

ROYAL PROPAGANDA: SOME SAMPLES

The politicized nature of the 16th and 17th centuries lead to sometimes subtle (and sometimes overt) practices of propaganda. Here are three examples from the period: one is the table of contents of a standard history book, one is the opening passage of a chronicle, and the other is the subject matter of a sermon.

An introduction into the devisiōn of the two houses of Lancastre and Yorke

- i. The unquiet tyme of kyng Henry the fowerth
- ii. The victorious actes of kyng Henry the v.
- iii. The troubleous season of kyng Henry the vi.
- iv. The prosperous reigne of kyng Edward the iii.
- v. The pitifull life of kyng Edward the v.
- vi. The tragicall doynge of kyng Richard iii.
- vii. The politike gouveaunce of kyng Henry the vii.
- viii. The triumphant reigne of kyng Henry the viii.

The opening passage of Edward Hall's Chronicle:

"What mischief hath insurged in realmes by intestine devisiōn, what depopulaciōn hath ensued in countries by civill discension, what detestable murder hath been committed in citees by separte facciōns, and what calamitee hath ensued in famous regions by domesticall discord and unnaturall controversy: Rome hath felt, Italy can testifie, Fraunce can bear witnes, Beame can tell, Scotland maie write, Denmarke can shewe, and especially this noble realme of Englande can apparently declare and make demonstraciōn."

English Homilies

After Henry VIII split from the Catholic church, he appointed himself as the head of the Church of England. He ordered that a well-known books of homilies (sermons) be published in 1547, and organized the churches so that the same sermons would be read on the same days throughout all the churches of England. The standard first sermon is this sequence:

Opening Lines of Sermon #1: "Obey the King [or face chaos]. This is the word of God."