

# Gabriel Harvey, James VI, and the Politics of Reading Early Modern Poetry

---

Jennifer Richards

---

☞ **GABRIEL HARVEY** has long been remembered for his connections rather than his writings. He chose wisely in making a friend of Edmund Spenser in the 1570s and unwisely in making an enemy of Thomas Nashe in the 1590s. His reputation has been permanently marked by the clumsy provocation he offered to Nashe and the dexterity with which he was turned aside. In comparison to Nashe's writings, Harvey's literary accomplishments appear of slight consequence: experimental poetry in Latin and English, and letters and satirical prose. Most of his publications have been forgotten, but he is valued from an antiquarian point of view as a collector and annotator of books. Indeed, his industrious habit of annotation inspired an edition of selected marginalia by G. C. Moore-Smith in 1913 and a study of his life and library by Virginia Stern in 1979.<sup>1</sup>

Harvey's reputation has been rehabilitated, if not quite restored, however, by a new and burgeoning field of research, the history of the book, and within this the history of reading. Here, the marginal Harvey has played a surprisingly central role. In 1990, Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, working with a copy of Livy's *Decades* owned by Harvey, demonstrated the purpose and method of humanist reading practice as professional, collaborative, and "goal-orientated." They discovered in the margins of this text evidence of its "directed reading" with "prominent Elizabethan political figures." Harvey recalls in marginal notes a private conference he had with Philip Sidney about "these three books of Livy" and, on a separate occasion, a debate at the house of

I would like to thank Cora Beth Fraser for her help with the translation of Harvey's difficult Latin poem, "De republica ordinanda." This translation is substantially hers, with minor modifications of my own. Dermot Cavanagh and Fred Schurink both gave invaluable advice on earlier drafts of this essay, as did three anonymous readers for the *Huntington Library Quarterly*. I would also like to thank the British Academy for providing me with funding to complete my research at Magdalene College, Cambridge, and the ever-helpful librarians at the Pepys Library.

1. *Gabriel Harvey's Marginalia*, ed. G. C. Moore-Smith (Stratford upon Avon, U.K., 1913), and Virginia F. Stern, *Gabriel Harvey: His Life, Marginalia, and Library* (Oxford, 1979).

Thomas Smith that apparently “emerged from or accompanied a full-scale reading of the text.” Moreover, Jardine and Grafton have been able to connect these debates to “real-life events.” Harvey’s reading of Livy with Sidney, they argue, probably took place just before Sidney’s embassy to Rudolph II in 1577. They describe this reading as “moral politique”: “a careerist reading—one designed to promote the career of a courtier, and at the same time to bring the hopeful facilitator to the notice of a court circle.”<sup>2</sup>

Although there have been a few attempts to move beyond this model of “goal-orientated” reading, Jardine and Grafton’s account of Harvey’s practice remains intact, for all sorts of good reasons.<sup>3</sup> One is that this model is based on the reading practices instilled by a humanist education. Under the guidance of a schoolmaster, young boys learned Latin and studied rhetoric by “digesting” their books, noting stylistic devices but also excerpting and collecting proverbs, maxims, pithy sayings, and ready-made phrases that they stored in their “commonplace books” under headings (“places”). The purpose of this practice was to facilitate the easy retrieval of linguistic resources and information to aid composition. It is this habit from elementary schooling that informed professional reading: what Grafton has elsewhere described as the “processing” of the ancients for patrons, princes, noblemen, clerics, their transformation “into uniform, easily retrievable, reproducible bits of utterance and information.”<sup>4</sup> It is also this habit that is represented and developed in the margins of the *adversaria*, a collection of annotated early modern books held in Cambridge University Library. William H. Sherman, who recently brought fresh attention to these, observes that they share a range of annotational techniques that facilitate the quick retrieval of information: underlining, topical headings, cross-references, summaries, and diagrams.<sup>5</sup>

A second very good reason for accepting this model is that it has helped us understand better the political values of humanists. Searching books for phrases and stylistic devices and leaving markers in book margins is understood to shape

2. Lisa Jardine and Anthony Grafton, “‘Studied for Action’: How Gabriel Harvey Read His Livy,” *Past and Present*, no. 129 (1990): 30–78 at 30, 32, 36, 41, 52.

3. For new emphases in the history of reading, see Heidi Brayman Hackel, *Reading Material in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2005). Brayman Hackel shifts attention from “professional scholars” to “less extraordinary readers” and the “recreational” books that they read (p. 3). Scholars are increasingly recognizing the importance of the skills of the literary critic for the reading of marginalia; see H. J. Jackson, *Marginalia: Readers Writing in Books* (New Haven, Conn., 2001). See also Daniel Wakelin’s “William Worcester Writes a History of Reading,” *New Medieval Literatures* 7 (2005): 53–71, esp. 54, 70. Meanwhile, Peter Mack offers the most far-reaching challenge to the characterization of “the Renaissance approach to reading classical texts as reading in fragments.” The maxims and pithy sayings that a schoolboy was meant to collect and reuse, he argues, also forced him “to think around the circumstances and consequences of the exemplary action”; see “Rhetoric, Ethics, and Reading in the Renaissance,” *Renaissance Studies* 19 (2005): 1–21 at 3, 9.

4. Anthony Grafton, “The Humanist as Reader,” in Guglielmo Cavallo and Roger Chartier, eds., *A History of Reading in the West*, trans. Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge, 1999), 179–212 at 199.

5. William H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance* (Amherst, Mass., 1995), 65–75. On the *adversaria*, see also David McKitterick, *Cambridge University Library: A History* (Cambridge, 1986). For a study of the use of the “manicule,” or marginal hand, to select, among other things, *sententiae* for recording in commonplace books, see William H. Sherman, “Toward a History of the Manicule,” <http://www.livesandletters.ac.uk>, posted March 2005, accessed 5 January 2007.

readers who are skilled in “the *manipulation of information*”<sup>6</sup> and who, in some cases, are “ruthlessly utilitarian” in their social as well as their literary practice. Thus, Kevin Sharpe, who develops Jardine and Grafton’s model of Harvey’s practice for the seventeenth-century diarist William Drake, discovers a correlation between Drake’s habit of breaking up a text, extracting what was immediately useful, and his equally pragmatic attitude toward his associates. “All social relationships,” writes Sharpe, like the books that Drake avidly digested, “were pursued for gain.”<sup>7</sup>

Challenging this influential model may seem churlish, not least because it might withdraw from Harvey the little credit he has regained. Yet his surprising prominence in this area of book history has obscured one oddity or contradiction: the curious mismatch between the Harvey we have come to know from his marginalia and the Harvey we might get to know from his poetry and prose writings. Attention to the latter may well prompt us to modify our conception of Harvey’s pragmatic humanism. For example, in his familiar letters to Spenser, printed in 1580, Harvey sought to represent a more flexible relationship between a teacher and a talented student, and between friends at different stages in their careers, than had been envisaged by earlier humanists. This is a different kind of “collaboration and conversation”<sup>8</sup> from the one discovered by Jardine and Grafton in the margins of humanist books. In these letters they are not just displaying their ability to advise and direct; they are also making a case for reading as an active *and* critical activity, one that empowers the student.<sup>9</sup>

This is not to say that Harvey is not pragmatic or self-interested in these letters. Throughout he also advertises his skill as a professional reader, noting in one letter that he has been reading Homer and Virgil “this fortnight” with his Lord for the latter’s “preferment,” and then boasts that “I dare undertake he shall not neede any further instruction.”<sup>10</sup> More ambitiously still, these letters establish Gabriel Harvey as a successor to an earlier generation of Cambridge humanists. They do so in a curious way, however, by dwelling on Harvey’s refusal to teach. “I dare geue no Preceptes, nor set downe any Certaine General Arte,” Harvey stubbornly declares in response to Spenser’s request for advice, adding that he is “not greatly squaimishe of my *Particular*

6. As Sherman reminds us in “Toward a History of the Manicule,” “Early modern readers were trained in schools, universities, Inns of Court, and even common households in what might be described as the *manipulation of information*—in selecting, ordering and applying resources gleaned from a wide variety of texts” (p. 4).

7. Sharpe, *Reading Revolutions: The Politics of Reading in Early Modern England* (New Haven, Conn., 2000), 84–85, 99. See also Sharpe, “Uncommonplaces? Sir William Drake’s Reading Notes,” in Sabrina Alcorn Baron, ed., *The Reader Revealed* (Seattle and London, 2001), 59–65.

8. Anthony Grafton, “Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise? Guillaume Budé and His Books,” *Publication of the Bibliographical Society of America* 91 (1997): 139–57 at 152.

9. Gabriel Harvey and Edmund Spenser, *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters: lately passed between two Universitie men: touching the Earthquake in Aprill last, and our English reformed Versifying. Two Other very commendable Letters, of the same mens writing: both touching the foresaid Artificiall Versifying, and certain other Particulars* (London, 1580). For discussion of this, see Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and Courtliness in Early Modern Literature* (Cambridge, 2003), chap. 5, esp. 122–38.

10. Harvey and Spenser, *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters*, sigs. E3r–E4r, H4v. References are given henceforward in the text.

*Examples*,” and so offers his own poems for discussion. He “that can but reasonably skill of the one,” the poetry, he insists, “wil give easily a shreude gesse at the other,” the rules, “considering that the one fetcheth his original and offspring from the other” (sigs. D4v–E1r). In so doing, he rejects the “dead Advertizement” (sig. D4r) of Roger Ascham’s *The Scholemaster* (1570): its strict regard for the authority of classical “quantification,” the system that measures the “quantity” or duration of a syllable according to Greek or Latin pronunciation, and its application to English. If poets want rules, Harvey argues, they need to develop them through practice—that is, through experimentation and in debate with other poets. This is just what he and Spenser do in these letters; they exchange early drafts of poems and offer critical commentary. They are discriminating and challenging readers of each other’s work.

To be blunt, though: why should this matter? It may simply disentangle another, and not unexpected, strand of opinion in the temperament of this essentially minor and eccentric Tudor humanist. Yet, Harvey’s commitment to the principle and practice of dialogue in his prose writing<sup>11</sup> might invite us to vary our sense of the goals of *this* early modern reader and to think more expansively about how we interpret marginalia—a different kind of dialogue or “speaking across”<sup>12</sup>—as a moral-political form. I want to venture such an approach here by making this claim: that an adversarial reading, or its imaginative representation at least, could explore the restraining of authority as well as the promotion of individual careers. I will explore this argument in relation to Harvey’s annotation of James VI’s *Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (Edinburgh, 1584), a reading that relates closely to the concerns of his letters to Spenser.<sup>13</sup> The book is a volume of poetry that he says he read hot off the press on 24 February 1585. I should confess now that I will be straying quite widely from Harvey’s specific response to this work, which demands an understanding of his reading method that is broader than that proposed by Jardine and Grafton. I will be considering, among other things, Harvey’s neglected formulation of his reading practice, as articulated in his Cambridge lectures on the art of rhetoric, published in 1577 as *Rhetor*. These lectures not only illustrate once again Harvey’s reluctance to tolerate the unchallenged enforcement of linguistic laws, but they also detail a way of reading that, I am claiming, is put into practice in *Essayes*. First, though, I want to introduce James VI’s *Essayes of a Prentise* and Harvey’s reading of it, and I also want to give a more overtly political turn to Harvey’s preoccupation with rule-making and -breaking.

11. For further evidence of Harvey’s experimentation with the dialogue form, see also *Letter-Book of Gabriel Harvey A.D. 1573–1580*, ed. Edward John Long Scott (London, 1884).

12. On marginalia as “conversations,” see Jackson, *Marginalia*, 82–86.

13. Harvey’s copy, held in Magdalene College, Cambridge, is bound with James VI’s *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at vacant houres* (Edinburgh, 1591) and Josuah Sylvester’s translation of Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas’s writings, *The Triumph of Faith. The Sacrifice of Isaac, the Ship-wracke of Ionas. with a song of the victories obtained by the French King, at Yvry* (London, 1592). For Harvey’s dated signature, see sig. P4v. Sig. A3r is also signed “Gabriel Harvey. 1585.” His signature also appears on the title page of *The Triumph of Faith* (undated).



James's *Essayes of a Prentise* is a collection of original poems accompanied by a translation of Du Bartas's *Vranie* and, most importantly for my argument, a short prose piece entitled "Revlis and cautelis [Rules and directions] to be obseruit and eschewit in Scottis Poesie."<sup>14</sup> Despite the stature of the treatise's author, one would be forgiven for supposing that Harvey is interested in it only as an aspiring vernacular poet and, of course, as a fellow pedant. Like other "scholars of his day," Harvey corrects "scribal and typographical blunders" as he reads;<sup>15</sup> his marginal annotation consists of a number of corrections, usually added commas. He also inserts a handful of his own vernacular and Latin poems, among them two "nursery rhymes," "A charme for a mad woman," and "De republica ordinanda" [On the republic to be established], as well as scattered comments, including praise of James VI as "A perfect Oratour, & diuine Poet" (sig. A3r). This is hardly "oppositional" reading. Compare this with the marginalia and editorial interventions of James VI and I's openly partisan readers in the seventeenth century, especially those who remained undaunted by apparently obvious textual constraints. I am thinking of those readers who discovered in James VI and I's *Basilikon Doron* sympathy for "Anabaptism," or the printers responsible for the unauthorized editions of his *Letter and Directions Touching Preaching and Preachers* (1622), who "succeeded in transforming a repressive text into a vehicle for expressing popular thought and sentiment."<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, unlike Harvey's copy of Livy's *Decades*, this book bears in its margins no hint of a reading context, and no record of shared discussions about its contents. Yet, names of friends and acquaintances do appear, and this may offer some insight into the identity of the readers with whom Harvey shared this book. Harvey notes on the title page that he bought *Essayes* with money given to him by Bartholomew Clerke (d. 1590),<sup>17</sup> and he dedicates a cryptic "horoscope" of five lines of iambic pentameter to a second acquaintance. This poem is titled, "The victorie presaged to One, borne upon New Yeares euen"; Harvey recalls that it was "Imparted at Occasion to, Doctor Bing, master of Clare Hall: as judicious, as anie Doctor of his, or other profession":

14. These texts were annotated by Harvey in his neat italic hand across a period of ten years, though it is *Essayes* that receives the most attention. For a full transcription of Harvey's marginalia, see Eleanor Relle, "Some New Marginalia and Poems of Gabriel Harvey," *The Review of English Studies* 23 (1972): 401–16.

15. Grafton describes Guillaume Budé's reading habits thus in "Is the History of Reading a Marginal Enterprise?" 150.

16. James Doelman, "'A King of Thine Own heart': The English Reception of King James VI and I's *Basilikon Doron*," *Seventeenth Century* 9 (1994): 1–9; Joseph Marshall, "Reading and Misreading King James 1622–42: Responses to the *Letter and Directions Touching Preaching and Preachers*," in Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier, eds., *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I* (Detroit, 2002), 476–511 at 502. On the "polemical reading" of texts in the seventeenth century, see Steven Zwicker, "Reading the Margins: Politics and the Habits of Appropriation," in Kevin Sharpe and Steven Zwicker, eds., *Refiguring Revolutions: Aesthetics and Politics from the English Revolution to the Romantic Revolution* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998), 101–15.

17. James VI, *Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (Edinburgh, 1584), sig. A3r.

The Capricornist capere in the rooffe  
 Of the celestial palace; and surmountes  
 His adversaries in the heavens accounts.  
 Courage, mie hart: the victorie is thine:  
 Jove, & the Sun upon thie encounters shine.  
 (Sig. G1r)

This is Thomas Byng (d. 1599), Master of Clare College and, like Clerke, a civil lawyer.<sup>18</sup> Other names that appear include those of Philip Sidney (d. 1586), whose writing is commended for its Homeric “pictorial quality” and, perhaps most importantly, George Gascoigne (d. 1577), whose attempt to define the rules of English verse, *Certaine notes of Instruction* (1575), was known to both Harvey and James VI. But none of this suggests that Harvey was reading *Essayes* “politically.” Except that he is, and to recognize this we need to expand our sense of his political idiom.

To make my case I want to step aside from Gascoigne and other poetry-makers for a moment and suggest that Harvey’s other influence and interlocutor in his reading of *Essayes* derives from a more remote but also more obviously political source: the works of George Buchanan, especially his polemical treatise *De iure regni apud Scotos* [The law of kingship among the Scots]. Harvey almost certainly knew this work. *De iure* was circulated among the so-called Sidney circle, to which Harvey was attached; it was distributed first in manuscript in the mid-1570s, and later in print, published in Edinburgh in 1579. Moreover, one of the members of this group, Daniel Rogers, was responsible for the printing of the London edition in 1580.<sup>19</sup> How this connection might have informed Harvey’s reading of James VI’s poetry is not immediately clear. This is partly because of our understanding of the significance of *De iure*: its hard-line argument that not only must a king obey the law but also that it is lawful to kill a king who does not. James VI’s *Essayes*—his first print publication—has been read as a

18. Clerke (ca. 1537–1590) studied at King’s College, Cambridge, obtaining his B.A. in 1559; he was appointed Professor of Rhetoric ca. 1563, proceeding to the L.L.D in 1572. Byng (d. 1599) was admitted to Peterhouse as a sizar in 1552 and took his B.A. in 1555/6 and his M.A. in 1559; he became Public Orator in 1565, and later proceeded to the L.L.D in 1570. He was elected Master of Clare College in 1571. In 1572 he was admitted to practice law in the ecclesiastical courts, and in 1574 he became Regius Professor of Civil Law at Cambridge. A third friend, John Caius (1510–1573), is the Cambridge scholar and physician who refounded Gonville College in 1557. These associates were also committed to the exploration and practice of civil conversation: both Caius and Byng published their support for Clerke’s Latin translation of Castiglione’s *Il libro del cortegiano* (1571). See the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

19. See James E. Phillips’s excellent and underused essay, “George Buchanan and the Sidney Circle,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 12 (1948–49): 23–55. Copies of a manuscript of *De iure*, and later the newly printed edition, were circulated among this circle; notably, Daniel Rogers lent his copy to Thomas Wilson, who shared it with Thomas Bromley, who then passed it on to William Cecil (who, Rogers complained, failed to return it). See also the introduction to George Buchanan, *A Dialogue on the Law of Kingship among the Scots: A Critical Edition and Translation of George Buchanan’s “De Iure Regni apud Scotos Dialogus,”* ed. and trans. Roger A. Mason and Martin S. Smith (Aldershot, U.K., 2004), xli–xlii. For Harvey’s admiration of Buchanan’s astronomical and religious poetry, and his interest in Buchanan’s three invectives against Mary, Queen of Scots (1571), see Phillips, “George Buchanan,” 47–49. On Harvey’s ownership of these invectives, see Stern, *Gabriel Harvey*, 204–5, and Harvey, *Gabriel Harvey’s Marginalia*, 158.

sharp rejoinder to this. Rebecca Bushnell argues persuasively that James is asserting in *Essayes* his divinely bestowed status “as the reformer of Scottish culture and the ‘inventor’ of its laws.” Indeed, in laying down the “reulis” of poetry, the king seems to be “working out a sense of himself as a ‘free’ lawmaker and a Scot, in ways which would surface more clearly in his later political works,” most notably *Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598), which defends his right to modify the law.<sup>20</sup> Given this argument, Harvey’s praise of James VI, cited above, seems rather too accommodating for a committed reader of Buchanan: it seems that he is accepting too readily the divine authority of a king to declare laws.

But what if we approach Buchanan differently, focusing less on our sense of *De iure* as the quotable work of a “radical monarchomach”<sup>21</sup> who gave his young charge nightmares with “terrifying stories of what had happened to wicked kings,”<sup>22</sup> and turn our attention instead to the significance of its dialogue form? Why would Buchanan have chosen this literary form to explore the law of kingship among the Scots? One reason is that it helps to elucidate his broader conception of the law. For Buchanan the law is not only a rule or code that should be followed. Following Cicero in *De legibus* [On the laws], he understands the law as a set of practices or customs that carry the consent of a community (including, in Scotland, the view that a king is subject to the law). Just as importantly, though, he also understands it as an internal resource, our capacity for reason and speech; it is this divinely bestowed gift, the origins of our humanity, that enables us to form social relationships, to form societies.<sup>23</sup> The one conception of the law sustains the other: laws agreed upon across the generations should realize and protect this capacity for fellowship, which is synonymous with natural law. For this reason, Cicero insists that in order to comprehend a just and civil society we must first explore the divine origins of human nature, rather than the codified regulations of a state. That is, we must first grasp “that there is only one principle by which men may live together with one another and that this is the same for all, and

20. Rebecca Bushnell, “George Buchanan, James VI, and Neo-classicism,” in Roger A. Mason, ed., *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* (Cambridge, 1994), 91–111 at 91, 106. This stance seems to be supported by the attack on jealous counselors in *Phoenix* and also by the deferential prefatory sonnets of James VI’s court poets; these represent him in the style of a Roman emperor and divine author who defies comparison. *Essayes* is often seen to construct the reader as subject to an absolutist king; see Jonathan Goldberg, *James I and the Politics of Literature: Jonson, Shakespeare, Donne, and their Contemporaries* (Baltimore, 1983), and Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds., *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke, U.K., 1994). For a different view of the way in which James’s poetic career is implicated in the politics of the Scottish court, see Roderick J. Lyall, “James VI and the Sixteenth-Century Cultural Crisis,” in Julian Goodare and Michael Lynch, eds., *The Reign of James VI* (East Linton, U.K., 2000), 55–70 at 59.

21. Roger A. Mason, “*Rex Stoicus*: George Buchanan, James VI, and the Scottish Polity,” in John Dwyer, Roger A. Mason, and Alexander Murdoch, eds., *New Perspectives on the Politics and Culture of Early Modern Scotland* (Edinburgh, 1982), 9.

22. Jenny Wormald, “James VI and I, *Basilikon Doron*, and *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies*: The Scottish Context and the English Translation,” in Linda Levy Peck, ed., *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge, 1991), 36–54 at 43.

23. Buchanan, *Law of Kingship*, 17. On the divine (*divinus*) source of human rationality see Cicero, *De legibus*, 1.22–24, in *De Republica, De Legibus*, trans. Clinton Walker Keyes (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1977).

possessed equally by all”; the principle is “that all men are bound together by a certain natural feeling of good-will.”<sup>24</sup> The core of civilized life is defined as an ethic of civil association; this demands intercommunication and mutual respect among citizens.

Buchanan’s debate about law-making is greatly indebted to Cicero’s *De legibus*. The speaker given Buchanan’s name in the dialogue argues that natural law is of “divine origin” and defines “nature” thus: as “a light divinely shed upon our minds” [*lucem animis nostris divinitus infusam*] (pp. 18–19). Moreover, his understanding of the relationship between natural law and positive law informs *De iure*’s dignified definition of the duty a king owes to his people as participation in dialogue, not simply enforcing submission to a set of inflexible laws: only a king who engages in dialogue with his parliament can truly be called “divine.” This explains Buchanan’s choice of the dialogue form for *De iure*: the exchange that he represents between the speakers manifests the process of reasoning that fulfills or realizes this law; it brings the king into conversation with his parliament.

Bushnell, in a very suggestive reading, contends that James VI’s *Essayes* offers a sharp riposte to Buchanan’s hard-line insistence that the king is subject to the law. She benefits from hindsight, however, making this argument with an eye to James VI’s later print publications, notably *Trew Law*. In 1584 a reader familiar with the moral-political basis of Buchanan’s *De iure* might just as easily have arrived at a different view of *Essayes* and its defense of linguistic custom: that James VI promised to prove a “citizen king,”<sup>25</sup> one amenable to the collective shaping of laws. In Harvey’s case, such a reading may have been encouraged not just because of his literary tastes—his commitment to the organic realization of the rules of vernacular poetry, outlined in his letters to Spenser—but also because it was impossible to imagine that Buchanan, who was appointed as James VI’s tutor in 1570, had not shaped the king’s values. There was an understanding among the Sidney circle that Buchanan had reared Elizabeth I’s likely successor “in accordance with the political doctrines of limited monarchy and popular sovereignty.”<sup>26</sup> This interpretation is reflected, not negated, by Harvey’s praise of the king as “A perfect Oratour, & diuine Poet.” After all, this praise is accompanied by a Latin tag, “*Magna grauitè: Mediocria temperatè: parua submissè*” [most gravely, with moderation, a little modestly], and it follows a conventional expression of self-deprecation by the king in a poem entitled “Ane Qvadrain of Alexandrin Verse”:

Immortal Gods, sen I with pen and Poets airt  
 So willingly hes servde you, though my skill be small,  
 I pray then euerie one of you to help his pairt,  
 In graunting this my sute, which after follow shall.

(Sig. A3r)

Quite simply, James is divine not just because he is eloquent but also because he knows his limits.<sup>27</sup>

24. Cicero, *De legibus*, 1.35.

25. See the introduction to Buchanan, *Law of Kingship*, xxxix.

26. Phillips, “George Buchanan,” 36–37.

27. On the complex use of this word in the English parliament see Conrad Russell, “Divine Rights in the Early Seventeenth Century,” in John Morrill, Paul Slack, and Daniel Woolf, eds., *Public Duty and*





It is one thing to recognize how a Roman ethos of civil association is formulated in the work of a political theorist like Buchanan, quite another to argue that it constitutes the basis for a reading of a book of poems. How can the act of annotating such a book be construed as an example of this ethos? How can reading poetry serve to realize the “sacred bond of fellowship” that is the first principle of natural law? There is an important link, I am suggesting, between the debate about lawmaking in Buchanan’s *De iure* and the one about the rules of poetry in “Revlis and cautelis,” at least in my account of Harvey’s reading of *Essayes*: both texts understand that the formulation, either of a principle or a regulation, is a process of negotiation; laws and rules must be established from practice and through discussion and debate. This link depends on understanding the reading of *Essayes* as an imaginative, if one-sided, dialogue with its author, and the value of the book as resting on its contribution to an ongoing exchange about the laws of vernacular poetry rather than as a resource than can be turned “into uniform, easily retrievable, reproducible bits of utterance and information.”<sup>28</sup>

Fortunately, we do not have to intuit or deduce this simply from Harvey’s marginalia or from specific moments of its practice, because he defends the importance of conversation to reading in *Rhetor* (1577). I want to pause over these lectures before turning to Harvey’s copy of *Essayes* because they offer us a different way of understanding how training in rhetoric—another rule-bound art—shaped humanist reading methods, and thus a different paradigm for the reading of *Essayes*. In these lectures, Harvey understands reading as “goal-orientated” in a specific sense: the kind of rhetorical analysis and practice that, he advises, will create a reader who nurtures “the light of divine nature” [*naturae diuinae lumen*] or eloquence through reading, writing, and conversing. This method prioritizes practice over the solitary and docile study of rules as a means to realize this “divine light.”<sup>29</sup>

For Harvey, schooled by Cicero, eloquence connotes fluent and moving speech and writing, but it is also a social virtue, and its acquisition depends on more than learning a set of devices by heart. Rather like Cicero in *De oratore* [On the ideal orator], Harvey rejects the emphasis on technical training.<sup>30</sup> *Rhetor* includes an attack on

*Private Conscience in Seventeenth-Century England: Essays Presented to G. E. Aylmer* (Oxford, 1993), 101–20 at 111. Russell reminds us that the adjective “divine” could be used to “limit” or “increase” the sovereign’s power. For a common lawyer, it was possible that the common law—which is not made but grows organically—“was equally derived from God, and that the divine right of the king and the divine right of the common law, like the Lords and Commons, had to learn to live with each other.”

28. Grafton, “The Humanist as Reader,” 199. Important challenges to the perceived relationship between rhetoric and reading include Peter Mack’s “Rhetoric, Ethics, and Reading in the Renaissance,” and, very recently, Daniel Wakelin’s *Humanism, Reading, and English Literature 1430–1530* (Oxford, 2007).

29. *Gabriel Harvey’s Rhetor*, trans. Mark Reynolds, <http://comp.uark.edu/~mreynold/rhetor.html>, accessed 5 January 2007, p. 33; page references are given henceforward in the text. On the importance of practice to Harvey, see John Charles Adams, “Gabriel Harvey’s *Ciceronianus* and the Place of Peter Ramus’ *Dialecticae libri duo* in the Curriculum,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990): 551–64 at 561; see also Timothy J. Reiss, *Knowledge, Discovery, and Imagination in Early Modern Europe: The Rise of Aesthetic Rationalism* (Cambridge, 1997), chap. 3.

30. Cicero’s *De oratore* [On the ideal orator] is a key source for *Rhetor*. In this dialogue the main speakers refuse to divulge the rules of their art straightforwardly, arguing that the principles of

classroom textbooks that, according to Harvey, crush the “light of divine nature” with their long lists of figures (p. 33). He explains that a student needs only to memorize one style manual, Omer Talon’s very succinct *Rhetorica* (p. 34), and that he should read as widely as possible among the best (Roman) orators and poets and look for examples that elucidate the rules he has already picked up. Harvey offers precise advice on what students should be looking for when reading. They should analyze the style of poets and orators, paying attention to their brilliant tropes, “the vigor and bite of their thought,” and the “arrangement and fluency and cohesiveness and composition” of their “whole discourse”; moreover, they should highlight for future reference “all those passages which are ornamental, elaborate, and highly polished.” More broadly, they should also:

compare [their] findings with a carefully formulated artistic theory. Illustrate the rules with examples, and fit the examples to the rules. Observe how these rules were in the beginning formulated by generalizing from individual examples. (P. 91)

All of this falls under the heading of what is described as “analysis.” However, as Harvey also explains, analysis is only one aspect of the “practice” (*exercitatio*) that leads to eloquence. Its second aspect is “genesis,” and this includes a range of activities—writing, reading, and “speaking, pleading and declaiming” (p. 99).

This may sound very much like the rhetorical training with which we are already familiar, but I want to pause over two new emphases in *Rhetor*: the importance of matching examples to rules so as to understand how these rules have been formulated from practice, and of *practicing* them in reading, writing, and speaking. Moreover, Harvey understands “genesis” very broadly: all kinds of speech, not just exercises in declamation, provide occasion for “genesis.” One of the divine orators praised by Harvey, and more famously by Cicero, is Socrates: the philosopher who learned how to be eloquent by “reading, praising, criticizing, correcting, refuting, and irritating” the best rhetoricians and by joining “in discussions, disputes, and dialogues” (pp. 75–76).<sup>31</sup>

The obvious aim of *Rhetor* is to reform rhetorical training by describing a number of “practical” and adversarial exercises that nurture eloquence; but a second aim—we could say, a by-product—of this is the reconception of the nature of the relationship between tutor and student. This concern is represented in the aspirations of Harvey’s new rhetorical curriculum to establish a less-hierarchical relationship between student and teacher. From the beginning of the first lecture Harvey claims not to be teaching anything new: “you will hear only those precepts which you yourselves followed some years ago” (p. 6). This is not false modesty. Harvey locates authority not in a rule-bound pedagogy but in the shifting dialogue between a pupil and teacher as they test the established rules. Recognition of the student’s potential levels this relationship: the

eloquence are embodied in everyday practice, writing, and also speaking in the forum and among friends. For discussion of this refusal see the introduction to Cicero, *On the Ideal Orator*, trans. James M. May and Jakob Wisse (Oxford, 2001), 10.

31. Cicero, *De oratore*, 1.257–58.

teacher must exercise restraint, working out the rules with his student rather than just pronouncing them. Thus, Harvey recalls with approval Cicero's observation that "Many students are greater than their teachers" (p. 20); later, he advises that students should learn from example rather than from instruction (p. 113). The model of learning that *Rhetor* favors is competitive in spirit. The student is frequently encouraged to outdo exemplary poets and orators. "Match them," Harvey urges, "and sometimes even surpass them in refined and elegant stylistic charms, in smooth, flowing periods, and in tasteful repetitions of the same words and sounds" (p. 100). This model, however, is also friendly and collaborative. From the very beginning of *Rhetor* Harvey insists on the mutual creation of excellence. The prefatory material commends reading the works of colleagues because this supports them and lends authority to their writings. In the dedication to Clerke, Harvey praises John Caius and Thomas Byng as "eloquent gentlemen" (p. i). Clerke's response is printed alongside this. He agrees with Harvey, but he also advises him "earnestly" to "visit my Byng, and yours too, a man of most precise judgment." Harvey is encouraged to share drafts of his writings with Byng, who will extol them but also "by his sound judgment and appraisal will refine them, in such a way that even if they should have no need of correction and more exacting criticism they might even seem to you to have taken on an added excellence from his very touch and gaze." Clerke recounts a salutary tale of the loneliness of his own early writing career, and then offers advice that, as we have seen, Harvey repeats in the lectures:

Nothing causes me greater grief than that I studied alone, read alone, wrote alone, and published my books alone. It is very important to have someone to whom you can communicate your thoughts, and to hear the advice of another, even one who is perhaps less wise than you. (P. v)

There are several interesting correlations between *Rhetor* and Harvey's reading of *Essayes*. The Cambridge humanists Clerke and Byng, who are identified as exemplary orators and readers at the beginning of *Rhetor*, also appear briefly in the margins of *Essayes*, suggesting that they may have been the intended recipients. Moreover, James VI's treatise is judged according to the criterion commended in *Rhetor*, economy. Harvey was sufficiently impressed by the succinctness of "Revlis and cautelis" to make a note of this on its first page: "8. leaves. short, & sweet" (sig. L1r). At the bottom of the same page he inserts a reference to George Sabinus's rhetorical handbook *De Carminibus ad verterum imitationem artificiose componendis, praecepta bona & utilia*, well known for its brevity, and on the preceding blank page details several of its rules (sig. K4r). This preference for immediacy is also the subject of one of Harvey's two Latin poems, "Odiosa Procrastinatio. ad Meipsum," a reminder to avoid procrastination, which rings with the refrain: skill is too late tomorrow; learn now! [*tarda nimis techna est crastina: disce statim*; sig. P2v]. In addition, we might note how easily debate about the rules of rhetoric carries over to a treatise on the art of poetry. However, if in *Rhetor* Harvey is concerned with how "practice" facilitates a deep understanding of the

art of rhetoric, when reading *Essayes* he is interested instead in how it helps to *formulate* the rules of poetry. In the final section of this essay I want to argue that Harvey's "analysis" and "genesis" of the king's rules in *Essayes* should be conceived as part of a process of reform, the gradual articulation of the laws of poetry rather than their obedient acceptance; this, in turn, is imagined as a way of supporting a "citizen-king" who understands the importance of the collective production of laws.



Jenny Wormald has described how the "agony over union" at the turn of the seventeenth century gave rise to the "English fear of James as the divine-right monarch who made awesome claims for himself which broke all accepted English rules and conventions."<sup>32</sup> Some were concerned that the King of Scots did not understand English common law, the law that was deemed to reflect "a morality based on divine law" and that carried the consent of the commonwealth because it had acquired its authority through the legal practice and deep discussion by generations of lawyers.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, it was feared that James adhered too closely to the Roman or civil law, "which followed the princes pleasure." He is reported to have hanged a thief without trial at Newark-on-Trent on his progress south in 1603, leaving one Elizabethan courtier, Sir John Harrington, to speculate thus: "oure new King hath hanged one man before he was tried; 'tis strangely done: now if the winde bloweth thus, why may not a man be tried before he hath offended?"<sup>34</sup>

Such concerns were likely fueled by James's clear indication in print that he believed his Scottish subjects owed "unstinting obedience to their divinely appointed ruler" according to the law of God.<sup>35</sup> *The Trew Law of Free Monarchies* (1598) is understood as a riposte to the radical Presbyterian divine Andrew Melville and also the republican Buchanan. James, to defend his divine right, notes Roger Mason, provided in *Trew Law* both scriptural exegesis and an interpretation of "the famous Ciceronian dictum *summum jus summum injuria* [more law, less justice], in terms that would have appalled Buchanan, as an open invitation to modify or dispense with the law as he saw fit."<sup>36</sup> This worry might also have been fueled by his early formulation of the rules of Scottish poetry. As I have noted, Rebecca Bushnell describes *Essayes* as James VI's

32. Jenny Wormald, "The Union of 1603," in Mason, ed., *Scots and Britons*, 17–40 at 37. For an account of James VI and I's debate with the English common lawyers, see Paul Christianson, "Royal and Parliamentary Voices in the Ancient Constitution c. 1604–1621," in Peck, ed., *Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, 71–95.

33. Allen D. Boyer, *Sir Edward Coke and the Elizabethan Age* (Stanford, Calif., 2003), 85.

34. Cited in Catherine Drinker Bowen, *The Lion and the Throne: The Life and Times of Sir Edward Coke, 1552–1634* (London, 1957), 153.

35. Roger A. Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal: Political Thought in Renaissance and Reformation Scotland* (East Linton, U.K., 1998), 226. Mason is modifying Glenn Burgess's argument that "neither James I nor his Scottish self, James VI, deserves to be labelled absolutist"; *Absolute Monarchy and the Stuart Constitution* (New Haven, Conn., 1996). See also J. H. Burns, *Concepts of Monarchy* (Oxford, 1996), chap. 7.

36. Mason, *Kingship and the Commonweal*, 231, citing Cicero, *De officiis*, trans. Walter Miller (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1951), 1.33.

sharp rejoinder to his erstwhile tutor, Buchanan. We might suppose that James's decision to include a brief manual titled "Revlis and cautelis" in a collection of his own verse is provocative; it does suggest that the king is asserting his divinely bestowed status "as the reformer of Scottish culture and the 'inventor' of its laws." And this may explain "the gentle advice," as Gavin Alexander phrases it, that Samuel Daniel offers his new monarch in 1603 in *Defence of Rhyme* "about the attachment of the freeborn English to their ancient rights."<sup>37</sup> Using the language of natural and common law, *Defence of Rhyme* attacks the "unjust authority of the law-giver" who turns decent English words into disobedient and unruly citizens by forcing them to follow foreign (neo-classical) patterns.<sup>38</sup> "Every language," Daniel writes, "hath her proper number or measure fitted to use and delight, which custom, entertaining by the allowance of the ear, doth indenize and make natural" (p. 210). Custom naturalizes new words, but it also derives in turn from what is natural or fitting to a particular language. For this reason Daniel unambiguously asserts that accentual iambic pentameter is the natural meter of English, arguing that attention to the "sound" of a language represents a natural and demotic alternative to the tyrannical prescription of new rules applied from other languages. James VI and I evidently needs reminding of this.

But this is 1603. Readers of James VI's *Essayes* in the 1580s could have found a different emphasis, one that was much more congenial to the concerns of Daniel and other defenders of vernacular custom. This is because James *is* committed to the recovery of the customs of Scots poetry and argues that this means paying attention to how the vernacular sounds in practice. In the preface to "Revlis and cautelis" he explains why he has undertaken this work: "albeit sindrie hes written of it in English, quhilk is lykest to our language, zit we differ from thame in sindrie reulis of Poesie" (sig. K2v). James VI's attentiveness to the vernacular leads him to recommend the conventions of Scots poetry—including rhetorical tropes such as alliteration and the native genre of flyting; it also leads him to identify iambic meter as natural to it (sig. L2r). Poets should be guided by the sound of courtly Scots, he insists: "gif ze wald ask me the reulis, quhairby to knaw euerie ane of thir thre foirsaidis kyndis of syllabes," he insists, "I answer, Zour eare man be the onely iudge and discerner thair of." And he offers proof of this to his readers, asking them to identify which line flows better:

Into the Sea then Lucifer upsprang.  
In the Sea then Lucifer to upsprang.  
(Sig. L2r)

We might add to this the "self-conscious modesty" of the king's title, *Essayes of a Prentise*.<sup>39</sup> James is in fact a consistently self-deprecating author. Most of the examples of his "reulis" are drawn from the court poet Alexander Montgomerie, and both *Essayes* and *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at vacant houres* include translations from the

37. Samuel Daniel, *A Defence of Rhyme* (1603), in Sidney's "The Defence of Poesy" and Selected Renaissance Criticism, ed. Gavin Alexander (London, 2004), lxx.

38. Ibid., 205–33 at 225; all citations, given in the text, are to this edition.

39. Lyall, "James VI," 55.

Protestant reformer and French poet Du Bartas. In other words, James is not the only author in *Essayes*. The so-called Castalian poets may preface *Essayes* with flattering sonnets, but one member of this group, Thomas Hudson, in the preface to his translation of Du Bartas's *The Historie of Iudith* (1584), offers insight into a different kind of dialogue between king and court poets. He undertook the translation as an assignment from the king, with the aim of disproving his claim that Du Bartas could not be imitated "in our rude and impollished english language."<sup>40</sup> This wish to improve poetry by laying down a challenge to fellow poets is carried over to *Essayes*. In the preface to his translation of Du Bartas's *Vranie*, James apologizes for the lack of skill that has compelled him to break some of his own rules: "I must also desire you to bear with it, albeit it be replete with innumerable and intolerable faultes: sic as, Ryming in tearmes [polysyllabic words], and dyuers others, whilkis ar forbidden in my owne treatise of the Art of Poësie" (sig. C3v). James may not outdo Du Bartas, but he hopes that "some quick spirited man of this yle . . . might by the reading of it, bee moued to translate it well, and best, where I haue both euill, and worst broyled it" (sig. C3v). We could say that Harvey takes James at his word, for he does offer to tidy his translation. Du Bartas's line starting "Ce que la Cour celeste" appears in *Essayes* as "It that the heavenly court," and is clarified by Harvey thus: "That which [the heavenly court]" (sig. D3r).

James VI's modesty may well explain why Harvey takes upon himself the role of advising the king in the margins of *Essayes*, engaging with him in imaginative dialogue about the formation of the rules of Scots verse, which is written in the language that is "lykest" to English. But Harvey is already confirmed in the habit of contesting the rules of poetic "theorists," as his detailed annotation in 1577 of George Gascoigne's *Certayne notes of Instruction* (1575) suggests. That Harvey was interested in this text and annotated it is unsurprising. *Certayne notes* offers a clear defense of linguistic custom against a top-down prescription of rules almost three decades before Samuel Daniel, and it probably informs the defense of linguistic custom that Harvey was to offer in *Three Proper, and wittie, familiar Letters* in 1579–80. Gascoigne defends native customs of rhyme and "accent," and he emphasizes the importance of paying attention to pronunciation. Thus, he offers to "set down . . . such rules or precepts that even in this plain foot of two syllables [an iamb] you rest no word from his natural and usual sound." Poets should "place every worde in his natural *Emphasis* or sound"; to do otherwise, he insists, is not "lawful or commendable."<sup>41</sup> Thus, establishing the rules of poetry depends on the observation of practice: as Harvey writes in his letters to Spenser, he "that can but reasonably skil of the one wil give easily a shreude gesse at the other, considering that the one fetcheth his original and offspring from the other" (sigs. D4v–E1r). This perhaps explains why Harvey engages critically with Gascoigne, testing his rules against examples, agreeing and sometimes disagreeing with him. When Gascoigne ar-

40. Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas, *The Historie of Iudith*, trans. Thomas Hudson (London, 1584), sigs. A2r–A2v.

41. George Gascoigne, *Certayne notes of Instruction, concerning the making of verse or ryme in English*, in *The poesies of George Gascoigne Esquire* (London, 1575), sigs. T3r, U1r; all citations are to this edition. "Emphasis" here "means something like 'natural' word accent"; see O. B. Hardison, *Prosody and Purpose in the English Renaissance* (Baltimore, 1989), 106.

gues that we should “place every worde in his *Natural Emphasis*,” Harvey agrees: “the naturall and ordinary Empha[sis] of euery word as, uiolently: not uiolently.” However, against Gascoigne’s own example, “*Treasúre*,” he writes: “as I haue heard sum straungers and namely Frenchmen pronounce it. *Treasúre*. Sed ineptè.”<sup>42</sup> He finds examples that confirm or contradict particular rules: thus Gascoigne prohibits writers from placing an adjective after a noun, but Harvey notes, “yet we use to say He is of the bludd royal, and not: he is of the roiall bludd. he is heire apparent to the Crowne, and not he is apparent heire to the Crowne.” He also comments critically on the organization of the manual:

His aptest partition had bene, into precepts of Inuention [and] Elocution. And the several rules of both, to be sorted & marshialled in their proper places. He doth prettily well: but might easely haue dun much better, both in the one, & in the other: especially by the direction of Horaces, & Aristotles *Ars Poetica*.<sup>43</sup>

Would Harvey really have engaged with the King of Scots in the same way that he did with his countryman Gascoigne? There are two explicit references to *Certayne notes* in “*Revlis and cautelis*,” both of which are in James VI’s favor:

A braue art of Poetry, *supra* in the Vrany of Dubartas: & his owne Twelue Sonets of diuine Inuocations. Hetherto no better of English meter, then Gascoignes Rules, and the practis of owr excellentist Poets. (Sig. K1r)

The excellentest rules, & finest Art, that A King could learne, or teach, in his Kingdom. The more remarkable, how worthy the pen, & industrie of a King. How much better, then owr Gascoignes Notes of instruction for English Verse, & Ryme. (Sig. K3r)

Nonetheless, this is not evidence of straightforward flattery. James VI is preferred to Gascoigne not just because he carries royal authority as a “free law-maker,” but also, I suggest, because he gives better expression to the common laws of verse. Reminding his readers of the precedent of Gascoigne in these marginalia allows Harvey to suppose that “*Revlis and cautelis*” is a similar kind of treatise—that is, it upholds the organic reform of the vernacular. Indeed, it is also likely that Harvey had his copy of Gascoigne in front of him when he read “*Revlis and cautelis*”; the same criticism on the organization of the treatise is repeated in this book:

His aptest partition had bene, into precepts of Inuention. Elocution. in tropes, the meter, & other figures (Sig. L1v)

42. Harvey, *Gabriel Harvey’s Marginalia*, 168, citing Gascoigne, *Certayne notes*, sig. T3r.

43. *Ibid.*, 168–70.

That is, the same questioning practice Harvey applied to *Certayne notes* informs his reading of *Essayes*, and I will give a few further examples of this. When James advises poets in “Revlis and cautelis” not to open a poem with an image of the rising sun because “thir thingis are sa oft and dyuerslie writtin vpon”—that it will look like imitation, not invention—Harvey disagrees:

No Imitation, but a singularitie in the right Poet: & either exquisite Descriptions; or fine Preteritions, or suddaine Reticencies: *nihil Vulgare* [nothing common or ordinary] (Sig. M2r)

Elsewhere, he enforces James’s own rules. For example, in “Revlis and cautelis” James offers advice on where to place the “Sectioun,” or caesura (sigs. L1v–L2r), but several of his own poems fail to comply. Thus, Harvey dutifully adds caesurae to James VI’s sonnets. He also checks and corrects his iambic pentameter: the line “Of fertile Harvest in the description trew” in one sonnet is regularized to “Of fertile Harvest, in ~~the~~ description trew” (sig. B1v).

Harvey is a questioning reader of “Revlis and cautelis”; he is unwilling to accept James VI’s rules for Scots verse without testing them first against English linguistic practice. In testing these rules he reveals the ways in which these related vernaculars, Scots and English, can be regulated for poetic effect. This explains Harvey’s inclusion of two nursery rhymes, examples of what James calls “cuttit” or broken verse:

When pucketts away, when shall we go play?  
When the puckett is a sleap, then may wee go sow owr wheat.

My Dame hath in a hutch at home  
A little Dog  
With a Clog;  
Hey dogs hey.

(Sig. G1v)<sup>44</sup>

The principle of vernacular regulation also informs his attitude to James’s conception of iambic pentameter as suitable for “Heich and graue” subjects and for “tragical” verse.<sup>45</sup> Harvey boldly transcribes some of his own compositions onto blank pages, not only the poem celebrating Thomas Byng, cited above, but also “A charme for a mad woman.” This second insertion recalls the recommendation that, contrary to James’s advice, iambic pentameter is also suitable for low subjects.

Ô heauenlie Medcin, Panacea high,  
Restore this raging Wooman to her health,  
More Worth then hugest Summes of worldlie wealth  
Exceedingly more worth than anie Wealth.

44. Relle, “Some New Marginalia,” 404; Harvey tried to delete these rhymes, possibly because they appeared inappropriate additions to the king’s book; these are the only marginal deletions.

45. The meter of “Ballat Royal” and “Troilus” verse, sig. M3v.



Ô Light of Grace, & Reason from the Skie,  
 Jlluminate her madd-conceited minde,  
 And Melancholie cease her Witts to blinde.  
 Cease fearful Melanchollie her Witts to blinde.  
 (Sig. O3r)

In this poem Harvey tests and extends the king's laws for rhyming iambic meter; at no point does he ever just obey them. "Charme" uses iambic pentameter for a low subject: the troubles of a mad woman. In this poem Harvey also adapts the meter; he changes the opening stress pattern of every second line from an iamb to a spondee, and he introduces a rhyme scheme not used by James: abbb, accc. In fact, Harvey treats James's "laws" as if they were flexible and open to adaptation. For example, the repetition of "wealth" at the end of the first stanza, and then "blinde" at the end of the second, is a type of pattern expressly forbidden by James. One of his first rules is "That ze ryme nocht twyse in ane syllabe" (sig. L1r).

Such corrections may look like the efforts of a pedantic Cambridge scholar, but I am arguing that they rather represent a considered contribution to a humanist debate about the cultivation of eloquence and the formation and sustaining of the bonds of commonwealth. When Harvey corrects James VI in "Revlis and cautelis" he is putting into practice the theory outlined in *Rhetor*; he is showing how the king's "Sovrain grace" can be developed by reading, praising, criticizing, and correcting him. In doing so, he is not usurping the role of lawgiver. James is "not to be trained by the instruction of others" (p. 113); Harvey is no pedagogue. Rather, it is by discovering the rules of vernacular poetry "rationally," in dialogue with other humanists, that the king can "teach by his own example" (p. 113). James VI's writing of *Essayes* is evidence enough to suggest to Harvey a willingness to engage in dialogue.

These corrections can seem oblique, but Harvey's copy of *Essayes* also includes an explicit plea for participation in government in a Latin poem copied onto a blank page, "On the republic to be established. To the highest magistrates of the palace, city and provinces" (see the Appendix on page 321). Harvey claims that this poem recalls a conversation about "public matters" at Caius College. It urges magistrates to learn from the example of the past, when moderation was held in esteem. Very few can survive unlimited power, he argues:

We can look after the body politic and lighten the burden of state if we divide the cares of a community with the proper art; we need to remember laws, customs and rules. In this way, leaders will not be exhausted by the disorderly mass of detail. No one is able to resolve great affairs alone, no matter how much a magistrate might deserve the glories of a kingdom. Not even if, buried like Enceladus, he should bear steep Etna, or if he should be buried under the weight of the sky, like great Atlas. He is a fortunate man who has endured a wretched struggle, and who has not

succumbed to fear, though buried under the mass of affairs. Give to none, Terminus [god of boundaries], the judgment which is yours alone, which is to set new limits beyond what is already fixed when too much has been undertaken. Moderation in private and public affairs was once golden: how much more golden an age than this of iron? It will be advantageous to divide those things that the beautiful order separates. Having considered these public matters at Caius College, Crisp [unidentified] advised me to remind the masters of affairs and princes of this. And indeed, I believe it; what harm will it do to remember? (Sig. P3v)

What is so suggestive about Harvey's copy of *Essayes* is the interlinking of literary and political counsel. The king we discover in its margins does not expound the "reulis" of poetry; rather, he is engaged, on this view, in a broader debate about the development of the vernacular and conduct of association in ways that Harvey and Buchanan would recognize. The king who can write so conventionally, on this view, is also likely to heed the advice in the poem "On the republic to be established."

Harvey's marginalia in *Essayes* enables us to expand the significance of marginal annotation, a form that can both express a political ideal of association and put it into practice. It prompts us to reconsider not just the reception of writings that crossed the border at Berwick but also how the border at the edge of a page might be used to conceive a boundary to royal dominion. Attending to this fragmentary, sometimes fugitive, mode of writing illuminates another place in which Elizabethan humanists demonstrate that the boundary between thinking like a citizen and thinking like a subject was provisional rather than absolute.

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

#### ABSTRACT

In this essay, Jennifer Richards suggests that a study of Gabriel Harvey's neglected poetry and prose qualifies his current reputation as a purely pragmatic Renaissance humanist. In his literary writings, Harvey explores the different ways in which social bonds are formed and sustained; this interest is also manifested in his marginalia. Richards considers the continuity between Harvey's work as both a writer and a reader in relation to his annotations of James VI's *Essayes of a Prentise, in the Divine Art of Poesie* (Edinburgh, 1584). This example also suggests that the broader political implications of marginalia should be reappraised. Keywords: Thomas Nashe, Edmund Spenser, *Essayes of a Prentise* . . . by James VI, Cicero, George Buchanan

Appendix

De Republica Ordinanda. Ad summos Aulae, Urbis, provinciarumque magistratus:  
 Curas partiri communes arte decenti,  
 Nec Legum immemores, nec morum, aut ordinis esse,  
 Et fascem cuiusq[ue] grauem ratione leuare,  
 Ne procurantes confusa mole fatiscant,  
 Aut hos, aut illos nimiumue, parumue molestet,  
 Propria nostrorum fortè est medicina malorum.  
 Quæ nemo potis est solus componere tanta,  
 Quantuscunq[ue] magistratus meret inclyta regni.  
 Non si humeris, velût Enceladus, ferat arduus Ætna[m],  
 Aut coeli subeat pondus, magni instar Atlantis.  
 Foelix, qui miserum tolerans superauit agonem,  
 Nec spe succubuit, pænè obrutus aggere rerum.  
 Nam cedo nulli, tua sola est, Termine, gnoma:  
 Plusq[ue] vltrà, nimis effusum, defixa coercet.  
 Ille modus rerum priuatus, publicus, olim  
 Aureus, hoc ferri, quantò magis aureus aeuo?  
 Diuidere intererit, quæ pulcher segregat ordo.  
 Talia apud Caium meditatus publica Crispus  
 Me monuit, rerum dominos, Proceresq[ue] monere,  
 Credo equidem, memores: sed quid memorare nocebit?