The Print Depiction of King William III's Masculinity

Famous for his work on military subjects, Jan Wyck's use of symbolism and imagery in his portrait *William III at the Battle of the Boyne* (c.1690-1695) connotes overt messages about the recently crowned king's qualities. The portrait (*Figure 1*) depicts William III flourishing his sword while riding a white horse as the battle ensues around him. In the background, the clouds and smoke are just beginning to part as cavalry charge down the hill. The blue sash of the Order of the Garter, the highest order of chivalry in England, can be seen across his chest. Wyck presents William as a brave, hardy, and heroic British commander. His calm expression astride the rearing white horse (a common trope for heroic princes and chivalric knights) suggests a natural authority and ease. Portraits such as this depicting scenes of William's military glory and feats of arms presented William as an overtly masculine military hero. It celebrates the masculine qualities that his military prowess conveyed. Even more accessible depictions of William's character came in the form of the burgeoning medium of print. As much a function of easily applicable norms as a reflection of actual agency, Williamite writers, usually Whigs, deliberately fashioned him as England's Protestant warrior-king and a constitutional monarch.[1] Investigating the importance of public image and its connection to monarchical power in his seminal text, *Rebranding Rule: The Restoration and Revolution Monarchy, 1660-1714* (2013), Kevin Sharpe argued that Williamite propaganda was crucial to his regime. It was systemic and ubiquitous by necessity in order to deter invasion and internal insurrection, obtain backing for the government, and secure the Revolution, political settlement, and Protestant succession.[2] This article explores one facet of this propaganda: the print depiction of William's problematic masculinity. That commentators invoked discourses of masculinity to both legitimate and denounce William's regime suggests the importance of masculinity to kingly meaning. In so doing, commentators appealed to a range of contemporary masculine norms.

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The study of masculinities has grown rapidly in the last 20 years as a way to explore inequalities in power relations and discrimination.[3] Work on early modern masculinity in England tends to focus on masculinities associated with the patriarchal landed rural gentry,[4] the domestic sphere and male-female relations within the family,[5] as well as the more "middling sort" of bourgeois masculinity,[6] which was embodied by the eighteenth-century polite male in the public sphere.[7] Pertinent to this article's examination of William's masculine image, more recently, historians such as Matthew McCormack and Jennine Hurl-Eamon have begun to consider the masculinity of military men, which Karen Harvey called for in her 2005 historiographical overview of long eighteenth-century masculinity.[8]

The mediation of power has been a central theme in the history of masculinity because masculinities are publicly affirmed and strengthen both formal institutionalised power, such as monarchy, and subtle informal power, such as reputation, acclaim, and public approval.[9] Yet, somewhat surprisingly, for all the work on elite and middling masculinities at the turn of the eighteenth century, there has been comparatively little on the portrayal of the particularly problematic William III, or the extent to which kings were held to normative models of masculinity in general. Indeed, reflecting a trend in the study of kings as a whole, William's modern biographers largely ignore the question of gender, with the exception of questions over William's sexuality (discussed later).[10] As Katherine Lewis argues, the masculinity of kings has remained largely invisible except in cases where kings "do it wrong" and their deviation from the norms of manhood is used to help explain their status as "bad" kings.[11] And yet it seems clear that the stability and prerogative of monarchical rule was inherently linked with the gendered identity of the man (or woman) who sat upon the throne. As David Kuchta argues, creating a public image of manliness, or having one created, was one way to facilitate the legitimation of power.[12] As such, Roger Chartier has explained, representation is transformed into a mechanism for the fabrication of respect and submission.[13]In the context of kingship—as Lewis shows in her account of

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[1] Painting by Jan Wyck of William III at the Battle of the Boyne held by the Government Art Collection.

the performance and projection of the masculine identities of Henry V and Henry VI—idealised versions of masculinity were part of the criteria against which the performance of kingship might be assessed by contemporaries.[14]

Early modern print culture, Helen Berry argues, was a crucial means of mass communication for the construction and transmission of gender norms, particularly popular literature and ephemera.[15] Thus, for men of all social rank, gendered discourses—as prescribed by courtesy literature and reinforced by print containing others' circumstantially conceptualised opinions, such as eyewitness reports, poems, pamphlets, plays, and other ephemera—informed normative standards and expectations for men and women.[16] Likewise, through a range of print media, writers commented on and debated the qualities of ideal kingship, perhaps best summarised by one 1689 pamphlet declaring that the four regal virtues are "Piety, Prudence, Valour, and Justice, and if a Prince hath not a share of them, he will hardly answer the Expectations of his people, nor the Ends of Government..."[17] Another published in 1700 explained, "A Kingdom forfeited by the Cruelty, or Injustice of the Prince and Conquer'd, or obtain'd by another, is better preserv'd by Love than Force: The Stranger Prince ought to endear himself to his new Subjects, by all the Arts of Friendship and Moderation..."[18] As this article shows, in several respects, discourses of idealised kingship such as these shared common expectations with discourses of idealised masculinity. This was reflected in print, particularly in regard to the most basic criteria of both kingship and masculinity: the assertion of a male's personal independence. That is not to say that kings were held accountable to normative gender models to the exact degree as other men; rather, that they were portrayed in recognisable language.

To understand the role of masculinity in discourses of kingship, this article examines print depictions of King William III throughout his reign (1689-1702), specifically how William's identity as a man was produced and perceived in relation to readily accessible masculine norms. As Christopher Fletcher explains in his pioneering study of Richard II, considering kings in terms of manhood not only clarifies the rhetoric used by their advocates and adversaries but also the way in which familiar ideas of how a "man" should act could inform political practice.[19] The nature of William's masculine character stood in stark contrast to that of his two immediate predecessors. This contrast illustrates some of the complexities of masculinity at the end of the seventeenth century with William

III representing a short-term change. The masculinity of Charles II and James II was much more sociable, extravagant, and sexual; William's manly qualities were military courage, modesty, and merit. However, the two Stuart brothers also had problems projecting the right image. Like William, Charles and James also did not live up to kingly masculine paragons. Therefore, the transition was not from kings who conformed to *the* ideals to a king who had trouble doing so. Rather, it is from kings who had difficulties to a king who had different difficulties. Thus, when the Glorious Revolution deposed James II, along with a political culture of extravagance, and installed William and Mary, the new regime signified the embrace of more modest masculine discourses.[20]

As Fletcher has shown, kings and other men always shared some masculine values even if other values had different effects according to the social contexts of rank and status.[21] The first section will examine the largely positive portrayals of William's masculinity in accordance to the kingly and manly norms of the army, Protestant religion and government. The second section will examine the primarily negative depictions of William such as his allegedly effeminate behaviour, his reclusive nature, and, more importantly, how he failed to reach full patriarchal manhood. As W.M. Ormrod suggests in his examination of medieval boy kings, the correlation between the basic anthropological model of an adolescent becoming a man on the birth of a male child and the dynastic implications of monarchy likely found some form of coded expression in public debates over the manhood of the king.[22] In the early modern period, patriarchal masculinity—epitomised by the production of a male child—was an extremely powerful set of norms even if it was often actively resisted and ignored by those in high-status positions or freighted differently for kings.[23] William III held a traditional patriarchal role as the figurehead of the nation but never fully achieved true patriarchal manhood. Furthermore, some of his actions, as well as the rumours surrounding him, also contradicted traditional masculine ideals. His problematic masculinity necessitated the invocation of alternative qualities in order to negotiate an identity of strength and maintain formal and informal power.

I. The Protestant Warrior-King

The discourses of masculinity ascribed to William by his advocates were alternatives to patriarchal manhood because he never proved his maturity and potency by producing an heir to secure the inheritance of property; or in the context of kingship, a supporter, successor, and symbol of dynastic succession and the effective transfer of power. Yet overtly positive sources constructing William's masculine persona are plentiful and consist mostly of panegyrics, poems, and pamphlets. The different masculinities William most often embodied, as depicted in contemporary media, were related to his virtuous persona and regal splendour, his military prowess, and his adopted English patriotism and interest in the public good. Given that "Reputation abroad, and Reverence at home, are the Pillars of Safety and Soveraignty," as part of the effort to solidify his place on the throne and quell Jacobite sentiment, these different masculine attributes were compared favourably to other kings and used to establish his reputation and legitimate his rule.[24]

In the eyes of the public, and as a man without children, William III was able to cultivate, if not fully discover, his manliness through homosocial military activity. In his younger days, James II also embodied a military code of masculinity similar to William. He was promoted to the position of Lord High Admiral upon the restoration of his brother and was considered to be an intelligent and perfectly adequate seaman. In his memoirs, probably edited and rewritten to portray an image of his choosing, James presented himself as a proud and courageous senior officer, noble prince, and a befitting future king.[25] Yet, as James grew older and his popularity waned, this code was compromised by comparisons to William's military prowess before and during the Glorious Revolution. An anonymous poem in 1688 mocked:

> He is perjured prince and coward too. / His chiefest aim is to be valiant thought, / And lately bragged how often he had fought / For this his native land-and still would do / Were it assaulted by a foreign foe. / Yet when brave Nassau, / And his troops to Salisbury did draw, / Swearing he'd conquer, or in battle die: / He basely fled, ere any foe was nigh.[26]

As this poem suggests, drawing upon the familiar motif of the citizen-soldier, Williamite propagandists made a concerted effort to depict him as a rough and rugged warrior-king rather than a libertine playboy like his predecessors. Being able to physically defend one's honour was important within a military culture that still associated manhood with physical prowess and strength.[27] As such, military virtues like aggression, strength, and courage

have repeatedly been defined as natural, inherent qualities of manhood climaxing in battle and war.[28]

William's boldness and aggression were qualities that received considerable attention and praise, bestowing upon him a "…Manly Courage and Fury…" in his militaristic pursuits.[29] Although panegyric verse lost some of its traditional ceremonial function following the Glorious Revolution, it was still effective as propaganda for the regime and masculine image of William.[30] A 1697 panegyric celebrating the Peace of Ryswick noted William's boldness and attributed the concluded peace to this manly aggression. The physician and frequently published hack writer Joseph Browne lauded, "Noble by Birth, by bold Experience, wise, / Inur'd to hard, and toilsom Victories; / Bold even to a Fault, if such a Fault we blame, / That gain'd our Peace, and his Immortal Fame. / His well taught Passion rules his Warlike Rage, / And a mild Clemency his Actions gage."[31] Through this celebratory iteration of William's character Browne reveals the perceived association of gender and kingship by conjoining William's "Warlike rage" with a "mild Clemency," signalling the importance of the balancing of passions and curbing of natural excesses essential to both normative manhood and ideal kingship. Moreover, Browne hinted at a curious aspect of William's martial masculinity, which is that his boldness supplanted his ingenuity in the arts of war.

Contemporaries and historians alike have acknowledged that William III was not a particularly great war strategist. Suggesting that even hagiographical sources have the capacity to be representative, Bishop Gilbert Burnet, who had a close relationship with the new royal family, noted that "his genius lay chiefly to war, in which his courage was more admired than his conduct: great errors were committed by him, but his heroical courage set things right, as it inflamed those who were about him…"[32] Nonetheless, as Burnet suggested, it was his courage that reinforced his masculine reputation. William's presence on the battlefield was a frequent target for praise, which writers claimed had a galvanising effect on his troops. Browne proclaimed, "Our very Foes the conqu'ring Charm wou'd feel, / And own the Magick of the pointed Steel. / How'midst his Troops the Heroe flew like Fire, / His Martial Soul burning with hot Desire; / Which ev'ry Souldiers Breast did so inspire. / With hugh Gigantick Strides he mov'd apace, / Amazing all his Foes to see his warlike Grace."[33] The admiration of his bravery and courage from these commentators stemmed

from putting his royal person in danger and exposing himself "...for the Benefits, Ease and Advantage of his good People..."[34] That William survived a bullet wound while in Ireland only increased his reputation. Bishop Burnet provided a clear picture of the event:

> ...a ball passed along the king's shoulder, tore off some of his clothes and about a hand-breath of the skin, out of which about a spoonful of blood came... he himself said it was nothing; yet he mounted his horse again, and rode about all the posts of his army. It was necessary to show himself everywhere, to take off the apprehensions with which such an unusual accident filled his solders.[35]

Thus, it was militaristic discourses that emphasised manly aggression and martial prowess that writers most often drew from to praise William's heroic stoicism, bravery, and indomitable masculinity.

William's military fortitude also sparked many contemporary, historical, and even mythical comparisons. The most obvious comparison used to inculcate William's manly character was his enemy King Louis XIV of France. Unlike William, Louis never fought in any open battles. Instead, at most, Louis observed sieges at a safe distance, a fact mocked by the English. One 1692 ode juxtaposing the two kings jeered, "Towards him King LEWIS in a trembling Fright / Crept slowly, but yet durst not sight. / To save his Credit he did feign / He could not pass Mehaigne. / Poor Luxemburg stood still and gaz'd, mean while, / Great unconcerned WILLIAM at their Cowardise did smile."[36] Compare this sentiment to an earlier point in the poem when the author described the fear the French troops felt as William advanced, writing, "France heard the Noise of this great Hoast, / And quak't for fear, / King WILLIAM should come near, / Whose Valour they had try'd too often to their Cost."[37] Another poem recorded, "As at each Charge his daring Troops he led, / And ev'ry Squadron saw him at their Head; / As Lewis fled from Conquests that he Bought, / Surrendering Towns for which he never Fought."[38] These passages suggest the function that comparison served in the construction of identity as William's manly valour was juxtaposed with Louis' fear and cowardice.

Perhaps the most well-known contemporary comparison of the two kings came from Sir Richard Steele whose 1701 pamphlet *The Christian Hero* argued that the best and most noble men, motivated either by fame or by conscience, follow Christian principles.[39] *The Christian Hero* included a thinly veiled reference to the Nine Years' War, noting that "the two great rivals who possess the full fame of the present age" have different ideas of glory with "one it consists in an extensive undisputed empire over his subjects, to the other

in their rational and voluntary obedience…"[40] For Steele, William, portrayed as the latter, was a more noble Christian king. Similarly, like *The Christian Hero*, further comparisons were drawn between William and famous male characters of history, Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar in particular. Expressing British gratitude, Browne proclaimed, "As new-born Souls arise, come gladly show / How much to Caesar's mighty Toils you owe."[41] Others interpreted William's successful defence of the Glorious Revolution and protection of English Protestantism as the beginning of British global ascendancy. One such speech declared, "How Just is ALBIONS's Triumph, when we see / Augustus happy Reign reviv'd in Thee! / Your Arms have spread as far the English Name / As e're Octavius did the Roman Fame."[42] Delivered less than a month after the conclusion of the Treaty of Ryswick, another proclaimed, "Go on, (Great Sir!) belov'd of God and Man; and having surpas'd all Ancient Heroes, be your own great Rival and Example."[43] In celebrating William as a conquering hero, defender of the public good, and saviour of Britain through connections to heroic male figures of the past, these proliferating post-Nine Years' War comparisons reflected early modern British interest in classical history and philosophy. In so doing, they highlight the ready-made gendered language within which William III could be located.

In Scotland, William's masculinity was further endorsed by comparisons to King Fergus I, the first king in the mythic genealogical line of Scottish kings, as well as the medieval king, William "the Lion," who ruled Scotland from 1165 to 1214. In one of the few works to examine William's masculinity from a purely Scottish perspective and touch upon the consolidation of the Crown, Scottish physician and poet Alexander Pennecuik fashioned these comparisons in his 1699 poem *Caledonia Triumphans: A Panegyrick to the King*:

> FERGUS 1st. Your brave Ancestor gave the Scots of old /FERGUS 1st. A Lyon rampant in a field of Gold. / When he our Coat-Armorial did dispense, / Which now is ours, in a true literal Sense. / And can our Breasts such swelling Joys contain, / WILLIAM the Lyon rules the SCOTS again: / A Nation who with hearts, with hands and head / Will serve you, Soveraign Sir, in time of need.[44]

Pennecuik also compared William to other Scottish heroes such as William Wallace and Robert the Bruce before suggesting that William would lead the Scottish people to prosperity as Julius Caesar and Augustus Caesar had the Romans. Pennecuik's panegyric ended triumphantly, "And we shall flourish by your Royal Rays, / With Honour, Riches, and old Nestors days: / And ever bless our GOD, and praise our KING, / And CALEDONIA's Triumphs gladly sing."[45] The date of publication of this work reflects William's brief surge

in popularity in the immediate aftermath of the Nine Years' War before the drawn out standing army debate. Similar to contemporary pro-army stage dramas that set out to rehabilitate the reputation of the army officer by underlining his political reliability, public spiritedness, courage, and romanticism, Williamite verse echoed patriotic sentiments at the conclusion of hostilities with France in an effort to further affirm the king's masculinity and authority.[46]

As grumblings that William's interests were more in line with the Dutch than the English began to slowly fade, the Three Kingdoms began to claim more possession of William by emphasising his British patriotism and the glory that he had won. For example, Browne began his panegyric by asking and answering, "What greater Conquest cou'd our Albion wish? / Than have her Monarch crown all Europe's Peace. / What greater can to future Times be told? / Than that our William was the mighty Chief of Old; / That he more Brave, Heroick Trophies won, / Than other Gen'rals, great in Arms, had known."[47] Reflecting Browne's use of the word "our" and "her" describing British possession, William's masculinity was reinforced by distancing him from "the other," mainly the supposedly effeminate French, but also his problematic Dutch origin. Browne's panegyric mirrored a similar work that followed the conclusion of fighting in the Irish war theatre and King Louis XIV unsuccessfully offering peace terms in 1691. The author suggested that "Th' unheard of Victories of Great Britains King, / Renowned WILLIAM, whose All-conquering hand, / Has France subdu'd, sav'd and enrich't our happy Land."[48] These celebrations of power and victory were exuded gendered language through words loaded with innately masculine connotations for contemporaries — "Conquest," "mighty," "Brave," "Renowned," and his having "subdu'd" the French.

Notions of personal, familial, religious, and regal virtue also informed the characterisations of William III. Questions of James' alleged abdication aside, and despite his modest Low Country Protestant misgivings about the rituals, expectations, and culture surrounding the English monarchy, William and Williamite writers fought hard to cultivate a kingly mystique on the basis of his personal and moral merit.[49] One poem referred to "A King whom Fate a Sovereign wou'd advance, / Not by so low a Means as Birth, and Chance: / A King petition'd to accept of Power, / And rule a State thy Arms preserv'd before…"[50] It was also implied that his personal virtues accorded divine favouritism denoting William's

Protestant masculinity. According to another panegyric, "Each feels th' Effect, but none the Cause can find, / Or William's God, or God's to William kind. / Either this Pow'r's himself, or to him giv'n / As the choice Favourite of bount'ous Heaven..."[51] Another panegyric suggested that the monarchs were "Religious Champions, 'gainst that Monster Pope. / You th' first did us Convince / Of an Enslaving Arbitrary Prince..."[52] Furthermore, Richard Allen's funeral sermon in the year of William's death spoke towards William's perceived divine mission by comparing William to Moses.[53] All of these works suggest a sense of providentialism and the idea of the "godly prince"; it had become something of a stock platitude to describe William in terms of his preservation of the "true faith" and deliverance of the Three Kingdoms from the Catholic villain across the Channel.

Exploring these motifs, Tony Claydon argues that William and Mary adopted a language of "courtly reformation" in order to help legitimate the Glorious Revolution. At the beginning of the reign, however, it was Mary who was employed as the example of censure rather than William due to rumours about his sexuality and his reclusive nature (discussed later).[54] Despite Mary being the focal point, the language of courtly reformation still positively influenced notions of William's Christian masculinity and, as Claydon shows, the king's later campaign of manners and his cultivated image as a purging ruler became a simultaneous assertion of his morality, authority, and love of England.[55] That ideal kingship carried an inherent religiousness, as evidenced by the deluge of late seventeenth-century normative literature replete with hyperbolic moralistic language, was succinctly represented by Richard Baxter explaining that "God looketh for great service from great men: Great Trust and Talents must have great account: A Prince, a Lord, a Ruler, must do much more good, in promoting Piety, Conscience, Vertue, than the best inferiors..."[56] Moreover, as Jeremy Gregory argues, religious objectives in the long eighteenth century meshed comfortably with other masculine ideals; Christian precepts dominated normative literature as the later seventeenth century witnessed an increase in literature offering gender-specific advice on how to live a Christian life.[57]

The respect of the public towards an august and virtuous Protestant monarch, the public admiration of William's instances of military courage, depictions of William's allegiance to Britain, and, with William on the throne, the rise of Britain in European imperial politics all provide evidence of the power and stability William III gained

throughout the 1690s. The English poet and translator John Glanvill summarised these sentiments: "Such are the Glories which Thou dost restore; / Such Policies, such Warfare, and such Power. / England once more is England, and Thy Reign / Has seen her act her brave old Part again; / Balance wild Power, that wou'd too far prevail, / Lend her important Weight, and poize the Scale."[58] In the guise of Williamite print, the king's regal reputation, defence of Protestant Britain and the Glorious Revolution, and military glory and courage served as testaments to his masculinity. Above all else, William's identity was ensconced in codes of masculinity that spoke to power relationships.

II. The Childless and Effeminate Usurper

The efforts of the Whig poets and Williamite propagandists, made all the more critical after the death of the popular Queen Mary in 1694, failed to entirely convince the people that William was above any and all Jacobite charges of illegitimacy.[59] Attacks in print were aimed at both William and Mary in the late 1680s and very early 1690s, with William taking the brunt of personal criticism.[60] His character as a man was a frequent target, especially in verse. Crude literature such as verse libels may have disregarded legal, political, social, and artistic decorum but it clearly had some effect, if nothing other than generating embarrassment.[61] Rumours, whisperings, libels, and slanders could be just as powerful as truths regardless of credibility because, as Alastair Bellany argues, defamation had serious public consequences for gentlemen and village housewives alike.[62] Because masculinity corresponds directly to power, those who wanted to remove William III from power could attack his manhood as a means of destabilising him.

Having both achieved fatherhood and been blessed with good looks, striking physiques, and charm, the first two post-Restoration Stuart kings constructed their masculine identity primarily from divine right monarchical authority and heterosexual appeal and activity. Williamite propaganda, on the other hand, was forced to ignore William's childlessness and poor stature and features to focus on romanticising his virtues instead.[63] Following the Restoration, overt heterosexual lust was considered increasingly tolerable and commonplace as Charles II seemingly encouraged a culture of sexual libertinism. Although womanising was certainly not part of the patriarchal or monarchical

ideal, it was still one of the ways by which Charles II and James II cultivated a masculine image, albeit a problematic one. Known as the Merry Monarch, Charles II's reputation for hedonism and debauchery was not immune to criticism, particularly in light of his fathering several illegitimate children yet failure to produce a legitimate heir. The sensuality Charles was famous for could also be labelled as "effeminate" or "wicked," referring to both homosexuality and an over-fondness for women. Burnet explained that "the profligacy and licentiousness of Charles the Second, wickedness that was gloried in rather than concealed; how naturally this tended to deprave the public morals every one was a judge, because all know the influence upon society in general of the example of its higher classes."[64] This inconsistency in attitude towards sexuality is indicative of two opposing strands in Enlightenment thinking: one espousing marriage and the other focusing on extramarital pleasure.[65]

The masculinity of James II, to say nothing of his religion or popularity as king, primarily drew on similar behaviour as Charles II but with more moderation, or at least less infamy. Of the three later Stuart kings, only James II achieved, by traditional standards, full manhood by siring legitimate children. Yet he cannot be said to have lived up to kingly or heterosexual husbandly ideals because, as one mocking poem suggested, James II had a weakness for women that inhibited his judgement. Courtier-poet Charles Sackville, 6th Earl of Dorset, wrote, "But if that good and gracious Monarch's charms / Could ne'er confine one woman to his arms, / What strange, mysterious spell, what strong defense, / Can guard that front which has not half his sense?".[66] Similarly, Burnet also noted James' weakness for women and concluded that his only personal vice was "wandering from one amour to another…"[67] Thus, in suggesting that James failed to control his lustful passions, the author questioned James's self-command, implicating him in discourses of effeminacy and indulgence that jeopardising his rule.

Antithetically to his two predecessors, a glaring discrepancy in William's manly character was his relationship with women and his childlessness. William's marriage to Mary was freighted with complex and discordant gender and monarchical implications. To begin with, the transfer of property from wife to husband was one of the arguments used to legitimate the Glorious Revolution with one "Vindication" arguing that "it is incontestable, that a Queen in Possession superinducing a Husband, may with her own Consent and

Allowance of the Parliament, vest her Husband with an equal share of the Regal Authority during her Life…"[68] For this reason, Rachel Weil notes, "The relationship between political and familial authority was nowhere more intimate and problematic than in the newly installed monarchy."[69] Further complicating the dynastic implications for the reign of William and Mary was the failure to conceive an heir. Mary miscarried at least twice in the late 1670s and the two would never produce a healthy child. Most fatherless men already felt insecure about their lack of progeny and, as Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster note, the misfortune and exposure to ridicule that childless men and their families suffered illustrates the continuing importance of patriarchal manhood throughout this period.[70] That William's acknowledged mistress, Elizabeth Villiers, married and gave birth to three children by her husband soon after her relationship with William ended was surely a further source of embarrassment for the king.[71] Despite his wife's miscarriages, the fact that William III never had children even by his apparently fertile mistress almost certainly demonstrated William to be inadequate and even epicene in the public eye. The lack of a royal heir was a source of anxiety and derision for the literary public, not unlike the concern felt by the gentry over fathering a son and continuing the male line.[72] *The Coronation Ballad* (1689), by nonjuring priest Ralph Gray, serves as a perfect example of anti-Williamite satire that exploited William's inability to produce an heir and achieve full patriarchal manhood. In addition to mocking the new king's appearance and accusing him of acting like a beast towards his father-in-law, Gray vilified William's sexuality taunting, "An unnatural beast to his father and uncle; / A churl to his wife without e'er a pintle;…"[73] This allusion to both William's wife and his penis ("pintle") has multiple meanings. By saying that William is a "churl" Gray is referencing William and Mary's inability to produce a healthy child while also propagating the unsubstantiated libels and slanders of William's cuckoldry and spreading the contemporary rumours and allegations about William engaging in homosexual activity. By discussing William's sexuality and ability to reproduce, commentators like Gray suggest that, although freighted differently, normative models of kingship and masculinity overlapped in easily recognisable ways.

As Berry has pointed out in her exploration of gender and print culture in late-Stuart England, the appropriate expression of sexuality was one of the most pressing social roles through which gender was constructed.[74] The sexual behaviour of a man, as well as that of

his wife, was fundamental to his masculinity in the early modern period.[75] No evidence exists to substantiate print rumours that William was a cuckold apart from a handful of allusions in anti-Williamite verse. Yet, as with allegations of homosexual behaviour against William, and even claims of martial bravery and heroism for that matter, perception trumped truth. Most likely meant to simply be inflammatory, accusations in verse of adultery committed by Mary were closely associated with homosexual allegations against William. For example, one anonymous 1689 poem insinuates sexual liaisons between Mary and Charles Talbot, 1st Duke of Shrewsbury, and William III and his life-long friend and assistant, William Bentinck, 1st Earl of Portland, who was referred to as "Benting" (a play on his last name) in contemporary poetry. The poem suggests, "Whilst William van Nassau, with Benting Bardasha, / Are at the old game of Gomorrha, / Wise Tullia his wife, more pious of life, / With Shrewsbury drives away sorrow."[76] A year later, another anonymous poem further alluded to supposed sexual misconduct at court while seeking pardon from God on behalf of England, begging deliverance from William: "An inglorious crown may his temples adorn, / Unsettled and tottering, let it be worn, / And only fixed to his head by a horn, / We &c. / In a Court full of vice may Shrewsbury lay Molly on, / Whilst Nanny enjoys her episcopal stallion, / And Billy with Benting does play the Italian, / We &c."[77] The allegation that William "does play the Italian" is likely a reference to a castrato, known generically as "Italian singers," who were typically associated with homosexuality. Similarly, the "horn" imagines the horns of a cuckold, which was a common motif for men whose reputation suffered because of their wives' sexual indiscretions.

The history of homosexuality is rather complex as the dual sexual identities of heterosexual or homosexual were becoming more starkly defined in this period.[78] Allegations over William's sexuality, such as those in Gray's *Coronation Ballad*, will never be proven and the historiographical verdict is mixed. These allegations have been explored in numerous works and biographies and need not be rehashed here at length. Briefly, the historiography, particularly the biographies, on William's homosexuality varies with biographers Stephen Baxter and Nesca Robb decidedly dismissive of such allegations.[79] Fellow biographers John Van der Kiste and Henri and Barbara Van der Zee admit there is no unambiguous evidence to support such a claim, yet find William's refusal to give his life-long friend Bentinck a full denial of the accusations of homosexuality to be suggestive that

he truthfully could not give such a denial.[80] For his part, Tony Claydon gives the topic little attention in his 2002 biography and simply mentions that William's reclusive nature with all but a few male confidants fuelled rumours that then, as now, were impossible to substantiate.[81]

However, the truth of these allegations is less important than the very existence of such allegations and that they were prominent enough for Bentinck to attempt to resign from his offices in the royal household. To be considered manly required social affirmation, and a man's reputation and honour could be compromised regardless of truth. In an anonymous anti-Williamite poem published in 1697, a narrator gave advice to a fictional painter on how best to depict William's court and his relationship with one of his younger favourites, Arnold Joost van Keppel, with whom he was rumoured to be intimate. The narrator suggested painting with blood to signify the Nine Years' War, "Or tell how they their looser Moments spend; / That Hellish Scene would all chast Ears offend / For should you pry into the close Alcove, / And draw the Exercise of Royal Love, / Keppell and He are Ganymede and Jove."[82] Clearly, as the allusion to Ganymede and Jove in this "Hellish Scene" illustrates, any semi-toleration of libertine bisexuality between older and younger men had diminished considerably by 1700 in contrast with the increased toleration (or even endorsement) of male heterosexual lust.[83] These allegations of homosexual activity certainly recalled the reign of another "foreign" king, James I, who was also dogged by rumours of sexual relationships with male favourites.[84] However, unlike William, James I enjoyed the redeeming features of holding a direct lineal claim to the crown as the great-great-grandson of King Henry VII and having already produced two possible legitimate male heirs at the time of his ascension to the English throne.

William III's inability to father a child and the allegations of homosexual activity were not the only questions posed of his masculinity. Some of his conduct was portrayed as effeminate at worst, and unmanly at best. The most revealing episode was the death of the queen in December 1694. Leaving aside the renewed questions about the legitimacy of his title that arose from the death of the actual Stuart in the joint monarchy, commentators chastised William's prolonged state of grief. When Mary died, the king was nearly inconsolable for a month and organised an impressive state funeral.[85] However, William's grief was at odds with the renewed popularity of the Roman stoic philosophers, notably

Epictetus, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and a cultural current that increasingly emphasised masculine self-command.[86] As Cynthia Herrup has argued, although rulers were seen to inhabit an artificial body that balanced both male and female qualities, the ideal ruler was nevertheless expected to demonstrate masculine self-control to avoid effeminacy.[87] Disapproval of male tears and grief was never absolute, and sometimes even acceptable in a rhetorical context, but uncontrolled grief was considered by many to be irreligious and suggestive of feminine weakness.[88] As such, notions about men showing emotions and mourning were highly complex in early modern England, as outlined by the work of Bernard Capp who argues that public life had been militarised with physical courage and fortitude re-emerging as defining attributes of masculinity as part of the legacy of the civil wars.[89]

That being said, some contemporary literature was rather forgiving of William's despair, focusing on the majesty of Mary and the humbling of William following her death. One panegyric read, "But then, what Power is This, that could Controul / Such Martial Heat, and Shake so firm a Soul? / MARIA could Alone. MARIA's hapless Fate / Made All the Hero Sink, the Fierce, the Bold, the Great."[90] Thusly, William's grief may have provoked sympathy and even the transference onto him of some of the adoration Mary received, but the image of a weepy, swooning William was also an emasculating liability that diminished the majesty of his kingship and rendered him unfit for war.[91] Most contemporary writers confirmed the conclusions made by Capp by questioning William's masculinity following his prolonged period of grief. A poem by writer and diplomat George Stepney asserted, "So greatly Mary died, and William grieves, / You'd think the hero gone, the woman lives."[92] Another further questioned his masculinity and lamented the death of the more popular of the joint monarchs, "While our great Queen went bravely to the devil, / Our hero King was taken with the snivel. / Sure Death's a Jacobite that thus bewitches / Him to wear petticoats, and her the breeches. / We were mistaken in the choice of our commanders; / Will should have knotted, and Moll have gone to Flanders."[93] In this instance, it is not necessarily the grieving; rather, in this poem William's grieving to excess stripped him of manly self-restraint as he succumbed to his effeminate passions.

The death of Mary II, William's reaction to it, and the continued war with France, along with his increased seclusion and aloofness, damaged the king's popularity. Despite a

promise "of being more visible, open, and communicative," William's reputation suffered as refined, public sociability increased in importance and a culture of masculine politeness and civility flourished in London.[94] Claydon suggests that the king's rudeness and "reluctance to communicate sprang from his sense of mission and of his status as saviour of Europe. This meant he was impatient with small talk, and had too high a notion of his special position to waste time with people he thought too inconsequential."[95] Furthermore, when William was in England he was content to spend most of his time at the rural seats of Kensington or Hampton Court rather than Whitehall. Yet, as the eighteenth century progressed, it was virtually expected that men, particularly those in elite society, maintain an accessible public presence. However, because the king could or would not be seen, he could not display his majesty, grandeur, and manly character.

Ironically, once William finally achieved his temporary victory over Louis XIV and France with the Treaty of Ryswick in 1697, the primary method he used to express his masculinity (the army) became less available. The peace years only brought further questions of his legitimacy, competence, and character. As his critics reminded, William III neither achieved the supposed "hegemonic" patriarchal form of masculinity nor that of the ideal king. William was problematic at best for contemporaries attempting to locate him within the more broadly accepted and authoritative traditional masculine model of patriarchal fatherhood; yet, he was successful in gaining formal and informal power using other codes of masculinity that stressed his physical, moral, and political prowess. Like other men who failed as patriarchs or failed to achieve patriarchal status, his promoters argued that he did not necessarily fail as a man (or king); instead, they proved his masculinity by promoting him as a classical hero and providential reformer.[96]

III. Conclusion

William himself offered few glimpses into how he saw his own masculine identity outside of the occasional moment of self-reflection in his rather formulaic speeches to Parliament. Even his personal letters offer little insight into anything beyond public policy. However, the Williamite literary faction readily curated a public image on his behalf that featured and publicised the masculine values that were desired by his subjects. As Helen

Berry has argued, 1690s print culture offered a brief window of opportunity for public debates on subjects that would become taboo even a century later.[97] The reign of William III certainly saw an increase in writers willing to comment explicitly or implicitly on sexuality and gender, as well as a wider range of readers who were open to the changing social attitudes fostered by nascent journalism.[98] A seventeenth-century increase in literacy strengthened the power of the printed word as an expansive, influential "middling sort" provided an audience for a growing literary market. However, it remains difficult to estimate the impact of print culture because title counts of publications often ignore subsequent editions and do not take account for imported or second-hand books; extreme variations in the size of print runs; and the disparateness of locally printed ephemera, hand-bills, ballads, odd miscellanies.[99] Likewise, official registrations of distributors — 2500 pedlars of chapbooks and ballads registered in 1696-16977 — were only a fraction of petty sellers of print.[100] Up until the mass manufacturing, marketing, and social stereotyping of the twentieth century, as Leslie Shepard argues, the effects of both popular and sophisticated literature remained largely unorganised and haphazard.[101] As such, it is difficult to judge the transmission and reception of the multitude of comments in print about William's masculinity and behaviour. Yet, although not without its problems for the historian, popular literature nevertheless has the capacity to inform us of a range of perspectives, debates, and ideas beyond the canonical works. In the sense that it both mirrored and instructed, print reflected the masculine and feminine gender roles and attributes valued by those living in early modern Britain. Likewise, print brings to light the spectrum of opinions of and attitudes towards the monarchy.

In his survey of the usage of "hegemonic masculinities," John Tosh argued, "The political order can be seen as a reflection of the gender order in society as a whole, in which case the political virtues are best understood as the prescribed masculine virtues writ large."[102] As such, this case study of print propaganda suggests that discussions of masculinity were used to legitimate and critique William's kingship and they were done so on the basis of current normative expectations. William's manhood is indicative of not only patterns of masculinity but also broader themes at the turn of the eighteenth century. The king's masculinity and its print depictions signal the importance of the sociable public, the continued significance of a religious discourse, and a growing spirit of patriotism and

interest in the public good. Furthermore, William's identity was synonymous with the traits of military masculinity that harkened back to a pre-Elizabethan model of warrior-kingship, which necessitated that kings lead men in battle, and reflected the domination of William's reign by war, which corresponded to the growing number of men who shared a sense of belonging to and self-identification with a revived military model of masculinity as the army became increasingly professionalised.[103] Additionally, the imagery of William as a "godly prince" sent to protect Protestantism through war and courtly reform were unequivocal reactions to the sensuous nature of the Restoration court, "...the open and avowed Practice of Vice, Immorality and Prophaneness, which amongst many Men has too much prevailed in this Our Kingdom of late Years...", and the perceived religious threats from James II and France.[104]

Likewise, the particulars of the masculine codes that the public found problematic to apply to William also reflected contemporary gender themes. William was typical of many men in the sense that not all men married or produced children, let alone the small percentage who actually achieved the patriarchal standards of manhood. Moreover, the allegations of cuckoldry and homosexuality against William were at odds with the importance of a wife's sexual reputation to a man's honour and the increased intolerance of same-sex erotic intimacy. Furthermore, his reclusive nature clashed with the growing normative weight of proper male sociability, particularly in an urban environment such as London. Thus, in accordance with masculine and kingly expectations, and in light of his weak claim to the throne, Dutch origin, and desire to wage a financially draining and unpopular European war, Williamites needed to cultivate a masculine persona of competence and authority on his behalf throughout the duration of his reign if for no reason other than to assuage lingering English misgivings about the propriety of the Three Kingdoms being ruled by a Dutchman.

While the historical study of kings and great men may have fallen out of fashion in favour of social and cultural history, the nature of William's masculine identity and its portrayal in print nevertheless makes the important point that masculinity is vulnerable, multiple, and contingent. That others negotiated normative masculine and monarchical expectations on his behalf suggests how much masculinity mattered and how firmly established its position was in public discourse. Thus, examining the propaganda used to

both legitimate and critique William illuminates the discussions that were provoked by discursive assumptions that masculinity was derived wholly from male-female relations and fatherhood. As such, William's print portrayal sheds light on codes of masculinity in early modern Britain that were constructed in a variety of settings outside of the problematic paragon of patriarchal manhood.

Notes

1. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule,* 381.
2. Ibid., 345.
3. French and Rothery, *Man's Estate,* 3; See: Connell, *Gender and Power,* 183-6; and Connell, *Masculinities.*
4. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination;* French and Rothery, *Man's Estate.*
5. Stone, *Family, Sex and Marriage*; Shoemaker, *Gender in English Society*; Berry and Foyster, "Childless Men"; Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England*; Harvey, "The History of Masculinity"; Harvey, *The Little Republic.*
6. Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*; Grassby, *The Business Community*; Hunt, *The Middling Sort.*
7. Whyman, *Sociability and Power*; Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*; For a 2002 historiographical review of politeness see: Klein, "Politeness".
8. McCormack, *Embodying the Militia*; Hurl-Eamon, *Marriage and the British Army*; Hurl-Eamon, "Youth in the Devil's Service"; Harvey, 'The History of Masculinity," 308; See also: Hughes, *Gender and the English Revolution*; and Nye, "Western Masculinities".
9. Tosh, "What Should Historians Do with Masculinity?," 184. Harvey and Shepard, "What Have Historians Done with Masculinity?," 276.
10. See: Baxter, *William III*; Robb, *William of Orange*; Van der Zee and Van der Zee, *William and Mary*; Claydon, *William III*; and Van der Kiste, *William and Mary.*
11. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity,* 4.
12. Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit,* 10.
13. Chartier, "Introduction".
14. Lewis, *Kingship and Masculinity*. Lewis also argues that, in the case of Henry VI, idealised versions of masculinity might also be used as an educational tool. See: Lewis, "Edmund of East Anglia".
15. Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture,* 5.
16. See: Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, ch. 16; Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility*; Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture*; Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, ch. 1; Carré, *The Crisis of Courtesy*.
17. *Character of a Prince,* 1.
18. Dallington, *Dallington Epitomisd,* 12-3.
19. Fletcher, *Richard II,* 278.
20. Kuchta, *Three-Piece Suit,* 93.

21. Fletcher, "Manhood, Kingship, and the Public".
22. Ormrod, "Coming to Kingship," 39-40.
23. Shepard, "From Anxious Patriarchs," 291.
24. De Britaine, *Humane Prudence*, 114.
25. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, p. 234-6.
26. Cameron, "A Hue and Cry," 23.
27. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England,* 177.
28. Dawson, *Soldier Heroes,* 1.
29. Terry, *Character of His Royal Highness,* 6.
30. Williams, "Panegyric Decorum," 56.
31. Browne, *Panegyrick upon His Majesties Glorious Return,* 4.
32. Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 702.
33. Browne, *Panegyrick upon His Majesties Glorious Return,* 9.
34. *Full Account of King Williams Royal Voyage*, 2.
35. Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 553.
36. Philanax, *A Pindarique Ode,* 2.
37. Ibid.
38. *The Loyalist,* 3.
39. Steele, *The Christian Hero,* 93.
40. Ibid., 110.
41. Browne, *Panegyrick upon His Majesties Glorious Return,* 3.
42. *The Triumphs of Peace.* 1.
43. Crew, *A Speech,* 2; Stephen Baxter has argued that in his own eyes William was Hercules, an emblem of Christian fortitude that brought peace and empire. See: Baxter, "William III as Hercules".
44. Pennecuik, *Caledonia Triumphans*.
45. Ibid.
46. Smith, "Politics, Patriotism, and Gender," 54.
47. Browne, *Panegyrick upon His Majesties Glorious Return,* 2.
48. Philanax, *A Pindarique Ode,* 2.
49. See: Claydon, *William III*, ch. 2.
50. Glanvill, *Panegyrick to the King,* 5.
51. Browne, *Panegyrick upon His Majesties Glorious Return,* 4.
52. *Britain Reviv'd,* 1.
53. Allen, *Death of a Good King.*
54. Claydon, *William III and the Godly Revolution*, 94.
55. Ibid., 132.
56. Baxter, *How to Do Good to Many,* 37.
57. Gregory, "Homo Religiosus," 87-92.
58. Glanvill, *Panegyrick to the King.*
59. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, ch. 9.
60. Cameron, *Poems on Affairs of State*, 37.
61. Bellany, "The Embarrassment of Libels," 161.
62. Ibid., 146.
63. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, 477-8.
64. Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* 109*.*
65. Foster, "Reconsidering Libertines," 69.
66. Sackville, "Faithful Catalogue of Our Most Eminent Ninnies," 193.
67. Burnet, *History of His Own Time,* 696.
68. "Vindication of Proceedings," 459.

69. Weil, *Political Passions,* 105.
70. Berry and Foyster, "Childless Men," 182-3.
71. Van der Zee and Van der Zee, *William and Mary*, 423.
72. Tague, "Aristocratic Women and Ideas of Family," 194-8.
73. Gray, "The Coronation Ballad," 43.
74. Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture,* 212.
75. See: Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England,* ch. 4.
76. Cameron, "The Reflection," 60.
77. Cameron, "Litany for the Reducing of Ireland," 221. In this poem "Nanny" is Anne and "Molly" is Queen Mary II.
78. Hitchcock and Cohen, "Introduction," 3-6; For further reading see: Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England*; Hitchcock, *English Sexualities, 1700-1800*; Maccubbin, *"Tis Nature's Fault"*; Trumbach, "Sex, Gender, and Sexual Identity".
79. Baxter, *William III*, 350. Robb, *William of Orange,* 406.
80. Van der Kiste, *William and Mary,* 203. Van der Zee and Van der Zee, *William and Mary*, 208.
81. Claydon, *William III*, 44.
82. Ellis, "Advice to a Painter," 18.
83. Rubini, "Sexuality and Augustan England," 350. Trumbach, "Sodomy Transformed". Trumbach, "Erotic Fantasy and Male Libertinism".
84. Sharpe, *Rebranding Rule*, 478-9.
85. Claydon, "William III and II," para. 82.
86. Carter, *Men and the Emergence of Polite Society*, 70.
87. Cynthia Herrup, "The King's Two Genders"; For further discussion on the distribution of gender roles associated with the performance of monarchy see: Ormrod, "Monarchy, Martyrdom and Masculinity".
88. Capp, "'Jesus Wept' But Did the Englishman?"; See also: Dixon, *Weeping Britain.*
89. Capp, "'Jesus Wept' But Did the Englishman?,"104.
90. Manning, *To His Sacred Majesty,* 9.
91. Garganigo, "William without Mary," 120.
92. Cameron, *Poems on Affairs of State*, 444.
93. Morley, "Death of the Queen," 444–6.
94. Burnet, *History of His Own Time*, 525.
95. Claydon, *William III*, 44.
96. Shepard, "From Anxious Patriarchs," 292.
97. Berry, *Gender, Society and Print Culture,* 235.
98. Ede, *Arts and Society in England,* 54.
99. Raven, "Publishing and Bookselling 1660-1780," 15-6.
100. Ibid., 18.
101. Shepard, *History of Street Literature*, 109.
102. Tosh, "Hegemonic Masculinity," 41.
103. Manning, *An Apprenticeship in Arms,* 431.
104. Woodward, *Account of the Societies for Reformation of Manners.* Quote taken from a proclamation by the king included in Woodward's text.

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