

## Jacqueline Rose

### *Kingship and Counsel in Early Modern England*

A fundamental part of early modern English governance was counsel. Whilst kings held ultimate authority, their rule was guided and, most would have said, enhanced by advice. Counsel was one important way in which royal sovereignty could be ‘absolute but not arbitrary’, and a means to exercise the *vita activa* in a princely setting. The importance of counsel was recognised by contemporary commentators on politics and has been noted by some historians, in particular those of Tudor political practice. But the role of churchmen in giving counsel has not been fully appreciated. This paper explores the power and prevalence of the idea of counsel in general, and ecclesiastical counsel in particular, for ideas of kingship in early modern England. By comparing ecclesiastical to humanist and parliamentary notions of counsel, it considers the ways in which advising kings was justified, what manner of giving counsel was felt to be most appropriate, and the Biblical and patristic models invoked in discussions of it. Counsel not only lubricated the functioning of early modern government, it also linked discussions of kingship and Reformation. It is therefore a key reminder of the interplay of ecclesiological and political languages about rule.

Seminar participants may find it helpful to consider the introductory discussion of genres of counsel (pp. 1-9) and then to concentrate on some of the particular case studies (as a general guide, those for the sixteenth century can be found on pages 9 to 19; those for the seventeenth century on pages 19 to 31); there is a brief conclusion on pp. 31-2.

#### Background reading:

Key secondary sources are John Guy, ‘The Rhetoric of Counsel in Early Modern England’, in Dale Hoak, ed., *Tudor Political Culture* (Cambridge, 1995); David Colclough, *Freedom of Speech in Early Stuart England* (Cambridge, 2005), esp. chs. 1-2; Patrick Collinson, ‘If Constantine, then also Theodosius: St Ambrose and the Integrity of the Elizabethan *Ecclesia Anglicana*’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 30 (1979), pp. 205-29.

The paper draws on parts of a wide variety of primary sources rather than a core handful, but easily accessible contextual discussions are: book I of Thomas More’s *Utopia*; chapter 2 of Erasmus’s *The Education of a Christian Prince*; and St Ambrose, epistles 40, 41, and 51, in S. L. Greenslade, ed., *Early Latin Theology* (London, 1956). More specific direction can be found in the footnotes; most printed sources are available on Early English Books Online, and a handful in modern editions.

#### Biography:

Jacqueline Rose is College Lecturer and Director of Studies at Newnham College, Cambridge; she completed her Ph.D. in 2007. Her research focuses on early modern political, religious, and intellectual history, in particular of the English Church and monarchy from c.1530 to c.1700. She is working on a study of the royal supremacy during the Restoration. Previous publications include: ‘John Locke, ‘Matters Indifferent’, and the Restoration of the Church of England’, *Historical Journal*, 48 (2005), pp. 601-21; ‘Royal Ecclesiastical Supremacy and the Restoration Church’, *Historical Research*, 80 (2007), pp. 324-45; ‘Robert Brady’s Intellectual History and Royalist Antipope in Restoration England’, *English Historical Review*, 122 (2007), pp. 1287-1317; with forthcoming articles on the later Stuart Church and on recent writing on Hobbes’s ecclesiology.