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"And Like a Widdow Thus": Donne, Huygens, and the Fall of Heidelberg

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Times of political unrest challenge the rhetorical prowess of those who speak to powerful audiences. One such speaker was John Donne, preacher before the court of King James during the early years of the Thirty Years War. Various commentators have discussed Donne's involvement in and degree of influence from the pulpit on the political situation of his day. Some argue that Donne championed religious and political conformity. R. C. Bald asserts that Donne, in sympathy with King James, complained against the "excess of freedom in preaching" (434)[1] Moreover, Bald states that "the King had a regard for him, and Donne's own loyalty was unquestioned" (444). John Carey, supporting the underlying thesis of his *John Donne: Life, Mind & Art*, alleges that Donne's sermon defending James' repressive measures in *Directions to Preachers* was prompted by Donne's own aversion to nonconformity and his fascination with power because he "was stirred by the image of numinous majesty, scattering opposition as the sun disperses clouds."[2]

Others consider Donne sagaciously independent. Paul Sellin argues that Donne was an astute political thinker who, realizing the power he wielded from the pulpit, fitted his rhetoric to specific churches, audiences, and political situations as evinced by the sermon he gave to the States General of the Netherlands in 1619.[3] And Jeanne Shami illustrates convincingly that Donne did not fail "to apply his observation and keen wit to the political issues of his day" (9).[4] She proceeds to prove that Donne had the authority to limit the absolute power of the King by "establishing the minister's spiritual authority and to remind his audience, including the King, of their duties as hearers"(14). She concludes that the court sermons are "models of the discretion required in channelling and guiding, if not absolutely controlling, the turbulent sources of political power" (21).

Although the commentators disagree in the measure of Donne's involvement, they all agree that Donne could and would manipulate the power invested in him as a preacher to awaken in his audience an awareness of both their religious duties and their political responsibilities. An examination of Donne's translation of Jeremiah's Lamentations and of a sermon preached in 1622 on the anniversary of

the Gunpowder Plot placed within the political context in which these works were conceived gives additional evidence that Donne was keenly aware of the dangerous political situation that presented itself towards the end of 1622. Moreover, the political and poetical ties between the budding Dutch politician Constantijn Huygens and Donne, the revered Dean of St. Paul, will be used to illustrate that their mutual translations of Lamentations are private expressions of grief over the fall of Heidelberg. Donne's subsequent sermon will be posited as a discreet but pertinent attack on the politically dangerous schemings of James.

Toward the end of 1622, four years into the Thirty Years War, the political situation on the continent and in England had become critical. In hopes of averting the acceptance of the Catholic Duke Ferdinand of Styria as future king of Bohemia and of enlisting the active support of England and other Protestant states, the Bohemian Calvinists had turned to Frederick, the young Calvinist Elector of the Palatinate, the head of the Protestant union, and the son-in-law of James I, king of England, and had offered him the crown of Bohemia. James, however, proved reluctant to support Frederick's campaign because he was stubbornly pursuing a pro-Spanish policy, negotiating a marriage between his son Charles and the Spanish infanta over which he suffered a serious break with the House of Commons. The Commons both feared and hated the Spanish king and hoped to gain from a war with Spain the very benefits that James hoped to obtain from an alliance through the proposed marriage: the restoration of the Palatinate to Frederick and a strengthening of the Protestant faith against Catholic influences.

James' wooing of the Spanish court perturbed the Dutch, in the middle of their eighty-year war with Spain in search of independence; they feared the inherent dangers such liaison would pose for their struggle with Spain and for the fledgling Protestant Church. They had sent an embassy to England in December 1621, among whom travelled the aspiring Dutch poet and budding politician Constantijn Huygens as secretary and interpreter. James' apathy for the Dutch demands increasingly frustrated the Dutch negotiators who saw the situation both at home and in Germany deteriorating rapidly. On September 6, 1622, waiting in vain for support from England, Heidelberg, the bulwark of the Protestant faith and Frederick's last attempt to salvage his winter-kingdom, fell to the Catholic emperor.

Buffeted by these political and religious disquietudes and plagued by homesickness, Huygens befriended his London neighbors: Sir Robert Killigrew and his wife, Mary Woodhouse. Jacob Smit, Huygens' biographer, relates that Huygens was a daily guest at the Killigrews and that, among many other dignitaries, he met Donne at their residence.[5] And Bald, too, records the meeting between Donne and Huygens at the Killigrews(441). Donne made a lasting impression on the young Dutchman, who often went to Donne's church to listen to his sermons as Huygens fondly testified in his Latin autobiography written around 1678 when he was eighty-six years old. After introducing Lady Killigrew as "pulcherrima Mater,"

he mentioned Donne first among the many guests and, as Bald notes, "saluted his memory in enthusiastic lines"(442):

> Te, maximi, *Donni*,
> Omnibus antefero, divine vir, optime Rhetor,
> Prime Poetarum: O, quoties sermonibus illis
> Aureolis quos vel privatos inter amicos
> Vel de suggestu, Praeco Facunde, serebas,
> Intereram, quo me visus sum nectare pasci!
>
> (Thou, greatest Donne, I place before all others, man divine, best Orator, first among Poets: O how often have I listened to your golden words, uttered either among friends or from the pulpit, O Great Herald, that have nourished me like nectar. [*Gedichten*, VIII:208][6])

Although the intervening sixty years may have colored Huygens' memory of Donne, his admiration for Donne both as poet and preacher was genuine.

The two men had many common interests. Like Huygens, Donne was a shrewd politician and eminently aware of the political and religious troubles on the continent. In 1619, Donne had accompanied Doncaster as chaplain to the embassy that was to mediate in the precarious Bohemian situation. During his travels, Donne had preached to the elector and his English bride; on his way back to England, he had visited The Hague—Huygens' birthplace—and preached to the States General. Huygens, although young, was no newcomer to international politics. He had accompanied van Aerssen on a diplomatic mission to Venice in 1620 and had visited England as secretary of an embassy to England in early 1621. Both missions dealt with the Catholic threat on the continent and had as goal the mustering of support for the Protestant cause in Germany. Moreover, both men were notable poets, sharing a love for the complexities and possibilities of language, and both stretched the limits of language to witness their faith in God and to grasp at an understanding of their place within God's divine plan.

When the situation in and around Heidelberg became critical, Donne and Huygens shared the concerns about the threat to their faith and the future of the Protestant Church. In a letter written early September to Sir Henry Goodyer, Donne expressed his deep concern over Heidelberg and quoted from a letter that Huygens shared with him to underscore the perilous political and religious ramifications:

> The Palatinate is absolutely lost; for before this Letter come to you, we make account that *Heydelberg* and *Frankindale* is lost and *Manheme* distressed. *Mansfield* came to *Breda*, and *Gonzales*, to *Brussels*, with great losses on both sides, but equall. The P. of *Orange* is but now come

> to *Breda*. . . . The Secretary of the States [Huygens] here shewed me a Letter yesternight, that the Town spends 6000 pounds of powder a day, and hath spent since the siege 250^{m} pounds. (*Letters* 230-231)[7]

In the same letter, James' flirtations with Catholic Spain prompted Donne to emphasize James' unwavering dedication to the Church of England. He related to Goodyer that his Majesty had asked him to publish certain reasons for his political course in a sermon preached at Paul's Cross for a large congregation who received assurances "of his Majesty's constancy in Religion, and of his desire that all men should be bred in the knowledge of such things as might preserve them from the superstition of Rome" (231-232). In a subsequent letter to Goodyer, written September 24, 1622, Donne added:

> Now we are sure that *Heidelberge* is taken, and entered with extreme cruelties. . . . *Manheim* was soon after besieged, and is still. *Heydelth* was lost the 6 of this moneth. the K. upon news of this, sent to the Spanish Ambassadour, that the people were like to resent it, and therefore, if he doubted ought, he should have a Guard. (*Letters* 211)

Moved by the desperate events, both Donne and Huygens sought comfort in the Bible and around this time translated Jeremiah's Lamentations, perceiving critical parallels between Old Testament Jerusalem and the Reformed Church. Huygens' translation has been accurately dated in the last trimester of 1622.[8] No satisfactory date has been established for Donne's translation. John T. Shawcross tentatively dates the translation in 1617 or 1618 but gives no evidence for these dates.[9] Sellin argues that, given the political situation during the fall of Heidelberg, "[the translations] both seem to stem from about this time, and it is difficult not to suspect some connection between the two endeavors."[10] Donne and Huygens collineated Jeremiah's mourning over the guilt and the misery of Jerusalem and the ensuing Babylonian captivity of the Jews with the fall of Heidelberg, seeing in the victory of the Catholic emperor another Babylonian captivity for the true church, facing subjugation and corruption by the papacy, the kingdom of Babylon. A close look at both translations illustrates that Donne and Huygens used different poetic approaches to render the same sombre apprehension over the political situation.

Both paraphrased Jeremiah into their own vernacular—English and Dutch. In his preface Donne mentioned having used the Latin translation of Tremellius, the Jewish born Calvinist who taught theology at the University of Heidelberg from 1562-1577 and whose Latin translation of the Old Testament was published in England in 1580, 1581, and 1585.[11] Sellin proposes that Huygens most likely used Tremellius as well since he subsequently translated Psalm 119, alluding to the use of Tremellius.[12] Both poets also used the Latin Vulgate as reference. Donne

translated all five chapters into English; Huygens only rendered the first seven verses of Chapter I. Both employed the meter that reflected the natural rhythm of their respective vernaculars: Donne's paraphrase reads in the eloquent yet frugal iambic pentameter and Huygens' in the slow-moving and ponderous hexameter.

Called *Qinah* in Hebrew and *Threni* in Latin, the Lamentations record the fall of Jerusalem in 587 B.C. to Nebuchadnezzar as is recorded in II Kings 25: 8-9:

> And in the fifth month, on the seventh day of the month, which is the nineteenth year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, came Nebuzaradan captain of the guard, a servant of the king of Babylon into Jerusalem And he burned the house of the Lord, and the king's house, and all the houses of Jerusalem, and every great man's house burnt with fire.

Lamentations expresses an eloquent tribute to the physical suffering of the people, yet it also portrays the spiritual significance of the fall of Jerusalem.

Donne and Huygens understood the power and adaptability of Lamentations—as a paradigm of despair it is still used on Good Friday—and saw that the fall of Heidelberg to the superstition of Rome could have the same spiritual ramifications. Heidelberg, too, became a widow, the most vulnerable of people, deserted by all those who should have protected her; her children—the Protestant Church—were being starved on a literal as well as on a spiritual level. After Heidelberg fell and Bohemia was the undisputed possession of Ferdinand, the Catholic reaction was ruthless and the persecution of Calvinism violent. Religious privileges were revoked and the estates of the rebel nobles confiscated. As in the Dutch provinces after the invasion by Spain, the population was given the choice of conversion to Catholicism or emigration.

Lamentations presents an example of the literary topos of the grief over a ruined city; the first seven verses are not unlike the haunting laments written centuries later in Anglo-Saxon England, such as *The Seafarer* and *The Ruin*, where a lone survivor reminisces over the great hall where now but crumbling walls and eerie silence remain. The syntactical structure of Latin lends itself well to a tightly compressed rendition of Lamentation, intensifying by parallel clauses and repetition the dirge-like quality of the funeral song. Donne, using the iambic pentameter, adhered closely to the Latin text and managed to retain the starkness of the lament. In the Vulgate printed in 1584, Aleph, the first verse of Chapter I, reads "Quomodo sedet sola civitas plena populo? Facta est quasi vidua domina gentium. Princeps provinciarum facta est sub tributo" (I:1). Donne's translation reads:

> How sits this citie, late most populous
> Thus solitary, and like a widdow thus!
> Amplest of Nations, Queene of Provinces
> She was, who now thus tributary is! (I, 1-4)

Donne's bold lines, his dramatic strength of images, and his strong caesura give his version a concise solidity. This solidity stands at odd tension with his subject matter, the utter devastation of Heidelberg/Jerusalem. Yet the regular rhythm and the compact rhyming couplets enhance the sombre occasion by their directness and regularity. There is no escape for Heidelberg, now deserted by her allies and driven into captivity by her enemies. The unrelenting brevity of the text drives home the truth that "none of all / Her lovers comfort her," not even England, and that "Perfidiously / Her friends have dealt, and now are enemie" (6-8).

Verse six reads:

> From Sion's daughter is all beauty gone,
> Like Harts, which seeke for Pasture, and find none,
> Her Princes are, and now before the foe
> Which still pursues them, without strength they go. (I, 21-24)

The inversion in line two becomes especially powerful, delaying the identification of the tenor of the simile to illustrate the visual image of helplessness and defeat. This inversion departs from the Latin which reads "Facti sunt principes eius velut arietes non invenientes pascua." Frederick, Mansfeld, and Vere were just such hunted animals seeking for pasture and finding none. Heidelberg and the Protestant Church throughout Bohemia sat "like a widdow," bereft of their winter-king, "The breath of [their] nostrils, the anointed of the Lord." The run-on lines—gathering strength as the speaker's anguish grows—make the pursuit the more relentless and the desolation complete.

Huygens' rendition of the first seven verses of Chapter I, using the same Latin text, offers a totally different vision of the suffering city and her inhabitants. Since Huygens used the Alexandrine meter, native to the speech rhythm of the Dutch, but at the same time retained the four line stanza, the translation becomes longer, more ponderous, almost baroque. Each quatrain needs to accommodate eight extra syllables—an increase of eighteen percent—and Huygens, even more so than Donne, needed to supply words not found in the original Latin text with which he worked. His rendition of the first verse of Chapter I reads:

> Hoe sitt die Heylighe, die prachtige, die schoone,
> Die borgher-machtighe, de aller Steden Stadt,
> Die aller Landen eer en Vorstelijcke Croone
> Verwoest, werweduw-lijckt haer hateren ter schatt?

(How sits the Holy one, the splendid one, the beautiful one, the citizen-mighty, the City over all Cities, the honor of all Countries, and Princely Crown devastated, like a widow, a booty to those who hate her? [I, 1-4]

Jerusalem, identified in the Latin text as "sola civitas plena populo" and qualified in subsequent lines by "quasi vidua domina gentium," and "princeps provinciarum," blossoms into repletion, overqualified by adjectives such as "holy," "splendid," "beautiful," "city of cities," and "mighty in citizens." The addition of "holy" is especially critical; Jeremiah was lamenting Jerusalem for just the opposite reason: "Jerusalem hath grievously sinned" (I: 8) and "the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions" (I: 5). Heidelberg, however, and the Dutch cities aligned with Heidelberg—Breda and Bergen op Zoom—also under siege at this time, were indeed holy in the eyes of the Calvinist Church, forming a pious bulwark against the corruption and superstition of the Church in Rome. The qualifier "borgher-machtighe" (mighty in citizens), Huygens' translation of "full of people," is a tribute to the Dutch political system that thrived on the stolid values of the commoner, the burgher, and had no great ambition for the establishment of nobility.

His rendition of verse six repeats the expansion of the text, this time by adding near synonymical verbs to illustrate Jerusalem's loss of beauty:

> Der dochter Zions glans js heel van haer verscheyden,
> Vervallen en verplett; haer' Vorsten overmant,
> Gelijcken 'tmatte wild dat niet en vindt te weyden,
> En vlieden sonder weer des overwinners hand.

> (The splendor of Zion's daughter is totally departed from her, decayed and crushed; her monarchs are overpowered, like weary quarry that cannot find pasture, and flee without resistance the hand of the conquerer [I, 21-24]).

Yet for all its extravagant and ornate expansiveness, the fall of Jerusalem and Heidelberg becomes the more intensified in Huygens' poem. The fall of a city, gilded by such superlative attributes, evokes even a more profound silence than Jeremiah's original lament. Donne and Huygens commemorated by their mutually inspired translations the fall of Heidelberg and the ensuing exile of the Calvinist Church in Bohemia. Their different poetic approaches prove to the reader that Donne's "well-wrought urn" and Huygens' "halfe-acre tombes" could honor equally well "the greatest ashes."

Both men subsequently used the same or similar biblical texts to add to their private expression of grief a warning—to a more immediate and public audience—about the consequences of the fall of Heidelberg. Huygens had by November 13, 1622, translated Psalm 79, and Donne preached on November 5, 1622, commemorating the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, on a text he had recently translated: Jeremiah IV: 20.

In the throes of acute homesickness and worried about the war fought in and near his fatherland, Huygens sought support and consolation in additional translations from the Bible. He used his translation of Psalm 79 as a frame for his pastoral elegy "d'Uytlandighe Herder" ("The Shepherd Abroad" or more accurately "The Shepherd in Exile" [*Gedichten* I, 281]) in which he mirrored the war between his depressed ego and his rational ego. It is a poem of deep psychological significance, an investigation of an identity crisis brought on by his depression.[13] He prefaced Psalm 79 by a paraphrase of two verses from Psalm 119, the Psalm of the pilgrim: "Dit is mijn troost in mijn bedroefdheden; uw wetten zijn voor mij hulpmiddelen geweest om te zingen, in de plaats van mijn ballingschappen" ("this is my consolation in my distress; thy laws have been my support for my songs at the place of my exile"), a free translation of Psalm 119: 50 and 54: "This is my comfort in my affliction: Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage." It is interesting to note that both the title of the elegy and the preface support the notion that Huygens saw his time in England as secretary to the embassy of van Aerssen as a time of exile, a stay in a country hostile to him. His choice of Psalm 79 for the frame of his elegy underlines this feeling of discomfort in a country that should have been an ally. England, after all, was a neighbor to the Dutch but a neighbor that in the words of Psalm 79 scorned them: "We have become a reproach to our neighbours, a scorn and derision to them that are round about us" (4).

Donne's sermon on Jeremiah IV: 20 connects equally strongly with the situation in England and the Continent on political as well as on religious levels. Preached on Guy Fawkes Day, 1622, to commemorate the Gunpowder Plot, the sermon stands as a convincing plea against the tenets of the Catholic Church and carries a strong warning to James and Charles as king and future king of England. It is a learned sermon, exquisite in its expression and delivery, filled with quotations from and allusions to the Bible and the Church Fathers, extravagant in its rhetoric, spiritual in its ultimate message, yet with a strong internal political coloration. As text, Donne chose Jeremiah IV: 20: "The breath of our nostrils, the anointed of the Lord, was taken into their pits." Donne argued eloquently that the text of Jeremiah had both historical and prophetical relevance, historical in that it was written after Jerusalem's fall and subsequent transportation into Babylon and prophetical in that "the Prophet laments a greater desolation then that, in the utter ruine, and devastation of the City, and Nation, which was to fall upon them, after the death of *Christ Jesus.*"[14] As Shami also has shown, Donne drew links to the England of his day, choosing "texts and explications of texts which will enable him to propose analogies, even identification, between the actual literal situation and responses of Biblical examples and those he expects from his audience:[15]

> it is both Historicall, and Propheticall, for, they, from whom, God, in his mercy, gave us Deliverance, this day, are our *Historicall Enemies*, and our

> *Propheticall Enemies*; historically wee know, they have attempted our ruine heretofore, and prophetically wee may bee sure, they *will do so againe*, whensoever any new occasion provokes them, or sufficient power enables them. (238)

Donne, of course, meant the threat of the Catholic Church, and the whole sermon bristles with warnings against Catholicism: "so in the *Roman Church*, they established their heresie of *Transubstantiation*; And so, their deliverance of soules not from *Purgatorie* onely, but from *Hell* it selfe" (244). And he warns the "*Oath* that the *Emperour* takes to the *Pope*, is by their authours called *Juramentum fidelitatis*, an oath of Allegiance; and if they had brought our Kings, to take an oath of allegiance so, this were no kingdom" (244).

Donne's warning to the assembly at the Church—the sermon had been moved from Paul's Cross indoors because of the weather—also carried strong advice to James and Charles in the midst of their negotiations with Spain. Although Shami argues that King James in this sermon is cast in the role of the good King Josiah,[16] I feel that Donne's juxtaposition of good and bad kings permits other interpretations. Leaving it to his listeners to decide how to judge James, Donne expounded that both bad kings—such as Zedekiah—and good kings—such as Josiah—are "Vnctus Domini, The anointed of the Lord" and "Spiritus Narium, The breath of their nostrills" (240). He warned that the fate of the king and the kingdom were inextricably interlinked and that the cause of lamentations was "the dangerous declination of the Kingdome . . . But then they did not seditiously sever the King and the Kingdome, as though the Kingdome could do well, and the King ill, That safe, and he in danger" (239). With fine irony he added that "when Princes pretermit in some things, the present benefit of their Subjects, and confer favours upon others, give your selfe the liberty to judge of Princes actions, with the affections of private men, and you may think a King an ill King" (250).

The king had recently released a large number of Catholics from prison, and rumors now made the rounds that he intended to make a change of religion. Donne, however, exhorted the congregation to pray for the many blessings that they enjoyed and warned against prayers that were recently instituted:

> So wee have seen of late, some in obscure Conventicles, institute certain prayers, *That God would keep the King, and the Prince in the true Religion*; The prayer is always good, always usefull; but when that prayer is accompanied with circumstances, as though the King and the Prince were declining from that Religion, then even the prayer it selfe is libellous, and seditious. . . . Let our prayers bee for continuance of the blessings, which wee have, and let our acknowledgement of present blessings, bee an inducement for future: pray, and praise together; pray thankfully, pray not suspiciously. (253-254)

Although Donne openly counted James among the good kings, "we all lamented, and bitterly, and justly, the losse of our *Deborah* [Elizabeth], though then we saw a *Josiah* [James] succeeding" (426-27), the whole sermon quivers with warnings against the pro-Spanish course of James and advice about the treacherous promises of the Spanish: "now, a man that *flattereth*, spreadeth a net, and a Prince that discerns not a flatterer, from a Counsellor, is taken in a *net*" (259).

On a spiritual and exegetical level, Josiah, the good king, is Christ Jesus—"the anointed of the Lord" as James should be; yet on a political level, Donne played with the subtle differences between good and bad kings and placed James and Charles in the liminal space between the two, challenging the audience "to discern any ironic disjunctions between ideal and real."[17] He ended his sermon that must have held his congregation spellbound despite its length with a call to the English people to support the king: "not onely upon your Allegiance to God, but upon your Allegiance to the King, be good: No Prince can have a better guard, then Subjects truly religious" (261). Although it was unlikely that the Spanish ambassadors attended the service, the Dutch certainly did. So Donne added a warning to ambassadors not to be fooled by hearsay: "but then all strangers in the land are not noble, and candid, and ingenuous *Ambassadors*; and even *Ambassadors* themselves may be misled to an undervalue of the *Prince*, by rumours, and by disloyal, and by negligent speaches" (262).

Donne directly touched on the King's dangerous political course in his exhortation to the congregation to remain true to their religion, no matter where the preference of the king took him at any particular time. "Let us preserve [the King]," Donne recommended in the closing paragraph of the sermon, "by preserving God amongst us, in the true, and sincere profession of our Religion. Let not a mis-grounded, and disloyall imagination of coolness in him, cool you, in your own families," a strong accusation to an audience among which, at this special occasion, the King and members of the royal family were surely present.

Donne was eminently aware of the power of his sermon and its implications of and warning against James' pro-Spanish—and thus pro-Catholic—tendencies. On December 1, 1622, several weeks after having preached this sermon, he wrote to Sir Thomas Roe, James' ambassador to the Ottoman Porte. After mentioning the sermon he had preached on September 14, 1622, in which the king had commanded him to assure his subjects of his steadfast adherence to the Church of England and which was printed by royal command some weeks later, Donne wrote "Some few weekes after that, I preached another at the same place: upon the Gunpowder day." With more than a hint of irritation at James' censure, he continued, "Therin I was left more to mine own liberty; and therfore I would I could also send your Lordship a Copy of that." Donne explained that he was unable to do so since the sermon was "yet in his Majesties hand." With a hint of sarcasm, Donne added "I know not whether he will in it, as he did in the other, after his reading thereof, command it to be printed."[18]

Upon reading it closely, James needed to decide if the call to his subjects to protect, honor, and preserve the King outweighed the intimations of his own political and religious vacillations. After all, he was "the breath of their nostrils" as his Dean in one of the most hyperbolic passages of the sermon attested, flamboyantly hyperbolic both in Donne's qualifications to utter it and in its protestation of absolute truth:

> for, beloved in the bowels of Christ Jesus, before whose face I stand now, and before whose face, I shall not be able to stand amongst the righteous, at the last day, if I lie now, and make this pulpit my Shop, to vent sophisticate Wares, In the presence of you, a holy part, I hope, of the Militant Church, of which, by him, by whom I am that I am, I hope to bee, In the presence of the Head of the whole Church, who is All in all, I (*and I thinke I have the Spirit of God,*) (I am sure, I have not resisted it at this point) I, (and I may bee allowed to know something in Civill affaires) (I am sure I have not been stupified in this point) doe deliver that, which upon the truth of a Morall man, and a Christian man, beleeve to be true, That hee, who is *the Breath of our nostrils*, is in his heart as farre from submitting us to that Idolatry, and superstition, which did heretofore oppresse us. (254)

This lengthy preamble to the faint praise should have made the attentive listeners aware that they were receiving more of a panegyric on the qualities of the preacher than a confirmation of James' steadfast adherence to the tenets of the Anglican faith. Donne did protest too much, and by focusing on his own astute awareness of the political situation, on his qualifications as preacher, and on his sacred duty from the pulpit where he could but speak the truth, he made the whole sermon a witness to the precarious situation at home as well as abroad and lectured both the king and his subjects on the dangers of meddling with such formidable enemy as Spain.

James may have taken the hint that at least his preacher was displeased with his political leanings. Bald relates that the King "did not, in fact, order the printing of the Gunpowder Plot sermon" (441). And Walton documented that by the end of 1622 Donne fell temporarily out of favor with the King:

> He was once, and but once, clouded with the Kings displeasure; . . . which was occasioned by some malicious whisperer, who had told his Majesty that Dr. *Donne* had put on the general humor of the Pulpits, and was become busie in insinuating a fear of the Kings inclining to *Popery*, and a dislike of his Government. (as quoted by Bald, 444)

I disagree with Bald's suggestion that Walton mixed up his dates in this instance and that the incident mentioned happened much later during the reign of Charles

I (445). After listening intently to the sermon preached on November 5, 1622, an attentive hearer—be it the King himself or a member of the congregation—would have distinguished Donne's discreet but pertinent probing into the King's Spanish diplomacy and its implications for English Protestantism.

Donne closed the sermon with a strong plea for unity within the church and the kingdom, a unity that was almost destroyed by the Gunpowder Plot of 1605, and that was once again in danger by the King's political course. Directly alluding to James' plans for his son, Donne counseled the king to keep Charles securely within the family of the Church of England: "Cities are built of families, and so are Churches too; Every man keeps his owne family, and then every Pastor shall keep his flock, and so the Church shall be free from Schisme, and the State from sedition, and our *Josiah* preserved" (263). It was a plea shared by Huygens and the Dutch who, by their petitions to the English throne, extended the unity to include all Protestant nations to stand firm against the imminent Catholic threat. Both Donne's and Huygens' translations of Jeremiah offered a strong paradigm of a nation that had lost its unity within and without its gates: "The kings of the earth, and all the inhabitants of the world, would not have believed that the adversary and the enemy should have entered the gates of Jerusalem" (Lamentations 4: 12). The divergent voices using either the pulpit or biblical metaphors did not go unheard. By 1648, it had become evident that the Catholic Church no longer had the power nor the internal unity to reduce the Protestant people, "amplest of Nations, Queene of Provinces," to the status of a widow.

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Notes

[1] All citations of R. C. Bald are to *John Donne: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970).

[2] John Carey, *John Donne: Life, Mind and Art* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981) p. 116.

[3] Paul Sellin, *So Doth, So Is Religion* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1988) pp. 109-34.

[4] All citations of Jeanne Shami in this paragraph are to "Kings and Desperate Men: John Donne Preaches at Court." *John Donne Journal* 6:1 (1987): 9-23.

[5] Jacob Smit, *De Grootmeester van Woord en Snarenspel* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1980), p. 102.

[6] Constantijn Huygens, *Gedichten*, 9 vols., Ed. J. A. Worp (Groningen: Wolters, 1893), VIII, 208.

[7] All citations of John Donne's letters are to *Letters to Severall Persons of Honour (1651)*, ed. M. Thomas Hester (Delmar, NY: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1977), p. 230-231.

[8] Smit, p. 15.

[9] John T. Shawcross, ed., *The Complete Poetry of John Donne* (New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1967), p. 415.

[10] Paul Sellin, "John Donne and the Huygens Family, 1619-1621," *Dutch Quarterly Review* 12 (1982/1983): 201, n23.

[11] Shawcross, p. 371.

[12] See Sellin, "John Done and the Huygens Family, 1619-1621."

[13] Smit, p. 109.

[14] All citations of John Donne's sermons are to *The Sermons of John Donne*, 10 vols., eds. George R. Potter and Evelyn M. Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959).

[15] Jeanne M. Shami, "Donne on Discretion," *ELH* 47 (1980): 58.

[16] "Donne on Discretion," p. 59.

[17] "Kings and Desperate Men," p. 11.

[18] Charles M. Coffin, *John Donne and the New Philosophy* (New York: Humanities Press, 1958), p. 393