

Filmer's 'Patriarcha'

Sir Robert Filmer (c. 1588-1653) was an English philosopher who defended the Divine Right of Kings. His most famous work, *Patriarcha*, was most likely begun in the 1620s and completed before the outbreak of the British Civil Wars in 1642. However, it was not published until 1680, several years after his death.

Questions

Study Source A1 - the frontispiece (illustration) which faces the title of the book.

1. Who is the portrait of?
2. Can you identify any of the words written in Latin underneath the portrait? What does it say?
3. Are there any clues here that suggest the book is defending the idea of the Divine Right of Kings?

Study Source A2 - the title page of the book.

1. What does the title of the book suggest about the author's views on the power of kings?
2. Who wrote the book? What language is used to suggest that the author is a person of importance and authority?
3. When and where was this book printed? Can you suggest why it may have been published in 1680, long after Filmer had died?
4. Can you identify any of the Latin words written in italics in the middle of the page? What ideas or concepts are being mentioned?

Tyrell's Response

James Tyrell (1642-1718) was an English Whig political philosopher and friend of John Locke. His *Patriarcha non Monarcha* was a response to Filmer's *Patriarcha*.

Questions

Study Source B.

1. When and where was this book printed?
2. What does this title page suggest the author thinks about the arguments put forward about the Divine Right of King's by Robert Filmer in his book *Patriarcha*? Select a quote to show this.
3. How is the author of this book described? What does this description imply about Filmer, whom Tyrell is disagreeing with?
4. What do you notice about the way the author of this book's name appears on the title page?



Locke's Response

John Locke (1632-1704) was an English political philosopher who was associated with leading Whigs. He fled to the Netherlands in 1683, after the Rye House Plot (in which Whig extremists tried to assassinate King Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York), returning to England after the Glorious Revolution of 1688. His *Two Treatises of Government* argue against the Divine Right of Kings and in favour of individual consent.

Questions

Study Source C.

1. What does the title page suggest was the purpose of this book? Select a quotation to demonstrate this.
2. When and where was this book printed? Can you suggest why this book might have been published at this time?
3. Compare the title page of Locke's book with that of Tyrell's. What similarities can you identify in the language they both use?



Sidney's Response

Algernon Sidney was an English Whig politician and political theorist. Although not published until after his death, his *Discourses Concerning Government* was written in the early 1680s, during the Exclusion Crisis in which three exclusion bills attempted to exclude Charles II's brother, James, Duke of York from the succession as he was a Roman Catholic. Sidney was executed in 1683 for his involvement in the Rye House Plot in which Whig extremists tried to assassinate King Charles II and his brother James, Duke of York.

Questions

Study Source D1 - the title page of 'Discourses Concerning Government'.

1. When and where was this book printed?
2. How is the author of the book, Algernon Sidney, described in a way that suggests he is a person of importance and authority?

Study Source D2 - the introduction of Sidney's book.

1. What does Sidney say he hopes to show about Sir Robert Filmer's work?
2. Compare Sources D1 and D2 with Sources B and C. What do they all have in common?

