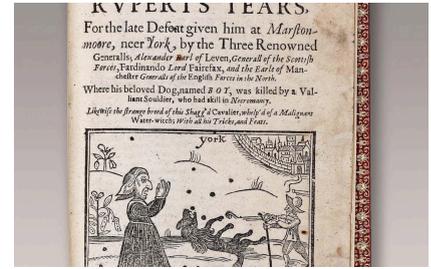


The British Civil Wars in 12 Objects for KS3-5

OBJECT TEN

DOG'S ELEGY OR RUPERT'S TEARS



INFORMATION SHEET

STARTER

Dogs and witchcraft might seem like a weird combination. However, witches had a history of being connected to animals. Read the extract from Professor Diane Purkiss' article on the history of witchcraft on the worksheet to understand the context behind witches' familiars.

CONTEXT

Charles I's nephew Prince Rupert's dog, 'Boy', was, perhaps, the most celebrated dog in England at this time. A large white hunting poodle, he had originally been given to the prince while he was languishing in prison at Linz Castle, Austria, and Rupert had subsequently brought the dog over to England with him when he came to join his uncle's forces at the beginning of the civil war.

During the first year of the conflict, Boy had shot to fame when an anonymous royalist satirist, possibly John Cleveland, had claimed that the parliamentarians believed the dog to be either a witch or a demon, who had assumed animal form, and, in that guise, had deployed his occult powers in order to assist the prince against his enemies. Tales of Prince Rupert and his magical dog had soon been in a thousand mouths, and during 1643-44, it seems to have been widely believed that there was, indeed, 'something of the night' about Boy, and that he possessed the ability to render both himself and his master 'shot-proof', or invulnerable to bullets.

Boy's eventual death at Marston Moor made it plain that, in the end, his supposed occult powers had been unable to save him - and 'a Dog's Elegy's' author jeeringly suggested that the dog had owed his untimely demise to the fact that a 'Valiant [Parliamentarian] Souldier, who had skill in Necromancy' had killed him with a silver bullet.

OBJECT FOCUS: A DOG'S ELEGY OR RUPERT'S TEARS

This is the title page of a satirical pamphlet, which was written by an anonymous pro-parliamentarian polemicist, and printed in London on 27 July 1644. The pamphlet was designed simultaneously to celebrate the destruction of the king's northern army at the Battle of Marston Moor - which had been fought near York some three weeks before - and to mock Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who had commanded the royalist forces. Yet rather than concentrating his fire on the prince himself, the author of the pamphlet chose to focus, instead, upon the sad fate of Boy who had been found dead on the field in the wake of the engagement.

The pamphlet well illustrates both the wicked glee with which the pro-parliamentarian polemicists set about their royalist opponents, and the way in which popular fears about witchcraft and sorcery were manipulated by the propagandists of both sides.

KEY ISSUES

- Supernatural beliefs during the Civil War
- Intersection of Religion and Superstition.
- Relationship between Royalists and Parliamentarians.
- Nature of Propaganda
- Reliability of Source Material/Eye Witness Accounts/News Sheets, etc.

GLOSSARY

Royalists	Those who supported the monarchy and Charles I during the Civil Wars.
Satirist	Someone who mocks current events by overexaggerating something of a serious nature.
Parliamentarians	Those who supported Parliament and Fairfax/Cromwell during the Civil Wars.
Occult Powers	Supernatural powers such as witchcraft.
Polemicist	A person who engages in controversial debate.
Prince Rupert of the Rhine	Charles I's royal nephew through his sister Elizabeth Stuart, daughter of James I, who married Frederick V, Elector Palatine and King of Bohemia.
Propaganda	Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view.

STAR MODEL: SEE, THINK, ASK, RESEARCH

- [Class Powerpoint](#)
- [Teacher notes](#)

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 1: ANTI-ROYALIST PROPAGANDA

Research: In small groups, conduct online research into anti-Royalist propaganda, including Prince Rupert's dog.

Class Discussion: Was the propaganda surrounding Prince Rupert meant as satire, or does it suggest a true belief in the supernatural? How does this propaganda compare to later propaganda used in wars e.g. World War II.

Object analysis: Look at the Dog's Elegy and carry out See, Think, Ask, Research.

See: Identify key elements of the pamphlet and what stands out to you.

Think: Identify the significance of the object.

Ask: What questions do you have following your examination of the object? What does it make you wonder? What is missing or not clear?

Research: What next steps will I take to find out more and to answer any of the questions I have?

How does this compare to other propaganda? What surprises you about the pamphlet compared to its reputation?

[ACTIVITY 2: WITCHCRAFT](#)

1. In pairs or small groups, look at other examples of witchcraft beliefs at the time on the worksheet,

including the Bellarmine jug and the Ghost of Oliver Cromwell.

2. Conduct See, Think, Ask, Research with these images.
3. What was the significance of beliefs in witchcraft during the Civil War? How might this conflict with the Christian values of the time? Discuss this as a group or write down your thoughts.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 3: COMPARING WITH IRISH REBELLION PROPAGANDA

1. Look at the propaganda images from the Irish Rebellion of 1641 on the worksheet.
2. How do you think this compares to the anti-Royalist propaganda? Note down any similarities or differences you identify.
3. If you have completed the Irish Skein lesson, then compare the portrayal of the Viragos to that of Rupert's dog. Were either treated more sympathetically than the other? Why were both linked to the supernatural?

ACTIVITY 4: THE IMPACT OF THE PRINTING PRESS

1. Using the supporting text on the worksheet, learn the context behind the development of the printing press and how it changed English society during the reformation.
2. **Discussion:** Using your knowledge of its impact on the reformation, discuss what impact did the arrival of the printing press have on propaganda? What examples of this can we see during the Civil Wars?
3. Now, design your own piece of anti-Royalist propaganda about Prince Rupert's dog. Will you portray him as a witch or take a more sympathetic view of Boy?

LINKS WITH OTHER OBJECTS

- Bellarmine Jug
- Discovery of Witches
- Irish Rebellion Propaganda

MOVING ON FROM THE OBJECT: WIDER ENQUIRY QUESTIONS

What does a Dog's Elegy tell you about the nature of war and propaganda?

How is a Dog's Elegy an example of superstition and a belief in the supernatural during the 17th century?

What is the link between a Dog's Elegy and the impact of propaganda in the 17th century?

FIND OUT MORE: LINKS TO ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL RESOURCES

[Article on the Printing Press and the Reformation](#)

[Article on the History of Witchcraft](#)