



Based on hitherto unexplored and unpublished legal and business records, this study presents the fullest account so far published of any London printing firm in the reign of James I. In particular it examines the businesses of men associated with that crucial instrument of cultural production—the King’s Printing House. This institution stood four-square at the top of the London printing and publishing trade, for it monopolized the right to print the Bible, Book of Common Prayer, and other indispensable works promoted or encouraged by the king. The office of King’s Printer, initially owned by Robert Barker, was potentially very lucrative, and so attracted the predatory attentions of the prosperous book-trade partnership of John and Bonham Norton, and John Bill. The stage was set for bitter rivalry between Barker and his opponents, rivalry which involved sharp practice, deceit, bullying, and downright thuggery—with lawsuits to match. Barker was no fool, yet he was up against very able, resourceful individuals who understood better than Barker that they were in business to promote the king’s politico-cultural programme, and extend his influence at home and abroad. That is exactly what John Norton and John Bill did, and to such good effect. With his unique experience of the domestic and continental book trade, Bill eventually became the greatest London book trader, printer, publisher, disseminator of ideas, and cultural entrepreneur of his generation.

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Jacket illustration: Abraham Ortelius: *The theatre of the whole world*, London, 1606, map of England and Ireland (reduced). BL Maps 9.Tab.8. By permission of the British Library.

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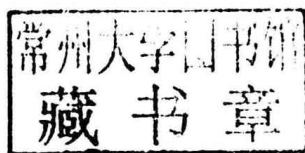
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# Publishing, Politics, And Culture

*The King's Printers in  
the Reign of James I and VI*

by

GRAHAM REES AND MARIA WAKELY



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PUBLISHING, POLITICS, AND CULTURE  
THE KING'S PRINTERS IN THE REIGN OF  
JAMES I AND VI



For Susie Honeyman and Jock McFadyen

In Memoriam Graham Rees



## Preface

The subject of this book, the King's Printers in the reign of James I and VI, and the cultural politics of the king and his printers, is enormous. The primary sources used in our work—printed books, and manuscript archival materials—are startlingly extensive, and until now either little explored or wholly unknown. Accordingly, we have not tried to cover all the ground. We would, for instance, have enjoyed studying the connections between the King's Printers' London businesses, and their landed interests. We wish that we had had time to undertake an analytical-bibliographical investigation of the printing of the first edition of the King James Bible. Indeed, if human life were not so short we would have examined the King's Printers' typographical materials, and the watermarks of the paper they used. But each of these enquiries would have required the investment of thousands of hours of alluring drudgery, and each would almost certainly have eventuated in a substantial monograph. To those readers who can overcome their disappointment with our reluctance to fill these toothsome gaps in our knowledge, we offer an exploratory work in which we try to map out the contours of *terra incognita*, to fill out the geography of our subject in some detail and, where necessary, to leave some areas unsurveyed in the hope that future expeditions will take on the job.

This study, and other work done by the King's Printer Project,<sup>1</sup> was made possible by the generous financial support of the Leverhulme Trust, and the Arts and Humanities Research Council. Without the funding we could not have even begun to take on a project of this scale. Among the many libraries and librarians who have helped us, special thanks are due to the British Library, and Giles Mandelbrote; to the National Archives (formerly the Public Record Office), and its photographic service; to Erica Wylie of Thomas Plume's Library for supplying us with photographs of a rare and important edition; and to Ian James of the Society of Antiquaries. We also record our especial thanks to John Barnard, whose conversation, published writings, and unpublished working notes have provided us with invaluable information of fundamental importance to our work. Our thanks too to Ian Gadd for providing us with transcriptions of Thomas Lydiat's letters; to Alan Nelson for his work on Humphrey Dyson; and to Ian Maclean for sharing with us his work on the relations between the English and German book trades. We are grateful to Dirk Imhof, who guided us through the rich and astonishing archival sources of the Plantin-Moretus Museum at Antwerp, to Stijn van Rossem, who supplied us with photographs of

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.english.qmul.ac.uk/kingsprinter/index.html>

Plantin-Moretus materials beyond the hundreds we took for ourselves, and to Ben Wakely for sprucing up and captioning the plates illustrating this book. Lastly we owe a great debt of gratitude to Andrew McNeillie, Dorothy McCarthy, and their colleagues at Oxford University Press for their unfailing courtesy and expertise.

G. R. and M. W.  
Queen Mary University of London

*February 2009*

Since Graham died on 23 July the task of completing this book has been very hard. It has been my love for Graham that has enabled me to finish the work, but without the sustenance given by Ben and Ruth Wakely, Megan Thirlaway, and my many wonderful friends I could not have done it.

M. W.

*October 2009*

## *References and Abbreviations*

Arber	<i>A transcript of the registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1660</i> , ed. Edward Arber, 5 vols., London, 1875; repr. New York: Peter Smith, 1950.
BCP	The Book of Common Prayer
BL	British Library
CSPD	Calendars of State Papers: Domestic Series
DMH	T. H. Darlow, H. F. Moule, and A. S. Herbert, <i>Historical catalogue of printed editions of the English Bible 1525–1961</i> , The British and Foreign Bible Society: London, 1968.
ESTC	English Short-Title Catalogue (a database accessible through the British Library and other websites)
KJB	King James Bible
KP	The King's Printer
KPH	The King's Printing House
LL	James Spedding, <i>The letters and life of Francis Bacon</i> , 7 vols., London, 1861–74.
NA	National Archives (United Kingdom, i.e. Public Record Office)
ODNB	<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>
OED	<i>Oxford English Dictionary</i>
OFB	Volumes of <i>The Oxford Francis Bacon</i> are designated by the abbreviation and a volume number in Roman numerals.
P-M	Plantin-Moretus Museum Archives
PRO	Public Record Office
SEH	<i>The works of Francis Bacon</i> , ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis, and Douglas Denon Heath, 7 vols., London, 1859–64.
SP	State Papers: Domestic Series
STC	<i>A short-title catalogue of books printed in England, Scotland, &amp; Ireland, and of English books printed abroad 1475–1640</i> , ed. A. W. Pollard and G. R. Redgrave, 2nd edn. rev. and enlarged by W. A. Jackson, F. S. Ferguson, and K. F. Pantzer, 3 vols., 1976–86, vol. 3, <i>Indexes</i> , compiled by Katharine F. Pantzer and Philip R. Rider, The Bibliographical Society: London, 1991.

We use STC abbreviations for formats (fol., 4°, 8°, etc.) except where it is more convenient or readable to use expanded forms (folio, quarto, octavo, etc.).

## *Manuscripts: Conventions of Transcription*

The Chancery documents and other public records consulted for this book (with Chancery references denoted by C ..., Exchequer by E ..., and State Papers by SP ...) are all housed in the National Archives. The initials RB, JB, BN, HD, or WT following Chancery references are ours. They indicate records attributed to Robert Barker, John Bill, Bonham Norton, Humphrey Dyson, and William Taylor respectively.

In the chapters following, extracts from manuscripts quoted in the body of the text or the footnotes have been transcribed according to the conventions below.

**Editorial interventions** in the text: expansions of abbreviations and contractions excepted (see below), these are set in square brackets, e.g. [hole] (= hole in parchment or paper); [illegible word(s) (together with an estimate of the number of illegible words)] (often caused by damage to the document (see for instance illegibility caused by damage to right margin of Bill and Norton's petition C2/JASI/N4/57, ll. 28ff.)).

**Conjectural readings:** the word 'conjectural' with a colon, followed by the conjectured word(s) enclosed in square brackets.

**Semi-conjectural readings:** words for which we have a few letters but with some letters conjectured are preceded by a question mark.

**Orthography and punctuation:** original spellings have been retained—modernization destroys evidence of scribal practice, and falsifies the original. Original punctuation (or lack of it) has also been retained.

**Superscript letters** in the original have been retained in the transcriptions, e.g. 20<sup>li</sup> (i.e. £20); Lo<sup>p</sup> (i.e. Lordship).

**Scribal interpolations:** these are often interlinear insertions and are enclosed in angle brackets (<...>).

**Scribal strikethrough deletions:** are represented by strikethrough.

**Abbreviation and contractions:** for the most part these have been retained. There is no point in expanding, for instance, 'Lo<sup>p</sup>' (Lordship), 'Ma<sup>tie</sup>' (Maiestie), 'yo<sup>r</sup>' (your), etc. when their expansions will be known to the reader or can easily be inferred by the reader. However some abbreviations and contractions (even in cases where the expansion is obvious) have been expanded for ease of reading. Expansions have also been introduced in cases where expansions cannot easily be inferred—p with horizontal bar through descender *per-*, *pro*, *par-*, *prae-*. All expansions are represented in italics, e.g. '*Præmisses*', *repaymen<sup>t</sup>*. Exceptionally the chi-rho abbreviation of 'Christopher' (i.e. Xpofer) has been retained as evidence of scribal practice, evidence which it would be difficult to convey in the transcriptions.

**Scribal fillers and deliberate blanks:** where scribes have entered marks to fill out a line or a space within a line to prevent, for instance, extra words being surreptitiously entered in the text we have inserted one or more §s in our transcription. Where scribes have left a space—never in the event filled in—for a name or a detail to be entered at a later date, we have represented that space thus: [scribal space].



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