

## Michael Drayton and the Writing of Jacobean Britain

Michael Drayton is a poet whose chief critical notoriety... lies in having missed his moment; he was a Spenserian, a son of Edmund, a Bronze Age echo of Golden voices, a study in nostalgia and belatedness.<sup>1</sup>

In a rare moment of absolute consensus between the disciplines of literature and history, there exists a state of concord when dealing with Michael Drayton. Born in 1563 he lived through the majority of Elizabeth's years on the throne, witnessed all of James's reign in England and took in the first years of Charles's rule before his death in 1631. Author of such pieces of patriotic literature as *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (1597) and *The Barrons Wars* (1603), his most celebrated work, *Poly-Olbion* (1612), a journey round England and Wales rendered in verse, has been seized upon recently by both literary critics and historians as an example of 'oppositional' writing at its most eloquent. Drayton's comparative silences regarding the achievements and majesty of James VI & I are depicted as cutting critiques of the Jacobean monarchy's failure to live up to its Elizabethan antecedent.

Within the secondary literature Drayton is most emphatically an Elizabethan, a quaint anachronism living out of his time in Jacobean England, his work a hollow canon lamenting that past, a man, as it were, for no seasons. As Thomas Cogswell has reminded us, 'Drayton remains one of the most elusive poets of the early seventeenth century' though while his later work in respect of Caroline politics has had a greater degree of attention paid to it, recent interest in his early Jacobean writing has been less than favourable.<sup>2</sup> Joan Rees writes of Drayton that 'for all his love of country, he contributes nothing on social and political topics which is likely to make him read for the quality of his thought' while Curtis Perry writes of Drayton's 'increasingly oppositional politics' and cites his penchant for eulogising Elizabeth to the exclusion of James.<sup>3</sup> This kind of oppositional thesis is also present in an essay by Jane Tylus in which she writes of the 'nebulous status of a community which has only the possible fictiveness of history with which to unite

itself against an unsympathetic king'.<sup>4</sup> That community, however, articulated a vision of Britain that used much the same imagery as the supposedly 'unsympathetic' James Stuart. The difference was rather in the manner in which this British material was interpreted.

The most recent work looking at *Poly-Olbion* has made further significant charges. Clare McEachern writes 'certainly, the nation for which the poem is written no longer exists (if, indeed, it ever did)' and that 'however disingenuously, Drayton collaborates in its demise'.<sup>5</sup> A degree of caution is required with such an analysis. McEachern is indeed correct to view the poem as one which sought to 'reconcile polarities' but seeing the poem in the context of a middling path during the Union period, as she does, might in fact be pinning the poem to the wrong donkey.<sup>6</sup> This assertion rides to a significant extent on one very important claim, that the opinions of Henry, Prince of Wales were far more diffuse within contemporary discourse than has hitherto been accepted and that they briefly outlived his death on 6 November 1612. Henry's opinions are significant for this particular study, not only because of the glowing dedication Drayton makes to the Prince in the frontispiece of *Poly-Olbion*, but because the differing depiction of Great Britain being professed at this time (c.1609–14) had him as its figurehead.<sup>7</sup>

Another important premise upon which a challenge to orthodox opinion rests is that the nature of Drayton's particular antiquarian study does *not* fall into the historiographical *raison d'être* as expressed by Ivo Kamps, that 'it was the antiquarian's primary purpose to resuscitate and preserve the past in order to learn about the past itself, not about its relevance to the present'.<sup>8</sup> Drayton's work certainly sought to celebrate the past but with the express purpose of adding to the literature of Henry's coterie and consequently providing an ideological model for future glory.

Furthermore, when reading Drayton and noting the manner in which King James is a less than visible figure, one is inclined to concur with Malcolm Smuts, who reminds us that 'criticism and satire are not necessarily expressions of opposition. They can be offered in a loyal spirit, to counteract flattery and to encourage reform'.<sup>9</sup> Michael Drayton's writing will be considered here from the perspective of early Jacobean political culture, a complex milieu in which the king's court was not the singular focus of attention. In reconstructing Drayton's political ideas it will be noticed that a consideration of the second part of *Poly-Olbion*, published in 1622, is left until the concluding remarks. The second part originated in very different political circumstances and its political context has been dealt with in recent essays by Thomas Cogswell and Richard McCoy.<sup>10</sup>

It will be concluded that scholars can glean as much information from the first part of *Poly-Olbion* as the second and that a consideration of this work illuminates Prince Henry's social and political agenda with a significant degree of clarity. Furthermore, the articulation by Drayton of a nascent British identity should make us aware that the origins of Great Britain lie not

in the 1707 Act of Union but a century earlier, in the 1603 Union of the Crowns.

## I

Cartographic publications bearing the word 'Britain' in their titles did not, as a rule, seek to encapsulate the united British monarchies created by the accession of James VI of Scotland to the English throne in 1603. Elizabethan cartographic writers referring to Britain invariably considered England, the use of Britain being a translation of the Roman *Britannia*. The first part of John Norden's *Speculum Britanniae* is a good example of such a trope, being concerned not even with England as a whole but with Middlesex.<sup>11</sup>

However, there is a running theme throughout much of the literature of the early Jacobean period that codifies a set of political and social references to Great Britain as a reborn entity, a unified body both supported by the crown in that it legitimised aspirations towards imperial monarchy as well as one supported by those whose views were at odds with those of James Stuart. In spite of the predilection of writers before 1603 to use Britain as an extended term for England much was changed by the accession of James. Once given common currency through James's speeches and proclamations as well as on coins and portraits, extended reference to 'Great Britain' was made regularly in plays performed on the London stages – examples include Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, *King of Britaine* (1610), the anonymous *Tom a Lincoln* (c.1611) and Rowley's *The Birth of Merlin* (1612).<sup>12</sup>

Prior to the publication of *Poly-Olbion* Drayton had made known his acceptance of the story of Brute, founder of Britain in his 'An Ode Written In The Peake' (1606) when describing London as 'Great BRUTES first builded Towne'.<sup>13</sup> By 1612–13, however, the interest in ancient British pre-history was being undermined by other scholars. In *The First Part of the Historie of England* (1612, 1613), Samuel Daniel spent little time considering it, while John Speed largely rejected the stories of Brute as well as his supposed Trojan origins, accepting only an abridged version of the Arthurian legends in his *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (1611). Yet these were men who still considered themselves advocates of an emphatically British patriotism, beginning to look forward for a new model of Britishness rather than back in time. Speed was certainly no stranger to considering matters of Britain, even proposing that the Irish were of British extraction: 'So doubt I not', he wrote, 'but that our *Britanes* passed thereinto themselves'.<sup>14</sup>

*Poly-Olbion* was not out of its time in the sense that it was an Elizabethan work so much as it occurred at the moment when its subject matter was at its zenith. The period of eighteen months beginning at the end of 1612 saw the Jacobean age change irrevocably. Henry, Prince of Wales died in November 1612 and with him the literature of reborn Britannia underwent something

of a seizure from which it was never quite to recover, even though the transfer of allegiance of Protestant hopes to the Princess Elizabeth and her husband the Elector Palatine was certainly successful in the short term.<sup>15</sup> The precise nature of this end of era is evident in the tone of the writing lamenting the death of the Prince. Profound shock seems to have been widespread and, as we shall see, Drayton was stunned into silence by the tragedy.

The fact that Drayton chose to depict his work as a representation of Britain might not seem to be so out of the ordinary viewed in the light of the antiquarian controversy surrounding it. Keith Brown has suggested an archaism implicit in his work:

Michael Drayton and Sackville Norton continued to peddle their old-fashioned English version of British origins in the face of criticism from fellow countrymen such as Samuel Daniel who dismissed the notion of a once-united Britain – ‘a multitude of pettie regiments’ – but embraced a forward-looking vision of union based on imperial monarchy.<sup>16</sup>

However, Drayton embraced a paradigm of imperial monarchy that was, if anything, even more visionary than that to which Daniel subscribed at the same time as he advocated a British origin that was based on anything but division. Drayton was very aware of the fact that England was just the geographical beginning of his particular vision of Britain and it would certainly not be fair to accuse him of Anglocentrism when he does in fact consider Wales in *Poly-Olbion* while also appearing to have begun work on a description of Scotland.

Drayton's relations with James Stuart were soured early. Before the king arrived in England Drayton had already written an encomiastic sonnet to him in 1600 but while penning a welcome verse in 1603 was commonplace, Drayton failed to achieve even a modicum of favour from his, compared with those from Jonson and Daniel which helped their authors reap significantly greater rewards.<sup>17</sup> As a consequence Perry notes that in Drayton's writing ‘we can detect an impulse toward the Jacobean pastoral line’.<sup>18</sup> That Jacobean pastoral line, as David Norbrook has shown was, if not what we might comfortably term ‘oppositional’ nowadays, then certainly *acourtly* rather than anti-courtly on select policy matters.<sup>19</sup> Drayton was effusive in his praise for the new king in his *Gratulatorie Poem* (1603) which lauded the new king in suitably imperial terms:

From *Cornwall* now past *Calidons* prowde strength,  
Thy Empire beares eight hundred miles in length:  
Halfe which in bredth her bosome forth doth lay  
From the faire *German* to'th *Vergivian* sea:  
Thy Realme of *Ireland*, a most fertile Land,  
Brought in subjection to thy glorious hand,  
And all the Iles their chalkie tops advance  
To the sunne setting from the coast of Fraunce.<sup>20</sup>

He went on to trace the King's Tudor ancestry and mentioned the prediction made by Merlin that another great individual would replace Arthur as king of the Britons. The King's legitimate parentage made him indeed 'This Brittain hope, *James* our undoubted King' and Drayton continued by citing from a Scottish prophecy promising a period of unity and friendship:

Two famous Kingdoms separate thus long,  
 Within one Iland, and that speake one tongue,  
 Since *Brute* first raign'd (if men of *Brute* allow)  
 Never before united untill now,  
 What power, nor war could do, nor time expected,  
 Thy blessed birth hath happily effected.  
 O now revive that noble Brittaines name,  
 From which at first our ancient honors came,  
 Which with both Nations fitly doth agree  
 That Scotch and English without difference be.<sup>21</sup>

However, Drayton had made a critical mistake. He had forgotten to mention Queen Elizabeth in this panegyric which appeared before she was even buried. Without a hint of mourning this was not seemly. Worse, Drayton's oversight was compounded by tactlessness. He chose to advise the king that he should banish 'Those silken, laced, and perfumed hinds That have rich bodies, but poore wretched minds... The foole, the Pandar and the Parasite'. He then completed *The Owle* (1604) which he had been writing before the Queen's death. Here he attacked Cecil as well as pointing out further abuses in both government and Church. If Drayton sought royal favour it was an inauspicious way of going about it. As he later admitted in his elegy *To Master George Sandys*, 'It was my hap before all other men To suffer shipwrack by my forward pen When King James entred.'<sup>22</sup>

Confronted with his errors Drayton could have tried to write his way back into favour with the king but he chose not to. One of the key differences between the reigns of Elizabeth and James was the quantifiable existence of sources of royal patronage other than that of the actual monarch in the period post-1603. Notably, Samuel Daniel worked under the auspices of Queen Anne's household and while Prince Henry lived there was always someone else in the early Jacobean period to whom a patriotic poet might address his work and under whose aegis he might write. In the light of this, *Poly-Olbion* was a piece of work which did not need the king's active interest or approval. It was not written for him. It was written for his son, the future king. James is most certainly *in* the work but Drayton's failure to praise him excessively does not derive from anything so dramatic as dislike. Certainly he was piqued that he was passed over, but he remained committed to the *future* Stuart king even after Henry's death, dedicating the second part of his *magnum opus* to Prince Charles in 1622.

Yet Jean R. Brink has gone to considerable lengths to find conflict between Drayton and his king. She cites two passages in *Poly-Olbion* as being 'likely

to offend' James but these excerpts are actually quite mild passing references dwarfed by a book whose tenor was actually celebrating James's redefinition of England.<sup>23</sup> That redefinition aimed not only at representing his new Britain as an imperium, a sovereign state sharing a common language and a Protestant faith but also as a power capable of spreading its influence overseas. Drayton's interest in the colonisation of Virginia was based on the contemporary concern with the enhanced status of Britain as an overseas rival to Spain. His celebration of the colony's produce in his ode 'To the Virginian Voyage' (1606) derives from Hakluyt and is thus totally at odds with reality. Drayton refers to the availability of 'Pearle and Gold', calls Virginia 'Earth's onely Paradise' and comforts those prospective colonists concerned with the climate that 'Winters age... long there doth not live'. But it is also a specifically heroic venture, his first verse urging colonists to go forth:

You brave Heroique Minds,  
 Worthy your Countries Name,  
 That Honour still pursue,  
 Goe, and subdue,  
 While loyt'ring Hinds  
 Lurke here at home, with shame.  
*Britans*, you stay too long,  
 Quickly aboard bestow you ...<sup>24</sup>

With an interest in colonial expansion and an appreciation of the benefits of British reunification, Drayton firmly belongs to that group of men associated with all elements of Prince Henry's aspirations. That Drayton should be interested in the Prince's set of ideas comes as no surprise. In *England's Heroical Epistles* (1597) he affirms an imperial ideology in the Sidnean vein of bellicose martialism, as Mortimer claims

A thousand Kingdomes will we seeke from farre,  
 As many Nations waste with Civill Warre;  
 Where the dishevel'd gastly Sea-Nymph sings,  
 Or well-rig'd Ships shall stretch their swelling Wings,  
 And drag their Anchors through the sandie Fome,  
 About the World in ev'ry Clime to rome,  
 And those unchrist'ned Countries call our owne,  
 Where scarce the Name of *England* hath been knowne.<sup>25</sup>

In the third of his Elizabethan pastoral eclogues we can further observe the extent of his patriotism in a stirring panegyric to Beta, Queen of the Thames and a thinly veiled Elizabeth:

BETA long may thine Altars smoke with yeerely Sacrifice,  
 And long thy sacred Temples may their high Dayes solemnize,  
 Thy Shepherds watch by Day and Night,  
 Thy Mayds attend thy holy Light,  
 And thy large Empire stretch her Armes from East in to the West,  
 And Albion on the Appenines advance her conquering Crest.<sup>26</sup>

The advocacy of religious observance, the evocation of the pastoral ideal coupling vigilance and purity, the celebration of empire and the implied expectation of its expansion as well as a firm Protestant martialism all combine to form a stirring manifesto of Drayton's religious and political views. He believes Elizabeth's policies were closer to the mark, just as he later found that James's left much to be desired. That is not to say that he believed James himself was in some way intrinsically at fault, that kingship had after 1603 failed or that someone other than a king would do a better job. Drayton never advocated republicanism. He may have had problems with individual monarchs but he was not adverse to the idea of monarchy itself, as his dedication and associations with Prince Henry suggest. Furthermore, in the concluding lines of the eleventh song of *Poly-Olbion*, Edward the Confessor is praised as the individual who 'for *Englands* generall use, Our Countries Common lawes did faithfully produce, Both from th'old *British* writ, and from the *Saxon* tongue'. At a time when the origins of the laws of the country were being disputed between King and Parliament this statement finds in favour of law being a gift of the Crown and not an immemorial tradition.<sup>27</sup>

Having failed to mourn Queen Elizabeth in 1603 Drayton had learnt his lesson, using *Poly-Olbion* to praise her memory in glowing terms. He celebrated her ability to use diplomacy to play France off against the Spanish in defending not only England but England's co-religionists, the Dutch. The Queen was also

Rude *Ireland's* deadly scourge; who sent her Navies hence  
Unto the either *Inde*, and to that shore so greene,  
*Virginia* which we call, of her a Virgin Queen:  
In *Portugall* gainst *Spaine*, her English ensignes spred;  
Took *Cales*, when from her ayde the brav'd *Iberia* fled.  
Most flourishing in State: that, all our Kings among,  
Scarce any rul'd so well: but two, that raign'd so long.<sup>28</sup>

At this point in his catalogue of monarchs he paused, failing to eulogise James as Elizabeth's successor. It would be a slight were it not for the fact that James had earlier been recognised as the inheritor of Britain's kingship. If Drayton celebrates Elizabeth's martial virtues and her patronage of colonial endeavour he does so because his book is dedicated to a Prince with a direct interest in such matters. At the end of the first part of *Poly-Olbion* he would write at length of England's most noble warriors, singling out Essex as the man who 'made *Iberia* quake'.<sup>29</sup> He was concluding his book with a glance at Spain just as he had begun it, with the ships at Plymouth described as having 'checkt *Iberias* pride, and held her oft in awe' in the first Song.<sup>30</sup>

This book of poems ostensibly concerned with Britain betrays strong interests in the country's neighbours and in a key discussion Drayton notes how Arthur – Britain's most iconographically important king – conquered not only Ireland and Scotland but also the greater part of Europe. In making this

point he would not be the only Jacobean writer to note this kind of European conquest by an errant Briton. As noted above, the anonymous and untitled play known as *Tom a Lincoln* is a prime example of the crossover between the British mythical past and the British present wrapped in the language of an aggressive imperialism.<sup>31</sup> The plot tells of the exploits of an illegitimate son of King Arthur who, contrary to the accepted story of Arthur, goes on the imperial conquest of most of Europe instead of his father. Tom, taking on the title of the Red Rose Knight in true Spenserian fashion warns a French ambassador:

for such an armie shall arriue in france  
sent from this Iland for to fright rebellion  
as that false Leues shall tremble at the name  
of conquering Arthur; for yo<sup>f</sup> strongest forts  
best guarded holds weele batter to the ground  
when hartles Lewes yo<sup>f</sup> king for dead shall sound...

(842–851)

The ahistorical reference to Lewes [Louis] and a later one to a Duke of Anjows [Anjou] (919) draws the play firmly within the Jacobean present and celebrates the patriotism of Prince Henry's circle.

Four members of Drayton's circle of friends, William Browne, George Wither, John Davies and Christopher Brooke received grants from Henry but not from King James's court.<sup>32</sup> Drayton himself made his allegiances very clear in the closing lines of his *Ballad of Agincourt* (1606) which look not to James but to his son: 'O, when shall *English* Men With such Acts fill a Pen, Or *England* breed againe, Such a King HARRY?'<sup>33</sup> Those whom Drayton counted as friends and associates can indeed cast a considerable light on the poet's politics.<sup>34</sup> He wrote elegies dedicated to those whose work he admired and mentioned many others in passing. He was also one of the group of writers and wits asked to submit a dedicatory verse to Thomas Coryate's celebrated 1611 travelogue *Coryats Crudities*.<sup>35</sup> His relationship with his key patron, Sir Walter Aston, in whose service he had been since 1602, reveals much about the circles within which he moved. A Groom of the Chamber to King James and a companion to Prince Henry, Aston's friendship with the young Prince was later remembered vividly in a letter written by Sir Simon Degge to the third Lord Aston in 1694. The author recollects of Sir Walter:

I have heard my L<sup>d</sup> say that playing at the Tennis with Prince Henry he strayed his back and fell downe not able to rise agen but was carryed to bed and the King's Phisicians and Chirurgeons were called to him & wrapt him in hot weathers skin w<sup>ch</sup> speedily recovered him.

After the Prince's death, Aston was made a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber in 1613, a promotion, according to Pembroke which was 'testimony of your masters noble remembrance of you'.<sup>36</sup> According to Henslowe's *Diary* Drayton had been writing for the theatre in collaboration with Dekker,

Webster, Middleton and Munday around the turn of the century. Drayton subsequently invested in the Whitefriars playhouse but his patron Aston's theatrical associates also included the playwright John Fletcher, who had become acquainted with him by 1608. Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, published in 1609, contained a dedicatory verse to Aston.<sup>37</sup>

Two other close friends of Drayton, the Scottish poet and future colonial magnate Sir William Alexander and Sir David Murray were Gentlemen of the Bedchamber to Prince Henry. Indeed it was Murray who ensured that the £10 annuity Drayton had received from the Prince's privy purse continued after Henry's death.<sup>38</sup> Lines written in 1600 by Alexander suggest Drayton had visited his home in Menstrie before the death of Queen Elizabeth. Drayton's glowing tribute to Alexander is indicative of their friendship:

So *Scotland* sent us hither, for our owne  
That man, whose name I ever would have knowne,  
To stand by mine, that most ingenious knight,  
My *Alexander*, to whom in his right,  
I want extreemely, yet in speaking thus  
I doe but shew the love, that was twixt us,  
And not his numbers which were brave and hie,  
So like his mind, was his cleare Poesie...<sup>39</sup>

Also indicative of the bond between the two men is the comment made by Ben Jonson to William Drummond that 'Sir W. Alexander was not halfe kinde unto him [Jonson] & neglected him because a friend to Drayton'.<sup>40</sup> Drayton may well have come to know Drummond through Alexander – Drayton and Drummond corresponded from 1618 until Drayton's death in 1631.<sup>41</sup> On that occasion Drummond wrote to Alexander revealing that Drayton had indeed intended to encompass Scotland within the scope of *Poly-Olbion*, making it a truly British project. The letter exists in two drafts, preserved among the Hawthornden papers. The first draft notes:

I am greeved at the Death of your L. freind M. Drayton and more that hee should have left this world before hee had [*ended*] acomplished the northern part of his polyolbion. All wee can doe to preserve his Memorye, and if your L. can find any of the fragments which concerne this country they shall [*be printed suffer*] come to the presse heere, and be dedicated to your L. w<sup>t</sup> the best remembrance of him which [*our*] freindship [*can*] did deserve.

The second draft reads:

The Death of M.D. your great freind hath beene verye grevous [much deplored] by all those which love the Muses heere, [*especialye*] cheslie that [*hee should have*] in such sort left this world before hee had perfected the northern [*part of his poly-olbion*] that it brake off that noble work of the northern part of the poliobion which had beene no litle honour to our countrey. all wee can doo for him is to honour his Memorye. If your L. can get those fragmentes [*which*] remaines of his Worke which concerne Scotland. wee shall endeavour to put them in this country

to the presse w<sup>t</sup> a dedication if [*your L. thinke*] it shall be thought expedient to your L. w<sup>t</sup> the best remembrances his love to this countrey did deserve.<sup>42</sup>

The lasting memory was of a friend to Scotland prevented by death from completing his work.<sup>43</sup>

Another associate was John Reynolds, author of *Votivae Angliae* (1624), a work which urged King James to intervene to restore the Palatinate. Reynolds contributed to the 1627 Folio of Drayton's work and his sonnet 'To my worthy Friend Mr Michael Drayton' reinforces the notion that the pantheon with which Drayton was familiar included those espousing an emphatically martial course in the years after Prince Henry's death.<sup>44</sup> It therefore comes as a surprise that in spite of the connections with Henry's court Drayton did not write to mourn the death of the Prince in 1612. He later admitted in 'An Elegie upon the Death of the Lady Penelope Clifton' that he had written a lament neither for Henri IV, the much liked King of France murdered in 1610 nor Prince Henry: 'When *France* and *England's* HENRIE'S dy'd, my quill, Why, I know not, but it that time lay still.'<sup>45</sup>

For Drayton the impetus of history was most definitely its effect on the present. The *Ballad of Agincourt* is a call to arms, as revealed in its final lines, just as the evocation of the ancient glories of Britain within *Poly-Olbion* was so directly a clarion call to an emphatically British patriotism at a time when, especially while Henry lived, the idea of a recreated Great Britain held a significant attraction within the public consciousness.<sup>46</sup> In a sense it was a manifesto for a set of beliefs about the future course of Britain which had the misfortune to be published at a time when the aspirations of such a project of British revival were about to suffer a major setback. As Hardin notes, 'whereas in Part I he had hoped to inspire his countrymen by appealing to the beauty and history of England, in Part II the instruments of his appeal have become the sole objects of his attention, and he is no longer concerned with their ends.'<sup>47</sup> It is more apposite to substitute the word 'Britain' in favour of Hardin's use of 'England' since in appealing to the island of Britain Drayton emphatically moves away from the singularity of an English vision. But Henry Stuart's death was indeed a catastrophe for Drayton, more so than has truly been appreciated. His source of royal patronage was now gone. *Poly-Olbion* was to be its legacy.

## II

Drayton's celebratory remarks about the new king in 1603 were by no means unusual. What is significant, however, is that he was using the same language nearly a decade later. His convictions regarding an emphatically British national vision were not a passing intellectual phase used to curry favour with the new king. The sentiment of *Britannia reviva* discussed by Drayton

was a genuine expression of his belief in the cultural significance of a greater Britain.<sup>48</sup>

In reading *Poly-Olbion* it is therefore necessary to be aware of the sincerity with which he treated what was a very political trope, an idea of state recreation espoused by King James, developed by a group of writers and assiduously sidelined by the House of Commons. The acceleration in colonial projects from 1607 in both Ulster and Virginia and the expansion of trade into the Far East internationalised the affairs of the English nation as never before while making the redefinition of the island as a singular and implicitly greater territorial body more attractive. It was under these circumstances that Drayton sought to describe the island in detail, mapping its component parts so that the whole might be better understood. In his introduction, ‘To my friends, the Cambro-Britans’ he writes of his ‘*progresse, through these united kingdomes of great Britaine*’ and apologises for not discussing Wales first.<sup>49</sup>

*Poly-Olbion*’s greatest strength lies in its ability to construct a vision of Britain which is both nostalgic *and* forward-looking over the course of its eighteen ‘Songs’. It has recently been the subject of two very important studies. Richard Helgerson’s view is that the text is profoundly and indeed inextricably oppositional, articulating Drayton’s hostility to the Stuart monarchy, while Clare McEachern views the work as frustratingly non-committal in its allegiances.<sup>50</sup> It is necessary to qualify both these views, there being a palpable sense in which opposition to the monarchy was the last thing on Drayton’s mind at the same time as a clear agenda was being advocated.

The text was printed complete with commentary notes by John Selden and at times the two men do not agree. Drayton charts the story of Brute’s arrival on these shores in the first Song while Selden admits his scepticism:

I should the sooner have beene of the Authors opinion... if in any *Greeke* or *Latine* *Storie* authentique, speaking of *Aeneas* and his planting in *Latium*, were mention made of any such like thing. To reckon the learned men which denie him, or at least permit him not in conjecture, were too long a Catalogue.<sup>51</sup>

Wary that written records of the British past were lacking Drayton would later point out the reason for this:

Thus doe I answere these;  
That th’ancient *British* Priests, the fearlesse *Druides*,  
That ministred the lawes, and were so trulie wise,  
That they determ’d states, attending sacrifice,  
To letters never would their mysteries commit,  
For which the breasts of men they deem’d to be more fit.<sup>52</sup>

Though another of the sceptics on the point of written records, Samuel Daniel was also aware that the Druids ‘committed not their misteries to writing, but deliuered them by tradition, whereby the memory of them after their suppression (first by *Augustus*, and after by *Claudius*) came wholly to perish with them’.<sup>53</sup>

*Poly-Olbion*'s discourse subsequently turned to prophecy and Drayton was keen to chart the rise of the new king from a long historical line. James was heir to 'a branch sprung out of Brute' and his patrimony 'th'imperiall top'. Drayton noted a royal pedigree taking in the Plantagenets and Tudors, with a strong affirmation of the Welsh connection to this British kingship, before legitimising the sovereignty of the Stuarts in Scotland. He then referred to James in all but name:

This Stem, to Tudors joyn'd (which thing all-powerfull Fate  
So happily produc't out of that prosperous Bed,  
Whose mariages conjoyned the White-rose and the Red)  
Suppressing euery Plant, shall spread it selfe so wide,  
As in his armes shall clip the Ile on every side.  
By whom three seuer'd Realmes in one shall firmlie stand,  
As *Britain*-founding *Brute* first Monarchiz'd the Land.

If we were in any remaining doubt, Selden glosses this as James's triumphant succession.<sup>54</sup>

The Eighth Song of the work continues with the emphatically British agenda, drawing attention to the validity of a specifically British past separate from that of Rome. Drayton uses British history to suggest that far from being a mixture of tribes, ancient Britons were in fact united long before the Roman invasion. A reunion of the British peoples in the early seventeenth century could consequently be legitimised through historical precedent:

The ancient *Britans* yet a sceptred King obey'd  
Three hundred yeeres before *Romes* great foundation laid;  
And had a thousand yeeres an Empire strongly stood,  
Ere *Cæsar* to her shores here stemd the circling Flood...  
Nor Troynovant alone a Citty long did stand;  
But after, soone againe by *Ebranks* powerfull hand  
*Yorke* lifts her Towers aloft...  
So *Britaine* to her praise, of all conditions brings;  
The warlike, as the wise. Of her courageous Kings,  
*Brute Green-shield*: to whose name we providence impute,  
Divinely to revive the Land's first Conqueror, *Brute*.<sup>55</sup>

It is likely that Henry Chettle's lost play, *Brute Greenshield* (1599) dwelt on the reign of that same courageous king. The end of Elizabeth's rule saw a flurry of 'British' plays, riding perhaps on the nationalist wave of the Armada failure but also occurring because of concerns over the succession question, the individual with the greatest claim to the English throne being the Scottish king. The anonymous *Lamentable Tragedy of Lochrine the Eldest Son of King Brutus* was performed between 1591 and 1595. Day's *I The Conquest of Brute* and *II The Conquest Of Brute* were both first performed in 1598 though the latter of the two was probably the same play as Chettle's *Brute Greenshield*, while the titles of the anonymous *Uther Pendragon* (1597) and

William Rankins' *Mulmutius Dunwallo* (1598) also reveal them to have British material. Unfortunately all of these plays are lost.<sup>56</sup>

Having established a recognisably unified history for Britain with which to defend against the charge that only the arrival of the Romans brought civility to an otherwise barbarous country, Drayton turned from a concern with describing a British imperium only conquered because of disunity to a Britain extending her power overseas. He discusses how Brennus (son of Mulmutius)

Asham'd of civill strife; at home heere leaving all:  
 And with such goodly Youth, in *Germany* and *Gaul*  
 As he had gather'd up, the *Alpin* Mountaines past,  
 And bravely on the banks of fatall *Allia* chas't  
 The *Romans* (that her streame distained with their gore)  
 And through proud *Rome*, display'd his *British* Ensigne bore:  
 There, ballancing his sword against her baser gold,  
 The Senators for slaues hee in her *Forum* sold.

He then proceeds to conquer Greece too.<sup>57</sup>

The Scots continue to be present in *Poly-Olbion* even if their country is not itself encompassed within the poem's pages. Those Scots who are eulogised for having held out against the Romans for 130 years are 'Northerne *Britans*', a choice of words that may have had a great deal more political resonance than is at first apparent. In the early years of his reign King James had written of his Scottish and English subjects being North and South Britons respectively, separated by the 'Middle Shires' on the border. The idea still had some currency in 1615, Fulke Greville referring to an acquaintance as a 'northerne briton' in a letter to Sir John Coke.<sup>58</sup>

In her reading of *Poly-Olbion* McEachern laments how 'despite its own encouragement to envisage Britain as one giant and harmonious country house, the poem offers nothing if not a picture of disintegration. The land seems to be unified only in its common tendency to change shape over time.'<sup>59</sup> Indeed, Welsh Britons witness the arrival of the Saxon English who in turn see Normans arrive on these shores. As Drayton writes it, Britain is a polyglot nation, its cohesion deriving from the unity its constituent parts can gain under a mantle of Britishness. The English and Welsh are indeed differing peoples, as are the Scots and Irish. However, Drayton's concern is to write these peoples through their inhabitation of the land, to uncover the stories of the past without fear when relating invasions and conquests. His past history is just as relevant as the present – his Prince of Wales was a Scot and a Briton too. Consequently, his version of British history predates the current historiographical interest in the 'British Problem' by over three and a half centuries. McEachern appears to miss the wood for the trees.

While it is a magisterial summation of English nationalism in the Elizabethan period, the subtitle of Helgerson's *Forms of Nationhood, The Elizabethan Writing of England* sits slightly awkwardly with the fact that much of

the evidence he deals with is Jacobean. Jacobean writing of the nation was subtly different – it could not fail to be different given the circumstances of a royal family, a monarch with imperial pretensions and a coterie of writers keen to appeal to them. Helgerson's understanding of *Poly-Olbion* is based on a reading which actively searches out notions of conflict.

Of the British conquerors depicted on the frontispiece Helgerson suggests that 'marginality is the best they can hope to achieve.' They are, however, about as marginal as the pillars upon which they stand, being in fact the props upon which the British nation was built. They are indeed the framers of the nation. True, they stare inwards, the Norman William visibly leaning back in the presence of the great Britannia herself, but his is not the position of a peripheral figure. He, like the other men have shaped the realm and stand as her cornerstones rather than as insignificant adjuncts to territorial supremacy. The manner in which Helgerson describes the vanishing of the royal arms from maps can just as validly be depicted as the result of royal power going without being said, indicative of a greater confidence in the nature and extent of royal authority rather than its diminishment.<sup>60</sup>

Helgerson claims that in stopping after Elizabeth in the list of kings in *Poly-Olbion*, Drayton was 'thus omitting all mention of James' and that the book 'never mentions the reigning monarch'.<sup>61</sup> But as we have seen, there *is* mention of James in the work, and quite a significant piece of eulogy it is too. Helgerson contradicts himself when he writes that looking at the frontispiece of *Poly-Olbion* 'one does not see the single nation, the integrated and cohesive body, that would justify Drayton's literary project or the more general representational project of his generation'. Yet lines later he claims that 'in the poem, as on its frontispiece, the one unified body is the body of the land'. Perhaps we are in danger of becoming confused by the semantics of 'nation' and 'land' but it seems that Helgerson does not like to view the unity of Britannia as Drayton indeed seems to celebrate it – alongside the depiction of a group of conquerors. The presence of these men Helgerson seems to view as being inherently antithetical to the good of the country. According to him, these four figures are representative of 'many nations, all ultimately foreign to the land they have occupied' yet if James Stuart too 'occupied' this land, his son, also born north of the border, and the man who paid Drayton a wage, was the heir to it.

The achievement of sovereignty was not necessarily violent, nor was the racial intermixture which made up Britain anything to be lamented. 'Not king, but country dominates his vision' writes Helgerson, continually marking out a bifurcation with which Drayton would probably have been decidedly uncomfortable. The notion of a differentiation between country and king in *Poly-Olbion* is a strained one at best.<sup>62</sup> As Stella Revard noted, *Poly-Olbion* depicts a monarchical hierarchy, with rivers and mountains assuming the dignity of kings and queens over the lesser subjects, the streams and valleys beneath and flowing from them. Revolt against this system, where it

occurs, is depicted as being absurd and an aberration against nature and disputes are resolved quickly. Drayton's world *has* conflict but it is dealt with equably.<sup>63</sup>

### III

By writing a poem evoking a British national spirit, Drayton was actively participating in a wide-ranging historiographical debate during the first twelve years of the seventeenth century regarding British origins. He was actually pre-empted in personifying the Thames and other rivers as nymphs by Anthony Munday, Ben Jonson and Samuel Daniel.<sup>64</sup> In his 1605 Lord Mayor's pageant, *The Triumphes of re-vnited Britania* Munday staged an explicitly British masque, replete with Brute, which contains the only full scale treatment of the Brutus material to be found in civic pageantry material down to the closing of the theatres.<sup>65</sup>

The pageant itself opens with a conversation between the Master, Mate and Boy of a ship, the *Royall Exchange*. They have just returned from a voyage where they have gathered rich spices and silks. The theme of the entertainment is the renewal of unity under James and its visual devices are pertinent to Drayton's visualization. The chief stage of the pageant is a 'mount triangular' which contains in the supreme place a nymph 'Britania hir self'. Seated beneath her is Brutus and the pageant traces the Brutus myth back to Noah and the Flood.<sup>66</sup> Munday describes how

*Troya-nova* (now *London*) incites fair  
*Thamesis*, and the rivers that bounded the severed kingdoms,  
(personated in faire and beautiful *Nymphs*) to sing *Paeans* and songs  
of tryumph, in honor of our second *Brute*, Royall King *James*.  
*Thamesis*, as Queene of all *Britaines* rivers, begins the triumphal  
course of solemne rejoycing.<sup>67</sup>

As has already been noted, Speed and Daniel had their doubts about some elements of British history. Camden, who praised Drayton in *c.*1597 as a long-standing friend indeed 'all but put the lid on Brutus' coffin as far as most antiquaries were concerned' even though the *Britannia* (1610) was certainly a main source for *Poly-Olbion*.<sup>68</sup> However, there were writers keen to defend the antiquity of the Brute material which strongly suggests that Drayton was writing as part of a wider debate. George Saltern's *Of the Antient Lawes of Great Britaine* (1605) advocated the Brute legend, as did John Lewis, in his *History of Great Britain*, six books of which he sent to James between 1605 and 1612. In *A Treatise of Union of the Two Realmes of England and Scotland* (1604), Sir John Hayward gave credence to the point Drayton was trying to make regarding the benefits of unity in that he viewed the Saxon and Danish invasions of Britain as being possible because of British

disunity. A united Britain would, he wrote, be secure from the threat of invasion. Perhaps not surprisingly Hayward enjoyed Prince Henry's patronage.<sup>69</sup>

In his *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605), Richard Rowlands [Verstegan] accepted the historicity of Brutus himself, while thinking it important to differentiate between the English and the Britons, giving the latter group the manifest historical destiny. It was not, he noted, the *English* who met Caesar on the battlefield:

Diuers forreyn writers do I also fynd fouly to erre in not knowing rightly to attribute things vnto the ancient Britains that properly concerne them, and things vnto the English that rightly vnto them do appertaine, and heerin *Iohn Bodin* among others is blame woorthy, who wryteth that *Cesar* in his comentaries saith, that the Englishmen of his tyme had but one woman to serue for ten or twelue men, whereas in deed *Cesar* neuer said so, or could so say, for that hee neuer knew or hard of the name of Englishmen, seeing their coming into *Britaine* was almost 500. yeares after his death.<sup>70</sup>

Rowlands makes a point still relevant for twenty-first century Englishmen who fly the Union Jack at sporting events as if it is a peculiarly English emblem. Of Brute and his history Rowlands was confident: 'But that there was such a king, and that of him both the countrey and people of our Ile had heertofore their appellation, it both is and hath bin, the comon receaued opinion: & is not now rashly to be reiected.'<sup>71</sup>

1607 saw the publication of John Ross's *Britannica, sive De Regibus veteris Britanniae*, a version of the British History from Brute to Cadwallader in Latin verse, in which the writer summoned Cadwallader back to the earth in order to inform him of the Gunpowder Plot before going on to defend the traditional Brute myth.<sup>72</sup> By 1612 there were still those willing to back the Brute material, Dekker in the epistle dedicatory to his *Troia Nova Triumphans* claiming 'we from Troy deriue' and 'ranckt next to Troy, our Troy-novant should be'.<sup>73</sup> Such was the desire to keep some grasp on the material that Edmund Howes inserted into his edition of John Stow's *Annales* (1615 and 1631) a chapter that was called 'A Briefe Proofof *Brute*'. Herein he records 'although I dare not precisely defend that hee was descended of *Aeneas* or *Siluius* or came hither by Oracle accompanied with *Troians*, yet I dare boldly say that neere the time hereafter mentioned there was one *Brute* or *Brito* king of this Realme which left it to his posteritie'.<sup>74</sup>

#### IV

The second part of *Poly-Olbion* in 1622 bore a dedication to Prince Charles and was published as the prospect of a Spanish marriage loomed. While Drayton had always expressed his great irritation that the reception of the first part of *Poly-Olbion* had been less than warm, he never gave up on



eulogized the Elizabethan Elizium long gone. For Jonson it was a newer departure than for Drayton. Parker Duchemin has written of the quality of Drayton's particular contribution to this literary conceit, his 1630 collection of poems, *The Muses Elizium*. In these poems Drayton shows himself 'more at ease and in greater control of his medium than ever before, with a lightness of touch and delicacy rarely seen in his early poetry'.<sup>78</sup> But by the 1630s Drayton was indeed settling back, reflecting on the manner in which events had unfolded. In 1612 he had every reason to believe that *Poly-Olbion* would be a great success and that Prince Henry's continued patronage would see him established as one of the most important poets in the literary firmament of the future King Henry IX.

If, in the opinions of Helgerson and A. L. Rowse, the Elizabethan years saw the discovery of England, and Helgerson's demonstration of this is indeed valid, then we should not be averse to considering the possibility that the early Jacobean period saw the discovery of Great Britain.<sup>79</sup> The origins of the British state are consequently a century older than historiography concerned with the 1707 Act of Union would have us believe.

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#### Notes

- 1 Clare McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 138. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations from Drayton's works are from J. William Hebel (ed.), *The Works of Michael Drayton*, 5 vols (Oxford, 1931–41), subsequently 'Hebel'.
- 2 Thomas Cogswell, 'The Path to Elizium "Lately Discovered": Drayton and the Early Stuart Court', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 54 (1991), 208; Anne Barton, 'Harking Back to Elizabeth: Ben Jonson and Caroline Nostalgia', *English Literary History*, 48 (1981), 706–31; Richard C. McCoy, 'Old English Honour in an Evil Time: Aristocratic Principle in the 1620s' in R. Malcolm Smuts (ed.), *The Stuart Court and Europe: Essays in Politics and Political Culture* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 133–55.
- 3 Joan Rees, [Review of Richard F. Hardin, *Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England* (Kansas, The University Press of Kansas, 1973)], *Notes and Queries*, 23 (1976), 268. Curtis Perry, *The Making of Jacobean Culture: James I and the Renegotiation of Elizabethan Literary Practice* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 168.
- 4 Jane Tylus, 'Jacobean Poetry and Lyric Disappointment' in Elizabeth D. Harvey and Katharine E. Maus (eds), *Soliciting Interpretation: Literary Theory and Seventeenth-Century English Poetry* (Chicago, Ill., University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 189.
- 5 McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood*, p. 140.
- 6 *Ibid.*, p. 173.
- 7 For an expanded discussion and bibliography regarding the prince see Tristan

- Marshall, *Theatre and Empire: Great Britain on the London Stages under James VI & I* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2000), pp. 87–144.
- 8 Ivo Kamps, *Historiography and Ideology in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 119.
  - 9 R. Malcolm Smuts, *Court Culture and the Origins of a Royalist Tradition in Early Stuart England* (Pennsylvania, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), pp. 81–2.
  - 10 Cogswell, ‘The Path to Elizium “Lately Discovered”’; McCoy, ‘Old English Honour in an Evil Time’.
  - 11 John Norden, *Speculum Britanniae. The First part: an historicall discription of Middlesex* (London, 1593).
  - 12 See Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*, pp. 67–78, 98–102, 108–114, and Tristan Marshall, ‘“That’s the misery of peace”: Representations of Martialism in the Jacobean Public Theatre 1608–14’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 13:1 (1998), 1–21.
  - 13 Michael Drayton, ‘An Ode Written In The Peake’ in Hebel, II (1932), 365, line 12.
  - 14 John Speed, *Theatre of the Empire of Great Britain* (London, 1611), p. 138. See also Andrew Hadfield, ‘Briton and Scythian: Tudor Representations of Irish Origins’, *Irish Historical Studies*, 28 (1993), 390–408.
  - 15 See Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*, pp. 130–1, 156–60.
  - 16 Keith M. Brown, ‘The Vanishing Emperor: British Kingship and its Decline 1603–1707’ in Roger A. Mason (ed.), *Scots and Britons: Scottish Political Thought and the Union of 1603* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 83.
  - 17 See, for example, Perry’s discussion of Ben Jonson’s ‘Panegyre on the Happie Entrance of James’ in *The Making of Jacobean Culture*, pp. 32–6.
  - 18 *Ibid.*, p. 67.
  - 19 David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), especially pp. 175–214.
  - 20 Michael Drayton, *To the Maiestie of King James. A gratulatorie Poem* (London, 1603) in Hebel, I (1931), 472, lines 51–8. On the imperial context of Jacobean writing see Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*.
  - 21 Hebel, I (1931), 474, lines 114, 137–46.
  - 22 *Ibid.*, p. 475, lines 165–8. See Bernard H. Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle* (Oxford, 1961), pp. 124–35; Michael Drayton, ‘The Owle’ in Hebel, II (1932), 477–514; Michael Drayton, ‘To Master George Sandys, Treasurer for the English Colony in Virginia’ in Hebel, III (1932), 206, lines 19–21.
  - 23 Michael Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* (London, 1612) in Hebel, IV (1933), 334, lines 186–92 and p. 366, lines 130–4; Jean R. Brink, *Michael Drayton Revisited* (Boston, 1990), p. 87.
  - 24 Michael Drayton, ‘To the Virginian Voyage’ in Hebel, II, 363, lines 21, 24, 41–2, 1–8. On Drayton’s direct use of Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations* see Gerhard Friedrich, ‘The Genesis of Michael Drayton’s Ode “To the Virginian Voyage”’, *Modern Language Notes*, 72 (1957), 401–6.
  - 25 Drayton, *Englands Heroicall Epistles* (London, 1597) in Hebel, II, 170, lines 75–82.
  - 26 Hebel, II, 530, lines 115–20. Prior to the cited 1600 revised version of the text the last line read ‘And thou under thy feet mayst tread that foul seven-headed beast’.
  - 27 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, 229, lines 417–9, noted in McEachern, *The Poetics of English Nationhood*, p. 173.

- 28 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, 338, lines 346–52.
- 29 *Ibid.*, pp. 366–79; p. 379, line 633.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 7, line 232.
- 31 *Ibid.*, pp. 76–7. Anon, *Tom a Lincoln*, ed. G. R. Proudfoot (Oxford, Malone Society Reprints, 1992). For a full discussion of the play see Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*, pp. 98–102 and Muriel C. Bradbrook, ‘A New Jacobean Play from the Inns of Court’, *Shakespearean Research and Opportunities*, 7–8 (1972–4), 1–5.
- 32 On the literary circle of Browne, Wither and Brooke see Michelle O’Callaghan, *‘The Shepherd’s Nation’* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 2000).
- 33 Michael Drayton, ‘To the Cambro-Britans, and their Harpe, his Ballad of Agincourt’ in Hebel, II, 378, lines 117–120.
- 34 His circle of friends and in particular his association with the Mermaid Tavern group is a matter to be dealt with in a forthcoming study by this writer, *Politics and Literary Culture in Jacobean England*.
- 35 There were 56 contributions in all. Thomas Coryate, *Coryats Crudities* (London, 1611) (Repr. Glasgow, 1905), I, 39. The dedication is also in Hebel, I, 500–1.
- 36 Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle*, p. 147; p. 154.
- 37 On Drayton’s financial stake in the Whitefriars playhouse see Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his circle*, pp. 112–23 and William Ingram, ‘The Playhouse as an Investment, 1607–14: Thomas Woodford and the Whitefriars’, *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, 2 (1985), 209–30; Gordon McMullan, *The Politics of Unease in the Plays of John Fletcher* (Amherst, University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), p. 63.
- 38 The heads of the Prince’s household recommended to the Chancellor of the Exchequer persons ‘whoe by the comaundement of the late prince without anie graunte in wrytinge were allowed yerely somes by way of Anuyties or Pencons out of the privie purse of the said late prince: viz. Joshua Silvester a poett xx<sup>li</sup> Mr. Drayton a poett x<sup>li</sup>...’ Cited in Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle*, p. 160.
- 39 Michael Drayton, ‘To my most Dearely-Loved Friend Henery Reynolds Esquire, of Poets and Poesie’ in Hebel, III, 230, lines 163–170.
- 40 Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle*, p. 137.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 177.
- 42 *Ibid.*, pp. 188–9.
- 43 Drummond, a poet himself, wrote *Teares on the death of Meliades* (Edinburgh, 1613) upon Prince Henry’s death as well as editing a collection of elegies to the Prince, *Mausoleum, or the Choisest Flowres of the Epitaphs* (Edinburgh, 1613). His *Forth Feasting. A Panegyricke to the kings most excellent majestie* (Edinburgh, 1617) commemorated James’s visit to Scotland in that year. See Robert Cummings, ‘Drummond’s *Forth Feasting*: A Panegyric for King James in Scotland’, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2:1 (1987), 1–18.
- 44 Newdigate, *Michael Drayton and his Circle*, pp. 201–2.
- 45 Michael Drayton, ‘An Elegie upon the Death of the Lady Penelope Clifton’ in Hebel, III, 219, lines 7–8.
- 46 See Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*, pp. 87–144 and Barbara C. Ewell, ‘Drayton’s *Poly-Olbion*: England’s Body Immortalized’, *Studies in Philology*, 75 (1978), 307–8.
- 47 Hardin, *Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England*, p. 65.
- 48 He shared this idea with Browne and Wither whose writing during the middle

- years of James's reign indeed came to eulogize a more virtuous Britain via the pastoral genre. See Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance*, pp. 195–214.
- 49 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, vii.
- 50 Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England* (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 107–47; McEachern, *The poetics of English nationhood, 1590–1612*, p. 166.
- 51 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, 21, lines 9–15.
- 52 *Ibid.*, pp. 207–8, lines 263–8.
- 53 Samuel Daniel, *The First Part of the Historie of England* (London, 1613), sig. B4r.
- 54 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, 98, line 49; p. 99, lines 62–8; p. 107. James is referred to again when Drayton arrives in Wales:
- And he that was by heaven appointed to unite  
 (After that tedious warre) the red Rose and the white,  
 A Tudor was of thine, and native of thy Mon,  
 From whom descends that King now sitting on her Throane.
- (*Ibid.*, p. 178, lines 367–70).
- 55 *Ibid.*, p. 140, lines 39–42, 49–51, 55–8.
- 56 Marshall, *Theatre and Empire*, pp. 52–86.
- 57 Drayton, *Poly-Olbion* in Hebel, IV, 141, lines 81–8.
- 58 *Ibid.*, p. 147, lines 309–10. On North and South Britons see, for example, *A Proclamation declaring what Flaggs South and North Britaines shall beare at Sea* [Westminster 12 April 1606] in which the King considered how 'some difference hath arisen betweene our Subjects of South and North Britaine'. James F. Larkin and Paul L. Hughes (eds), *Stuart Royal Proclamations*, I (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1973), 135; p. 19. Norman Farmer, 'Fulke Greville and Sir John Coke: an Exchange of Letters on a History Lecture and Certain Latin Verses on Sir Philip Sidney', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 33 (1969/70), 218.
- 59 McEachern, *The poetics of English Nationhood, 1590–1612*, p. 167.
- 60 Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, p. 120.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 129, p. 140.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 140.
- 63 Stella P. Revard, 'The Design of Nature in Drayton's *Poly-Olbion*', *Studies in English Literature 1500–1900*, 17 (1977), 108–11.
- 64 Thames had spoken at the first arch in the royal entry into London in 1604 in a device written by Jonson, and subsequently in his *Masque of Beauty* (1608). Samuel Daniel depicted Anne of Denmark in *Tethys Festival* (1610) as the Queen of the Ocean and her ladies as those same aqueous Britons, while Christopher Brooke referred to 'Thestis raues, And bids her waues Bring all the Nymphes within her Emperie' in his *Two Elegies* (1613). Samuel Daniel, *Tethys Festival* in Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong (eds), *Inigo Jones and the Theatre of the Stuart Court*, vol. I (Berkeley and London, 1973). Christopher Brooke, *Two Elegies, consecrated to the never-dying Memorie of the most worthily admyred; most hartily loued; and generally bewayled PRINCE; HENRY Prince of Wales* (London, 1613), sig. E.
- 65 David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry, 1558–1642* (London, 1971), p. 141.
- 66 *Ibid.*, p. 142.
- 67 Anthony Munday, *The Triumphs of Re-united Britania* (London, 1605) in David

- M. Bergeron (ed.), *Pageants and Entertainments of Anthony Munday: A Critical Edition* (New York, Garland, 1985), lines 186–91.
- 68 In his *History of Great Britaine* (London, 1612) Speed wrote of the Arthurian material: ‘such extremes are wee driuen vnto, that haue our relations onelie from them’ (p. 319) while of Brute he noted that he would ‘herein make doubt as many more of riper iudgement before me haue done’ (p. 386). D. R. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: Erudition, Ideology, and ‘The Light of Truth’ from the Accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1990), p. 117. See also Parker Duchemin, “‘Barbarous ignorance and base detraction’: The Struggles of Michael Drayton”, *Albion*, 14 (1982), 118–38.
- 69 Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England*, p. 62; p. 110; p. 112. At Henry’s request Hayward wrote his *The Lives of the III Normans, Kings of England* (London, 1613).
- 70 Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England*, pp. 202–3. Richard Rowlands [Verstegan], *A Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605), sigs †3v–†4r.
- 71 *Ibid.*, pp. 90–93.
- 72 John Ross, *Britannica, sive De Regibus veteris Britanniae* (Frankfurt, 1607). See T. D. Kendrick, *British Antiquity* (London, Methuen, 1950), p. 100.
- 73 Thomas Dekker, *Troia Nova triumphans. London triumphing* (London, 1612). London’s origins in the Trojan history were also noted by Bacon who referred to the city as being ‘here where Brute did build his Troynouant’ while Dekker had written ‘Troynouant, is now a sommer arbour’ for James’s entry in 1604. See Vaughan Hart, *Art and Magic in the Court of the Stuarts* (London, Routledge, 1994), p. 159.
- 74 John Stow, *The Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England, begun first by maister Iohn Stow...* ed. Edmund Howes (London, 1615), sigs. A3v–A4. Also see the same pages in the 1631 edition.
- 75 Quoted in Hardin, *Michael Drayton and the Passing of Elizabethan England*, p. 109.
- 76 Cogswell, ‘The Path to Elizium “Lately Discovered”’, 217–8.
- 77 Drayton, ‘To Master George Sandys, Treasurer for the English Colony in Virginia’ in Hebel, III, 206, lines 9–10; Michael Drayton, ‘To Master William Jeffreys, Chaplaine to the Lord Ambassador in Spaine’ in *ibid.* p. 239, lines 33–8.
- 78 Barton, ‘Harking Back to Elizabeth’; Duchemin, “‘Barbarous ignorance and base detraction’”, 137.
- 79 Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood*, p. 122; A. L. Rowse, *The England of Elizabeth* (New York, Macmillan, 1951), pp. 31–65.

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