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Visualising Protestant Monarchy: Ceremony, Art and Politics after the Glorious Revolution (1689-1714)

Julie Farguson

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Visualising Protestant Monarchy: Ceremony, Art and Politics after the Glorious Revolution (1689-1714). By Julie Farguson. Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2021. ISBN 978-1-78327-544-1. xlix + 331pp. £75.

Recent scholarship of royal portraiture has focused on painted, printed, and minted representations. In *The Elizabethan Image* (2019), Roy Strong re-examined the emblems and imagery of Elizabethan painted portraits. The non-verbal language of symbolism and the creation of an iconic image during this period served as a prototype for future rulers. In the exhibition catalogue *Charles II: Art and Power* (Queen's Gallery, Buckingham Palace, published by the Royal Collection Trust in 2018), curator Lauren Porter explored how printmaking and the distribution of commemorative mezzotint prints flourished at the Restoration. During this time, collectors of prints could demonstrate their loyalty to the Crown by including royal portraits in their collections. Numismatic consultant Jeremy Cheek's illustrated volume *Monarch, Money & Medals* (2019) has included individual histories behind coronation medals in the Royal Collection.

As a historian of early modern Britain, Julie Farguson combines these threads of scholarship of art, politics, and ceremony to deliver "the first comprehensive, comparative study of …the visual culture of monarchy in the reigns of William III and Mary II and Queen Anne." (5) This is not purely an aesthetic analysis of paintings, prints, and medals of the late Stuart period; rather, it provides a thorough interdisciplinary examination of the political landscape, which she asserts is essential to our understanding of why and how portraits and prints were created and promoted at a given time. Farguson's central argument is "that promotional art commissioned by the Crown was intrinsically connected to ceremony and politics." (4)

The text is arranged chronologically, beginning with the Stuart-Orange court of William III and Mary II to the Stuart-Oldenburg court of Queen Anne and her husband Prince George of Denmark. The substantial introduction clearly maps the visual response of the Crown to political changes and dynastic shifts which occurred between 1689 and 1714 through architecture, art, and ceremony. The subsequent chapters provide the reader with a digestible political assessment of each reign and include memorable case studies to support the analysis. For example, as Stadholder, William had effectively used print as a form of propaganda in the United Provinces to celebrate military victories. William recognised the power of print in its ability to communicate intended political messages to a wide audience. As a result, portraits of William and Mary at their accession were printed before their state portraits were painted.

Importantly, the cultural influences that William and George brought to the Crown are recognised and the impact of Mary's time in the United Provinces as Princess of Orange is explored. Surviving examples of visual culture in England and in the United Provinces are compared to understand their representational strategies in both countries.

Farguson explains that "'Visuality' is the term used to describe what is visual or visible, physically or mentally, which enables the image of the monarch to be created—artistically or ceremonially, permanently and ephemerally—then promoted." (5–6) Carefully staged ceremonial events which emphasised their Protestant faith ultimately fuelled the dissemination of royal imagery through the medium of print. By examining the state portrait and specific types of ceremony such as coronations and thanksgiving services, Farguson strongly illustrates the marked shifts that occurred in William and Anne's visualisation following the deaths of their spouses. The

author should be applauded for providing a well-balanced portrayal of each royal couple and indeed of Prince George of Denmark.

When addressing architecture, Farguson argues effectively that Antonio Verrio's commission at Hampton Court was influenced by William's visit to Burghley House (160–162). It is worth considering, however, that this commission could sit within what is described as a "Stuart Renaissance," which came to fruition with this younger generation of Stuarts. Verrio had worked at Windsor Castle for Charles II and his commission included the painting of the King's Staircase, which led from the open-air Horn Court to the King's Guard Chamber. Twenty years later, Verrio received a commission from Charles' nephew. It is possible that William sought to emulate Charles II when a feeling of an open courtyard was echoed on the King's Staircase at Hampton Court, which also led to the King's Guard Chamber.

One of the most enjoyable threads pertains to the Order of the Garter and how it was used in ceremony and in portraiture to convey messages about legitimacy, Protestantism, and military capabilities. The importance of what the Garter represents is underscored by Anne's commitment to establish how it should be worn by a queen. Since Elizabeth I included the Garter in her emblematic portraiture, the Garter Star was subsequently added by Anne's grandfather, Charles I. Her sister Mary deferred to William to wear the Garter, although both were entitled to do so. These developments contributed to Anne's careful consideration of how she should handle the visualisation of this important Protestant and chivalric emblem.

The portrayal of Queen Anne contributes to the revisionist works emphasising her capability. Instead of re-telling a narrative of ill-health and personal liaisons, Anne is portrayed as a capable monarch in her resilience and strong sense of duty. Anne is credited with formulating her own image which offers a unique perspective to existing scholarship. As readers, we come to appreciate Anne's intention to create an image of constancy rather than simply to misjudge her portraits, which at first glance appear to be similar in composition. Her idealised visual representation was achieved through the state format, including her coronation robes, and the Garter which underscored her Protestant faith.

This handsome edition contains twenty-one colour plates primarily of portraits of the Stuarts and painted interiors. A second set of plates would have proved useful to convey the velvety tonality of the mezzotints and to represent the medals more clearly. Throughout the narrative, Farguson draws our attention to the subtle symbolism present in ceremony and in print, which was intended to convey messages of legitimacy and constancy in religion and rule. The poor reproduction quality of the black and white photographs, particularly of medals, is disappointing and a disservice to the well-argued text they are meant to support.

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