

Speech to the King, attributed to the Duke of Lennox (1638)

Pseudo-Lennox and James Stewart, Duke of Lennox

Transcript

Norfolk Record Office, HMN 7/307, 772X8, ff. 177r–179r

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The Duke of Lenox his speech to his Maiestie Concerninge the proposition of warr for Scotland July 80 – 1638

Most gracious soueraigne.

{I} am not altogether unsensible in this business wherein {I} am now called to give my aduice for I know I shall suffer some disadvantage because I am a Scott by nation and education and the best blood that runnes in my veines I haue extracted from thence, and what I shall now speake examine and then execute:

Some may happily impute it as proceedinge from strength of affection to that place and people from whence I came but I protest my zeale to your Ma[jes]tie shall at this time suspend the aggitation of such principles and I will sett aside all perticuler relation and looke uppon the Question as it is not as passion and affection may sett it forth .

The question is concerninge warr an vnkowne subiect here which seemes sweet to those that haue not tryed it, and perhaps thinkes not to be troubled with it.

The worst of warr is in the close of it, for in the conclusion of the most aduentagious warr that euer was waged when all reckninges be cast vp the Conquerour hath but litle whereof to glory.

But this is not a warr betwixt a king and a stranger but betwixt a soueraigne and his subiect a neer relation and they had nee of waighty motives that should dissolue this knott.

Subiects are easily lost we see see it in the worke of eu{-} dayes experience but once lost are hardly regayned affections are like to Christall glasses which once broken are hardly sett together againe .And thes people are

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not such a people as the {-----} (a people whome I know not shall be subiect vnto me your Ma[jes]tie of them as Addam did of Eve w{-} was framed out of his owne Ribb thou art flesh of my f{-} and bone of my bone or rather as David of his su{-} in the day of his inauguration (for my bretheren companions sake) soe your Maiestie beinge theirs they your Maiesties by a double tye you are not Rex factus but Rex natus, and therefore the vn{-} beinge soe streight the motiue had need to be waig{-} that shall cause a man to sett his house on fire an{-} destroy the work of his owne hands.

Now let us consider of 2 thinges requisite in this Qest{-}

[*Left margin:1*] The necessity of this warr.

[*Left margin:2*] Secondly the motives may induce us to it whether they {-} {tanti} of such moment that a kinge should hazard the uncer{-} chance of warr and the miseries that

accompanie it rat{-} then to forgoe the same for the first pointe it is a good noate of Tacitus, that warr shall be his vltimum refugium the last because the worst refuge.

And if we consider of the wisest kings that euer did sway a scepter in thes latter times how willinge they were to decline the stroake of warr almost vppon any tearmes; If your maiestie doe but consider the practise of Lewis the 11{ }th king of france Henry the 7th king of England

For in the large list and catologue of all the kings of booth nations you cannot point out { } two of more deep and profound Iudgment and better verst in the misteries of gouernment yet what meanes the vsed or rather not vsed to diuert the course if { } that at any time they did waide { } with in their one channells, They counted it noe dishonour to yeeld to their subiects demaunds though

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{..e} times vniust and unreasonable, { }ay themselves to { } the first seekers and propounders of peace, and soe {y} those meanes when the storme was ouer and thing es, a{-} {ame} to be debated upon the gr^eat green carpet they { } were masters of their owne ends and their subiects {a}ffections and obteyned a victory without strⁱ {st}rikinge a stroake.

Those wise kings considered that the end of warr was uncertaine and the euent uarious, and he that com[m]itteth one error in the warr (especially when the estate of it is in his owne kingdome seldome lives to com{ }itt a second we need not to goe far for Instances, Rich: 2d: Ed 2d: will be fresh presidents for any that desire to try the experience. Thereof vppon such tearmes as they did/ It shoul[d] be in the body politique as it is in the body naturall: Philobotomie. shoul[d] not be used but when the humours be soe praedominant that noe other course can remoue them and unlesse that they be exiled they will occasion dissolution. but blessed be god there is noe such necessity in this case. That theire are some rough humo^urs in the body politique it cannot be denyed and some there are it may be that worke obstructions in some of the lesser pipes of gouernment, But your va' na basillicca and your va'na caua are full and the royall spiritts in them haue there full and prope{r} influence and motion without any opposition, Then what is now to be donne since by force it is not fitt for euery subiect, some humours are to be expelled by { }enations when as purgations will make them more malignant, and there are three ^{meanes} {obliteration} to be used or not yet have bin tryed any of which are better th{en} the meanes praescribed.

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[*Left margin:1*] The first is to remoue the occasion this can be impeachment to the scepter. The wisest kings haue had their errorrs in goue{ } which a wiser obseruance in auoidinge occasions{ } end taught them to recall.

Your father raigned gloriously and com[m]anded{ } affections as well as the bodies of the Scotts and yet n{ } sought the obtruding of them either by sea or Lan{d} yett there was none more zealous of a kingly gou{ } then he was.

It is an art of the greatest folly to hazard the{ } substance for the shadowe not worth to be conten{ } for, and if your Maiestie were master of your own{e} desire it woul[d] not add one cubite to your stature{ }

[*Left margin:2*] Secondly if the course like not then {let} tim worke{ } and by this meanes they will either swallow the hooke{ } endure the proposall of it with less regrate, distast { } thinges makes most dislike at the first and least at last { } And your Ma[ies]tie by degrees may worke them to th{ } at the last which for the present they will rather dye then imbrace.

We see how the Romanes by degrees brought royall slauery upon the world which if they had at first propounded in downe right tearmes had hardly beene accomplished if euer.

Soe Normane william by degrees had brought the English to weare the yoake which if he had at the first tendered he either must have mist his ayme or had noe people to impose it uppon soe impatient then were the english nation to heare the name of conquerour or be branded with the name of conqu^ured nation

{3} Thirdly we see the way to conquour is some times costly what if your maiestie shoul[d] yeeld in these thinges to the Scotts demaunds and give the aduantage of a faire game

cannot

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{ } at your Ma[ies]ties remoue the obstacles by depression {and} { }ne the humours some other way and waite for a more {se}asonable time or opportunity to stirr in the thinges by {in}struments more fite and less subiect to opposition { }he proposall of this course I shoul[d] houl[d] more certaine { } {m}ore safe and more secure thent that cruell one of the {s}word which knowes noe law but deuoures one as well as {th}e other.

And I houl[d] that kingdome most miserable which is en~~fo~~= enforced to make use of a remedy worse then the disease and { } thuse much for the three meanes untryed and also for the { } fiset part of the consideration of this matter that there is noe necessity of war rebus sic stantibus.

To the second consideration thes thinges in aggitation s are not tanti of such an alley as shoul[d] require such a desperate aduenture as to hazard kingdome at a cost for the gayning{e} of it, Plutarch wisely compared those that know not how to propose the meanes to the end to such as fish with a golden hooke the losse of the hooke is often of more consequence then the fish they can take.

And truely to speake plainely what I thinke they that adui{cs}e warr in this kingdome know not what it is to gett nor greatly ^{care} for the losse of a kingdome soe they may play their owne game and fish in troubled waters.

Such counsellours as these were the B[isho]p of Rosse to the late Queen of Scotts and the B[isho]p of Broox to the late miserable King of Hungarie the successe of booth may easily be remembred the one was the cause and occasion of bringinge in the Turke into Hun garia and the other the French into Scotland two such guests as booth nations may wish that they may neuer know the way thither agayne.

Three reasons have beene given to praeswade to warr which I will not now answere but leave it to him that is better able and more fully instructed for such a purpose, wherefore consideringe nulla salus bello nulla necessitas belli my aduice to your Ma[ies]tie is not to vse warr but when the end of it is either a certaine peace or when there is noe other way left but that onely to obteyne it in this aduice (though I shall undoubte{d}ly displease others.) yet I

shall please myselfe because I haue spoken as I thinke, and I hope when your Ma[ies]tie shall haue occasion or be necessitated to draw your sword in Iust warr I shall be ready to doe your ma[ies]tie seruice as they are that take much of warr but neither know whence to beginue it nor-greatly care where or when to end it

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Other manuscript witnesses

- British Library, Additional MS 23146, f. 78r
- British Library, Additional MS 28011, ff. 64r–65v
- British Library, Harley MS 1576, ff. 283r–v
- British Library, Harley MS 4931, ff. 35r–36v
- British Library, Harley MS 6284, ff. 10r–11r
- British Library, Lansdowne MS 1232, ff. 49r–51r
- British Library, Additional MS 69392, ff. 64r–65r
- British Library, Additional MS 72432, ff. 85r–86v
- British Library, Harley MS 1219, ff. 403r–408r
- British Library, Sloane MS 650, ff. 55r–58r
- British Library, Stowe MS 288, ff. 1r–4r
- Beinecke Library, OSB MSS 28, Box 2, Folder 24, item 34
- Beinecke Library, Osborn File 12601, ff. 1–7
- Beinecke Library, Osborn File 12602
- Beinecke Library, Osborn File 6557
- Beinecke Library, Osborn File 8986
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- Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 830, ff. 211r–212v
- Bodleian Library, MS Nalson 19, ff. 1r–3v
- Cambridge University Library, MS Dd.3.64, ff. 125r–126v
- Durham University Library, MSP 9, reversing the volume, 31–33
- Folger Shakespeare Library, MS V.a.248, ff. 63r–66r
- John Rylands Library, Mainwaring MS 15, loose bifolium
- Northamptonshire Record Office, FH854
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- Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/JO/10/1/38, ff. 17r–18r
- Parliamentary Archives, WDR/1, ff. 38r–v
- St John's College, MS S.37, ff. 24v–26r
- The National Archives, SP 16/395, /56 [ff.117r–118v]
- The National Archives, SP 16/408, /110 [ff.222r–223v]
- The National Archives, SP 16/408, /111 [ff.224r–225r]
- The National Archives, SP 16/408, /112 [ff.225r–v]
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- The National Archives, SP 16/537, /148 [ff.201r–202v]
- The National Archives, SP 16/537, /149 [ff.204r–205r]
- Trinity College, MS R.5.4, item 26