605 Gunpowder Plot in Ireland, 1605–1920', *Journal of British Studies*, l (2011), pp. 863–91; C. Whatley, 'Royal Day, People's Day: The Monarch's Birthday in Scotland, *c.*1660–1860', in R. Mason and N. Macdougall, eds, *People and Power in Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1992), pp. 170–88.

6. Studies relating to the Jacobean period include L.A. Ferrell, *Government by Polemic: James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603–1625* (Stanford, CA, 1998); M. Morrissey, *Politics and the Paul's Cross Sermons, 1558–1642* (Oxford, 2011); A. James, *Poets, Players and Preachers: Remembering the Gunpowder Plot in Seventeenth-Century England* (Toronto, ON, 2016); J. McGovern, 'The Political Sermons of Lancelot Andrewes', *Seventeenth Century*, xxxiv (2019), pp. 3–25. There are numerous studies of anniversary sermons for later periods. Examples for England are E. Kiryanova, 'Images of Kingship: Charles I, Accession Sermons and the Theory of Divine Right', *History*, c (2012), pp. 21–39; A. Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003); M. Neufeld, *The Civil Wars after 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 203–41; C. Ketterer, *To Meddle with Matters of State: Political Sermons in England, c.1660–c.1700* (Göttingen, 2020), pp. 219–51; J. Caudle, 'Measures of Allegiance: Sermon Culture and the Creation of a Public Discourse of Obedience and Resistance in Georgian Britain, 1714–1760' (Yale Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 1996). For Ireland, see T.C. Barnard, 'The Uses of 23 October 1641 and Irish Protestant Celebrations', *English Historical Review*, cvi (1991), pp. 889–920, and S. Connolly, 'The Church of Ireland and the Royal Martyr: Regicide and Revolution in Anglican Political Thought, *c.*1660–*c.*1745', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, liv (2003), pp. 484–506. Anniversary sermons also receive comment in L.A. Ferrell and P. McCullough, eds, *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History, 1600–1750*

As occasions both for festivities and for special sermons, the anniversaries are usually interpreted as a 'Protestant calendar', superseding the earlier Catholic calendar of saints' days.[7] In these accounts, the anniversaries memorialised what contemporaries believed to be striking instances of God's special providential care for the English kingdom or for Irish protestants, and perpetuated a stirring popular history of 'national' deliverances, originally and persistently from Catholic threats. The annual reiterations of the causes for commemoration were, it is argued, crucial for the development of an English and an Anglo-Irish 'national memory' and 'national identity'. Yet within these broad themes, particular applications of the shared providential histories and their bearing on subsequent events were debatable, creating rival claims about their significance. So fundamental was the ideological charge of the anniversaries that they generated a partisan calendar, as occasions of heightened contention between, successively, bishops and puritans, royalists and parliamentarians, and tories, whigs and Jacobites.

These historical interpretations are amply attested, but they are incomplete. Their concern is with meanings and activities that became attached to the anniversaries *after* they had been established; but later statements and actions of preachers, writers, townspeople and villagers do not necessarily express either the motives of those who created the anniversaries, or their persistent official meanings. Nor were sermons the principal statements for these occasions, or festivities the main activities. The clergy conducted religious services as well as delivering sermons, and townspeople and villagers participated in divine worship as well as hearing church bells, watching bonfires and gorging themselves at feasts. In order to understand both the original and the continuing official purposes of the state anniversaries, a different approach is needed. This requires close attention both to the circumstances in which each of the anniversaries was established, and to the orders which gave the reasons for their appointment and instructions for their observance. For England and Wales and for Ireland,[8] it also requires examination of the forms of prayer—the sets of services—that were composed specially for each anniversary and read out in all churches every year, superseding the statutory daily services in the Book of Common Prayer (BCP).

The present authors began this shift in the understanding of state anniversaries in their study of the original orders for commemoration of the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.[9] This revealed that the annual

(Manchester, 2000); P. McCullough, H. Adlington and E. Rhatigan, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* (Oxford, 2011); K. Francis and W. Gibson, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689–1901* (Oxford, 2012). Scant evidence survives for Wales, and very few sermons were published in Scotland, which is one reason, together with their shorter duration, why Scottish state anniversaries have received little historical study.

7. See Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, and id., 'Protestant Calendar'.

8. The Scottish kirk did not have prescribed and uniform texts for its services.

9. P. Williamson and N. Mears, 'James I and Gunpowder Treason Day', *Historical Journal*, lxiv (2021), pp. 185–210.

thanksgiving on 5 November was initiated by King James I, not, as conventionally believed, by parliament. Nor, as historians of England commonly assume, was it solely an English occasion; it was also ordered in Scotland. The intended meanings were not the English national identity and Protestant triumphalism celebrated by later English writers and preachers, but were related to the king's British political purposes and to the consolidation of the Stuart dynasty.

This article broadens this approach, by investigating the beginnings of the state anniversaries more generally and by considering what they reveal about the politics of King James VI and I. Gunpowder Treason day was only the last of the annual thanksgivings appointed by the king and his advisers in the churches and governments of his two British kingdoms. Within a short period of less than six years, from 1600 to 1605, they were responsible for five appointments for three anniversaries in Scotland and in England and Wales. How should this remarkable creation and multiplication of state anniversaries be understood?

I

'State anniversaries' here means the annual religious services which were ordered or authorised by the sovereign, royal council or parliament for observance in all places of worship throughout the kingdom, and marked by ceremonial attendance of members of institutions and associations, from the court and parliament to universities, town councils, local dignitaries and corporate bodies.[10] In sixteenth-century England and Wales, anniversaries had been created by the church, not the state, and to commemorate occasions of religious, more than political, significance. Under Queen Mary and King Philip, an annual thanksgiving for the reconciliation of the kingdom with Catholicism and the papacy was ordered by a legatine synod, and observed from 1555 to the end of their reign.[11] Although, as Alec Ryrie has noted, there was no explicit commemoration of the Protestant Reformation,[12] celebrations of the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession in 1558 began as implicit thanksgivings for the replacement of Marian Catholic rule with a Protestant monarchy and church. It was established by the

10. Alongside the official religious and political anniversaries, further customary and civil anniversaries came to be celebrated in numerous places and by various institutions, including government establishments. Examples are the anniversaries of coronations, the birthdays of current members of the royal family, and, in Ireland, the anniversary of the battle of the Boyne and the birthday of King William III; see B. Harris and C. Whatley, '"To Solemnise His Majesty's Birthday": New Perspectives on Loyalism in George II's Britain', *History*, lxxxiii (1998), pp. 397–419; Kelly, 'Glorious and Immortal Memory'; J. Hill, 'National Festivals, the State and "Protestant Ascendancy" in Ireland, 1790–1829', *Irish Historical Studies*, xxiv (1984), pp. 30–51.

11. See *The Anglican Canons, 1529–1947*, ed. G. Bray, Church of England Record Society, vi (1998), pp. 74–7, 138–9, and the commentary in *National Prayers*, IV.

12. A. Ryrie, 'The Liturgical Commemoration of the English Reformation, 1534–1625', in A. Walsham, B. Wallace, C. Law and B. Cummings, eds, *Memory and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, 2020), pp. 422–38.

archbishops and bishops, its observance was permissive, not mandatory, and although the queen enjoyed secular celebrations of the anniversary at her court, she gave no royal recognition or encouragement to the religious thanksgiving.[13] Religious anniversaries had so little attraction for the queen and her councillors that the greatest English and Protestant deliverance of her reign, the defeat of the Spanish armada in 1588, was celebrated only by a single thanksgiving day.[14] In Scotland, the kirk discouraged anniversaries: its leaders tried to abolish all religious observances that lacked biblical authority, including (with limited success) the festivals of Easter and Christmas. Even particular thanksgivings were rare.[15] From 1560 to 1599 perhaps four sets of general thanksgiving prayers, services or days were ordered for Scotland, compared with twelve appointed in England and Wales.[16]

Nevertheless—and paradoxically, given this earlier history—the first state anniversary was established in Scotland. This was a religious thanksgiving and public holiday every 5 August to commemorate James VI's escape from the Gowrie 'conspiracy' in 1600. As the king and his council introduced this thanksgiving holiday into England and Wales after his accession as James I in 1603, it also became both the first English state anniversary and the first British anniversary, ordered in two kingdoms with different types of church government and religious worship. Consequently, although 'Gowrie day' had a shorter duration than the other annual thanksgivings, it has considerable significance for the history of state anniversaries. Yet its establishment and observance have not received a commensurate degree of historical study. Gustavo Turner's examination of contemporary literary sources about the Gowrie conspiracy is unusual in including comments on both the Scottish and English thanksgivings, but he does not reflect on their political contexts and purposes.[17] Mary Morrissey and Anne James consider the anniversary only as an English preaching occasion, and largely in terms of how a controversial Scottish episode was absorbed into an English account of providential deliverances.[18] But this interpretation

13. N. Mears and P. Williamson, 'The "Holy Days" of Queen Elizabeth I', *History*, cv (2020), pp. 201–28; for fuller comment on the texts, *National Prayers*, IV.

14. *National Prayers: Special Worship since the Reformation,* I: *Special Prayers, Fasts and Thanksgivings in the British Isles, 1533–1688*, ed. N. Mears, A. Raffe, S. Taylor and P. Williamson, Church of England Record Society, xx (2013) [hereafter *National Prayers*, I], pp. 182–8.

15. W. McMillan, *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church, 1550–1638* (Dunfermline, 1931), pp. 299–324; M. Todd, *The Culture of Protestantism in Early Modern Scotland* (New Haven, CT, 2002), pp. 183–202, 341, 343–4.

16. See the revised summary list in *National Prayers*, IV, Appendix 1.

17. G. Turner, 'The Matter of Fact: The *Tragedy of Gowrie* (1604) and its Contexts' (Harvard Univ. Ph.D. thesis, 2006), pp. 190–200.

18. M. Morrissey, 'Presenting James VI and I to the Public: Preaching at Political Anniversaries at Paul's Cross', in R. Houlbrooke, ed., *James VI and I* (Aldershot, 2006), pp. 107–21; James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 23, 28, 33, 35–6, 48–9, 69–70, and see Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, pp. 66, 72. The Gowrie anniversary receives only passing mention in Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells,* and Hutton, *Merry England*. For comments on the Scottish observance, see McMillan, *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, pp. 321–2.

is almost the reverse of the king's intentions and the purposes stated in the English order and the form of prayer for the occasion. None of the existing studies of the Gowrie thanksgivings investigate its close connections with the other Jacobean anniversaries.

James and his advisers actually appointed three types of thanksgiving in Scotland after the Gowrie conspiracy. These successive orders established a model of what might be termed a 'politics of thanksgiving' which, as is shown in our earlier article, was applied in the series of English thanksgivings appointed after the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot in 1605. It is argued here that political considerations were also significant in the appointment during 1604 of an annual commemoration of James's accession to the English throne. This was not, as earlier studies considered obvious, an automatic transfer of the anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to that of her successor. It required decision, and this was not a small matter: after the earlier English appointment of 'Gowrie day', it established an unprecedented second anniversary celebration of James's rule; it involved another suspension of the statutory round of daily services, and necessitated the composition, printing and distribution of a substantially new set of religious services.[19]

Why were James VI and I and his advisers responsible for this remarkable creation and multiplication of state anniversaries? There are several general reasons. The king believed that he was twice very close to being killed, much closer than Queen Elizabeth had been during the several plots against her: extraordinary deliverances deserved extraordinary commemoration. Together with his accession to the English and Irish thrones, these personal deliverances appeared to demonstrate unusual divine favour for his kingship, and to vindicate the doctrine of divine-right monarchy that he had elaborated in three books published shortly before the Gowrie episode: *Daemonologie* (1597), *The True Lawe of Free Monarchies* (1598)[20] and *Basilikon Doron* (1599). As a king who expected to become an absentee ruler of his native kingdom and would become the foreign successor of a revered ruler in a new kingdom, he and his advisers had particular reasons to emphasise and publicise his special claims to royal authority. Highly experienced in ecclesiastical as well as secular politics, an intellectual, a skilled debater and a poet, biblical interpreter and political writer, he was well able to seize opportunities to strengthen his authority, to manipulate opinion and, perhaps most important, to advance his policies. For James was a king with causes: control over the kirk in Scotland and, in a programme expounded to his first English parliament, 'inward and outward peace'—meaning unchallenged dynastic succession, union of the two British kingdoms, religious consensus, and peace with Spain.[21]

19. Cf. Cressy, *Bonfire and Bells*, p. 50; Hutton, *Merry England*, p. 182; Morrissey, 'Presenting James', p. 109.

20. Usually known as *The Trew Law*, the title it was given in James's collected works of 1616.

21. *King James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. J.P. Sommerville (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 133–41. So important was this speech for James that he delivered it twice, on 19 and 22 March 1604,

In the numerous historical studies of these matters and in the 'new British history'—investigation of interactions among the kingdoms of the British Isles and Ireland—the anniversaries are rarely mentioned. Yet they were integral to the efforts of James and his ecclesiastical and political advisers to promote their causes and to assist the government of his composite monarchy. While much use has been made of literary, dramatic and cultural sources for understanding the reign of James VI and I, including his own prolific writings, the orders and the English forms of prayer for the anniversaries—requiring participation from congregations in every town and parish—reached far larger audiences than any other statements that were produced to justify or debate the great issues of the succession, political union, international peace and ecclesiastical policy, and indeed to explain the defeat of the Gowrie conspiracy and the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.

The general intention of the Jacobean anniversaries is obvious: to deepen support for the Stuart monarchy and for the further authorities in the state and church which depended on it. Yet the anniversaries also had specific beginnings, in the reactions of James VI and I and his advisers to particular political circumstances and opportunities, and in leading members of royal councils, parliaments and churches expecting advantages from these occasions. The next two sections of this article consider these exigencies, proceeding chronologically for each successive appointment of anniversaries in order to reveal a repeated practice. The first section gives close attention to the circumstances and appointment of the series of Gowrie thanksgivings in Scotland which, beginning as a strategy for containing a political crisis, became a new means to assert royal authority. As such, they provided a model for addressing later political difficulties and for advancing royal causes. The second section considers the subsequent applications of this 'politics of thanksgiving', in the transplanting of Gowrie day to England, and in the anniversary thanksgiving for James's English accession and for the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot.

The anniversaries also had long-term aims, to publicise and perpetuate specific claims for Stuart royal authority. The third section examines the official documents for the annual thanksgivings—the Scottish and English orders, and the English forms of prayer—as these are the best statements of the meanings and memories which James and his advisers sought to entrench far into the future. The conclusion of the article comments on the Jacobean anniversaries as occasions for the

after the Commons complained that on the first occasion many MPs had been unable to hear it: *Journal of the House of Lords*, II: *1578–1614* (1802), pp. 264, 265; *Journal of the House of Commons*, I: *1547–1629* (1802) [hereafter *CJ*], pp. 142–6; *Parliaments, Politics and Elections, 1604–1648*, ed. C.R. Kyle, Camden series, 5th ser., xvii (2001), pp. 42–3, 52–3. For tensions between the king and the kirk as a central political issue in Scotland, see J. Wormald, 'James VI and I: Two Kings or One?', *History*, lxviii (1983), pp. 196–8, and A.R. MacDonald, *The Jacobean Kirk, 1567–1625: Sovereignty, Polity and Liturgy* (Aldershot, 1998).

assertion of divine-right monarchy, and considers the implications for interpretations of the subsequent history of British state anniversaries.

Understanding the creation of these anniversaries is complicated by unevenness in the survival of sources, which makes it difficult to be certain about the extent of responsibility by the king, his councillors or senior churchmen for some of the decisions and documents. What is clear is James's direct involvement in the orders for the Scottish and English thanksgivings for the Gowrie anniversary and the English anniversary thanksgivings for the defeat of the Gunpowder Plot: these orders were issued either by his direct instructions, or by him in conjunction with his ecclesiastical or political advisers. But English and Scottish privy council records have been lost for crucial periods,[22] and for the king's individual councillors and the English bishops the surviving evidence is slight and occasional. This makes it impossible to be categorical about the king's part in the initiation of the anniversary of his English accession, or his influence over the texts of the English forms of prayer. What can be emphasised is a recurrent pattern of decisions and orders, the earliest and the majority of which certainly originated with the king or were issued with his approval. In often tense circumstances, royal councillors in Scotland and England, James's allies among the ministers in the Scottish kirk, and the English archbishops wanted to reinforce the king's authority and shared many of his policy aims, and when not fulfilling his direct instructions they would have been well aware of his preferences and opinions. English forms of prayer were composed (or primarily composed) by archbishops and bishops, and neither James nor his Scottish ecclesiastical advisers would have been familiar with these elaborately constructed texts for worship. But a king who published his own biblical commentaries, translated psalms, justified royal authority from scriptural sources, debated the content of the BCP at the Hampton Court conference, and ordered revisions in its text, is likely to have taken a religious as well as a political interest in special services which related to the presentation of his own kingship. As had been the case under Queen Elizabeth, draft forms were probably submitted to the king and his principal secretary for approval and possible amendment.[23] The king certainly approved the first special form of prayer issued after his arrival in England, for use during an outbreak of the plague;[24] and although no direct evidence survives of his part in the subsequent preparation of the anniversary services, their content is consistent with his known orders for thanksgivings and with

22. Neither the English privy council records for 1602–1618 nor the Scottish privy council records for 1603–1606 have survived.

23. For scattered evidence on the composition of special forms of prayer during Elizabeth's reign, including involvement by the queen and secretary of state, see *National Prayers*, I, pp. lxxix, c, 57, 80, 119, 222, 231.

24. *The Registrum Vagum of Anthony Harison*, ed. T. Barton, Norfolk Record Society, xxxii–xxxiii (2 vols, 1963–4), i, p. 38 (Richard Bancroft, bishop of London, to John Jegon, bishop of Norwich (and other bishops), 11 Aug. 1603).

statements made in his published writings and speeches. While the risk of claiming too much for the king alone is obvious, there are adequate grounds for inferring his strong influence on the councillors and the bishops who helped to organise the anniversaries.

II

The state anniversaries began with the management of a royal crisis in Scotland. On Tuesday, 5 August 1600, James VI abruptly abandoned a hunting party near his palace at Falkland and accepted an invitation to visit the house of the 3rd earl of Gowrie and his brother, Alexander Ruthven, a dozen miles away at St Johnston (Perth). Here an argument ensued, daggers and swords were drawn, and the king's attendants killed his two hosts. This was an acute embarrassment, especially for a king committed to ending the murderous lawlessness among Scottish nobles. James knew he was in serious trouble. He had acted recklessly, the motives of both the king and the Ruthvens were opaque, the events were confused, the reasons for the deaths were unclear, and for crucial moments the king was the sole surviving witness.[25] The killings would take a lot of explaining, and he had to act quickly to establish his own account and forestall damaging alternative reports and rumours. Overnight he hurriedly dictated explanatory letters to his privy council and the burgh council in Edinburgh, and briefed David Lindsay, one of his chaplains and a close ally among the ministers of the Scottish kirk, to follow the letters and corroborate his explanations.

So difficult was the episode to explain that James's account could not avoid implausibilities, but it was pitched high: he claimed to have been the target of an assassination plot, and to have survived by divine intervention. To publicise and reinforce this interpretation of events, the king instructed the privy and burgh councils to order the people of Edinburgh to attend their churches to hear his account read out by ministers, and to thank God for his deliverance. From the start, James placed religious thanksgivings at the centre of his efforts to control opinion. But embarrassment now turned into danger: while the ministers of the five main churches in the city were prepared to offer thanks for the king's safety, they refused without further evidence to accept the charge of treason against the Ruthven brothers, and would

25. For modern efforts to make sense of this famously mysterious episode, see esp. D.H. Willson, *King James VI and I* (London, 1956), pp. 126–9; W.F. Arbuckle, 'The "Gowrie Conspiracy"', *Scottish Historical Review*, xxvi (1957), pp. 1–24, 89–110; M. Lee, 'The Gowrie Conspiracy Revisited', in M. Lee, *The 'Inevitable' Union and other Essays on Early Modern Scotland* (East Linton, 2003), pp. 99–115; A. Julala, 'John Ruthven, Third Earl of Gowrie', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; J. Wormald, 'The Gowrie Conspiracy: Do We Need to Wait until the Day of Judgement?', in M. Kerr-Peterson and S.J. Reid, eds, *James VI and Noble Power in Scotland, 1578–1603* (London, 2017), pp. 194–206. J.D. Davies, *Blood of Kings. The Stuarts, the Ruthvens and the 'Gowrie Conspiracy'* (Hersham, 2010), adds new details, but also further fanciful speculations.

not summon their congregations. These ministers were influential: less than four years earlier, in December 1596, several of them had helped to rouse the townspeople against the king's policies, forcing him into temporary exile from his own capital. The two councils hastily made alternative arrangements, issuing orders for the townspeople to gather with them at the mercat cross, to hear Lindsay recount the king's story and conduct a thanksgiving service in the street, accompanied by celebratory ringing of bells, firing of cannon and lighting of bonfires.[26] Nevertheless, James's veracity had been questioned, his honour impugned and royal orders disobeyed. During the following days and weeks scepticism and unsettling rumours spread in Edinburgh and beyond. His authority within Scotland, his succession to the thrones of England and Ireland (Gowrie had been in favour at Queen Elizabeth's court), and his reputation in continental European courts were all to some degree at stake.

Much of what followed is familiar from historical editions published during the nineteenth century.[27] In order to corroborate the king's account and silence his critics, the familiar resources of state power and influence were vigorously applied. These included interrogations, torture, executions and forfeitures; the publication of an official narrative, reprinted in London and translated for continental readers; and the banishment of the five ministers from Edinburgh. But at first, the urgency and vindictiveness of these measures increased doubt about the king's version of events, and the ejection of the ministers created a new problem. Instead of obeying instructions to have them replaced, the Edinburgh presbytery petitioned for their reinstatement, with support from ministers elsewhere who regarded royal interference with ministerial appointments as a 'sacrilegious' usurpation of the kirk's authority. Again the king acted quickly, summoning meetings with the commission of the kirk's general assembly and then adding representatives of its provincial synods, seeking to preserve the increased control over the kirk which he had obtained since the 1596 crisis. James not only prevailed; within two months, he had achieved a vital element in his plans to curb the kirk's independence. A convention of leading members of the kirk was persuaded to sweep aside earlier agreements he had made with the general assembly, and accept the royal appointment of new

26. *The Register of the Privy Council of Scotland*, 1st ser. (14 vols, Edinburgh, 1877–98) [hereafter *RPCS*], vi, pp. 142, 148–9; *Extracts from the Records of the Burgh of Edinburgh, 1589–1603*, ed. M. Wood (Edinburgh, 1927), p. 269; Robert Bruce, 'Narrative', in *Bannatyne Miscellany*, I, ed. Walter Scott (Edinburgh, 1827), pp. 163–4; Kew, The National Archives [hereafter TNA], SP 52/66, fo. 53r–v, George Nicholson to Robert Cecil, 6 Aug. 1600. For the earlier episode, see J. Goodare, 'The Attempted Scottish Coup of 1596', in J. Goodare and A. MacDonald, eds, *Sixteenth-Century Scotland* (Leiden, 2008), pp. 311–36.

27. Especially Robert Pitcairn, *Criminal Trials in Scotland* (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1833), ii, pp. 148–329; David Calderwood, *The History of the Kirk of Scotland*, ed. Thomas Thomson and David Laing (8 vols, Edinburgh, 1842–9), vi, pp. 28–122; *RPCS*, vi, pp. xxi–xxviii, 142–50, 155–62, 173, 212, 236–7, 241. For a useful modern review, see Turner, 'Matter of Fact', chs 1–2.

bishops with seats in parliament.[28] As David Willson remarked, 'James turned the Gowrie Plot to his own advantage with astonishing speed and success'.[29]

What has not been sufficiently appreciated is the extent to which James devised a new method for reasserting royal authority throughout his kingdom. Turner noted that a series of further thanksgivings were organised,[30] but it is not only their number that deserves comment: even more striking is their increasing novelty and their relentlessness. Whatever their doubts about the king's account, all ministers, even the Edinburgh five, could at least agree with him in thanking God for preserving his life. There is no reason to question James's own belief that he had been saved by divine intervention. At the end of the violence in Gowrie House, he fell to his knees with his attendants in thanksgiving for his 'miraculous deliverance', and promised that 'tewsdaye shalbe ever a day of precchinge where ever the king be'.[31] Tuesday sermons were soon established at court, and for the rest of his life James treated every Tuesday and every 5 August as days of special significance, and as auspicious for the holding of important meetings. But the king with his privy council and allies in the kirk also put thanksgivings to political use. After grasping the effectiveness of the earlier services, they steadily ratcheted them up in scale, frequency and duration in order to impose James's interpretation of the Gowrie episode, to outmanoeuvre and isolate critics, and to tighten his control within the kirk. As well as the Edinburgh thanksgivings ordered on 6 August, thanksgivings and restatements of his story were staged five days later on his return from Falkland, first at the port of Leith, where Lindsay again preached, and for a second time at the mercat cross in Edinburgh, now with the sermon by another leading minister and royal chaplain, Patrick Galloway, and with James himself testifying to his own truthfulness and promising to be 'more carefull of his government … than in tymes past'.[32] Further thanksgivings in the king's presence were held in Glasgow on 31 August, again with Galloway as preacher, and when parliament opened on 13 November.[33] By then, James, presumably with assistance from Lindsay and Galloway, both former moderators of the general assembly, had

28. MacDonald, *Jacobean Kirk*, pp. 94–5, and, for the significance of this issue, M. Lee, 'James VI and the Revival of Episcopacy in Scotland, 1596–1600', in id., *'Inevitable' Union*, pp. 81–98.

29. Willson, *James VI and I*, p. 129, and see Lee, 'Gowrie Conspiracy Revisited', pp. 113–15.

30. Turner, 'Matter of Fact', pp. 156–7, 192, 193.

31. *Govvreis Conspiracie a Discourse of the Vnnaturall and Vyle Conspiracie Attempted Against the Kings Majesties Person at Sanct-Iohnstoun vpon Twysday the 5. of August. 1600* (Edinburgh, 1600), sig. C2v; Maidstone, Kent History and Library Centre [hereafter KHLC], U275/C1/17, Roger Aston (a member of the royal household) to his brother, 15 Aug. 1600. For the great importance that James publicly attached to truth, honour and conscience, see K. Sharpe, *Remapping Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 151–71.

32. Robert Birrel, 'Diarey', in *Fragments of Scotish* [*sic*] *History* [ed. John Graham Dalyell] (Edinburgh, 1798), pp. 50–51; KHLC, U275/C1/17, Aston to his brother, 15 Aug. 1600; Calderwood, *History*, vi, pp. 50–56.

33. Calderwood, *History*, vi, pp. 77–83; TNA, SP 52/66, fo. 95r, 'Occurrences from a councillor in parliament', 13 Nov. 1600.

persuaded the kirk's commissioners to endorse royal orders for even wider thanksgivings.

On 21 August thanksgiving days were appointed throughout the realm for 30 September and 5 October (the first, significantly for James, a Tuesday), with each synod instructed to gather earlier (again, on a Tuesday) to settle the arrangements for their presbyteries and kirks. All ministers were ordered to conduct these services and all subjects to attend them, as 'testimonie of thair trew affectioun to his Majestie and the quyetnes of his estait'.[34] This was unusual in several respects: as an exceptional instance of thanksgiving days for the whole of Scotland; as an order for special worship issued by the king through his privy council rather than by leaders of the kirk alone (though care was taken to state that the king acted with the 'advyce' of its commissioners);[35] and with observance of the thanksgivings presented explicitly as a test of allegiance. The next two orders were entirely unprecedented. On 24 August James, again with the stated advice of the commissioners, personally instructed the synods of the kirk to establish sermons 'every Tuesday thereafter' in every burgh, to commemorate his deliverance on that day.[36] As most burghs already had at least one mid-week sermon, this order often involved only local rearrangements of the preaching day, while a prayer for the king—asking that he have godly virtues, and for his and his kingdom's protection from enemies—had been ordered by the general assembly in 1571 and subsequently included in the kirk's 'Book of Common Order'.[37] Nevertheless, royal orders specifying a preaching day and the delivery of sermons declaring God's special favour towards the monarch were new. Then, as the kirk's commissioners were increasingly accommodating towards his wishes, yielding to measures directed against both the Ruthvens and the Edinburgh ministers as well as to the orders for thanksgivings, James was emboldened to reach even further. During October he presided over a joint meeting of the royal council, kirk commissioners and synod representatives to consider measures for parliament. This meeting agreed to propose yet another thanksgiving, to be observed each year on 5 August 'in all tymes and ages to cum', as a 'perpetuall monument' to the king's deliverance.[38]

34. *RPCS*, vi, pp. 156–7, and see *National Prayers*, I, p. 233.

35. See details of the Scottish occasions from 1560 to 1596 in *National Prayers*, I, and in *National Prayers*, IV, Appendix 1.

36. Calderwood, *History*, vi, p. 76. Turner, 'Matter of Fact', p. 192, incorrectly attributes this order to parliament.

37. McMillan, *Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church*, pp. 146–8; Todd, *Culture of Protestantism*, p. 30; *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies of the Kirk of Scotland* [ed. Thomas Thomson] (3 vols, Edinburgh, 1839–45), i, pp. 177–8, 201; *The CL Psalmes of Dauid … with the Forme of Prayers … Vsed in the Churche of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1575), pp. 158–9.

38. Calderwood, *History*, vi, pp. 75–6; 'The fyft day of August appointit yerilie for solempne thankis giving in all tyme cumyng', 15 Nov. 1600, *Records of the Parliaments of Scotland to 1707* (Univ. of St Andrews, 2007–) [hereafter *RPS*], 1600/11/12, available at www.rps.ac.uk.

Precisely how this idea for an anniversary commemoration arose is unknown. James would have been familiar with the biblical justifications for the particular occasions of special worship that became common in Reformation Scotland, but there was no clear scriptural precedent for annual thanksgivings. The obvious model was the anniversary thanksgiving in England and Wales for Queen Elizabeth's accession day. He may well have coveted a similar annual thanksgiving—there were no yearly celebrations for his Scottish accession[39]—as a regular affirmation of the sacral qualities of his own kingship. But the chief motivation was probably a specifically Scottish combination of opportunism and planning for the future. The anniversary would entrench his account of the Gowrie episode in the public memory, and be a frequent test of the obedience and loyalty of ministers and congregations. Given his expected accession to the English throne—a position possessing much greater power and wealth than the Scottish monarchy—it would also be an annual reminder of the continued authority of a king who would no longer be resident in Scotland. Whatever the reasons, the anniversary was created with the full force of the state. The act of parliament passed during November ordered 'publict preacheingis, prayeris and solempne thankis geving' in all parishes, with attendance enabled by suspension of 'wark, labour and uther occupatiounes'. All civil and ecclesiastical authorities were empowered to ensure that its provisions were observed, if necessary by imposition of punishments.[40] To be doubly sure, through an act of the privy council before the first anniversary in 1601 James ordered the proclamation of the parliamentary act throughout the kingdom, required ministers to announce the thanksgiving on the previous Sunday, and specified when these services were to be conducted—both morning and afternoon in towns, and the afternoon in rural parishes. As a further incentive for observance, the king also appointed the whole of 5 August as a public holiday, so that after attending the church services, people could 'spend the rest of the said day in all civill and lauchfull glaidnes'.[41] At least in burghs, observance of the anniversary, as for the thanksgivings in 1600 and the Tuesday sermons, seems to have been good.[42] But there was resistance from some ministers who remained sceptical about the circumstances of the Gowrie episode, had doctrinal objections to anniversaries, or disliked how the holiday encouraged 'immoral' behaviour. Ministers in Fife who in 1602

39. The coronation and birthday of James VI were marked in some 'kalendars' of books used by the kirk, but as almanac records, not occasions for religious observance; see, for example, *The CL Psalms of David … for Use in the Kirk of Scotland* (London, 1587; STC 16582), sig. Av^{v} (coronation), and (Edinburgh, 1607), sig. Av^{r}–^{v} (birthday and coronation).

40. *RPS*, 1600/11/12 (15 Nov. 1600).

41. *RPCS*, vi, pp. 256–8 (16 June 1601).

42. For example, Calderwood, *History*, vi, p. 136; *Extracts from the Council Register of the Burgh of Aberdeen*, ed. John Stuart (2 vols, Aberdeen, 1844–8), ii, pp. 219–22; *The Records of Elgin*, ed. W. Cramond (2 vols, Aberdeen, 1903–8), ii, pp. 84, 92.

preached against and refused to observe the anniversary were publicly summoned for chastisement before the council, until the king decided on a less provocative and more effective general course.[43] At James's request, the general assembly provided full ecclesiastical reinforcement to the orders for both the anniversary thanksgivings and the Tuesday sermons, eased by his promise to take measures against 'all ryotousnes, drunkennes, and vther filthie exercises' during the holiday.[44]

Maintenance of royal authority was vital to the peace and interests of the Scottish kirk and kingdom. James and his allies in his council and in the kirk had during the previous decade gradually increased their control over independent lords and often truculent members of the kirk. Now, a claimed assassination attempt and new threats to his rule had suddenly created opportunities to consolidate their earlier successes. They were able to persuade parliament and the representative bodies of the church to accept new assertions of royal authority, most remarkably—given the kirk's earlier teachings—the establishment of a royal anniversary. Thanksgivings, the king had learned, could assist the management of political and ecclesiastical difficulties, disseminate favourable opinions throughout the realm, expose critics and lubricate policies. Every year, there would be reminders of the religious character of the king's authority, and expressions (or tests) of loyalty to the monarchy. These lessons influenced the establishment of further state anniversaries in England and Wales and in Scotland during the next five years.

III

Within months of his accession to the English throne in March 1603, James introduced Gowrie thanksgivings into his new kingdom. By his own will he could and did establish sermons every Tuesday in his English court,[45] but for wider thanksgivings he required assistance from the English authorities. This may not have been straightforward. As seems clear from later evidence, James also wanted Tuesday sermons to be ordered in all English and Welsh places of worship, but at this time without success. The archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift, and perhaps other bishops or council members, probably persuaded him that this would cause too many difficulties: because they could not easily be fitted into the weekly scheme of services prescribed by the BCP, and because it was thought that a general increase in preaching would be exploited by radical puritans.[46] But the king did obtain a

43. *RPCS*, vi, p. 449 (12 Aug. 1602); Calderwood, *History*, vi, pp. 159–60.

44. *Acts and Proceedings of the General Assemblies* [ed. Thomson], iii, p. 1002 (6 Nov. 1602).

45. P. McCullough, *Sermons at Court: Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching* (Cambridge, 1998), pp. 116–17, 125, and attached 'Calendar of Sermons', p. 102 ff.

46. Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 198–9, with the king's long-standing wish reported in the 1605 order for thanksgivings after the Gunpowder Plot, ibid., p. 209. This answers a question posed in McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, p. 117.

privy council order for English and Welsh observance of the anniversary on 5 August, including the public holiday as well as the religious thanksgiving.

James no doubt had several motives for insisting on English acceptance of the anniversary: his own conscientious reasons, a desire to impress his new subjects with an annual thanksgiving distinct from that of his predecessor, and a wish to have an explicitly *British* anniversary that publicised his ambition of closer union between his kingdoms. Yet the order was issued only on 12 July, just three weeks before the first observance, leaving insufficient time for the archbishops and bishops to have a new form of prayer ready for use in the churches.[47] The lateness of the order might have been due to pressure of other business, or Scottish unfamiliarity with the amount of time needed to compose, print and distribute forms of prayer. There may, however, be other explanations. James's wishes would have been encouraged by Scottish advisers who had accompanied him to England, including Patrick Galloway and, as new members of the English privy council, the 2nd duke of Lennox, the 2nd earl of Mar, and Sir James Elphinstone,[48] but the English councillors and Whitgift perhaps had doubts about the anniversary as well as objections to the proposed Tuesday sermons, because of its Scottish origin and the well-known scepticism about the king's account of the conspiracy. If so, how might their doubts have been overcome?

As Jacobean 'succession studies' have shown, the accession and its aftermath were not as smooth as was once assumed,[49] and the persuasive elements for council members may have been two troubling developments during June and early July. First, an outbreak of plague brought social and economic disruptions, quarantines, delays in the courts and in other public business, and, on 6 July, a curtailment of the attendance and ceremonies for the king's coronation and a postponement of his ceremonial entry into the City of London.[50] As was stated in the orders for fast days and the special services that were customarily issued during severe epidemics, plague was treated by both church

47. *Acts of the Privy Council of England*, new ser. (46 vols, 1890–1964), xxxii, p. 500 (12 July 1603); Lambeth Palace Library [hereafter LPL], Reg. Whitgift 3, fos 150v–151r, Whitgift to Bancroft, 14 July 1603. See also John Strype, *The Life and Acts of John Whitgift* (1718; 3 vols, Oxford 1822), ii, pp. 474–5. For arrangements for the first observance having to be improvised, see below.

48. Lennox, Mar and Elphinstone were among the signatories of the council order: LPL, Reg. Whitgift 3, fo. 151r–v, privy council to Whitgift, 12 July 1603 (Strype, *Whitgift*, ii, pp. 472–4). Lennox had been present at Scottish privy council meetings in 1600 and 1601 that ordered thanksgivings after the Gowrie conspiracy, and Mar when the council took action against the Edinburgh ministers.

49. See, especially, J. Richards, 'The English Accession of James VI: "National" Identity, Gender and the Personal Monarchy of England', *English Historical Review*, cxvii (2002), pp. 513–35, at 514–24; S. Doran, '1603: A Jagged Succession', *Historical Research*, xciii (2020), pp. 443–65, and S. Doran, *From Tudor to Stuart: The Regime Change from Elizabeth I to James I* (Oxford, 2024).

50. *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. J.F. Larkin and P. Hughes (2 vols, Oxford, 1973–83), i, pp. 21–2, 32–5, 37–8, 40–41.

and state as a divine judgement on the sins of the kingdom. This was hardly a belief that the authorities wanted to become associated with the king's accession. Secondly, two conspiracies against James, the Main and Bye plots, were discovered in late June, and proclamations issued in early July for the arrest of their perpetrators broadcast throughout the realm the disturbing news of opposition to the new king.[51] Discovery of plots against Queen Elizabeth had been marked by short periods of 'occasional' thanksgiving services or prayers.[52] But the addition of both plague and plots to the unsettling early months of a new reign by a foreign king probably encouraged members of the council to exceed these Elizabethan precedents, and to accept James's more impressive anniversary and holiday as means to emphasise his godly credentials. Only on 11 August were fasts and penitential services ordered for the plague epidemic,[53] after divine favour for the king had been amply asserted at his coronation on 27 July and by the first observance of the Gowrie thanksgivings across the realm nine days later.

James also appropriated the Elizabethan practice of annual celebration of the sovereign's accession. It seems clear that, in contrast to Elizabeth, the king himself was involved in the decision to commemorate this anniversary, both from his personal promotion of the religious thanksgiving and from the character of the new form of prayer.[54] No distinct order for this anniversary has been found, and it may simply have consisted of the distribution of the form itself, stated 'to be vsed of all the kings maiesties louing subiects euery yeere' and 'set foorth by authoritie'. Again, the arrangements were left until very late. This can be demonstrated by comparison between the two forms of prayer for the Gowrie anniversary and for accession day, informed by details of changes in the BCP which the king authorised in early February 1604.[55]

51. Ibid., pp. 35–6, 41–3. For the plots, described as 'deeply embarrassing for James', see Doran, *Tudor to Stuart*, pp. 126–34, 152–3.

52. James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 30–33; *National Prayers*, I, pp. 153–6, 167–72, 206–12, 226–30, 234–8.

53. *Registrum Vagum*, ed. Barton, i, p. 38. This corrects a speculative earlier date in *National Prayers*, I, p. 240.

54. James added sermons to the secular celebrations which had been held at court on accession day since the 1580s; see McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, 'Calendar of Sermons', p. 123 ff. The houses of parliament are not known to have corporately attended thanksgivings on the anniversary during Elizabeth's reign, but James expected them to do so when they were in session: see Kyle, ed., *Parliaments, Politics and Elections*, pp. 25, 45, 56–7, for the Commons adjourning in 1604 to attend a sermon in Westminster Abbey; *CJ*, p. 288, and *The Parliamentary Diary of Robert Bowyer, 1606–1607*, ed. D.H. Willson (Minneapolis, MN, 1931), p. 90, reporting a reminder from the king to MPs in 1606; and *CJ*, p. 354, for attendance at the sermon described as a 'custom' in 1607. For the new form of prayer, see below.

55. Edward Cardwell, *A History of Conferences and other Proceedings Connected with the Revision of the Book of Common Prayer* (Oxford, 1840), pp. 217–25 (James to Archbishop Whitgift and fellow ecclesiastical commissioners, 9 Feb. [1604]). Special forms of prayer commonly made use of text from the BCP; the changes relevant to the forms for the two anniversaries are revision of the rubric before absolution in morning prayer, and additions of a petition and a prayer for the royal family in the litany (ibid., pp. 218, 222). Compare *A Fourme of Prayer with Thankesgiuing,*

After the rush which had made it impossible to distribute new services for the first English observance of Gowrie day in 1603, a form for this anniversary was composed by Whitgift and Bishop Bancroft of London and published by the following February,[56] in ample time before its second observance that August: this is clear from the form's use of text from the BCP of 1559. Yet with notionally a similar twelve months' notice from the king's accession date, the bishops and printers were placed under considerable pressure to have a form available for that anniversary. Although in this case they did meet the deadline, its preparation began, at most, just six weeks before the first observance on 24 March 1604, as is evident from its inclusion of text from the new 1604 edition of the BCP. Perhaps this thanksgiving had long been intended, and the archbishops were simply slow to act. But as they were already composing the Gowrie form and completed it with six months to spare, the more likely explanation is that before February 1604 there had been no plan to observe the anniversary of James's accession. The Elizabethan accession day had been specific to the queen and her supersession of Catholic rule, and with Gowrie day James already had his own English anniversary. It was not obvious that a second English anniversary thanksgiving for James's rule was needed or desirable; but it seems that the circumstances of early 1604 suddenly made it seem advantageous.

After a spate of puritan and Catholic petitions during the first months of the new reign, after detailed enquiries by the king to the bishops on the condition of the Church of England, and after his conference with bishops and puritan ministers at the Hampton Court conference on 14–16 January 1604, various measures were planned to achieve James's ambition of a new religious settlement and to curb what he and the bishops regarded as widespread irregularities in worship. The first of these measures, on 5 March, was a royal proclamation requiring conformity to the revised edition of the BCP as 'the onley Publike Fourme of serving of God … allowed in this Realme'.[57] More followed after the assembly of Canterbury convocation on 20 March, with the issue of new church canons. James also had large plans for his first English parliament: as well as declaring his general aims as king, he wanted support for a statutory union between England and Scotland, and for a large increase in royal financial income. But his council anticipated criticisms

to be vsed by all the Kings Maiesties Louing Subiects Euery Yeere the Fift of August: being the Day of his Highnesse Happy Deliuerance from the Traiterous and Bloody Attempt of the Earle of Gowry and his Brother, with their Adherents (1603 [o.s.]; STC 16489), sigs A3r, D4v, E3r, with *A Fourme of Prayer with Thankesgiuing, to be vsed of all the Kings Maiesties Louing Subiects Euery Yeere, the 24. of March: Being the Day of his Highnesse Entry to this Kingdome* (1604 [n.s.]; STC 16483), sigs A3r, C4v–D1r, D4v. As the first edition of the new BCP (STC 16326) is dated 1603, it was published before the old style new year on 25 March 1604.

56. See LPL, Reg. Whitgift 3, fos 150v–151r, Whitgift to Bancroft, 14 July 1603, for Whitgift proposing a 'conference' on preparation of the form of prayer with Bancroft and other bishops. Whitgift and Bancroft presumably took responsibility for drafting the detailed text.

57. *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. Larkin and Hughes, i, pp. 74–7.

of purveyance, wardship and monopolies, and puritan complaints about the terms of religious conformity and the application of anti-Catholic legislation. Re-emphasis on the king's special authority as a godly prince now seemed useful. The initial announcement of his plans to parliament on 19 March was followed five days later by the anniversary thanksgivings, including attendance by the House of Commons at the sermon in Westminster Abbey.[58]

For James, the Gunpowder Plot on 5 November 1605 was a repetition of the Gowrie conspiracy;[59] explicit links between the two were made both in his subsequent speech to parliament and in his order for the anniversary thanksgiving. For him, too, it was another assassination attempt by a definite group of traitors, not—as most people in England interpreted it—a scheme characteristic of Catholics in general. It was, he claimed, directed chiefly against himself, his family and his kingship, with the peers, members of parliament, bishops, judges and other dignitaries as collateral targets: the deliverance was special for him and his 'posterity'—his queen and eldest son—and only secondarily for his realms. And there was a striking coincidence: like his escape from the Gowries, the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot had taken place on a Tuesday, and on the fifth day of a month. In both cases, the 'same deuill' had 'persecuted mee', and the 'same God' had 'delivered mee'.[60]

In significant respects, the aftermath of the Gowrie conspiracy was repeated: a succession of thanksgivings was arranged, spreading out across Britain and into the future. They were held in London on 5 and 10 November, thanksgiving forms of prayer were distributed for use in churches throughout England and Wales during the following weeks, and thanksgivings were soon also held in Scotland.[61] On 29 November orders for further thanksgivings in England and Wales were issued to the new archbishop of Canterbury, Richard Bancroft, now by the king personally—not by the privy council (as in the case of the English order for the Gowrie anniversary) nor, it seems, in consultation with his principal secretary.[62] These orders were for the organisation of both annual thanksgiving services in all places of worship, and thanksgiving sermons and prayers every Tuesday in as many cathedrals, churches and chapels as possible. Evidently the attempted destruction of the

58. See n. 21 above, for James's general 'programme' in his speech to parliament on 19 (and 22) March, and n. 54 for the Commons' first known attendance at a sermon for accession day.

59. This and the following three paragraphs draw on the evidence and argument in Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day'.

60. 'His Maiesties Speach in this Last Session of Parliament' (9 Nov. 1605), in *James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, pp. 147, 148, 150, 152, 157; Archbishop Bancroft to Richard Vaughan, bishop of London, 29 Nov. 1605, in Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 208–10; and see *Letters of King James VI & I*, ed. G.P.V. Akrigg (Berkeley, CA, 1984), pp. 276–7, 309.

61. Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 189–91, 196–7.

62. Bancroft to Vaughan, 29 Nov. 1605, in Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 208–10. The earl of Salisbury was informed of the king's intention, but had no part in the issue of the order: Hatfield House Archives, CP 113/48, Thomas Lake to Salisbury, 27 Nov. 1605.

leaders of the state and church had enabled James to overcome any earlier objections that the bishops and council members may have had to weekly thanksgivings: these were to begin as soon as possible, with Bancroft providing instructions for their accommodation within the pattern of BCP services.[63] Although no copy seems to have survived, an order for annual thanksgivings for the king's deliverance in England was also issued in Scotland,[64] just as James had earlier brought the Scottish Gowrie anniversary to England.

As in Scotland in 1600, the most obvious purpose of these thanksgivings was to reassure and stabilise opinion after a dramatically unsettling incident. But again, their number and their novelty—the appointment of a third anniversary and Tuesday sermons in England, and a second anniversary in Scotland—make it likely that James had further intentions. Parliament had been summoned on 5 November primarily to consider the report of an Anglo-Scottish commission on the creation of a closer British union, which was facing considerable opposition. The Gunpowder Plot was likely to deflect attention from the commission's recommendations, and to strengthen parliamentary criticism both of the royal government's leniency towards peace-abiding Catholics, and its recent peace treaty with Spain. But with thanksgiving services proceeding during November and December, and with the planned Tuesday sermons beginning in December, James probably hoped that further emphases on God's favour would help to overcome opposition to political union and to mitigate an anti-Catholic reaction. Speaking to parliament four days after the discovery of the plot, for the start of a new session James chose a Tuesday (21 January 1606), explicitly as a day on which from his own experience it could be hoped that God would 'prosper all our affaires … and bring them to an happie conclusion'. In anticipation of this next session, he denied that most English Catholics and any foreign Catholic monarchies had been implicated, praised the impartiality of the union commissioners, and lectured MPs and peers on their duties towards God, their king and the commonweal.[65] Looking to the future, James almost certainly regarded another anniversary thanksgiving, commemorating a deliverance in England which complemented the king's deliverance in Scotland, and again observed in both kingdoms, as a means to assist a consolidation of opinion in support of the union of Great Britain.[66]

63. Bancroft to Vaughan, 29 Nov. 1605, in Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', p. 209. Any sermons preached on Wednesday and/or Friday—'litany days' ordered for observance by earlier royal injunctions and by the church canons of 1604—or on other week days (often when towns had markets) were to be transferred to Tuesday.

64. Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 196, 197.

65. *James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, pp. 152–3, 154–7 (speech of 9 Nov. 1605), and see Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, pp. 72–3.

66. James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 14–15, 25, 70, comments on the intended creation of a 'cultural memory' to this effect.

Given the king's order of late November—and on the precedents of the Gowrie and accession day anniversaries in England—no act of the English parliament was needed to appoint annual thanksgivings for discovery of the Gunpowder Plot. Special acts of worship came within the authority of the royal supremacy over the Church of England. Nevertheless, an act was passed. This was initiated by puritan MPs in January 1606, with a different purpose to that of the king—to reinforce their intended anti-Catholic legislation. Even though their bill was an encroachment on the royal prerogative, it was adopted, with modifications, by James and his council, probably in part because to oppose it would expend too much political capital, but also because they hoped its passage might encourage its advocates to moderate their anti-Catholic measures. Once these considerations were accepted, they probably welcomed the statutory force given to observance of the anniversary, in similar style to the Scottish parliamentary act for the annual Gowrie thanksgiving.[67]

IV

It is commonly observed that James regarded the anniversaries chiefly as occasions for special sermons.[68] It is certainly the case that as a Scottish Calvinist his own piety was 'sermon-centred': in the Scottish kirk, preaching was the main feature of the services, and in England James's intended reforms included an increase in the number of learned clergy, who were trained and able to preach.[69] But it should not be assumed, as is common in studies of Jacobean sermons, that in seeking to establish the themes for preachers on the Gowrie and Gunpowder anniversaries James and his advisers relied only or largely on the official pamphlet accounts of the conspiracy and the plot.[70] These pamphlets were influential for set-piece sermons at court and at Paul's Cross, but it is not obvious that copies were obtained by the clergy scattered across his realms. The main textual sources for preachers of the annual sermons were the Scottish and English orders that established the Gowrie and Gunpowder Treason anniversaries and the English forms of prayer for these occasions and for the anniversary of James's accession. These orders and forms were sent to all ministers in parishes, cathedrals and

67. The text of the act was almost certainly a negotiated compromise between MPs and the royal council; see Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 203–6.

68. Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, ch. 1; Morrissey, *Paul's Cross Sermons*, pp. 141–3, and id., 'Presenting James VI and I', pp. 107–10.

69. McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, pp. 99, 121, 125–30, 155–63; K. Fincham and P. Lake, 'The Ecclesiastical Policy of James I', *Journal of British Studies*, xxiv (1985), pp. 169–207, at 173–4, 175, 180.

70. The official narrative of the Gowrie episode, and James's speech to parliament, Bishop Barlow's sermon at Paul's Cross and a *Discourse* published after Gunpowder Treason. See Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, pp. 67–73, 75–81; Morrissey, *Paul's Cross Sermons*, pp. 145–9; Morrissey, 'Presenting James VI and I', pp. 118–19, 121.

universities, with presbyteries or bishops and archdeacons expected to ensure that they were read out to their congregations.[71]

In England and Wales the forms of prayer were a more important influence on opinion than any number of sermons. In contrast to the various and changing sermons preached by individual ministers in particular places over the years, the forms were prescribed, standard and fixed, and used every year in all places of worship. They contained services for morning prayer, litany and communion, with prayers, versicles, litanies, psalms, lessons, gospels and epistles that had been specially composed, adapted or selected to express the intended meanings of each anniversary, with congregations participating through responses and, in cathedrals, colleges and some churches, by singing. As has been observed of the BCP and 'occasional' special prayers, fasts and thanksgivings, 'every Tudor and Stuart regime understood that public worship was the most potent … broadcast mass medium available to it' and, it follows, the principal form of popular political participation.[72] What were the meanings and memories that the archbishops presented and sought to perpetuate on behalf of the king and his government in the anniversary forms of prayer?

Anne James has argued that James presented the Gunpowder Plot as 'the founding event of his new Protestant Britain'. But this overlooks his earlier creation of Gowrie day as a British anniversary.[73] Nor should it be concluded that the order to use the form of prayer for Queen Elizabeth's accession day for the first English observance of the Gowrie anniversary in 1603 was a 'brilliant' device by the king and Archbishop Whitgift to connect James with memories of the queen and with the English anti-Catholic tradition.[74] The king was not involved in this particular decision: the royal council left 'the forme and manner' of the thanksgiving to the 'judgemente and wisedome' of Whitgift and his fellow archbishop, Hutton of York. Given too little time to consult with other bishops on the delicate matter of composing services which would commemorate a Scottish episode for English and Welsh congregations and be worthy of use long into the future, Whitgift postponed the task. As already noted, a new form was composed for the second observance in 1604, but in the meantime he improvised: he ordered re-use of the form for Queen Elizabeth's accession day simply

71. James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 34–5, is a rare instance of comment on the forms of prayer, though she gives more attention to the pamphlet accounts: pp. 44–7, 52–4, 57–63.

72. Ryrie, 'Liturgical Commemoration', pp. 426–7; J.P.D. Cooper, 'O Lorde Save the King: Tudor Royal Propaganda and the Power of Prayer', in G. Bernard and S. Gunn, eds, *Authority and Consent in Tudor England* (Aldershot, 2002), pp. 179–96; N. Mears, 'Public Worship and Political Participation in Elizabethan England', *Journal of British Studies*, li (2012), pp. 4–25.

73. James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 8, 14–15, 25, 35. In another misconception, Ferrell, *Government by Polemic*, p. 64, comments that the plot 'catalyzed the Scottish king's transformation into an English monarch' and enabled him 'to re-design his image'.

74. James, *Poets, Players*, pp. 33–4, 35; McCullough, *Sermons at Court*, p. 122. Turner, 'Matter of Fact', p. 195, misled by the old style date, assumes that the form for the Gowrie anniversary was available in 1603.

because, as it had long been needed for annual use, the clergy were likely to have retained copies. But Whitgift both qualified and supplemented the use of this form. He gave 'especiall charge' that ministers were to adapt its services and to shape their sermons to suit the new occasion and the new king, with 'declaracion of the great blessinge of God for his Maiesties deliverance' and with 'hartie prayers to God for the continuance of his goodnesse towardes him'. In these adaptations and sermons, ministers were to be guided by the text of the council order, copies of which Whitgift sent to all the bishops and which, as episcopal and archdiaconal records show, they had re-copied or summarised for delivery to the local clergy, so that it could be 'published' (read out) to their congregations. This council order, more than the text of the now outdated Elizabethan form of prayer, defined how the thanksgiving day was to be understood. Here James's influence is obvious: the order was concerned solely with the Scottish origins of the anniversary, without reference to Elizabeth or to any earlier English deliverances. God's special care, it declared, had been bestowed upon James as king of Scotland, and the king, not the English kingdom, was the bearer of providential favour: his succession in England made the English people 'partakers of the same blessinges' as the 'subjectes of the Scottish nation'. The order went still further: it forcefully re-stated the provisions for the thanksgiving and the public holiday which had been enacted by the 'speciall acte and perpetuall statute made by the three estates' of Scotland in 1600.[75] This—the explicit application of a Scottish act of parliament within England and Wales—was an extraordinary assertion of the union of the two kingdoms, giving practical effect to James's 'proclamation for the uniting of England and Scotland' that had been circulated two months earlier.[76]

Similarly, the king's order of November 1605 for annual and Tuesday thanksgivings in England and Wales—also sent to the bishops and the clergy, to be read out in all places of worship—placed the Gunpowder Plot in Scottish and British contexts, as well as in the immediate English context. In its lengthy opening, the equivalence it drew for the Plot was again not with Elizabethan or English deliverances, but with the Gowrie conspiracy. God's mercies were described as being bestowed less on the English parliament and the Church of England than on the king and on 'this whole Iland of great Britayne', with 'the rest of His Maiesties dominions'.[77]

75. LPL, Reg. Whitgift 3, fos 151r–v, 150v–151r, privy council to Whitgift, 12 July 1603, and Whitgift to Bancroft, 14 July 1603; Lincoln, Lincolnshire Archives, DIOC/ADD REG/1, fos 188v–190r, William Chaderton, bishop of Lincoln, to diocesan officials and archdeacons, 20 July 1603, and note of actions taken; Hertford, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies [hereafter HALS], ASA, 5/3/167/759, James Rolfe (archdiaconal official) to the clergy of St Albans archdeaconry, 29 July 1603.

76. *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, ed. Larkin and Hughes, i, pp. 18–20. As Turner, 'Matter of Fact', p. 192, notes: 'one kingdom, one holiday'. There is no known suggestion that an English act of parliament might be needed to confirm the terms of the Scottish act.

77. Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 194–7, 208–9. For distribution of the order and instructions for observance, see HALS, ASA, 5/4/191, fos 831–3, Vaughan to Bill, 30

The new forms of prayer for the three English anniversaries also had a firmly Stuart focus. All incorporated some text and readings from the form for Elizabeth's accession day, and the Gowrie form used adapted versions of prayers that had been issued after plots against her. This re-use of earlier forms of prayer, together with the characteristic use of the structure, rubrics and some of the text from the BCP services, preserved a familiar liturgical style, as well as being economical for the time and effort of the archbishops.[78] But this in itself does not imply that James wished to be identified in any substantial sense with his predecessor's reign. More striking than this recycling are the new selections of psalms and biblical readings, and both extensively revised and new prayers. To an extent, the reasons for these changes are obvious: new deliverances were being commemorated, and the circumstances of James's accession to the English throne varied considerably from those of Elizabeth's accession. But there was much more: James was presented as a distinctive new ruler, with his own independent claims to allegiance.

As the English order for the Gowrie anniversary stated, while king of Scotland it had 'pleased God manie waies to blesse our sovereigne Lorde': these included his survival of an attack on his pregnant mother, several challenges to his authority, and the spells of the North Berwick witches. Now God had gone further by rewarding him with accession to new kingdoms, and twice delivering him from imminent death.[79] All this provided divine recognition of the godliness of his rule, and proof that he was in person what he asserted for kings in general: that he sat 'vpon God his throne in earth', and was one of God's 'lieutenants and vice-gerents'.[80] Each anniversary was intended as an affirmation and public acceptance of his exceptional royal authority, and the special benefits this brought to his realms. In the insistent reiterations of the Scottish orders for Gowrie day, the 'haill estaittis of this realme' had 'singular benefite, grace and favour of God bestowit upoun thame be his miraculous and extraordinar delyverie of thair maist gracious soverane'.[81]

Nov. 1605, and Rolfe to ministers and churchwardens of St Albans archdeaconry, 10 Dec. 1605; Lincolnshire Archives, DIOC/COR/B/2/13, p. 26, Vaughan to Chaderton, 30 Nov. 1605, and Chaderton to William Smyth (archdiaconal official), 8 Dec. 1605; and similar for Norwich diocese in *Registrum Vagum*, ed. Barton, ii, pp. 215–17.

78. For numerous instances of the re-use of earlier texts for special forms of prayer, see *National Prayers*, I.

79. LPL, Reg. Whitgift 3, fo. 151r, privy council to Whitgift, 12 July 1603. For the attack on his mother, see *James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, p. 148 (9 Nov. 1605 speech); for attempted coups, J. Goodare, 'Scottish Politics in the Reign of James VI', in J. Goodare and M. Lynch, eds, *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton, 2000), pp. 35–40; and for the witches and James's published response in *Daemonologie*, C. Larner, 'James VI and I and Witchcraft', in A.G.R. Smith, ed., *The Reign of James VI and I* (London, 1973), pp. 74–90.

80. *True Lawe/Trew Law*, and 9 November 1605 speech, in *James VI and I. Political Writings*, pp. 64, 72, 147.

81. *RPS*, 1600/11/12 (parliamentary act, 15 Nov. 1600), and similar in *RPCS*, vi, pp. 256–8 (council act, 16 June 1601).

James's Tudor predecessors in England had also been invested with sacred qualities. In Ryrie's words, the BCP 'purrs with approval of royal and state power and is filled with obsequious prayers for the Crown',[82] and special forms of prayer, particularly after the discovery of plots, had been still more extravagant in their praise and petitions for Queen Elizabeth. But James's two deliverances and his English accession sanctioned still greater claims to sacral authority. All three of the new anniversary forms took from the form for the anniversary of Elizabeth's accession the opening biblical justification for praying 'for Kings, and for all that are in authoritie, that we may leade a quiet and peaceable life, in all godlinesse and honestie' (1 Timothy 2:1–3),[83] and, as either a lesson or an epistle, the classic scriptural text on obedience, 'the powers that be are ordained by God' and rulers are 'God's ministers' (Romans 13: 1–7). To these were added new scriptural texts, with still stronger support for royal authority. The themes of the psalms included God's protection for the Lord's anointed, kings whose success came from trusting in God, 'blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord', God's defeat of the ungodly, and God's scattering of the wicked (Psalms 20, 27, 31, 68, 69, 118). The lessons and gospel reading for the Gowrie and Gunpowder Treason anniversaries drew analogies between King James and King David's thanksgiving for deliverance from his enemies (2 Samuel 22), Paul's resistance to accusers and conspirators (Acts 23), and Christ's betrayal by Judas (Matthew 27:1–10). New or revised prayers in these forms for James's two escapes from death were as fierce as those for plots against Elizabeth, in their execration of 'bloody', 'barbarous', 'savage', 'desperate' and 'devilish' traitors and conspirators, cast by God's wrath into the 'Gulf of Destruction'. Although the king's order and the form of prayer issued after the Gunpowder Plot acknowledged that its targets had included 'the Nobilitie, Clergie, and Commons of this Realme, assembled … in Parliament', their focus was overwhelmingly on the deliverance of the king and his family.

The anniversary form for James's accession day celebrated his ultimately unchallenged succession, with such statements as the 'happy continuance of our peace and welfare and … the blessed maintenance of thy gospel and true religion among us'. But more prominent than continuity with the Elizabethan reign were assertions of a new start, after the doubts and troubles of recent years. The alternatives for the first lesson recounted God's selection of Joshua to succeed Moses and take possession of new lands (Joshua 1) and his bestowal of wisdom and prosperity on the rulership of Solomon (2 Chronicles 1). New prayers spoke of James's accession as God ending 'our fearful expectation of trouble & danger', and his 'ioyfull deliuering of vs from great dread & feare'. A kingdom that had

82. A. Ryrie, *Protestants: The Faith that Made the Modern World* (London, 2017), p. 47, and see Cooper, 'O Lorde Save the King'.

83. In deference to the queen's gender, 'Kings' had been changed to 'Princes'. This was retained in the form for James's accession day, but 'Kings' was restored for the other two forms.

considered itself 'a pr[e]y to rauin, and spoyle' had by God's grace been given 'a Shepheard, a Captain, a King … a man chosen after thine owne heart, that he might lead vs vnto the greene pastures, and to the waters of comfort'. By the union of the crowns of Scotland and England, James exceeded even the achievements of Elizabeth's reign; he had conferred on England 'a great increase of honour, power, & dignitie'.[84]

Yet more important in practice, James had a family and two male heirs. While the inclusion of a royal family and provision for the sovereign's succession in official prayers was an obvious and not entirely new device, there was now a remarkable emphasis on the point. It not only provided a stark personal contrast to Elizabeth but also promised an end to the recurrent English succession crises and chronic political and religious uncertainties since the 1530s. This was a matter of considerable relief to almost everyone in England and Wales, and the archbishops and bishops made much of claims which were made by James himself, and which they surely knew they were expected to celebrate and sanctify. His fecundity was another proof of his special place in God's providential scheme, which he had first celebrated in Scotland during 1594 in the elaborate (and extensively publicised) baptismal ceremonies for Prince Henry as (in effect) a future British prince.[85] Prayers for the royal family became prominent in the Jacobean Church of England, far more so than during the earlier use of such prayers, in the last years of Henry VIII and the reign of Edward VI.[86] Soon after James's accession, Whitgift ordered petitions for Queen Anna, Prince Henry and all the 'royal progenie' to be added to the 'bidding prayer' for the sovereign, which preachers were required to say before their sermons, an instruction that was confirmed and expanded in the new church canons issued in September 1604.[87] In the revisions to the BCP which James ordered in February of that year, a new petition and 'A Prayer for the Queene and Prince, and other the King and Queenes children'—specified as sharing, along with the king, places among God's 'Elect'—were added to the litany.[88] One or both of these

84. *A Fourme of Prayer with Thankesgiuing, to Be Vsed … the 24. of March*, sigs D4r, C2v–C3v. Doran, *Tudor to Stuart*, p. 33, incorrectly states that this form was inserted into the new official prayer book of 1604; as *National Prayers,* IV explains, no anniversary form of prayer was annexed to the BCP until 1662.

85. R. Bowers, 'James VI, Prince Henry and a "True Reportarie" of Baptism at Stirling 1594', *Renaissance and Reformation*, xxix (2006), pp. 3–22.

86. For these, see [H. Cox], *Forms of Bidding Prayer* (Oxford, 1840), pp. 71–3, and W.K. Clay, 'On the Right of the Sovereign to Insert the Names of the Royal Family in the Prayer-Book', *British Magazine*, xxx (1846), pp. 1–2. The queen and Prince Henry had earlier been added to the prayer for the king in Scotland: *The CL Psalms of David … with Prayers … according to the Forme Used in the Kirk of Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1596; STC 16585), p. 80.

87. LPL, Reg. Whitgift 3, fos 148v–149v, 'The stile wch all preachers are comanded to vse in their sermons for his most excellent Ma[jes]ty' [Apr.–May 1603]; *Anglican Canons*, ed. Bray, p. 343. In more publicity for James's union ambitions, the canon required preachers to say prayers for the churches of England, Scotland and Ireland.

88. Cardwell, *History of Conferences*, p. 222, and see BCP (1603 [1604 n.s.]; STC 16326), sig. Bv. The petition and prayer were not among the revisions agreed at the Hampton Court conference. After James's death, the predestinarian promise of God towards 'thine Elect, and their seed' was replaced by God as the 'fountaine of all goodness'.

additions were among the parts of the BCP services used in the forms of prayer for accession day and Gunpowder Treason day, and both forms had new prayers which contained further petitions for the royal family. God was thanked for 'a secure expectation of our future establishment by the propagation of his royall issue within our lande', and allegiance was promised not just to the king but also to 'his seed, his heires, and successors after him in all generations'. The revision of the litany in the form for accession day included a new 'composite psalm', a selection of verses from scriptural psalms which emphasised God's promises to David of a secure succession for his heir. The point was relentless in the services for the earliest of James's English anniversaries, Gowrie day: all six of the new or revised prayers named the queen, prince and other 'princely issue'.[89]

For James, the existence of a dynasty, with male successors and with daughters available for foreign marriage alliances, was a further source of authority and cause for obedience,[90] deserving regular public recognition and religious thanksgivings. It promised permanence not just for the union of the Scottish and English crowns, but also for his policies of general British union, settled religious consensus and international peace. While these policies were contentious among peers and MPs, the English parliament could agree on the enormous importance of a king who had brought the blessing of a new security, by ensuring long Protestant successions to the throne. Its act for the anniversary thanksgiving after the Gunpowder Plot declared that:

> no Nation of the Earth hath bene blessed with greater Benefits then this Kingdome now enioyeth, having the true and free profession of the Gospel under our most gracious Sovereign Lord King James, the most great, learned and Religious King that ever reigned therein, enriched with a most hopefull and plentiful Progenie, proceeding out of his Royal loynes, promising Continuance of this Happinesse and profession to all posteritie.[91]

V

The Jacobean creation of multiple state anniversaries, together with Tuesday thanksgiving sermons, was a remarkable development in the worship of both the Scottish kirk and the Church of England, and in the public presentations of the monarchy to the Scottish and English people.[92] The annual and weekly thanksgivings had both immediate and long-term purposes. James VI discovered in Scotland that they

89. In 1605 and 1606 two pregnancies for the queen and the birth of a further child were marked by more special prayers: *National Prayers*, I, pp. 257–60, 265.

90. See *Trew Law*, in *James VI and I. Political Writings*, ed. Sommerville, p. 82.

91. *An Act for a Publique Thankesgiuing to Almightie God, Euery Yeere on the Fift Day of Nouember* (1606). This stipulated that the text of the Act was always to be read out in all places of worship on the anniversary.

92. Cf. Doran, *Tudor to Stuart*, pp. 471–2, which misses their novelty and significance (and inaccurately refers to 'Elizabeth's practice' of encouraging national 'holidays').

eased the solution of political difficulties and achievement of royal policies, experiences which he subsequently applied on three occasions in England. In 1600 they helped him to smother a potential threat to his English accession, and to prepare for becoming an absentee ruler in Scotland. From 1603 they were a means for a foreign king to develop and sustain a favourable impression throughout a new kingdom, despite doubts about his Scottish ways and Scottish followers,[93] and to assist his attempted conversion of his personal union of the Scottish and English crowns into a formal political union of Great Britain.

More generally, the state anniversaries and Tuesday sermons were occasions for the assertion of divine-right monarchy. James had several reasons for raising the religious and ideological prestige of his kingship in both Scotland and England. He wanted to establish beyond all possible dispute his own and his descendants' rights of succession to all his kingdoms.[94] He wanted to discredit 'resistance theories', ideas that 'the people', with or without encouragement of the pope or any other foreign power, had a right to overthrow or assassinate their sovereign.[95] He wanted a stature that would assist his grand ambition of an ecumenical council to bring religious peace to Christendom.[96] He also wanted greater authority to assist the political management of his kingdoms, and more particularly to arbitrate in religious and ecclesiastical matters. By emphasis on the divine right of kings, James and his advisers created a counterbalance to troublesome members of the Scottish kirk, and amid mutual unfamiliarity in England as a novice—and, by confession and experience, a presbyterian—supreme governor of its church, he obtained additional weight in negotiating and imposing a religious settlement in his new kingdom.

As Julian Goodare has written, 'there was nobody in Protestant Europe more confident in his role as godly prince than James VI',[97] a role which he publicised and consolidated through his biblical exegeses and his *Daemonologie*, *True Lawe* and *Basilikon Doron*, all pointedly republished in England during the year of his accession, selling thousands of copies.[98] Two deliverances from violent death and his English

93. See especially Wormald, 'James VI and I', and more strongly in J. Wormald, 'O Brave New World? The Union of England and Scotland in 1603', in T.C. Smout, ed., *Anglo-Scottish Relations from 1603 to 1900* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 13–36.

94. For the awkward issue that Henry VIII's will and an Act of parliament had excluded the Stuarts from the English succession, see C. Russell, '1603: The End of English National Sovereignty', in G. Burgess, R. Wymer and J. Lawrence, eds, *The Accession of James I: Historical and Cultural Consequences* (Basingstoke, 2006), pp. 1–13, at 4–5, and (with further causes for doubt), Doran, *Tudor to Stuart*, pp. 97–100.

95. P. Lake, 'The King (and Queen) and the Jesuit: James Stuart's *True Law of Free Monarchies* in Context/s', *Transactions of the Royal Historical* Society, 6th ser., xiv (2004), pp. 243–60.

96. W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge, 1997).

97. J. Goodare, *State and Society in Early Modern Scotland* (Oxford, 1999), p. 192.

98. J. Wormald, 'James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron* and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and the English Translation', in L. Levy Peck, ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), pp. 36–54; J. Rickard, *Authorship and Authority: The Writings of James VI and I* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 69–120; K. Sharpe, *Image Wars: Promoting Kings and Commonwealths in England, 1603–1660* (New Haven, CT, 2010), pp. 18–28.

accession confirmed his proximity to God, and his special claims to loyalty and obedience. The appointment of annual and weekly thanksgivings required regular public acceptance of these claims, and of their descent to his heirs. The effect was a marked increase in the number and the degree of sacral presentations of the monarchy, on a greater scale even than that which had surrounded the Tudor sovereigns after their successive breaks with papal authority and their assertions of royal supremacy over the English church.[99]

All this has implications for interpreting the significance of the state anniversaries. Historians and literary scholars who have studied the English festivities and sermons for these occasions have emphasised the interpretative importance of context. Yet the primary contexts (and texts)—the circumstance in which the anniversaries were appointed, and the orders and the forms of prayer that defined their purposes—have largely been ignored. In England and Wales the festivities were normally associated with, and the sermons normally delivered within, church services during which ministers read out, and congregations responded to, the prescribed forms. It is probable that the great majority of sermons—those delivered in parish churches, very few of which were published—took their scriptural texts and themes from the texts of the services in these forms. The anniversaries were obviously Protestant celebrations, but what the orders and forms of prayer show is that their original intentions were not to associate James with Queen Elizabeth or with earlier English deliverances, nor to strengthen anti-Catholicism and trumpet English national identity. James's attitude towards his predecessor was ambivalent: while he could praise her as 'the late queen of famous memory',[100] his larger interest was to present himself as distinct from her, bringing a new start with fresh policies.[101] James, in this respect like Elizabeth, was opposed not so much to Catholicism as to treason. The condemnation in the form of prayer for Gunpowder Treason day of those 'whose Religion is Rebellion, whose Faith is Faction' encapsulated his concerns—a contrast not between

99. See also S. Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2015), pp. 68–80, for interesting comments relating to James's concern about his religious status. In 1603 he initially refused to exercise the English practice of the 'royal touch', a supposed cure for scrofula, for a Scottish Calvinist reason that it encouraged a superstitious belief in miracles. But in September of that year he announced a change of mind, justifying its continuation as part of his new subjects' religious reverence for the monarchy and (apparently to the satisfaction of his Scottish ecclesiastical advisers) as being compatible with faith in prayer and providence. James 'touched' far more people than his Tudor predecessors had done.

100. D.R. Woolf, 'Two Elizabeths? James I and the Late Queen's Famous Memory', *Canadian Journal of History*, xx (1985), pp. 173–81; but see Richards, 'English Accession of James VI', pp. 524–7, for James (and his queen, on his instructions) not wearing mourning after Elizabeth's death, and his dislike of female rulers.

101. It is conceivable that a consideration in the decision to commemorate James's accession was to counteract any local inclinations to continue celebrations of Elizabeth's accession day. These were revived in a number of parishes, though chiefly in the 1620s; see Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 130–38.

Protestantism and Catholicism, but between tolerable religious belief and unacceptable political action.[102] English chauvinism had no appeal to a Scottish king accompanied in England by Scottish advisers, and if he was to obtain a British union he had to overcome any English assumptions that they were a favoured people before God, an 'elect nation'. In the orders and forms of prayer for the new thanksgivings, it was the king and his family who were the recipients and bearers of divine favour. They, not their realms, were 'elect'; providential blessings were not organically inherent in the Scottish or English kingdoms or in Great Britain, but transmitted to them by godly Stuart rule. The state anniversaries were, first and foremost, royal occasions, created to require subjects of the British realms to pray both for a godly sovereign and for their own obedience to the monarchy.

This article has focused attention on the initiation and official purposes of the anniversaries, in order to suggest that new questions should be asked about their observance—about how they were presented and understood in communities throughout the two kingdoms. It is notoriously difficult to assess public reception of official statements, especially when the surviving evidence is thin or unhelpful,[103] and, as has been noted of the English anniversaries, in time (in some cases, within a very short time) understandings of these occasions diverged from the meanings intended by their creators.[104] These new (and shifting) meanings have attracted numerous studies, but the argument here is that more emphasis is needed on the extent to which the anniversaries retained their official purpose, as performances of loyalty to the Stuart monarchy. James and his Scottish council made sure that the two anniversaries in Scotland continued to be observed after his departure to England: royal commissioners to synods in 1607 enquired whether Gowrie day was 'solemnelie keeped' in all the kirks; the general assembly in 1608 re-stated the order for its observance by all ministers, now with a procedure for dealing with the few remaining recalcitrants; and in 1610 and 1619 instructions were issued for the conduct of ceremonies in burghs and universities on both 5 August and 5 November.[105] In England and Wales, Tuesday sermons did not become generally established, as they did in Scotland. The most likely reason is that, given the requirements for BCP services, they were

102. *Prayers and Thankesgiuing … for the Happy Deliuerance … the 5 of Nouember*, sig. D2v.

103. The evidence for local observance of the anniversaries consists very largely of records of expenditure (chiefly for bell-ringing) in Scottish burgh and English churchwardens' accounts, which, aside from the few instances noted below, yield no indications of how people interpreted their meanings. For some of the limitations of this English evidence, see Mears and Williamson, 'Holy Days of Queen Elizabeth', pp. 213–16.

104. E.g. Cressy, 'Protestant Calendar', pp. 32, 43–5; James, *Poets, Players*, esp. pp. 14, 15, 23–4, 29.

105. Calderwood, *History*, vi, pp. 676, 774; *RPCS*, viii, p. 613, and xii, p. 121; *Original Letters Relating to the Ecclesiastical Affairs of Scotland*, ed. David Laing (2 vols, Edinburgh, 1851), ii, p. 808.

simply too great a burden on the clergy, as the bishops had probably argued in 1603; they certainly made no attempt from 1605 to enforce their delivery.[106] But the original meanings of the three anniversaries were preserved by the annual reading of the forms of prayer, and from the 1610s, bishops' and archdeacons' visitations regularly enquired in parishes whether they possessed the forms of prayer and whether the anniversaries were appropriately observed.[107] Preachers who departed from their themes of royal deliverance or sacrifice, godly rule and non-resistance to speak of the providential place and anti-Catholicism of the English nation, or to pursue sectarian causes—those who tended to preach at the pulpits of leading institutions, and whose sermons were most often published and so known to historians—were probably untypical. Indeed, their promotion of an English providentialism and anti-Catholicism was in tension with the texts that were read during the church services which accompanied their sermons. It follows that the interpretation of surviving sermons should include close attention to the forms of prayer; and where tensions exist, there should be reflection on why these developed and why they were permitted, and on the likely effects for worshippers and hearers in congregations. It may be that the English preachers who have been presented as struggling to place the Gowrie conspiracy within an English national 'narrative' were not, in fact, striving to do so, but were simply fulfilling the terms of the council order and following the themes given in the form of prayer. Lancelot Andrewes, in preaching on divine right and non-resistance in his renowned series of court sermons for the state anniversaries, was doing exactly what the king had ordered.[108] In considering popular festivities, it should also be noted that despite the two houses of parliament being among the intended targets of the Gunpowder Plot, numerous parishes persistently described the anniversary of its discovery as the day of the king's deliverance or, into the 1630s, as the 'kinges holydaye'.[109]

The anniversaries were the Jacobean monarchy's most penetrating and persistent method for claiming the loyalty and obedience of its Scottish and English subjects. As with all forms of official propaganda, there were limits to their persuasiveness, amid the pressures of other interests and contending arguments. Although James's governments did for a time subdue the Scottish kirk, obtain new standards of religious conformity in England, and secure peace with Spain, the king did not acquire sufficient authority to convert his personal union

106. Williamson and Mears, 'Gunpowder Treason Day', pp. 200–201.

107. See many entries in *Visitation Articles and Injunctions of the Early Stuart Church*, I: *1603–25*, ed. K. Fincham, Church of England Record Society, i (1994).

108. McGovern, 'Political Sermons of Lancelot Andrewes'.

109. *The Account Book of St Bartholomew Exchange in the City of London, 1596–1698*, ed. Edwin Freshfield (London, 1895), pp. 29, 32; Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells*, pp. 145–6; *The Churchwardens' Accounts of Walton-on-the Hill, Lancashire, 1627–1667*, ed. E.M.E. Ramsey and A.J. Maddock, Record Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, cxli (2005), pp. xxxiii, 21.

of the Scottish and English crowns into a formal political union of Great Britain nor, in the early 1620s, to keep England out of new foreign wars. Nevertheless, as is shown by the subsequent history of state anniversaries, Stuart kings and their councils and ecclesiastical advisers continued to value the religious and political support offered by the anniversaries, even though these occasions also provided unforeseen opportunities for sectarian controversies. The Gowrie anniversary did not last, despite the original orders for its perpetual observance: its religious observance ended in both Scotland and England with the death of King James in 1625.[110] No order or any other explanation for its discontinuance seems to have survived; it was probably regarded as personal to James, with the effect that 'perpetual' was interpreted as the duration of his reign. But the other two anniversaries were continued. Accession day was easily transferred to Charles I, by publication of a revised form of prayer with the new anniversary date and minor textual adjustments, and in 1640 the Laudian bishops added orders for its observance in new church canons, with instructions for punishment of ministers who did not comply.[111] Gunpowder Treason day continued to be observed in England and Wales, sustained by statutory authority as well as episcopal oversight, and in 1634 Laud, on Charles I's orders, revised the form of prayer to strengthen its emphasis on obedience.[112] Charles and his council in Edinburgh also gave orders in 1628 for better observance of the anniversary in Scotland.[113] By the 1640s, Gunpowder Treason day had acquired the wide English providentialist appeal which transcended the differences between royalists and parliamentarians; it continued to be celebrated in various parts of England throughout the Interregnum. After 1660, the re-established Stuart regimes introduced new and emphatically royal anniversaries to mark the execution of Charles I (for England and Wales)—the fast day taking the place of thanksgivings for Charles II's accession—and the restoration of the monarchy (both for England and Wales and for Scotland), and the English anniversaries were now also ordered for observance in the Church of Ireland. The intended purpose of the anniversaries as supports for the British monarchy, more than as offerings of praise (or repentance) to an English Protestant God, is especially evident during

110. It disappears from all the known records of local religious observances. There is, however, evidence of its civil celebration in some Scottish burghs and in military garrisons during the Restoration period, presumably as part of the government's efforts to rebuild allegiance to the monarchy; for example, *RPCS*, 3rd ser. (16 vols, Edinburgh, 1908–70), i, p. 15, and xiii, pp. xlviii, xlix; John Nicoll, *A Diary of Public Transactions and other Occurrences, Chiefly in Scotland, from January 1650 to June 1667*, ed. D. Laing (Edinburgh, 1836), pp. 374–5, 449.

111. *A Forme of Prayer, with Thankesgiuing, to Bee Vsed of all the Kings Maisties Louing Subiects euery Yeere the 27. of March, Being the Day of his Highnesse Entry to this Kingdome* (1626); *Anglican Canons*, ed. Bray, pp. 560–61.

112. William Laud, *A Speech Delivered in the Starr-Chamber* (London, 1637), pp. 32–9. The strengthening was mostly by detailed rephrasing, but also by a recommendation that if no sermon was delivered, sections of the homily against 'disobedience and wylfull rebellion' should be read.

113. *RPCS*, 2nd ser. (8 vols, Edinburgh, 1899–1908), ii, pp. 473–4.

the reign of the Catholic James II and VII. An anniversary thanksgiving for the king's birthday was created in Scotland, accession day was revived in England and Wales, and revisions of most of the English and Irish forms of prayer gave yet greater emphasis to their themes of passive obedience to royal government.[114] After the upheavals of 1688–9, the anniversaries and the monarchical themes of their forms of prayer remained intact in England and Wales and in Ireland, with the arrival of William of Orange—*not* the parliamentary revolution—added to the celebrations for Gunpowder Treason day on 5 November. What had begun as particular presentations of James VI and I's good fortune became standardised as sacral representations of subsequent sovereigns and the British monarchy in general.[115]

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114. Gunpowder Treason day continued to be observed in the Chapel Royal, obviously enough for its original royalist themes, not its acquired anti-Catholic connotations. James himself was not present: he worshipped in his private Catholic chapel. For details of the late Stuart anniversaries and their English and Irish forms of prayer, see *National Prayers*, IV.

115. For an example of royal anniversaries considered as aspects of monarchical culture, see H. Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714–1760* (Cambridge, 2006).