'king-craft, n.

The art of ruling as a king; the skilful exercise of royalty; esp. the use of clever or crafty diplomacy in dealing with subjects.

[1650  A. WELDON Court & Char. King James 102  Nor must I forget to let you know how perfect the King [Jas. I] was in the art of dissimulation, or to give it his own phrase (King-craft).]

1643  W. PRYNNE Soveraigne Power Parl. II. 34  In this dissembling age; when King-craft is improved to the utmost.

1677  T. GALE Court of Gentiles: Pt. IV. 4  Solomon was endowed with this natural sagacitie..which kind of sagacitie Politicians cal King-craft.

1827  H. HALLAM Constit. Hist. Eng. II. xviii. 736  The king-craft and the priest-craft of the day taught other lessons.

1874  J. R. GREEN Short Hist. Eng. People viii. §7. 534  With Charles they were simply counters, in his game of king-craft.

This entry has not yet been fully updated (first published 1901).