

Christoph Ketterer

# *To Meddle with Matters of State*

Political Sermons in England, c.1660–c.1700





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Markus Friedrich, Jürgen Sarnowsky  
und Johann Anselm Steiger

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## Preface

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My thanks go to my doctoral supervisors Prof Ronald G. Asch and Prof Susanne Rupp for their patience and support. Prof Markus Friedrich was kind enough to join the doctoral examination committee. I would also like to thank all the editors of the series *The Early Modern World* for offering me the opportunity to publish this work. Ms Carla Schmidt at V&R unipress was always supportive with all the questions I had concerning the process of publishing this work.

Any doctoral dissertation places great demands not only on the candidate, but also on family and friends. It has not been different in this case. I would therefore like to thank (and in some cases apologize to) the people who have made all of this possible. My wife Corinna, and my son Johannes are certainly the first to mention. Without the support of my parents, Margot and Günter Ketterer, and my great-aunt Klara Zug, writing and publishing this thesis would have been inconceivable.

In addition, I would like to mention Dr Martin Foerster of Freiburg and Hamburg, as someone on whom I could always count. Finally, among the many people at the Research Training Group “Interconfessionality in the Early Modern Period”, Frank Kurzmann, Sarah Stützing and Sarah Lehmann, made my work easier and even more enjoyable.

All faults are my own.





## Conventions and Abbreviations

Dates provided correspond to the Julian Calendar unless otherwise indicated, as the Gregorian reformed calendar was not introduced until 1752 in England. The year, however, is taken to begin on 1 January, not on 25 March.

Spelling, punctuation and formatting have been kept as they appear in the original sources. This includes mistakes and errors. In cases where misunderstandings are likely to arise, printing errors have been marked, as have mispaginations in the primary sources.

Throughout the thesis, the following abbreviations have been used:

Add. MS	Additional Manuscripts, British Library.
BL	British Library.
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
CJ	Journal of the House of Commons.
CSPDom	Calendar of State Papers Domestic.
CSPVen	Calendar of State Papers Venice.
Evelyn	E.S. de Beer (ed.), <i>The Diary of John Evelyn</i> . In Six Volumes. London 1955.
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library.
LJ	Journal of the House of Lords.
KJV	Robert P. Carroll and Stephen Prickett, <i>The Bible: Authorized King James Version</i> . Oxford 2008.
Morrice	Mark Goldie, (General Editor), <i>The Entering Book of Roger Morrice</i> . 1677–1691. 6 Volumes, Woodbridge 2007.
ODNB	The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. Online Edition, <a href="http://www.oxforddnb.com">www.oxforddnb.com</a> .
Pepys	Robert Latham and William Matthews (eds.), <i>The Diary of Samuel Pepys</i> . A New and Complete Transcription. 11 Volumes. Berkeley 1971–1983.
Wood	Andrew Clark (ed.), <i>The Life and Times of Anthony Wood, Antiquary, of Oxford</i> , 1632–1695. 5 Volumes, Oxford 1891–1900.



# 1. Introduction

On November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1660, Samuel Pepys had a simultaneous run-in with England's history and his own. To the diarist's considerable anxiety, the old school friend with whom he was having dinner that day "did remember that I was a great roundhead when I was a boy."<sup>1</sup> Memories of the Civil War, the English Republic, and the execution of Charles I were of particular relevance for the recently restored monarchy. They acted as negative mirror images that Charles II and his supporters employed to strengthen their hold on England. Any alternative to the restored regime was tainted by an association with chaos and rebellion, so Pepys' was feared being thought of as an enemy of the monarchy. He later wrote in his diary that on the evening he was very much afraid that his schoolfriend "would have remembered the words that I said the day that the King was beheaded (that were I to preach upon him, my text should be: 'The memory of the wicked shall rot')."<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, Pepys' fears did not materialize and he found out that his friend had left school before he had announced his plans for the pulpit.<sup>3</sup>

Young Samuel's post-Restoration confrontation with his youthful preaching ambitions highlights several important aspects about sermons in late 17<sup>th</sup>-century England. The first is their ubiquity. A young man could easily imagine himself in the pulpit, where he would apply the lessons of Scripture to politics and history. On the same evening, Pepys' friend also entertained him by imitating the preaching styles of several well-known Presbyterian and Independent preachers, further proving how deeply the sermon penetrated into everyday life.<sup>4</sup> Secondly, the story shows the potential power of the pulpit, from which words spoken to a (likewise imaginary) audience could consign the memory of a

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1 Robert Latham, William Matthews (Eds.): *The Diary of Samuel Pepys. A New and Complete Transcription*. 11 Volumes, Berkeley 1971–1983, Vol. 1: 1660, 280. Hereafter quoted as *Pepys*.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Cf. *ibid.*

4 "He did make us good sport in imitating Mr. Case, Ash, and Nye, the ministers – which he did very well." *Ibid.*

monarch to oblivion. Pepys' choice of scripture<sup>5</sup> makes clear that the sermon aimed to show Charles I as an evil king, whose name would be justly struck from public memory. Thirdly, even though Pepys the schoolboy never did preach his proposed sermon, his anxiety reminds us that a preacher's words could come back to haunt him, as once they had left his mouth, they were no longer his own and could be criticized, scorned, ridiculed, and used against him by his audience. In Pepys' case, fortune was on the diarist's side as he found out that his one-man audience "did go away from schoole before that time."<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, all the elements to be found in Pepys' story – the cultural pervasiveness of the sermon, the power to be wielded from the pulpit, and the potentially delicate relationship of the preacher with his audience – underscore the political role of the sermon in 17<sup>th</sup>-century England.

The term "political sermon" undoubtedly contains a tautological element. After all, there was no clear distinction between politics and religion in Reformation England.<sup>7</sup> Temporal and spiritual spheres bled into each other, as illustrated in the particular position of the English monarchs. Henry VIII had claimed temporal and spiritual supremacy, conceiving of his crown as an imperial one and of his realm as an empire in which the king reigned as emperor and did not abide by the Bishop of Rome's interventions.<sup>8</sup> His claim, reiterated by his successors, had profound implications for political concepts and political debates in England, which were often "shaped by an ecclesiological prism [...] of church-state relations."<sup>9</sup> In such an environment, any sermon could potentially have political relevance and communicate visions of political order. Pepys' own "sermon" would have outed his political alignment and would have supported a

5 KJV, Proverbs 10.7. Pepys's quotation is slightly off. The passage reads: "The memory of the just is blessed: but the name of the wicked shall rot."

6 Pepys 1660, 280.

7 On the selective reception of Reformation ideas and concepts in England see: Diarmaid MacCulloch: *Sixteenth-Century English Protestantism and the Continent*. In: *Sister Reformations. The Reformation in Germany and in England*. Symposium on the Occasion of the 450th Anniversary of the Elizabethan Settlement, September 23rd-26th, 2009 = *Schwes-terreformationen. Die Reformation in Deutschland und in England*. Symposium aus Anlass des 450. Jahrestages des Elizabethan Settlement, 23.-26. September 2009. Ed. Dorothea Wendebourg. Tübingen 2010, 1–14.

8 "Henry conceived 'the imperial crown' as the sum-total of all the rights and functions which the late Roman emperor had, hence was rex who in his kingdom was imperator." Walter Ullman: 'This Realm of England is an Empire'. In: *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 30.2 (1979), 175–203, 198. The doctrine of royal supremacy subordinated the visible church to the power of the temporal ruler, in contrast to the invisible church, the mystical body of Christ, which was ruled directly Christ by himself. On the development of this doctrine see: William J.T. Kirby: *Richard Hooker's Doctrine of the Royal Supremacy*. Leiden 1990, 61–79 and *passim*.

9 Jacqueline Rose: *Godly Kingship in Restoration England. The Politics of the Royal Supremacy, 1660–1688*. Cambridge 2011 (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History), 3.

political order radically different from monarchy. Another factor intertwining religious and political issues was the existence of religious diversity in and of itself. As Patrick Collinson has determined for the Elizabethan period, it was not only repression of confessional diversity that caused political resistance: at least as important was the simple fact that multiconfessionalism proved to be a reality that resisted all the drives towards religious uniformity by the Elizabethan confessional state.<sup>10</sup> Although religious diversity as measured in the number of groups that found the Elizabethan settlement lacking and the church “halfly reformed” peaked during the 1640s and 1650s, it continued to be a central issue after the return of Charles II to his father’s throne in 1660.<sup>11</sup> Different confessional groups strove for different religious and political agendas. Sermons that picked up on the existence of religious diversity therefore almost automatically made a political statement, in so far as they argued for or against uniformity and expressed a great number of stances on issues of belief, ritual and moral, and on toleration, indulgence, and political power.

### 1.1. Problem Statement and Outline

Decrying a sermon as “political” meant that the preacher had unduly strayed in an area where he had no authority, a potentially devastating charge after the important role that sermons played in the run-up to the English Civil War. Yet most preachers would not let themselves be prevented from commenting on worldly affairs and criticizing and counselling those in power. Shortly before Charles II’s return, in February 1660, John Gauden, the supposed main author of the *Eikon Basilike*, which detailed Charles I’s pious sufferings, preached before the Lord Mayor and the city elite of London.<sup>12</sup> Gauden’s sermon celebrated the return of those members of the House of Commons who had been excluded under Cromwell and were now restored to their positions. He was preaching at a sensitive time, as he acknowledged that he had offended some listeners, yet he defended himself in a characteristic way in the dedication to the printed version of his sermon:

10 Cf. Patrick Collinson: The Politics of Religion and the Religion of Politics in Elizabethan England. In: *Historical Research* 82.215 (2009), 74–92, 91–92.

11 Cf. Mark Goldie: The Search for Religious Liberty 1640–1690. In: *The Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart Britain*. Ed. John Morrill. Oxford 2000, 293–309, 297; see also: Anthony Milton: *Catholic and Reformed. The Roman and Protestant Churches in English Protestant Thought, 1600–1640*. Cambridge 1996, 7–9.

12 On Gauden and his career see: Bryan D. Spinks: Art. Gauden, John (1599/1600?–1662), Bishop of Worcester. In: ODNB. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-10456> (accessed 19 February 2018).

Some I hear were offended [...] at the plain dealing I used (which possibly was from thier [sic] overrwness and foreness, more then from my roughness). [...] No man may wonder if I dare to reprove those sins which some dare to do, or approve, but dare not hear of, or repent.

The parrhesie or freedom of my speech as a man, a Christian, and a Preacher was such, as became my feeling of the publick miseries; my desire of the publick tranquility, and my sense of that fidelity I ow [sic] to God, to my Countrey, to you, and to my own soul.<sup>13</sup>

Gauden's words provide insight into the image the preacher had of himself and his office: his task, essentially, was to speak divine truth to his countrymen and, in doing so, to exhort and counsel them. This amounted to the right of exercising a good degree of influence on the politics of the nation, which Gauden, and many other preachers of the period under investigation, claimed was justly theirs.

This dissertation focuses on the ways in which they did this. It presents the overall idea that the political impact of a sermon is a combination of the factors of place, time, and context of preaching, as well as content and reception, rather than any single aspect. Most importantly, sermons in Restoration England often had a political impact because they touched on central questions of power and the inclusion or exclusion of parts of the nation. Their political meaning was provided or amplified by the multiconfessional reality of Restoration England, in which Anglicans, Protestant Dissenters, Roman Catholics, and the divisions and subgroups within those crudely defined large bodies interacted with each other in positive, neutral, and negative ways.

This thesis proposes to examine sermons as sources *sui generis* requiring due attention not only to the preacher's words but also to the material surroundings, the reactions of audiences, and in general those aspects that may be called the "performative" dimension of sermons. Omitting these aspects turns sermons into a subtype of quasi-political tracts, deafening our ears to nuances and subtexts of their words and to others' possible reactions to them. Secondly, this work proposes to approach the problem of the political sermon by following its function as a tool of counsel and criticism for those in power, and therefore as a way to exercise influence on the political process. Thirdly, the thesis reconstructs the political aspect of sermons from the concepts and visions of political and religious order to be found in them.

The main body of sources of this dissertation consists of sermons preached at the courts of Charles II and James II. These are supplemented by parliamentary sermons and sermons preached in the churches of London during the period from 1660 to about 1700. Sermons preached in other venues are also considered

13 John Gauden: A Sermon Preached In St. Pauls Church London, before the Right Honourable the Lord Major, Lord General, Aldermen, Common Council and Companies of the Honourable City of London February 28. 1659. London 1660, A2<sup>v</sup>.

if they offer political insights, such as those preached at the Inns of Court where English lawyers were trained, or in France after the Stuarts had been exiled there in the wake of the Glorious Revolution. The large majority of sermons used in this thesis are works of print. This causes some methodological problems, such as the question of how different the printed sermon was from what the preacher actually said in the pulpit. The ramifications of these issues are discussed further below, but an attempt has been made to include reactions to sermon performances whenever possible. Furthermore, a smaller number of pulpit discourses used here have survived in manuscript form. They form a valuable addition to the printed corpus. The same is true for the various other sources that have been used besides sermons. These include important diaries of the Restoration period, notably those of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn, and many other sources such as letters, and political and religious tracts.

The thesis adopts an approach that looks at sermons as source in their own right, and not as mere political tracts. Sermons are seen as performances embedded within a certain political and religious context, and not primarily as storehouses for ideas and concepts removed from the particularities of their respective historical situation. Scholarly literature on the subject of sermon studies will be discussed at more detail in the following section, but it should be stated here, that the thesis attempts to close a research gap in providing an overview of political preaching during the reigns of Charles II and James II, by relating a sermon's political significance to the unresolved confessional tensions which persisted after the restoration of the monarchy and the Church of England in 1660. It is also one of the first more detailed investigations of Roman Catholic court sermons under James II at the time of writing.<sup>14</sup> For all sermons discussed here, the thesis attempts to reconstruct their political relevance by situating them within the larger narrative of Restoration England as a multiconfessional society, in which competing visions of confessional coexistence were circulating. The sermons and tracts discussed here all made contributions to the debates and conflicts rising out of the confessionally charged politics of the Restoration period. In so doing, the dissertation implicitly rejects the notion that England after 1660 was nation already firmly under way towards secularization.

The dissertation begins with a review of sermon studies and a closer examination of the issue of the political sermon, defining the use of the term over its course. It then proceeds to investigate the architectural and material conditions of preaching at court, before Parliament, and in London. The first main

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14 Matthew Jenkinson has published an article on Roman Catholic court sermons under James II. However, it does not take into account many of the sources discussed here. In addition, I disagree with some of the article's points, further below. Cf. Matthew Jenkinson: Preaching at the Court of James II, 1685–1688. In: *The Court Historian* 17.1 (2012), 17–33.



section then closes with audience reception and a chapter on the printed sermon. Subsequently, the dissertation investigates the contending visions of political and religious order around 1660. Then, moving along chronologically, the work examines the middle and end years of the reign of Charles II and the extent to which political and confessional tensions were present in sermons at court and elsewhere. The third section then concerns the court sermons under James II. It reviews Roman Catholic court sermons and investigates their visions of kingship and Catholicism in England. The view then shifts to the Protestant Chapel Royal and the degree to which it, and Anglican preaching in other venues, criticized and resisted James II and his policies between 1685 and 1688. Finally, the thesis closes with a summary of the findings and a conclusion.

The large number and variety of sermons and other sources discussed in this work offer particular challenges, one of which is the question of which basic structure to choose. A roughly chronological approach has been adopted in this thesis. This method allows for the least amount of repetition in dealing with the sources, although it is sometimes necessary to revisit sermons or other tracts that have been mentioned in one section in a later one. Similarly, with a term so easily eluding definition as “political sermon,” it has proved necessary to discuss aspects that form part of a greater whole separately, and in different sections.

## 2. Defining the Political Sermon: Research and Approach

In 1998, Peter McCullough, in his study of sermons preached at the courts of Elizabeth I and James I in 1998, noted that they had been neglected almost entirely as a means of analyzing how different theological and political ideas were expressed at the center of power.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, Lori Anne Ferrell's study on the workings of the rhetoric of polemics and conformity among the Jacobean court preachers demonstrated how James regularly participated in the discussion of sermons and the political and religious disputes they contained, as a strategy to further his image as a theologian king entitled to pronounce on matters of theological debate.<sup>16</sup> These two works represent the beginning of a re-orientation in the study of sermons. Although sermons had not been ignored as important sources beforehand, they had been investigated principally for their literary, rhetorical, and stylistic aspects. W.F. Mitchell and his corresponding study of sermon rhetoric is probably the most important contribution to this aspect of sermon studies.<sup>17</sup>

For Mary Morrissey, it was Mitchell's book in particular that blocked the way towards a more nuanced understanding of early modern English preaching. Particularly problematic for her was the neat classification of 17<sup>th</sup>-century preaching styles into a "metaphysical" and a "plain" one.<sup>18</sup> Anglicans<sup>19</sup> were

15 Cf. Peter McCullough: *Sermons at Court. Politics and Religion in Elizabethan and Jacobean Preaching*. Cambridge 1998, 1–3.

16 Cf. Lori Anne Ferrell: *Government by Polemic. James I, the King's Preachers, and the Rhetorics of Conformity, 1603–1625*. Stanford 1998, 114.

17 Cf. William F. Mitchell: *English Pulpit Oratory from Andrewes to Tillotson. A Study of its Literary Aspects*. New York 1962. For another example see: Rolf P. Lessenich: *Elements of Pulpit Oratory in Eighteenth-Century England (1660–1800)*. Köln 1972.

18 Cf. Mary Morrissey: *Interdisciplinarity and the Study of Early Modern Sermons*. In: *The Historical Journal* 42.4 (1999), 1111–1123, 1119–1120.

19 In this thesis the terms "Anglican" and "Puritan" are taken to refer to members of the Church of England on the one hand and those for whom the Reformation had not been carried far enough. The latter group was by no means monolithic but generally held the belief that the Church of England retained too many "popish" elements. Still, it must be said, that that this

usually linked with the preaching of “metaphysical” sermons, which included complicated metaphors, rich allusions, and a tendency to show flourishes of learning on the part of the preacher. Puritan sermons, on the other hand, were characterized as lacking much rhetorical and stylistic embellishment, and being representative of a “plain” style. According to Morrissey, this represented a simplistic mapping of the two preaching styles onto the politico-confessional frontlines of the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, which did more harm than good.<sup>20</sup> Instead of maintaining the outdated classification, she strongly argued for the recognition that sermons were “text written to influence events,”<sup>21</sup> and went on to emphasize “that they must be studied in an interdisciplinary way, with equal emphasis on the text and the event.”<sup>22</sup>

For the English-speaking world, the publication of two major works, *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* and *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689–1901*, testifies to the great amount of research that has gone into the subject.<sup>23</sup> Different approaches have shed light on the dissemination of ideas, news, and knowledge through preachers, their interaction with audiences, their status as oral and written sources, and many other aspects. The study of “political” sermons is another aspect that has received much attention and, due to its importance for this thesis, will be discussed in more detail below. The following survey will reconstruct the understanding of the politics of the sermon

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classification is not without its problems. Labelling members of the Restoration Church of England and the church itself as “Anglican” not only imposes a single identity on a heterogeneous confession. More specifically, it also suggests an unproblematic continuity between theological thought of the nineteenth century, notably John Henry Newman and his coining of the term “Anglicanism”, and the seventeenth century Church of England. For an overview of the term “Anglicanism” and its variations see: Ashley Null: Art. Anglikanismus. In: Enzyklopädie der Neuzeit. Band 1. Ed. Friedrich Jaeger. Stuttgart 2005, cols. 384–390. These problems notwithstanding, in his detailed analysis of the Restoration church John Spurr has unequivocally defended the use of “Anglican” for the seventeenth century: “The years between 1646 and 1689 saw the invention of ‘one’ Anglicanism, which then formed a heritage to be reappropriated, cannibalized, or transformed into other ‘Anglicanisms’.” John Spurr: *The Restoration Church of England, 1646–1689*. New Haven 1991, 396. Much the same problems exist with a view to the word “Puritan”, a designation which also suggests a stable identity instead of a diverse set of beliefs. Recently, Arnold Hunt has argued that there is a distinguishing feature of Puritanism, namely its insistence that faith comes through hearing and not reading, which resulted in privileging the active attending and listening to sermons over other forms of devotion. Cf. Arnold Hunt: *The Art of Hearing. English Preachers and their Audiences 1590–1640*. Cambridge 2010, 30–42.

20 Cf. Morrissey: Interdisciplinarity, 1119–1120. The term “metaphysical style” was made popular by modernist poet and literary critic T.S. Eliot. Both it and the corresponding “plain style” will be discussed at more detail below.

21 Morrissey: Interdisciplinarity, 1121.

22 Ibid.

23 Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon*. Oxford 2011. Keith A. Francis, William Gibson (Eds.): *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon. 1689–1901*. Oxford 2012.

as it is employed as part of various methodologies. To arrive at a coherent approach, it will be necessary to critically interrogate these approaches for their strengths and weaknesses, and then to develop the methodology needed for this thesis and to place it into perspective with regard to earlier research. The results will then be used to present a workable definition of the “political sermon” as it is understood in the context of this study.

## 2.1. Conceptual Approaches

In his dissertation on sermon culture in Georgian Britain, James Caudle chooses to define “political” sermons as pieces of political rhetoric and focuses on those preached on England’s great days of national remembrance. Such pulpit orations are considered to be political because of their discussion of constitutional issues, such as the power of kings, the liberties of subjects, and theories of resistance.<sup>24</sup> Caudle shows how preachers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century gradually changed their tone and message when preaching on the three major dates in the English national calendar – January 30<sup>th</sup>, May 29<sup>th</sup>, and November 5<sup>th</sup> – and on the respective accession days of the reigning monarchs. A major development was how January 30<sup>th</sup> gradually lost its strong anti-nonconformist bias. While beforehand, sermons preached on the anniversary of Charles I’s execution had singled out the Puritan betrayal of the Lord’s Anointed, preachers now issued more generalized warnings against extremist tendencies from all sides of the confessional spectrum. In similar fashion, the anniversary of Charles II’s return to the throne in 1660, May 29<sup>th</sup>, was used increasingly to explain the shortcomings of the Restoration and the “necessary” changes made in the wake of the Glorious Revolution.<sup>25</sup> Finally, Gunpowder Treason Day, though it retained a strong anti-Catholic bias, evolved into a celebration of the Glorious Revolution and was additionally commemorated as the “rescue” of England from “arbitrary” power, which was taken to have begun with William of Orange’s landing at Torbay on November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1688.<sup>26</sup> From this, it can be seen that sermons had a crucial influence on the formation of public opinion well into the 18<sup>th</sup> century, whether

24 Cf. James Caudle: *Measures of Allegiance. Sermon Culture and the Creation of a Public Discourse of Obedience and Resistance in Georgian Britain, 1714–1760*. PhD Thesis. Yale University 1996, 290–291.

25 Cf. Pasi Ihalainen: *Protestant Nations Redefined. Changing Perceptions of National Identity in the Rhetoric of the English, Dutch and Swedish Public Churches 1685–1772*. Leiden 2005 (*Studies in Medieval and Reformation Traditions* 109), 581.

26 Cf. *ibid.*

preached at court, before Parliament, or even in the localities.<sup>27</sup> They also represented an indication of institutional change, seeing as parliamentary preaching began to have more weight than court preaching in the wake of Parliament's slow superseding of the court as the nation's political center.<sup>28</sup>

Political sermons are also the interest of Pasi Ihalainen, who opts to examine "state sermons" as a way of analyzing the history of political ideas. In his seminal study, *Protestant Nations Redefined*, Ihalainen reconstructs the changing political and religious concepts of nation and fatherland in the orations of Swedish, Dutch, and English churchmen.<sup>29</sup> Like Caudle, Ihalainen focuses on the 18<sup>th</sup> century and demonstrates how in England, earlier than elsewhere in Europe, the strongly confessionalized language of Protestant England was displaced by what he interprets as an enlightened and secular understanding of the national community.<sup>30</sup> This development was coupled with a more individualistic notion of religion, a point which is exemplified through the observation that from around the mid-century, comparisons between England and Biblical Israel slowly disappeared from sermons by Church of England preachers, contributing to a weakening of the notion of England as a Protestant nation.<sup>31</sup> Essentially, for both Caudle and Ihalainen, sermons are political tracts whose authors take part in and try to shape political discussions. In addition, sermons, or rather sermon rhetoric, reflect social and political changes in their use of concepts and ideas.<sup>32</sup>

The approaches of both Caudle and Ihalainen view sermons as part of political rhetoric. Furthermore, they are committed to a teleological outlook, in which sermons contribute and display a move towards social integration and political concepts where Enlightenment, rationality, and nationalism begin to replace religion. Given that the unsolved questions around religion in England potentially represented the largest threat to the restored monarchy of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, it seems that different interpretative frameworks for sermons and their politics would be needed for the years between 1660 and 1688/9. The implicit or explicit classification of sermons as parts of political rhetoric, a basic assumption for both authors, slants the focus of any analysis of sermons' politics heavily towards questions of constitutional politics, i. e. resistance theory and obedience

27 Cf. James Caudle: Preaching in Parliament. Patronage, Publicity and Politics in Britain, 1701–1760. In: *The English Sermon Revised: Religion, Literature and History 1600–1750*. Eds. Lori A. Ferrell, Peter E. McCullough. Manchester 2000, 235–263, 236.

28 Cf. *ibid.*, 257.

29 Cf. Ihalainen: *Protestant Nations*, 5.

30 Cf. *ibid.*, 579–580.

31 Cf. *ibid.*, 581–582.

32 For another example highlighting the diffusion of social and political ideas through sermons see: Michael Bregnsbo: *Gesellschaftsordnung und Staatsgewalt von der Kanzel her gesehen. Die Vermittlung politischer und sozialer Ideen durch dänische Predigten 1750–1848*. In: *Historisches Jahrbuch* 118 (1998), 108–130, *passim*.

in the case of Caudle, and the conceptual analysis of the national community's construction for Ihalainen.

Although there is no question that these issues are central ones to both the Restoration and the 18<sup>th</sup> century alike, such a focus on the discussion of constitutional politics in sermons runs the risk of neglecting other areas of potential political significance. Caudle is aware of this for some cases.<sup>33</sup> Even though it must be conceded that he is discussing 18<sup>th</sup>-century sermons, it may be noted that next to constitutional and "micro-political" issues, there are further categories of political significance which are crucial for an analysis of the political significance of sermon culture between 1660 and 1688/89; these include, for instance, the areas of liturgy, the status of theological truth, and piety in both its general and courtly contexts. As a consequence, it would seem that the definition of "political sermon" would have to be significantly widened.<sup>34</sup> This also appears necessary with regard to the body of sources, which should be extended beyond those of the "ecclesiopolitical holiday calendar"<sup>35</sup> of Stuart, Williamite, and Georgian Britain to include sermons preached on different and, on the surface, "unremarkable" dates.

Pasi Ihalainen's approach further abstracts from the specifics of the sermon genre, first through its larger scope of comparing sermons from three different Protestant nations, and second, through its focus on conceptions of political ideas and its goal "to reconstruct the scale of meanings attached to these concepts at a certain period of time, and to point out changes of meaning that were taking place within the concepts."<sup>36</sup> Since these changes are seen as having occurred on the macro level of the respective society and political nation, this largely eliminates the individual preacher's role in delivering a "political sermon," and subordinates him to the change and "modernization" of the discursive landscape, though Ihalainen notes that there is "the potential of individual language users to introduce innovations within the language of nation."<sup>37</sup> Ihalainen's conceptual analysis enables him to reach fascinating insights

33 Cf. Caudle: *Measures of Allegiance*, 290 where the following further categories of sermon occasions and topics are listed as of potential political significance: "Assizes, the Fifth Commandment of honoring parents, micro-political family (including master-servant relations), micro-political sexual (including sermons on marital 'politics'), and local-relations-with-magistrates-political sermons."

34 The need for such a wide approach to English political sermons was already noted in Joachim Eibach. *Politische Predigten in England und Brandenburg-Preußen zwischen konfessionellem Zeitalter und Frühaufklärung: Prolegomena zur Erschließung eines Felds der Religionsgeschichte für die Kulturvergleichs- und Transferforschung*. In: *Das eine Europa und die Vielfalt der Kulturen: Kulturtransfer in Europa 1500–1850*. Eds. Thomas Fuchs, Sven Trakulhun. Berlin 2003, 159–183, 176–177.

35 Caudle: *Preaching in Parliament*, 240.

36 Ihalainen: *Protestant Nations*, 11.

37 *Ibid.*, 29.

into the way in which official preachers in England, the Netherlands, and Sweden took part in and were subject to changing political and religious circumstances. Yet, we may take issue, for instance, with the classification of state sermons as “the most conservative genre of political discourse.”<sup>38</sup> This seems to underestimate the possibilities of preachers exercising influence at the cost of interpreting “state sermons” predominantly as tools for shoring up authority and preaching the political elite’s message of obedience to the nation. More often than not, sermons understood as political discourse seem to be mere templates of greater changes brought about by modernization and secularization, even though Ihalainen is far from equating secularization with the disappearance of religion.<sup>39</sup> This may be convincing in terms of a conceptual study of political languages in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. However, one might ask how preachers and their sermons did try to influence politics more directly, by holding their contemporary situation to the standards of Scripture, models of counselling their superiors, and employing biblical and rhetorical tropes to defend and criticize. The subtle mechanisms that the sermon genre allowed for, through its combination of oral presentation and distribution in written or printed form, do not figure in the equation of sermons as part of political discourse. However, they are one of the central aspects of sermons if they are truly to be understood as both texts and events.

Finally, Andreas Pečar uses the concept of a “political language” to analyze political argumentations drawn from the various parts of Scripture in different sources, including sermons. Pečar’s work is dependent on the so-called Cambridge School developed by Quentin Skinner and John Pocock; this methodology rejects a version of intellectual history that limits its sights to the interpretation of a few canonical authors, constructed around a timeless grand narrative of tradition and influence over the centuries.<sup>40</sup> Instead of approaching a text in what one might imagine as a sort of interpretative vacuum, where authorial intentions are of no importance, Skinner proposes “that the recovery of a writer’s (illocutionary) intentions must be treated as a necessary condition of being able to interpret the meanings of his work.”<sup>41</sup> According to Skinner, the methodological implications of this focus on the pragmatic aspect of a text, its

38 Ihalainen: *Protestant Nations*, 580.

39 Cf. *ibid.*, 15–18, where the author stresses the interactions between religion and non-religious discourses for the redefinition of concepts.

40 Melvin Richter: *Zur Rekonstruktion der Geschichte der Politischen Sprachen*. Pocock, Skinner und die Geschichtlichen Grundbegriffe. In: *Alteuropa – Ancien Régime – Frühe Neuzeit. Probleme und Methoden der Forschung*. Eds. Hans E. Bödeker, Ernst Hinrichs. Stuttgart 1991. 134–174, 144–145.

41 Quentin Skinner: *Motives, Intentions and the Interpretation of Texts*. In: *Meaning and Context*. Quentin Skinner and his Critics. Ed. James Tully. Cambridge 1988, 68–78, 77.

character as “speech act,” are at least twofold. First, it requires that due attention be given to the contemporary conventions surrounding the topic of a given text or texts which one wants to interpret.<sup>42</sup> Second, a writer’s convictions need to be elucidated in so far as they are relevant to what he intended to “do” with his text, since interpretation needs to be grounded in the “idea of the text as an object linked to its creator”<sup>43</sup> and in determining “what its creator may be doing in creating it.”<sup>44</sup> The practical implication of this consists of a sustained focus on the discursive landscape, comprising other texts and sources, surrounding an author’s writings and its reconstruction. Therefore, Pocock writes that “texts are events and make history.”<sup>45</sup> As performances, they are open to differing readings and go beyond the intentions of their original author, escaping control as soon as they are completed.<sup>46</sup> Pocock conceptualizes the relationship between the text as a speech act and its context as correlative of the structuralist dichotomy of *langue* and *parole*.<sup>47</sup> Recast in these Saussurean terms, *langue* refers to the available political “languages” or contexts, and *parole* signifies the individual speech acts, i.e. texts and sources. Thus, it is against the background of the numerous available languages that the individual speech act must be understood.<sup>48</sup> For Pocock, the task of the historian of ideas consists to a large extent of the process of reconstructing the context, or, to be more precise, the various “languages” in which authors and texts are necessarily embedded.<sup>49</sup>

Andreas Pečar’s work uses the referential frame of *langue* and *parole* employed by Pocock to reconstruct a new “political language” he refers to as “biblicism” in which Scripture becomes another reservoir for the exchange of

42 Cf. *ibid.* Skinner further explains: “It follows in turn that to understand what any given writer may have been doing in using some particular concept or argument, we need first of all to grasp the nature and range of things that could recognizably have been done using that particular concept, in the treatment of that particular theme, at that particular time.”

43 *Ibid.*, 78.

44 *Ibid.*

45 John G. A. Pocock: *Texts as Events: Reflections on the History of Political Thought*. In: *Political Thought and History. Essays on Theory and Method*. Ed. John Pocock. Cambridge 2009, 106–119, 114.

46 Cf. *ibid.*

47 John G. A. Pocock: *Der Begriff einer »Sprache« und das métier d'historien*. Einige Überlegungen zur Praxis. In: *Die Cambridge School der politischen Ideengeschichte*. Eds. Martin Mulrow and Andreas Mahler. Berlin 2010, 127–154, 127–130.

48 Pocock has, at different times, employed other terms for the concept of “political languages”, such as “paradigm”, “vocabulary” and “discourses”. Cf. Richter: *Zur Rekonstruktion*, 146.

49 “The history of political thought becomes primarily, though not finally, a history of language games and their outcomes. The historian’s reconstitution of the context that makes the text, as action and event, intelligible now becomes a matter of reconstituting the languages in which certain illocutions [...] were carried out, and of discerning what the individual text, author or performance did with the opportunities offered and the constraints imposed by the languages available to it.” Pocock: *Texts as Events*, 110–111.



political arguments.<sup>50</sup> Opponents resort to this “political language” of “biblicism” to imbue their arguments with authority when making statements about monarchical government, the right to resist, the relation between divine and human law, and other central topics of early modern political discussion in England. As a “political language,” the language of biblicism and the speech acts made within its confines are flexible tools. Consequently, Pečar is able to demonstrate the divergent, if not contradictory, political ends that could be supported using the same parts and passages of Scripture. For instance, the book of Revelation, with its strong anti-monarchical potential, could be made to serve the religious representation of James I, who in his own commentary on the text portrayed kings as the preordained warriors against the apocalyptic beast, i. e. the Papacy.<sup>51</sup> Essentially, any political statements could therefore be authorized and supported through recourse to Scripture. In a collection of essays on the subject, both Pečar and his co-author Kai Trampedach stress that this biblicism represents a neutral heuristic concept and is not to be understood in a pejorative fashion.<sup>52</sup>

Biblicism as an approach can highlight the possibilities of communicating admonishment, counsel, and criticism to the temporal rulers.<sup>53</sup> Its strong point is the understanding of the ambivalence of biblical types and images, something that Pečar and Trampedach indicate for the figure of David, who was often found in political sermons after 1660.<sup>54</sup> It therefore partly rehabilitates religion and religious discourse as viable objects of study, something that especially Pečar stresses in his analysis of the religious and political debate and conceptualization between Henry VIII’s Reformation and the Civil Wars. The potential of “biblicist” speech acts to inflame the volatile situation on the eve of the war is illustrated by the fast sermons preached before Parliament in the 1640s. Pečar views them as an important factor in preparing parliamentarians for the upcoming battle, expounding before them the necessity to defend God’s monarchy against that of the erring king Charles I and his surroundings.<sup>55</sup> Importantly, these sermons are interpreted as “political speech acts through which members

50 Cf. Andreas Pečar: *Macht der Schrift. Politischer Biblizismus in Schottland und England zwischen Reformation und Bürgerkrieg (1534–1642)*. München 2011, 22–29.

51 Cf. Andreas Pečar: *Der König – Theologe und Prophet? Biblizistische Selbstdarstellung Jakobs VI./I. im Spiegel seiner Schriften*. In: *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35.2 (2008), 207–234, 217–220.

52 Cf. Andreas Pečar and Kai Trampedach: *Der ‘Bibilizismus’ – eine politische Sprache der Vormoderne?* In: *Die Bibel als politisches Argument: Voraussetzungen und Folgen biblizistischer Herrschaftslegitimation in der Vormoderne*. Eds. Pečar/Trampedach. München, 2007, 1–18, *passim*.

53 Cf. *ibid.*, 12.

54 Cf. *ibid.*, 16–17.

55 Cf. Pečar: *Macht der Schrift*, 104.

of Parliament were to be influenced in their process of decision finding.”<sup>56</sup> Pečar rightly insists on the multiple and contradictory possibilities for the application of Scripture to the realm of politics.

The problems with this approach are essentially the same as with the Cambridge School methodology itself, and are twofold. First, historical individuals tend to disappear behind the all-important languages that the historian supposedly distills from a variety of textual speech acts.<sup>57</sup> This is a problem for the preachers, as it would be for poets and philosophers, because it neglects the individual’s voice in favor of what it supposes was an available reservoir of discourse. This leads to the second point of criticism: the Cambridge School methodology runs the risk of creating coherent “languages” that were available to individuals that might in fact have been anything but coherent.<sup>58</sup> This neglects context and attention to concrete situations in which an individual made a textual intervention.<sup>59</sup> With regard to Pečar’s construction of biblicism as a political language characterized by recourse to biblical arguments to bolster one’s argument, it must be asked whether this is not too vague a category. For if Pocock and Skinner can distill a certain use of concepts and ideas grounded in the interpretation of clearly demarcated philosophies or schools of thought, the Bible seems too large and varied a textual resource to fit into this category. Ultimately, the question is whether it is not self-defeating to construct the notion of a political language based on Scripture, which could be used to support basically every argument. This would not have been possible with the language of classical republicanism, which informed political discussions during the Civil War and Interregnum in England. In addition, the idea of the Bible as a mere reservoir for argumentation seems to accord too little importance to early modern views of Scripture. Though the Bible certainly had to compete increasingly with other textual reservoirs, it was still the fundamental way of making sense of life, and not merely another pool of arguments. While it is Pečar’s declared goal to strengthen the religious aspect of political debates, the notion of biblicism risks seeing early modern recourse to Scripture as a type of tool to bolster political arguments, which would seem to undermine the status of religious arguments and view them as cover for any political agenda.

56 The translation is my own. The original German quote reads: “Die hier präferierte Deutung sieht in den Fastenpredigten politische Sprechakte, mit denen die Abgeordneten in ihrer Entscheidungsfindung beeinflusst werden sollten”. Ibid., 103.

57 Cf. Eckart Hellmuth, Christoph von Ehrenstein: *Intellectual History Made in Britain. Die Cambridge School und ihre Kritiker*. In: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 27 (2001), 149–172, 160.

58 Cf. Ian Hampsher-Monk: *Political Languages in Time – The Work of J. G. A. Pocock*. In: *British Journal of Political Science* 14.1 (1984), 89–116, 104.

59 Cf. Hellmuth/Ehrenstein: *Intellectual History Made in Britain*, 163–165.