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“Princes upon Stages”: the Theatricalization of Monarchy in the Reign of Elizabeth I, 1558-1569

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“PRINCES UPON STAGES”
THE THEATRICALIZATION OF MONARCHY IN THE REIGN OF ELIZABETH I,
1558-1569

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

in

The Department of History

by
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*For David and Baby Rush - yes, you can do it.
Thank you for always reminding me of what's important.
I love you both to the moon and back!*

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ABSTRACT

The reign of Elizabeth I of England is one of the most celebrated reigns in history and is renowned for the renaissance of the arts, theater, and culture. Authors, playwrights, and artists venerated her in their art in what became known as the Cult of Gloriana. At her accession, however, her position was far from secure. Many considered her illegitimate and she was a female entering a male-dominated world. In addition, Elizabeth inherited a religiously divided nation. In response to this, Elizabeth and her councilors initiated a propaganda campaign that created an image of Elizabeth as a wise, just, and well-beloved ruler. This dissertation will examine the growing use of pageantry utilized by sixteenth-century rulers, the legacy of the English queens who preceded Elizabeth, Elizabeth's coronation procession, the evolution of the royal court, the performance of plays and masques at court, and the queen's annual progresses to show how Elizabeth, her council, and her subjects used pageantry and spectacle to communicate with each other on the important issues of the day.

INTRODUCTION

Early on the morning of March 24, 1603, Queen Elizabeth I died at Richmond Palace, bringing to an end a reign that saw a golden age of the arts, long periods of peace and stability both domestically and abroad, and the reaffirmation of England's status on the world stage. Her funeral was held on April 28 with over 1,500 people following her in her last procession to Westminster Abbey. "Nothing quite like it had ever been seen before."¹ The English historian, John Stow, described the scene:

The city of Westminster was surcharged with multitudes of all sorts of people in their streets, houses, windows, leads, and gutters, who that came to see the obsequy; and when they beheld her statue lying upon the coffin, there was such a general sighing, groaning and weeping as the like hath not been seen or known in the memory of man, neither doth any history mention any people, time or state to make like lamentation for the death of their sovereign.²

Poets and writers throughout the country quickly eulogized the beloved queen, comparing her to a phoenix, a mother pelican, a rose, Astraea, the Greek virgin goddess of innocence, the biblical judge Deborah, a multitude of heroes from the Old Testament and Greek mythology. One poet wrote, "She was and is, what can there more be said, in earth the first, in heaven the second maid."³ What quickly becomes apparent in these tributes is that none of the authors referred to Elizabeth as a human. By the time of her death, she had achieved an almost mythical status.

Historians call this phenomenon the Cult of Gloriana, a term coined by Roy Strong. The cult, according to Strong, is centered on "Elizabeth as the object of an intellectual cult."⁴ It was a deliberate attempt by Elizabeth and her image-makers to take the worship of the Virgin Mary and Catholic saints, which ended as a result of the English Reformation, and focus that adoration

¹ Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Pimlico, 1977), 14.

² Quoted in Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest, vol. 7: Elizabeth, Second Queen-Regnant of England and Ireland* (Philadelphia: George Barrie & Sons, 1902), 226.

³ Quoted in Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, 15.

⁴ Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, 47.

on the queen. This process was so effective that “the myth...of Elizabeth has been inseparable from the history and historiography of her reign.”⁵

The Cult of Gloriana flourished during the second half of Elizabeth I’s reign. Authors, playwrights, and artists venerated the queen in their art. This cult had its beginnings in the first years after her ascension because of the propaganda used by Elizabeth, her council, and the people of England. Susan Doran and Thomas Freeman in *The Myth of Elizabeth* argue that the Cult of Gloriana was a cooperative effort between the queen, her council, the people, and nobles, each with his or her own motives. The queen contributed to the cult by a process known as Renaissance self-fashioning. Her subjects contributed to the cult in order to please their queen, gain her approval, and to enhance the monarchy.

“The monarchy of Elizabeth I,” according to Christopher Haigh, “was founded upon illusion.”⁶ The accession of Elizabeth brought a cautious optimism about the future. Years of upheavals and religious strife left England a divided nation and the new queen faced a difficult situation. She faced more threats to her power than any Tudor monarch since her grandfather, Henry VII. In order to strengthen her position and unite the country during her first decade as queen, Elizabeth and her council launched an organized and effective propaganda campaign and cultivated an image that focused her subjects’ loyalties on her. She accomplished this through the use of spectacle, drama, and pageantry, specifically in her coronation procession, the performance of plays and masques at court, and annual progresses. Pageantry and performance offered a different type of medium through which to present a message because unlike a portrait

⁵ Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 319.

⁶ Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 2nd ed., Profiles in Power (New York: Longman, 1998), 10.

or book, a performance or appearance by the queen only occurred once. Therefore the message had to be memorable and clear.

The people of England participated in propaganda dialogue through the use of civic theater. When Elizabeth visited a town on progress or, most notably, for her coronation procession, the citizens of the town welcomed their queen with pageants which contained messages of their hopes and desires. Courtiers also used the performance of masques to express opinions on the important issues of the day. Sometimes the line between civic theater and royal propaganda blurred when the queen and her council collaborated on pageantry and the message, but there is little evidence that this occurred in the first years of the Elizabeth's reign. However, one must assume that those who presented the performances knew the wishes of their queen and did not want to displease her.

Printed accounts circulated throughout England and the continent, spreading the image of Elizabeth as a judicious and well-beloved ruler. One problem facing historians who study this period is that there is not as much surviving evidence from the first decades of the queen's reign as compared to that of the later years. Historians must rely on the biased descriptions from those who were present at the events. Diaries, such as that of Henry Machyn, and letters from foreigners such as the Venetian, Il Schifanoia, paint a picture of the performance and note the reactions of the queen and those present and, in some cases, on the texts of the plays presented to discern the message of the performance. From those sources that are available, however, it is apparent that plays and masques were gaining in popularity. In addition, patrons and writers were beginning to see their potential for spreading messages and propaganda.

Elizabeth sought the affection and approval of her subjects. According to Conyers Read, “No monarch of her time and very few since have been so sensitive to...public opinion.”⁷ She believed that the source of her monarchical power relied on the consent of her people. Her government was ultimately successful because it knew and paid attention to popular will. The relationship between the people and their queen was a common theme in Elizabethan propaganda. The Spanish ambassador, Count de Feria, wrote, “She is much attached to the people and is very confident that they are all on her side; which is indeed true.”⁸

Kings and queens throughout history have had some understanding of the importance of image. The Tudor monarchs were more visible to their subjects than previous monarchs and all were aware of the power of their image, both in person and in portraits, perhaps none more so than Elizabeth. Sydney Anglo, in *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy*, was one of the first modern historians to recognize the Tudor use of pageantry for propaganda purposes, the “fluctuation rather than the development” of propaganda during the Tudor age.⁹ Although later, in *Tudor Images of Kingship*, Anglo does question the effectiveness of such propaganda: “the imagery of kingship could be proclaimed from the pulpit, and it could be set forth in books, both in words and pictures. The means seem comprehensive enough: yet a moment’s reflection reveals their limitations and transience.”¹⁰ Roy Strong argues that the Cult of Gloriana helped Elizabeth consolidate her power and in *Selling the Tudor Monarchy* Kevin Sharpe argues that each Tudor monarch recognized the power of image and used it to gain the submission of their subjects.

⁷ Conyers Read, “Good Queen Bess,” *The American Historical Review* 31 (July 1926): 659.

⁸ Quoted in J.E. Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I: A Biography* (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), 52-53.

⁹ Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 6.

¹⁰ Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (Guildford: Seaby, 1992), 98-99.

The Tudors benefitted from the spread of the Renaissance and, after 1568, the large number of foreign artists who arrived in England, fleeing religious persecution on the Continent. Portraiture became a vital part of the Cult of Gloriana. Owning a portrait of the queen became a mark of loyalty. A monarch's face on coins gave a face to the ruler and kept the queen close to her subjects' hearts and in their minds. The proliferation of images of Elizabeth resulted in one of the first efforts to control her image. In 1563 her government drafted a proclamation, overseen by William Cecil himself. The proclamation was intended to prevent portraits with a poor likeness of the queen.

Hir Majestie perceiveth that a great number of her loving subjects are much greved, and take great offence with the errors and deformities allready comitted by sondry persons in this behalf, she is straightly chargeth all hir officers and ministers to see the observation hereof, and as soon as maybe to reform the errors allready committed, and in meantime to forbydd and prohibit the showing and publication of such as are apparently deformed until they are reformed which are reformable.¹¹

While the proclamation was never issued, it does show that Elizabeth's government was aware of the power and importance of the queen's image. By the mid-1570s, Elizabeth sat for a portrait known as the "Darnley" portrait painted by an unknown artist.¹² The facial likeness in the portrait was copied for many years in subsequent paintings which gave Elizabeth a youthful, almost ethereal, appearance in portraits even up to the end of her reign.

The ceremony surrounding a monarch provided a unique opportunity to present a message and image to the people. Pageantry could awe the observer, fleeting though that opportunity was. Unlike a painting or a coin or a book, which could be seen and studied over a

¹¹ Quoted in Georgianna Ziegler, ed., *Elizabeth I: Then and Now* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 167.

¹² For a copy of the portrait, see Tarnya Cooper, *A Guide to Tudor and Jacobean Portraits* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2008), 33.

period of time, pageantry relied on the moment and the senses to imprint the message. Pageantry capitalized on the sights and sounds, on the people present, and, especially the queen herself, dressed in sumptuous materials and glittering with jewels. She was particularly adept at making an impact on observers during public performances. She seemed to instinctively know the right moment, the right word, the right gesture, to win the approval of her subject, deflect criticisms, and strengthen the bonds of loyalty. Elizabethan pageantry drew upon the pageantry of the Italians, the Venetians, and the French, of the Renaissance and humanist learning in their performances.

Elizabeth was also able to use her femininity to her advantage. She was not the only reigning queen in Europe at the time, but was only the third queen in English history. Well-educated in history and public affairs, Elizabeth apparently took their experiences to heart. The recently-discovered exploits of Boudica, who led a revolt against the Romans, was not an obvious influence, but comparisons between the two red-haired queens could not be avoided, particularly later in Elizabeth's reign. The civil war that erupted after the disputed claims of the Empress Matilda and Stephen were certainly forefront in Henry VIII's mind throughout his "Great Matter." Matilda lost the support of the people because of her arrogance, a lesson for the new queen. The reign of Elizabeth's half-sister, Mary, whose unpopular policies and marriage, weighed heavily on her mind and influenced many of her policies.

Theatrical performances also gave Elizabeth's subjects an opportunity to present their wishes and expectations for the new regime. For her coronation procession, the guilds of London presented pageants that dramatized these hopes. The pageants emphasized Elizabeth's right to the throne and incorporated common themes in Tudor propaganda, focusing on Protestantism and Elizabeth's English heritage. Richard Tottel printed an account of the procession that not

only described the pageants, but also Elizabeth's reactions to them. For the first time, a monarch became a part of the performance and Elizabeth gave the perfect response each time. She obviously made an impression on the people of London, establishing the groundwork for later entertainments.

The royal court was at the center of a monarch's life. The court evolved over time, from a small group of people who surrounded the king who moved constantly throughout the kingdom, to a large and relatively stable institution. By the time of Elizabeth's accession, the court included the monarch's family, members of the government of the realm, the nobles of the realm, scholars, painters, and hundreds of servants. It was at the royal court that visiting ambassadors arrived to negotiate, presenting more opportunities for pageantry and propaganda. Elizabeth's court became well-known for its magnificence.

The spoken word was a powerful tool in the sixteenth century and Elizabeth's reign saw a renaissance of theater. The performance of plays and masques was a perfect medium for Englishmen to offer their opinions on the pressing topics of the day. Dramatic performances entertained, persuaded, and brought attention to the magnificence of the Court. Realizing its influence, the government attempted to manage the licensing of performances. Thus, courtiers who patronized acting companies contributed to the growing cult by presenting plays that perpetuated the image of Elizabeth as a loving monarch. The queen validated the image by attending the performances. Court entertainments also brought the Court together and made the queen the focal point of the evening. Courtiers offered plays based on parables, the nature of kingship, the issue of the queen's marriage, and the settlement of the succession.

The Queen's choice of a husband and an heir were the burning questions of the day. There were many candidates for her hand, but marriage to a foreigner was dangerous and

marriage to a subject was demeaning. The choice of an heir became a choice between the granddaughters of Henry VIII's two sisters. Parliament repeatedly asked Elizabeth for her choice and she continued to hesitate. Although this kept Elizabeth as the central point of the people's loyalty, it made many nervous because of the uncertainty of what would happen after her death. A disputed succession brought the prospect of civil war. Elizabeth's near fatal bout with smallpox in 1562 made this fear all the more acute. Courtiers presented entertainments that highlighted the advantages of marriage and offered solutions for the settlement of the succession, including a play that was the first succession tract and a landmark in theatrical history. The performances presented by the courtiers to the queen show the dialogue between the two sides.

Annual progresses through the countryside were a distinguishing feature of Elizabeth's reign. Progresses were not innovative. Previous monarchs and Elizabeth's contemporaries routinely traveled from palace to palace for sanitary reasons, but Elizabeth used the opportunity to show her person to as many people as possible. For many of her subjects, these yearly progresses were their only contact with her. The destinations reflected her perception of the political and diplomatic scene and validated her authority. For private hosts, the visits offered access to powerful guests. For civic hosts, they promoted local pride. With the exception of scattered anecdotes, there are few specific details of her visits. It was the spectacle of the queen's visit, rather than the events of her entertainments, that left its mark on the minds of the people.

Pageantry during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign provided a vehicle for the queen and her subjects to present a united front to the world. For the English people, Elizabeth's attendance at performances gave them the chance to convey their desires. For the new queen, her presence, and the subsequent publications of events, allowed her the opportunity to manipulate her image and keep her person as a focal point for the people's love and loyalty.

CHAPTER I
“A DANCE OF STATE”:
THE EVOLUTION OF ROYAL PAGEANTRY

And what have kings,
That privates have not too,
Save ceremony—save general ceremony?
And what art thou, thou idol ceremony?
What kind of god art thou, that suffer'st more
Of mortal griefs than do thy worshippers?
What art thy rents? What art thy comings-in?
O ceremony, show me but thy worth!¹

In 1598 Paul Hentzner, counselor to Duke Charles of Münsterberg and Öls, accompanied his student, Christopher Rehdiger, a German nobleman, on a tour of England. They visited Greenwich Palace and, at the invitation of the Lord Chamberlain, were admitted to the royal presence chamber. While there, they witnessed the ceremony surrounding the sixty-five year old Queen Elizabeth I as she passed through the chamber to attend chapel and then again to prepare for dinner.

First went gentlemen, barons, earls, knights of the garter, all richly dressed, and bare-headed; next came the Chancellor, bearing the seals in a red silk purse, between two, one of which carried the royal sceptre, the other the sword of state, in a red scabbard, studded with golden fleur-de-lis, the points upwards.

Next came the Queen, in the sixty-fifth year of her age, as we are told, very majestic... Upon her head, she had a small crown, reputed to be made of some of the gold of the celebrated Luneburg table. Her bosom was uncovered, as all English ladies have it till they marry, and she had on a necklace of exceeding fine jewels... Her air was stately, her manner of speaking mild and obliging. That day, she was dressed in white silk, bordered with pearls of the size of beans, and, over it, a mantle of black silk, shot with silver threads. Her train was very long. The end of it borne by a marchioness. Instead of a chain, she had an oblong collar of gold and jewels.

¹ William Shakespeare, *Henry V* (New York: Penguin, 1998), 89.

...The ladies of the Court followed next to her, very handsome and well shaped, and for the most part, dressed in white. She was guarded on each side by the gentlemen pensioners, fifty in number, with gilt battle-axes.

A gentleman entered the room, bearing a rod, and along with him another, who had a tablecloth which, after they had both kneeled three times with the utmost veneration, lay spread upon the table, and after kneeling again they both retired. Then came two others, one with the rod again, the other with a salt-seller, a plate and bread. When they had kneeled, as the others had done, and placed what was brought upon the table, they too retired with the same ceremonies performed by the first. At last came an unmarried lady (we were told she was a countess) and, along with her, a married one, bearing a tasting-knife. The former was dressed in white silk, who, when she had prepared herself three times in the most graceful manner, approached the table, rubbed tile plates with bread and salt with as much awe as if the Queen had been present. When they had waited there a little while, the yeoman of the guard entered, bare-headed, clothed in scarlet with a golden rose upon their backs, bringing in at each turn a course of twenty-four dishes, served in plates, most of them gilt. These dishes were received by gentlemen, in the same order they were brought, and placed upon the table, while the lady-taster gave to each of the guard a mouthful to eat, of the particular dish he had brought, for fear of any poison.

During the time that this guard, which consists of the tallest and stoutest men that can be found in all England, being carefully selected for this service, were bringing dinner, twelve trumpets and two kettle drums made the hall ring for half-an-hour together.

At the end of all this ceremonial, a number of unmarried ladies appeared who, with particular solemnity, lifted the meat off the table and conveyed it into the Queen's inner and more private chamber where, after she had chosen for herself, the rest goes to the ladies of the Court. The Queen dines and sups alone, with very few attendants, and it is very seldom that anybody, foreigner or native, is admitted at that time, and then only at the intercession of somebody in power.²

Pageantry encompassed every aspect of a monarch's life and the monarch was the center of the pageantry. It created an aura around majesty. The use of crowns, fine clothes and jewels, ceremony, and ritual dazzled viewers. The symbols of majesty were used to mark important events such as coronations, marriages, and treaty negotiations. They were displayed when the

² Paul Hentzner and Richard Bentley, *A Journey into England* (Reading: T.E. Williams, 1807), 26-27.

monarch went on progress, formally entered a city, and at court festivals. The accessories of majesty stayed the same regardless of who the monarch was, emphasizing the permanence of the monarchy.

The pageantry surrounding the monarch, known as civic theater, which Anne Lancaster defines as “drama and pageantry sponsored by city and town governing bodies,” dates to Roman times, but the records are scarce.³ The earliest evidence of civic theater is the remains of an amphitheater built by the Romans during the first and second centuries C.E. The Romans abandoned the amphitheater when they left England in 410, but their civic theater traditions remained.

In the tenth century, the Catholic Church revived the traditions and molded them to its needs. During the Middle Ages, the focus of pageantry was the glorification of the church in addition to that of the monarch. However, any celebration of the monarch was in relation to the church. This included ceremonies such as the priest anointing a king at his coronation or the foot washing ceremony on Maundy Thursday, where the prince would wash the feet of the poor.⁴ In 1247 King Henry III received “some drops of the Precious Blood” from the Patriarch of Jerusalem and led a great procession of the clergy from St. Paul’s to Westminster.⁵ The king, humbly dressed, carried a vase containing the blood. Interestingly, there were no civic authorities included in the procession, which again emphasized the importance of the church over that of the government.

Civic theater continued in some form from the withdrawal of the Romans until the thirteenth century, but the sources are scarce and vague. London continued to welcome royalty

³ Anne Lancashire, *London Civic Theatre: City Drama and Pageantry from Roman Times to 1558* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1.

⁴ For more information about the Maundy Thursday service in Elizabeth’s time see Carole Levin, “‘Would I Could Give You Help and Succour’: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Touch,” *Albion* 21 (Summer 1989): 191-205.

⁵ Robert Withington, “The Early ‘Royal Entry’,” *PMLA* 32 (1917): 619.

and dignitaries with ceremony, but there was none of the pageantry associated with the later Middle Ages. The king ordered the streets cleaned and decorated. The citizens met the procession and gifts were sometimes given. For the coronation procession of King Richard I, also known as Richard the Lionhearted, in 1189 tapestries decorated the walls of building and the citizens of London met the new king outside the city and escorted him to the palace.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, chroniclers began describing pageantry in London, most notably Matthew Paris whose *English History* provide a number of descriptions of royal events. By the thirteenth century, London would decorate the city for royal processions, cleaning the processional route and hanging rich cloths from windows and buildings. In the mid-thirteenth century Londoners began erecting stages along the route to display scenes, sometimes using mechanical devices, such as the 1236 coronation procession of Eleanor of Provence, queen of King Henry III. The procession is the "the first example of pageantry in the proper sense."⁶

There were assembled at the king's nuptial festivities such a host of nobles of both sexes, such numbers of religious men, such crowds of the populace, and such a variety of actors, that London, with its capacious bosom, could scarcely contain hangings, candles and lamps, and with wonderful devices and extraordinary representations, and all the roads were cleansed from mud and dirt, sticks, and everything offensive.⁷

London celebrated subsequent royal visits with the same pomp. In the early thirteenth century King Henry III ordered the streets cleaned and decorated for the visit of Beatrice, Countess of Provence, and again to celebrated the king's return from France, but there was no pageantry in the technical sense. In 1252 chroniclers noted great feasting that accompanied the wedding of Alexander III of Scotland and Henry's

⁶ E.K. Chambers quoted in Withington, "The Early 'Royal Entry'": 617.

⁷ Matthew Paris, *Matthew Paris's English History, vol. I*, J.A. Giles, trans., (London: George Bell & Sons, 1889). 8-9.

daughter, Margaret, in York. Again, there was none of the pageantry associated with later royal events, but a splendid occasion for participants and witnesses nonetheless.

In 1298, the citizens of London witnessed the first 'royal entry' that included pageantry.

The pageant celebrated Edward I's victory at the Battle of Falkirk.

The Cytezyns of London hearyng tell of this great Victorye made great solempnyty euery one accordyng to his craft & in especyall the fyshmongers which wth solempne processyon passed through the cytye havyng fyrst 4 storions 14 gylded caryed on 4 horses and after 4 horses caryed 4 samons 15 of sylver and after xlvi knyghtis all armed vpon luges of the water I" and St. Magnus among the rest wth a thowsand horsemen passed to leaden hall And this they dyd on St. Mapgus Day in honor of the Kynngis Victorye.⁸

There is no evidence that the king himself was present, however, this is the first occasion in which a pageant was created to celebrate a royal achievement.

By the fourteenth century, the descriptions of civic theater became more detailed. By 1357 any dignitary entering the city of London would travel the same well-established route. With the exception of coronations, the mayor of London and civic leaders, all wearing livery, met the visiting dignitary or the monarch on the outskirts of the city and they would enter the city together, crossing London Bridge. The group then proceeded up Bridge Street to Gracechurch Street, along Cornhill, to Cheapside, past Saint Paul's. They left the city via Ludgate, traveled along Fleet Street, then past Temple Bar, reaching their destination at Westminster. By the fifteenth century in England, the pageantry became more elaborate and the descriptions became more detailed and focused on the spectacles. From 1400 to 1500, with the exception of Richard III, no monarch or foreign dignitary entered London without ceremony.⁹

⁸ Withington, "The Early 'Royal Entry'", 621.

⁹ Richard III was regent for his nephew, King Edward V. Richard became king when Edward IV's marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was declared invalid.

Although dignitaries entered London with ceremony, coronation processions were still rare. Not every king or queen who traveled to Westminster Abbey for a coronation was accorded pageantry on the procession. It was not until the sixteenth century that processions became a regular part of the coronation celebrations. When the citizens of London did plan pageants along the route, the pageants focused on the concept of kingship and queenship. When the pageantry was for the coronation of a king, the citizens presented symbolic representations of the Coronation itself and its significance.

An example of this was the London entry of eleven year old King Henry VI upon his return from his French coronation in February 1432. Henry VI's coronation procession took place three years after his actual coronation as King of England, but was only two months after his coronation as King of France. In the overall theme of the pageants, the citizens of London presented Henry as a Christ-like figure on whom the Holy Spirit descends, which represented the anointment of the new monarch with the sacred oil. One pageant staged an allegorical version of the ceremony of investiture during the Coronation ceremony. Using the text from Ephesians 6:11-17, a figure of the king was bestowed pieces of spiritual armor.¹⁰ The armor included: "the crown of glory, the sceptre of clemency, the sword of justice and the pallium (cloak) of prudence."¹¹ This armor represented Saint Paul's description of the "whole armour of God."¹² In another pageant, the young king was cast as a king in the vein of King Solomon. It is unknown how much influence the king's government had in the planning and preparation of the

¹⁰ From Ephesians 6:11-17: "Put on the whole armour of God that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done, all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

¹¹ Roy Strong, *Coronation: From the 8th to the 21st Century*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 2005), 137.

¹² Strong, *Coronation*, 137.

procession, “but the desire to present the boy ruler as the embodiment of theocratic kingship was strong at a period when being king of two countries was under severe strain and moving to collapse.”¹³

It was not until the Renaissance that the focus of pageantry turned to the prince. The change was as a result of three characteristics of the Renaissance. The first was the idealism of the classical age and the triumphal appearances of conquerors and rulers. Many of the coronation processions and state entries of Renaissance princes mimic the entries of Roman rulers entering a conquered city.

The second characteristic that changed the focus of court pageantry was the split within the Catholic Church. After the Protestant Reformation, princes established themselves as their nation’s leader in religious matters. This image of a religious leader soon transformed into the image of the ruler as the maintainer of peace and order. This was particularly true in England, where after the establishment of the Church of England in 1534, the monarch was head of the church as well as the head of the government.

The third characteristic that affected pageantry was the rise of humanism during the Renaissance. Humanist artists, painters, writers, and poets used their art to glorify the state. “Before the invention of the mechanical mass media of today, the creation of monarchs as an ‘image’ to draw people’s allegiance was the task of humanists, poets, writers and artists.”¹⁴ Monarchs throughout Europe began commissioning artists to paint portraits, create pageants, and write poems that glorified them. At the same time, historians rewrote histories within dynastic terms. In 1548 Edward Hall published a history of England in which the whole of England’s

¹³ Strong, *Coronation*, 137.

¹⁴ Roy Strong, *Splendor at Court: Renaissance Spectacle and the Theater of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973), 19.

history was simply a precursor the rise of the Tudor dynasty, in particular the reign of King Henry VII.¹⁵

Monarchs used pageantry as propaganda. Every state occasion, masque, or banquet presented an opportunity to make a political statement. As the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation progressed, many monarchs, like Elizabeth, took an active interest in the image presented to the people. This explains, states Kevin Sharpe, “how they persuaded sometimes reluctant people to follow controversial courses and not only obey them but regard them as sacred.”¹⁶ A ruler needs a people to rule. To be successful, the people have to be compliant. “All authority requires legitimization.”¹⁷

Court festivals, according to Roy Strong, demonstrate “the passionate belief held during the Renaissance of the union of the arts” more than any other art form.¹⁸ Court festivals combined dance, music, poetry, and painting to glorify the monarch. The monarch and his or her counselors utilized the arts to shape the image of the ruler and to express the government’s messages: “power conceived as art.”¹⁹ The artists used these occasions to recreate and emulate the festivals of classical antiquity. Observers and the authors themselves wrote descriptions and commentaries of the events, which gave those not present for the occasion a glimpse of the event. These commentaries were sent throughout England and Europe. By the time of Elizabeth’s reign, the government saw these commentaries as a chance to shape and propagate Elizabeth’s image. These commentaries, such as the account of Elizabeth’s coronation, *The Queenes Maiesties Passage through the Citie of London to Westminster the Day before Her*

¹⁵ See Edward Hall, *Hall’s Chronicle: Containing the History of England, During the Reign of Henry the Fourth, and the Succeeding Monarchs, to the End of the Reign of Henry the Eighth, in which are Particularly Described the Manners and Customs of Those Periods* (London: J. Johnson, 1809).

¹⁶ Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, xxiii.

¹⁷ Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 11.

¹⁸ Strong, *Splendor at Court*, 17.

¹⁹ Strong, *Splendor at Court*, 76.

Coronacion, were printed with the blessing of the government. These commentaries generally included elaborate illustrations of the events. While a printed commentary did not have the same effect as a seeing the performance in person, after all, a page in a book cannot convey the charisma of the monarch, the sounds of the people, or the excitement in the air, they did allow the printer to convey the message of the performance and interpret its meaning. They enabled “those who were not there to savour the transitory wonder and to grasp its import from afar.”²⁰

Each appearance by a monarch had to impress both the subjects of the realm and visitors. Even so simple a task as going to chapel and preparing for dinner were occasions to make an impression. Everything was noted: from the monarch’s clothes and words both spoken and unspoken to the decorations at court and the actions of those in attendance.

A king had to look like a king; a queen had to look like a queen. Princely magnificence, or the appearance of the ruler, was sometimes as important as words of the ruler. Kings and queens had to wear rich clothing, jewels, and crowns, live in splendid palaces, and travel in luxury. Subjects and other rulers saw this as a sign of power and princes were expected to spend lavishly. In his book *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, the classical philosopher Aristotle wrote about the importance of magnificence and lavish spending.

But the magnificent man is like a skilled artist; he can be what a case requires, and can spend great sums tastefully. For, as we said at the outset, a habit or type of character takes its complexion from those acts in which it issues and the things it produces. The magnificent man's expenses, therefore, must be great and suitable...And so a poor man cannot be magnificent: he has not the means to spend large sums suitably: if he tries, he is a fool; for he spends disproportionately and in a wrong way; but an act must be done in the right way to be virtuous. But such expenditure is becoming in those who have got the requisite means, either by their own efforts through their ancestors or their connections, and who have birth and reputation, etc. ; for nil these things give a man a certain greatness and importance.²¹

²⁰ Strong, *Splendor at Court*, 19.

²¹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics of Aristotle*, F.H. Peters, trans., (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, & Co., 1906), 109-111.

In the reign of Henry VI, Sir John Fortescue, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, wrote a treatise on government and governing titled *The Governance of England*, in which he included a chapter titled "The King's Extraordinaire Charges."²² The king, according to Fortescue, must live in luxury. In addition to his own clothing and homes, he should ensure that ambassadors sent abroad were dressed appropriately. By the same token, visiting foreign ambassadors should be generously received. "If a king did not or could not behave in this way ...he lived not according to his rank."²³ Nearly a century later, during the reign of King Edward VI, William Forrest, a monk and poet, expressed the same sentiment in regards to a king's spending, stating that no expense was too great for a king to spend on clothing or jewels. "Magnificence was obligatory for effective kingship. So, too, was the ritual display of that magnificence."²⁴

Elizabeth was aware of the power and the importance of dressing like royalty and she dressed to impress. Contemporaries noted her elegant appearance throughout her reign. In 1593, the Chancellor of the Exchequer told the House of Commons, "As for her apparel, it is royal and princely, beseeming her call, but not sumptuous nor excessive."²⁵ Her appearance, particularly her wardrobes became an essential part of her image. Throughout her reign, she dressed as a maiden, emphasizing her unmarried state as the "Virgin Queen." Her wardrobe was vast. An inventory from 1600 listed over 1,900 pieces, including dresses, jewels, accessories, and lengths

²² See Sir John Fortescue, *The Governance of England Otherwise Called the Difference Between an Absolute and a Limited Monarchy*, Charles Plummer, ed., (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1885).

²³ Sydney Anglo, *Images*, 7.

²⁴ Anglo, *Images*, 8.

²⁵ Quoted in Janet Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: W.S. Many & Sons Ltd., 1988), 1.

of fabric.²⁶ James Melville, an ambassador for Mary Queen of Scots, described the variety of clothing worn by Elizabeth during a visit to the English court in 1564:

The queen said she had clothes of every sort; which every day thereafter, so long as I was there, she changed. One day she had the English weed, another the French, another the Italian, and so forth. She asked me which of them became her best. I answered, in my judgement [sic], the Italian dress; which answer I found pleased her well, for she delighted to show her golden-colored hair, wearing a caul and bonnet as they do in Italy.²⁷

Elizabeth's clothing was luxurious and sumptuous made of silks, velvets, furs, and jewels. She also understood the symbolism of color, favoring black and white "Those are my colours," she said to Don Diego Guzman da Silva, the Spanish ambassador in 1564.²⁸ These two colors also perfectly showcased the many pearls, jewels, and gold embroidery she wore, but she wore other colors, including gowns of peach, yellow, and grey. In 1559 the ambassador from France noted that Elizabeth "dressed entirely in purple velvet with so much gold and so many pearls and jewels, it added much to her beauty."²⁹ By the sixteenth century the growth of heraldry codified the meanings associated with colors. Black and white, for example, symbolized constancy and purity. Plays, masques, and pageantry helped make those both at court and outside the court familiar with the meanings of colors. It is almost certain that

²⁶ The 1600 inventory is separated into parts. The first, titled "The Inventory Made in July 1600 of all Clothes, Silks, and Personal Jewels remaining in the Wardrobe of Robes at the Tower of London and within the Court at the Palace of Whitehall, Westminster, and other Royal Residences" is known as the Stowe Inventory and included those items currently in use by the queen. The second inventory, titled "The Inventory Made in July 1600 of all Clothes, Silks, and Personal Jewels remaining in the Wardrobe of Robes at the Tower of London and within the Court at the Palace of Whitehall, Westminster, and other Royal Residences" is known as the Folger Inventory and included items in storage. Both inventories are included in full in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*. In addition, a list of items lost or given away by Queen Elizabeth can be found in Janet Arnold, *Lost from Her Majesties Back': Items of Clothing and Jewels Lost or Given Away by Queen Elizabeth I Between 1561 and 1585, Entered in One of the Day Books Kept for the Records of the Wardrobe of Robes* (London: The Costume Society), 1980.

²⁷ Lucy Aikin, *Memories of the Court of Elizabeth, Queen of England* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1870), 207.

²⁸ Quoted in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 1.

²⁹ Quoted in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe*, 5.

Elizabeth chose the color of her clothing carefully when appearing in public for events such as progresses and celebrations at court.

The most public of the ritual displays of the monarch and one of the few times a monarch was seen by people from all classes was the royal entry, when the prince formally entered and took possession of a town. In England, a ruler made a royal entry in London shortly before his or her coronation and on progresses. Until the middle of the fourteenth century a royal entry was relatively simple. A ruler was met at the city gates by the clergy, leaders, and prominent members of the town. They would then escort the ruler into the city. The royal entry developed into a spectacle that included members of the guilds and townspeople. Royal entries included pageants and speeches, turning the entry into a dialogue between the townspeople and the prince. Members of the town's guilds organized the pageants that greeted the ruler. The first pageants were religious in nature, portraying the Virgin Mary or lives of the saints. Gradually the subjects began to also celebrate the monarchy with allusions to mythology or classical literature and trees tracing the ruler's genealogical roots. The themes were similar throughout Europe, serving the reaffirm the ruler's sacred status and legitimacy. The tableaux also portrayed virtues which the people believed described a good ruler. Some cities presented pageants that alluded to any of the town's needs or requests. The royal entry became a chance for the people to send a message to their ruler through the pageants and, by his or her actions and words, for the ruler to send a message to the people.

Italy, the birthplace of the Renaissance and humanism, led the changes in the royal entry. The procession itself became more than a disjointed series of pageants; it developed into a highly symbolic medium upon which the humanists could recreate the Roman entries of the classical age. Nowhere was this change more evident than in the republic of Venice. Venice was an

independent republic for nearly five hundred years, ruled by a hereditary patriciate. Its constitution remained virtually the same from the late thirteenth century to 1797, when the republic fell to Napoleon Bonaparte. The fact that it survived as neighboring republics fell earned Venice a reputation for stability. “During that period of independence the Venetian patriciate created social and political institutions so outwardly stable, harmonious, and just that the tensions inherent in any community seemed to be contained in Venice, and self-interest subordinated to the common good.”³⁰ The image and fallacy of a stable Venice, known as “the myth of Venice,” was so well preserved that even today historians have trouble separating fact from fiction.³¹

Venice was a city of ritual and celebration; a city that reveled in appearances and shows. The government used pageantry and processions to celebrate its history and to establish its place on the world stage. Beginning in the twelfth century many of the Italian city-states used the arts to portray political virtues. One example is a series of frescoes by Ambrogio Lorenzetti, *Allegory of Good and Bad Government*, painted in 1338. The frescoes were painted on the walls of the Palazzo Pubblico in Siena and portrayed the effects of civil discord.³²

The Venetian government is the most successful example in Italy of a government that saw the political potential of the arts. The pageantry of Venice generally focused on four themes. The first was the hagiography of Saint Mark, the patron saint of Venice, and the Virgin Mary. The second were the successful conquests of Venice, comparing the republic to Classical

³⁰ Edward Muir, *Civil Ritual in Renaissance Venice* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 13.

³¹ Muir, *Civil Ritual*, 21.

³² For a discussion about this fresco, see C. Jean Campbell, “Ambrogio Lorenzetti and the Poetry of Peace” in *The Commonwealth of Nature: Art and Poetic Community in the Age of Dante* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 2008), 97-120.

Rome. The third theme centered on the civic cult created to celebrate Venice's past. The final theme was not as grand as the first three. It was generally utilized by families or individuals within the patriciate to increase their position.

Until the sixteenth century, these themes were portrayed in paintings, frescoes, or solemn processions. These events were not without political import and were impressive in their own right. The best example is the ducal procession, which occurred on religious holidays. The purpose of the procession was the display of office holders and the symbols of each office. It included all members of the patriciate and showed each person's rank. As a result, one's position was important.

The procession, a subject of much legislation and a charge of the ceremonial specialists, created in its ranking of officials a constitutional ideal for Venice that existed nowhere else, neither in visual nor even in written form; in effect, the ducal procession was the constitution. Changes in processional order were, hence, grave matters.³³

The procession began at the Ducal Palace, then moved around the outside of Saint Mark's Square, and ended in Saint Mark's Basilica. The solemn procession of hundreds of people in so small an area must have been an impressive sight for observers. Canon Pietro Casola of Milan who stopped in Venice while on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem witnessed a ducal procession for Corpus Christi at the end of the fifteenth century and described it thus:

A great silence was maintained, more than I have ever observed on similar occasions, even in seating so many Venetian gentlemen; every sound could be heard. One single person appeared to me to direct everything, and he was obeyed by everyone without protest. This filled me with astonishment, because I had never seen such perfect obedience at similar spectacles elsewhere.³⁴

³³ Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 190. For a full description of the ducal procession, see Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 190-192.

³⁴ "Uno grande silentio se tene, e piu che mai vedeti tenere a simili spectaculi, etiam in lo assetar tanti zentilhomini veneziani, ita che ogni cosa potete intendere. E uno solo a me pariva governasse ogni cosa, el qual senza resistentia era da ogni homo obedito. E da questo pigliai grande admiratione, perche non vidi mai tanta obedientia a tali spectaculi." Translated in Pietro Casola and M. Margaret Newett, *Canon Pietro Casola's Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Year 1494* (Manchester: University Press, 1907), 147.

Casolo, like other foreign commentators, interpreted the procession and the reactions of the Venetians as a commentary on the solidity and peaceful nature of Venetian society.

The Venetians began to employ pageantry to advance these themes in the sixteenth century, which was later than the other arts. Before the sixteenth century, pageants using actors or statues were rare. The first types of pageantry to appear were used in processions and portrayed the insignia of the doge, a statue of a saint, or a religious relic. They were decoration, not propaganda. Over time, participants in the procession created larger and more elaborate displays to attract attention. Some of the displays required four or more men to support them. Later the men built portable platforms to carry the items. Eventually, the items were used in dramas and pageants, which gradually became the focus of the procession.

One of the earliest examples of the Venetian use of pageantry was in 1511 in a procession that took place during the War of the League of Cambrai.³⁵ The procession celebrated and defended Venice's recent alliances with other European powers. In addition to religious motifs, members of the Confraternity of St. Roch built a tableau that included statues depicting Saint Roch, Saint Mark, and Justice, along with a woman dressed as Venice holding a dove. Accompanying the statues were figures representing the kings of Spain and England, who had recently aligned themselves with Venice. A ship followed with a sign that read "fear not, the wind ceased."³⁶ A flaming ball stood before Venice's enemy, the king of France, and the pope stood beside him with a sign stating that because France was against Venice, it had denied the true faith. The members of the confraternity used the display to show that those who opposed

³⁵ The War of the League of Cambrai, also known as the War of the Holy League, was fought from 1508 to 1516. The conflict was part of the Italian Wars, a dynastic struggle between the Duchy of Milan and the Kingdom of Naples.

³⁶ "Nolite timere, cessavit ventus." From Mark 4:39 when Jesus calmed the storm, "and He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm."

Venice opposed God. Such religious themes and images dominated Venetian pageantry for years.

“While the image of Venice as the ‘New Rome’ and classical allusions in the other arts had been gaining favor in Venice for some time, pageantry and tableaux were still closely tied to the liturgical elements of the procession. Jupiter and Venus had not yet joined Mark and Mary on the ceremonial stage.”³⁷ However by the 1540s, the Venetians began to embrace more secular motifs and began to use classical mythology and the presentations became more complicated in nature. The new message of the pageantry emphasized obedience to the doge and the leadership. The number of state processions also increased, thus, giving more of an opportunity for a presentation of pageantry. Some historians attribute this to the increase in the use of polychoral music, a form of music well-suited for outdoor use.³⁸

The evolution of pageantry spread throughout Europe and, like Venice’s civic cult, a cult of dynasty became the focus of the pageantry. The message became the ideals of kingship and each ruler adapted the message to fit his or her needs. By the middle of the sixteenth century, practically all the European rulers were using pageantry as propaganda with varying degrees of success and governments became more involved in shaping the message. By 1550, for example, city authorities in Rouen, France, took control of the decorations and pageants sponsored by the guilds for the entry of the king. The authorities commissioned poets and artists to convey a single message, rather than the differing and sometimes conflicting messages of the guilds.

King Louis XII of France, who ruled from 1498 to 1515, was one of the first French monarchs to harness the power of pageantry. He and his ministers recognized its power and, as a result, used ceremony and ritual to support important political and domestic events. The climax

³⁷ Edward Muir, “Images of Power: Art and Pageantry in Renaissance Venice” *The American Historical Review* 84 (Feb. 1979): 41.

³⁸ Muir, “Images of Power”, 42.

of this use of pageantry was the November 1514 Paris entry of his last queen, Mary Tudor, the youngest sister of Henry VIII. This entry also marked the last series of public ceremonies attended by the French king. Louis's marriage to Mary was important for France. It sealed a treaty between England and France, bringing hope of peace for the French people after years of war. In dynastic terms, Louis's two previous marriages had failed to deliver a male heir. At eighteen, Mary Tudor represented a hope for a successor.

The entry itself was similar to those for Louis's previous wives. The route and stops were the same, as were the preparations. What made this entry different were the pageants. This celebration is the first time a single writer created the series of pageants for a royal entry. The author was the poet Pierre Gringore. Gringore envisioned a series of seven pageants. Each pageant featured figures representing France and England and the themes were peace, stability, and fertility. Gringore then published an account and explanation of the pageants.³⁹ The pageants for the entry of Mary Tudor were "a masterful union of ceremonies and circumstances, an expression of the political opportunities, aspirations, and values shared by a society and represented by the immediate, the symbolic, and the implied presences of that society's leading figures."⁴⁰

Not all Renaissance monarchs were successful in their attempts to use pageantry to sway their subjects. One of the most notable was Mary, Queen of Scots, who ruled Scotland from 1542 to 1567. The central conflict between the queen and the Scottish people was religion. Mary was Catholic and many of her subjects, including a number of those in the leadership, were Calvinist. Prior to her return to Scotland, Mary's half-brother, Lord James Stewart, advised,

³⁹ For a more detailed description of the pageants see Pierre Gringore, *Pierre Gringore Pageants for the Entry of Mary Tudor into Paris*, Charles Read Baskervill, ed., (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1934).

⁴⁰ Michael Sherman, "Pomp and Circumstances: Pageantry, Politics, and Propaganda during the Reign of Louis XII, 1498-1515" *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 9 (Win, 1978): 32.

“Abuiff all things, madame, for the luif of God presse ne matters of religion, not for any man's advise on the earth.”⁴¹

Neither the queen nor her advisors appear to have had input into the pageants for the queen's entry into Edinburgh in 1561 upon her return to Scotland from France. The pageants were a message from the people of Edinburgh to their queen. The original intention of the tableaux was a challenge to the queen's religion, culminating in burning the figure of a priest in the act of elevating the Host. The Earl of Huntly, a Catholic, persuaded the authors to change the tableau and instead present the image of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram swallowed by the earth as punishment for rising up against Moses and Aaron in protest of the priesthood.⁴² This was a good compromise because it could be interpreted in a number of ways. The Protestant interpretation was that the pageant showed the punishment given to those who defied the will of God. Catholics, including the Queen, would interpret the pageant as the expected punishment of those who rebelled against the religious and secular hierarchy. To keep the message ambiguous, the pageant was presented without an accompanying speech.

The pageant is an example of the confusion surrounding the queen's entry. There is no official account of the procession and contemporary accounts are contradictory, some reporting the pageants intended for the procession, not the ones actually performed. “Although the central iconography had been altered at the last minute into something at least ambiguous, the popular apprehension of the entry was of a piece of explicitly anti-Catholic and anti-French intentions.”⁴³

In England, the Tudor dynasty once again changed the nature of pageantry. “Even by the ritualistic standards of 16th century Europe, England stood out for its love of formal

⁴¹ Quoted in Peter Davidson, “The Entry of Mary Stewart into Edinburgh, 1561, and Other Ambiguities” *Renaissance Studies* 9 (Dec. 1995): 416.

⁴² See Numbers 13.

⁴³ Davidson, “Entry of Mary Stewart,” 421.

ceremonies.”⁴⁴ As in other European countries, a monarch displayed his or her wealth through the use of magnificence and the Tudor monarchs embraced this principle fully. The purpose of Tudor pageantry was to support and reaffirm the dynasty and to mark England among the cultural elite in Europe. “Tudor kings and queens came and went about their public affairs in a constant atmosphere of make-believe.”⁴⁵

The importance of pageantry and civic theater in Tudor England is underscored by the fact that chroniclers and ambassadors wrote about it. One of these foreign visitors was the Venetian ambassador who wrote about the pageantry and its political implications in his official correspondence. However, it is possible that the ambassador was familiar with the pageants and spectacles at home in Venice and, thus, was more aware of them. For example, Il Schifanoja, the resident Venetian at the court of Elizabeth I, added information in his account of Elizabeth’s coronation procession, such as jewelry and decorations along the route, not found in the official pamphlets.

The pageants performed during the reign of Elizabeth’s grandfather, King Henry VII, are not well documented. He understood the importance of spectacle and of magnificence, but only sponsored them when necessary. There were certain times of the year, such as Christmas and the New Year, as well as state occasions when a magnificent performance was expected. He did not take part in them, unlike his son and granddaughter. Instead, he was, as Francis Bacon noted, “a princely and gentle spectator.”⁴⁶

The most spectacular of the pageantry presented during Henry VII’s reign were to celebrate the marriage of Henry’s eldest son, Arthur, to Catherine of Aragon, daughter of King

⁴⁴ A.N. Wilson, *The Elizabethans* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2011), 25.

⁴⁵ E.K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951) 107.

⁴⁶ Quoted in David Starkey, et al, *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (New York: Longman, 1987), 77.

Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain, in 1501. The marriage was a coup for Henry, legitimizing the new Tudor dynasty. The celebrations included four banquets, disguisings, dances, and a tournament.

The city of London hosted the procession for Catherine's entrance into London. In the past, English monarchs gave London control over the arrangements pageants and displays because the city paid for the spectacle. However, in November 1499 Henry took control. He ordered the mayor of London to appoint eight people to a committee that would liaise with members of the king's council regarding Catherine's reception. Henry and his councilors were now in charge of the planning for the procession. Catherine's procession through London followed the same route as past processions, with pageants and spectacles strategically placed along the way.⁴⁷ The six pageants highlighted the strength of the dynasty and its legitimacy. The pageants would hail Catherine's new husband, Arthur, as the heir to the mythical King Arthur and the embodiment of Arcturus.⁴⁸ "The general gist, though, was crashingly obvious: Catherine, the pageants said, was about to become part of something very special indeed."⁴⁹

Henry VIII's accession to the throne in 1509 breathed new life into pageantry at the English court. The new king was young, enthusiastic, and energetic, with a deep appreciation of the arts. From the start of his reign, Henry separated himself from his predecessors by participating in pageants personally. He took part in tournaments, in disguisings, and in

⁴⁷ For a full description of the pageants that greeted Catherine see Robert Withington, *English Pageantry: An Historical Outline* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), 166-168.

⁴⁸ In his *Morals on the Book of Job*, Gregory the Great describes Arcturus as the embodiment of Christian virtue: "The stars Pleiades, are so called...from plurality. But they were made so near to each other, and yet so distinct, that they can be near together, and yet cannot possibly be united, since they are united in nearness, but disunited as to contact. But Arcturus so illuminates the seasons of night, as placed in the axis of heaven, to turn itself in divers ways, and yet never to set for it does not revolve out of its orbit, but placed in its own position, it inclines to all quarters of the world, though it will never set." Gregory I, *Morals on the Book of Job*, vol. 3, James Bliss, trans., (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1850), 360.

⁴⁹ Thomas Penn, *Winter King: Henry VII and the Dawn of Tudor England* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 58.

masques. “Henry was unstoppable and became the star of a dazzling sequence of tournaments and revels that made England the Hollywood of Europe and Henry the *jeune premier* of Christendom.”⁵⁰ The celebrations at the beginning of Henry’s reign included a number of entertainments, including plays, tournaments, combats, masques, and dances. Throughout the first part of his reign, all state occasions, receptions for ambassadors, and diplomatic victories were celebrated in this manner. These celebrations were in addition to the traditional court festivals at Christmas, New Year, Easter, May Day, and Midsummer. While Henry VII isolated himself from these events, his son’s active participation shined a spotlight on the entertainments, turning these social events into political events reviving the “power of intimacy” at Court.⁵¹

King Henry VIII spent a vast amount of money on these entertainments. Henry’s expenditures, in addition to the king’s participation, were not merely the result of a spoiled, pleasure-loving king who was uninterested in governing. One of the important responsibilities of a monarch was to show how wealthy he or she was and these extravagant displays were a way of doing this. The king’s presence at any event was noticed and reported. Since the birth of the Renaissance, chroniclers paid more attention to surroundings and clothing and Henry used these spectacles “to impress Europe with his wealth, taste, and accomplishments, and to make England, culturally and militarily, a power on the Continent.”⁵²

Henry’s desire for England to have a place on the world stage culminated in 1520 with a meeting between Henry and King Francis I of France. The meeting became known as the Field of Cloth of Gold and took place in a field at Sadingfield, France, near Calais, from June 7 – June 20. The Field of Cloth of Gold, which Robert Withington called a “splendid show”, celebrated

⁵⁰ Starkey, “Intimacy and Innovation”, in Starkey, *The English Court*, 77.

⁵¹ Starkey, “Intimacy and Innovation”, in Starkey, *The English Court*, 77.

⁵² Anglo, *Spectacle*, 122-123.

the Treaty of Universal Peace, a treaty signed on October 2, 1518, that included the major powers in Europe.⁵³

Both sides transformed the field into a dazzling display, with one contemporary describing it as “the eighth wonder of the world.”⁵⁴ Both sides spent large amounts of money and time on the festivities. The French constructed a series of royal pavilions covered in gold brocade and decorated with azure velvet and gold fleurs-de-lis. The English constructed a two-story temporary brick palace at Guisnes. Henry’s government spent over £6,000 on materials, transportation, and labor. The timber used in the palace was ordered from the Netherlands. It was “of such length and in such quantities that it was bound together and floated to Calais, for no ship could carry it.”⁵⁵ Over 5,000 square feet of glass was used for the windows. The palace was about 300 feet long and nearly 40 feet high. The ground floor consisted of rooms for the officers of the household and wine cellars. The second story was the main story used for the meeting. It contained apartments for Henry, Queen Catherine, and Cardinal Wolsey in addition to a chapel and a banquet hall. Observers proclaimed the castle a triumph.

After two weeks of banquets, military games, tournaments, and dances, the Field of Cloth of Gold came to a close without accomplishing much diplomatically, and within a few short years the countries of Europe were at war once again. However, England did succeed in one aspect. The Field of Cloth of Gold provided Henry with an opportunity to show off wealth and magnificence on the continent. The meeting remained “a byword for princely magnificence” from that point on.⁵⁶

⁵³ Withington, *English Pageantry*, 173.

⁵⁴ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 139.

⁵⁵ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 141.

⁵⁶ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 139.

The grand displays at Henry's court continued. In March 1522, Cardinal Wolsey entertained the Imperial ambassadors at Court. As part of these entertainments was a pageant presented with the help of the Revels Department.⁵⁷

This was the 'Scatew Vert' – a timber castle with battlements covered in green tinfoil, and three green towers each surmounted by a love-lorn banner depicting human hearts in various stages of discomfiture. Imprisoned within this fortress were eight beautiful ladies – Beautie, Honor, Perseueraunce, Kyndnes, Constance, Bountie, Mercie, and Pitie – played by ladies of the court, including Mary, the French Queen, and one Mistress Anne Boleyn. The custodians of the castle, played with great enthusiasm by the Children of the Chapel Royal, were 'other eight ladies' – Dangler, Disdain, Gelousie, Vnkyndenes, Scorne, Malebouche, Straungenes, and one other, unnamed. These sinister gaolers refused to surrender to Henry VIII – thinly disguised as 'Ardent Desire' – and his companions, and were accordingly subjected to an assault of dates, oranges, and other 'fruites made for pleasure.' The defenders responded with a desperate hail of rose water, 'Comfittes', 'boows and balles', and three hats.⁵⁸

After the break with Rome and Henry's marriage to Anne Boleyn, Henry used propaganda to gain the people's acceptance for their new queen and the new state of affairs, beginning with Anne's coronation procession in 1533. Henry was determined that Anne's coronation procession would be even more spectacular than his own. A series of nine pageants greeted the pregnant Anne along the route to Westminster.⁵⁹ The message of the pageants was the Anne's marriage to Henry signaled better times for England. For example, at a pageant in Gracechurch Street, Apollo sat on Mount Parnassus surrounded by the nine Muses. Verses proclaimed Anne "the security of the people's future for it is believed that she will prove a fertile mother, and will soon bring forth male issue."⁶⁰ Subsequent pageants compared the new queen

⁵⁷ This pageant is the first recorded appearance of Anne Boleyn, Henry VIII's second wife and Elizabeth's mother, at Court.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Anglo, *Spectacle*, 120-121.

⁵⁹ For a full description of the pageants in Anne Boleyn's coronation procession see Anglo, *Spectacle*, 24-257.

⁶⁰ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 251.

to the Graces and to Saint Anne.⁶¹ Anne's coronation was one of the last great spectacles of Henry's reign. Instead, Henry turned to the printed word to spread his message. The magnificence of Anne's procession was followed by an official pamphlet describing the festivities published by Wynkyn de Worde.⁶²

There are a number a reasons why the spectacles which so characterized the beginning of Henry's reign disappeared. England was now a force on the world stage. The long fight with Rome over the dissolution of his marriage transformed Henry and he began to take more control over governmental affairs. Also, Henry himself was getting older. In 1533 he was 42 years old and in declining health so he could not take such an active part in the festivities. In 1532 Sir Henry Guildford, who organized many of the entertainments at Court in the 1520s, died. Two years later, Richard Gibson, who had organized and performed in entertainments for nearly forty years, also died. It was Gibson's accounts of the pageantry which serves as one of the primary sources of information for entertainments during Henry's reign. "The pageanteer, court reveler, and scenic artist were succeeded as purveyors of royal propaganda by the political pamphleteer, preacher, and public executioner."⁶³

The last court festivals of Henry's reign took place for the visit of Claude d'Annebaut, Admiral of France and governor of Normandy, in 1546 to formalize a treaty between England and France. The English welcomed d'Annebaut and his retinue with a reception by the civic leaders in London and a reception at Court. The purpose of the festivities echoed the early pageantry of Henry's reign, which was to proclaim the importance of an alliance with the English. "This last display seems to repeat the theme of princely magnificence, stated at the very

⁶¹ Saint Anne was the mother of the Virgin Mary.

⁶² Edmund Goldsmid, ed., *The Noble Tryumphaunt Coronacyon of Quene Anne – Wyfe unto the Noble Kynge Henry the VIII* (Edinburgh, 1884).

⁶³ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 261.

beginning of the reign, but transformed by the Reformation and by the terrible deterioration of the King's physique and personality into a grotesque coda."⁶⁴

Little is known about the plays, masques, and spectacles during the reign of Henry VIII's son, Edward. Edward was nine years old in 1547 when his father died and was only sixteen when he died so Edward never ruled alone. Instead others ruled in his name. The first was Edward's uncle, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset. In 1550, Somerset was overthrown and replaced by John Dudley, Earl of Warwick and later Duke of Northumberland. Therefore, it made for an odd situation in terms of propaganda. The people could not use pageantry to show the type of ruler they wanted because Edward was monarch in name only. In addition, given the situation between Somerset and Warwick, contemporaries did not want to offend either by showing a preference.

There is one aspect of the court entertainments during Edward reign unique in Tudor pageantry. In 1551, the Duke of Northumberland appointed George Ferrers the Lord of Misrule for the Christmas festivities.⁶⁵ Northumberland ordered the Master of Revels, Thomas Cawarden, to assist Ferrers and Ferrers was placed in charge of the Christmas festivities.⁶⁶ Before this appointment, the Lord of Misrule was a minor figure in Christmas shows and his performance was characterized by "peculiar and macabre buffoonery."⁶⁷ Appointed annually, the Lord of Misrule did not play a major part in court entertainments or royal processions. It is possible that Northumberland made this change in an effort to raise the young king's spirits after the execution of his uncle. However, why Northumberland chose Ferrers for this position is unknown. Ferrers was an associate of Somerset, even accompanying him on an expedition to

⁶⁴ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 280.

⁶⁵ For a more detailed discussion about the Lord of Misrule, see Robert B. Hornback, *The English Clown Tradition from the Middle Ages to Shakespeare* (Rochester: D.S. Brewer, 2009).

⁶⁶ For more information about the Revels Department and the Master of Revels, see chapter 5.

⁶⁷ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 302.

Scotland in 1547. Despite his relationship with Somerset, Ferrers performed his new role with distinction. Richard Grafton wrote that Ferrers “in shew of sundry sightes and devises of rare invention, and in act of divers enterludes and matters of pastime, played by persons, as not onely satisfied the common sorte, but also were very well liked and allowed by the counsayle and other of skill in the like pastimes.”⁶⁸

The accession of Edward VI’s sister, Queen Mary I, in 1553 brought more challenges for the writers of pageantry and propaganda. In addition to shaping traditional pageantry for the first queen of England, Mary also entered an unpopular marriage.⁶⁹ In 1554, Mary married her cousin Philip of Spain at Winchester. The pageants for Philip’s entry into London were elaborate, in part because the city of London wanted to make up for not fully supporting Mary’s accession. The procession marked the first appearance of statues representing the giants Corineaus Brittanus and Gogmagog Albionus at London Bridge. These statues would later be used for Elizabeth’s coronation. Five pageants greeted Philip along the route. The pageants united England and Spain and hailed Philip as a military hero, comparing him to his famous namesakes: Philip, king of Macedonia; Philip the Roman Emperor; Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy; and Philip the Bold, duke of Burgundy. The pageants also praised Philip’s faith.

Philip’s coronation procession was the most spectacular of the pageantry during Mary’s reign. This was due in part to the English dislike of the Spaniards. This dissent

hardly provided an atmosphere in which court festivals could flourish. It swarmed with Spaniards – hated, and well aware of the fact. The Queen, psychosomatically pregnant, was sick in mind and body. The King was less and less interested in English affairs, and increasingly anxious to escape to more congenial climes and more significant work. And the campaign of rigorous religious persecution was well under way early in 1555.⁷⁰

⁶⁸ Quoted in John Nichols, ed., *Literary Remains of King Edward the Sixth*, vol. 2 (London: J.B. Nichols & Sons, 1857), 382.

⁶⁹ For more information about how Mary’s new status was handled in propaganda, see chapter 2.

⁷⁰ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 339-340.

This does not mean, however, that there were no court festivities. The traditional festivals, such as Christmas and Easter, were still celebrated with masques, but the productions were inexpensive and unoriginal. The Lord of Misrule, who gained prominence in Edward's reign, appears to have disappeared. The Spanish introduced military games, but, naturally the queen was unable to participate. There were plays performed at court, but detailed descriptions have not survived.

Queen Elizabeth I's accession to the throne in 1553 once again breathed new life into Tudor pageantry. "Elizabeth loved magnificence."⁷¹ Like her father, Elizabeth was intelligent and a lover of the arts. She took a particular interest in pageantry and in her role in the festivities. Elizabeth inherited a divided people. She, as few monarchs before her, understood the importance and usefulness of pageantry as a way to focus the peoples' loyalties and enthusiasm "in a different direction, not towards God so much as to the Crown, or rather the Crown as embodied in the Queen as the Lord's Anointed."⁷²

⁷¹ Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, 5.

⁷² Strong, *Cult of Elizabeth*, 114.

CHAPTER II A QUEEN AS KING: MODELS OF ENGLISH QUEENSHIP

At seven o'clock in the morning on November 17, 1558, Queen Mary I of England died after a disastrous five-year reign. Waiting in the wings was her twenty-five year old half-sister, Elizabeth, an unknown quantity and the fourth monarch in eleven years.¹ When the Privy Councilors rode to Hatfield House to tell the new queen of Mary's death and of Elizabeth's accession, they found Elizabeth sitting under an oak tree at the end of an oak-lined path. Hearing the news, the young monarch fell to her knees, looked up to the heavens, and declared, "*A domino factum est et mirabile in oculis nostris!*"² Although contemporaries were initially skeptical, time would tell how prophetic this remark was, and how she successfully created the illusion of a prophecy.

When Elizabeth became queen of England, she was only the second anointed queen of the island nation. What kind of monarch would Elizabeth be? "Perhaps the most vital question for Elizabeth at her accession and throughout her reign was whether as a woman she could rule successfully."³ There were few models in English history, but Elizabeth would need to learn from those queens and one empress to determine her path.

A ruling queen faced a difficult situation. Despite the presence of Mary Stuart, queen of Scots; her mother Mary of Guise, who ruled Scotland as regent; and Catherine de Medici, who ruled France during her sons' minorities, government was a male-dominated world. The traits

¹ The preceding monarchs were as follows: Edward VI (1547-1553), Jane Grey (1553), and Mary I (1553-1558).

² "This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." Translated in Elizabeth Jenkins, *Elizabeth the Great* (London: Phoenix Press, 1958), 60. Historians argue as to the veracity of this story. Some state that Elizabeth was standing under the tree or taking a walk. Some claim it is apocryphal, while others believe that Elizabeth knew about her sister's death before the Privy Councilors arrived and staged the scene. Given its dramatic and theatrical effect, this seems the most likely scenario.

³ Carole Levin, *'The Heart and Stomach of a King': Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1994), 121.

that made a ruler great were not considered good traits for a woman. The commonly-held belief was that “a monarch should rule, a woman should obey.”⁴

There was a precedent for female rulers in England. In addition to Queen Mary I, England had witnessed the short reign of Jane Grey, the attempted rule of Empress Matilda in the twelfth century, and the recently discovered exploits of Queen Boudica from the first century. Each queen encountered resistance and prejudice. “Female rule changed the way the monarchy represented itself to its subjects.”⁵

When the possibility of a female English monarch first presented itself, contemporaries were unsure of what title to give her. The head of the English nation was “the life, the head, the authoritie of all things that be done in the realme of England.”⁶ A king was the judge over his people. A woman did not rule over her own household. A king could lead an army. A queen could not. In a society which separated the roles of the genders so distinctly, the definition of a ruler was thoroughly male. To settle this, the queen was given the same title of a king’s wife, but contemporaries recognized that the queen was given the sovereignty of a king.

However, a female ruler upset the proper order of things. Common law recognized three identities for women: maiden, wife, and widow. Under the first two identities, the women were represented in public affairs by their male relatives or guardians. Only a widow could be in charge of her own affairs. A queen consort was given more freedoms and legal rights than other married women, but was still under the control of her husband, the king. A female ruler answered to no one and, thus, many believed would only lead to disaster. Using the examples of

⁴ Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 13.

⁵ Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 6.

⁶ Quoted in Judith M. Richards, “‘To Promote a Woman to Beare Rule’: Talking of Queens in Mid-Tudor England” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28 (Spring 1997): 103.

Jezebel and Herodias, Thomas Becon wrote during the reign of Mary, “Queens were for the most part wicked, ungodly, superstitious and given to idolatry and to all filthy abomination.”⁷

John Knox, a Scottish clergyman, supported Becon’s ideas and in 1558, wrote *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*. The targets of Knox’s pamphlet were Queen Mary I of England, Mary, Queen of Scots, and Mary of Guise. Knox argued that a female ruler was contrary to God’s plan. “To promote a woman to beare rule, superioritie, dominion or empire aboue any realme, nation or citie, is repugnant to nature, contumelie to God, a thing moste contrariouse to his reueled will and approued ordenance.”⁸ God created woman inferior to man, and, therefore she was his subordinate. “Man is not of the woman but the woman of the man. And man was not created for the cause of the woman, but the woman for the cause of man, and therefore oght the woman to haue a power vpon her head (that is a couerture in signe of subiection).”⁹ These were representative of some of the ideas that Elizabeth had to overcome in order to be an effective ruler. Her half-sister had done little to change the of stereotype of a woman ruler so Elizabeth would have to look further back in time for models of good queenship.

While Europe was in the midst of the Renaissance, the works of the ancient Roman writer Tacitus were discovered. The works of Tacitus were considered essential reading for intellectuals, including Elizabeth. Tacitus wrote of a Celtic queen encountered by the Romans during the first century. That queen was Boudica and she became the ruler of the Iceni tribe in

⁷ Quoted in Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 12. As told in First and Second Kings, Jezebel was the wife of Ahab who convinced him to abandon his worship of Yahweh and persecute those who followed Yahweh. Herodias was the wife of Herod II. According to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, she was the instigator behind the execution of John the Baptist.

⁸ John Knox, *The First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, Edward Aber, ed. (London: E. Arber, 1878), 11.

⁹ Knox, *The First Blast*, 15.

present-day East Anglia in the first century C.E. after the death of her husband, Prasutagus. In 60 C.E., she led a rebellion against the Romans.

Little is known about Boudica. It is unknown even if Boudica was her name or her title.¹⁰ The name is derived from the Celtic word *bouda*, which means victory. The only surviving physical description of Boudica comes from the Greek historian Cassius Dio, who was writing nearly 200 years after her death.

In build she was very tall, in her demeanour most terrifying, in the glint of her eye most fierce, and her voice was harsh; a great mound of the tawniest hair fell to her hips; around her neck was a large golden torc; and she wore a tunic of many colours upon which a thick cloak was fastened with a broach. This was her general attire.¹¹

In his will, Prasutagus left his kingdom to his daughters and the Roman Empire. However, the Romans annexed the kingdom, ordered Boudica flogged, and her daughters raped. In response, the Iceni tribe, who once enjoyed friendly relations with the Romans, took up arms in rebellion. They were led into battle by Boudica. In Celtic legend there was no dishonor in being led in battle by a woman. “Romans and Celts feared and venerated the awesome power of the warrior queen: to both cultures she represented the human and the divine that connected heaven with earth; she symbolized the beginning and end of life and also the personification of fertility and death – and thus she assumed a potency unattainable by warrior men.”¹²

The Iceni tribe enjoyed some successes, most notably at the Roman city of Camulodunum (modern-day Colchester). Tacitus explains what happened next:

... the whole nation took up arms, under the command of Boudicca, a woman of royal blood – they recognise no distinction of sex among their rulers – and after

¹⁰ Even the spelling of Boudica’s name is unknown. It is sometimes spelled Boadicea, Boudicea, Boudicca, and Boudica. I chose Boudica because of the explanation in Kenneth Jackson, “Queen Boudicca?” *Britannica* 10 (1979): 255.

¹¹ Quoted in Vanessa Colingridge, *Boudica: the Life of Britain’s Legendary Warrior Queen* (New York: The Overlook Press, 2006), 285.

¹² Colingridge, *Boudica*, 179.

pursuing the soldiers scattered among the Roman forts, and capturing the garrisons, they invaded the colony itself, as the local centre of servitude: no sort of barbarian cruelty was overlooked in the hour of victory and vengeance. Had not Paulinus learned of the stir in the province, and come hastily to the rescue, Britain would have been lost.¹³

It is unknown what happened to Boudica after this, but she did not survive the end of her last battle. There are two versions of her death. Tacitus claims that she committed suicide by taking poison, while Cassius Dio states that she died from an illness.¹⁴

There is no direct evidence that Elizabeth, who had red hair like Boudica, drew inspiration from her predecessor. However, she was certainly aware of Boudica's actions. In addition to the newly discovered writings of Tacitus, in 1546, Polydore Vergil published a history of England and included Boudica:

Voadicia emonge the reste didde chieflie exasperate their mindes with great plaintee of her wrongs which she hadd sustained at the Romaines, whoe, bie cause she burned of all others in greatest hatred, it was broughte abowght, herselfe beinge capitan, (for in rule-bearinge there was noe difference of kinde,) that a great parte of the people, persuainge the menn called Trinobantes to refuse their dutie and homage, didde sodaynelie slide from the Romaines, in hedlong rage with weapon rising against them.¹⁵

During the late Anglo-Saxon period, the king's wife shared her husband's throne. Her specific domain was that of protector of the church and the monasteries. During the eighth century, the queen's name appeared with the king's on royal charters granting land to monasteries. However, by the reign of King Alfred of Wessex in the ninth century, all power was removed from queens and queens consort. Asser does not even mention the name of Alfred's wife, Eahlswith, in his biography of the king and the names of previous queens are

¹³ M. Hutton and W. Peterson, trans., *Tacitus I*, Loeb Classical Library (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 57.

¹⁴ See Earnest Cary, trans., *Dio's Classical History*, vol. 8 (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1925), 105.

¹⁵ Polydore Vergil, *Polydore Vergil's English History, Vol. 1: Containing the First Eight Books, Comprising the Period Prior to the Norman Conquest* (London: John Bower Nichols and Son, 1846), 71.

omitted from historical record. The king's wife was forbidden the title 'queen' and instead given the title 'lady.'¹⁶ According to Asser, "For the nation of the West Saxons does not allow the queen to sit beside the king, nor to be called queen, but only the king's wife..."¹⁷ The reason for this was "a certain headstrong and malevolent queen of the nation, who did all things so contrary to her lord and to the whole people."¹⁸ This was the explanation given to Asser by Alfred. The queen in question was Eadburh, the daughter of Offa of Mercia and the wife of Beorhtric of Wessex, who lived during the beginning of the century. According to tradition, Eadburh was a dominant force at court and participated in the poisoning of her husband. For this reason, queens were given no power or authority. Asser, however, notes that Alfred's position was controversial and that shifting attitudes favored giving the king's wife more power. Asser himself, who was originally from Wales where queens were granted authority, favored this attitude:

And because, as I think it is not known to many whence this perverse and detestable custom first arose in Wessex, contrary to the custom of all the Germanic peoples, it seems to me right to explain it a little more fully, as I have heard it from my lord Alfred the truth-teller, King of the Anglo-Saxons, who often told me about it, as he also had heard it from many men of truth who related the fact, or, I should rather say, expressly preserved the remembrance of it.¹⁹

In October 856 Judith, the daughter of Charles the Bald, Holy Roman Emperor, married Aethelwulf, king of the West Saxons. Knowing the Saxon attitude toward their queens, Charles insisted Judith be anointed as queen. The record of this consecration is the earliest document of its type that survives. In the early part of the ninth century, the belief that a king should be

¹⁶ During her son's reign, Eahlswith was called "Lady of the English." Richard Ables, *Alfred the Great* (Florence: Routledge, 2013), 122.

¹⁷ John Asser and Albert S. Cook, *Life of King Alfred* (Boston: Gin & Co., 1906), 8.

¹⁸ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 8.

¹⁹ Asser, *Life of King Alfred*, 8.

consecrated and anointed in order to transform the man into a king was common. After Judith's ceremony, a queen received her status not only from marriage, but "queenship was also enhanced by divinely endorsed anointings."²⁰

A queen's status began to change after the Norman Conquest as queens consort began to gain more power. Although there were a number of notable and influential queens consort after the death of Boudica, it would be another ten centuries before the prospect of a female ruler would arise again. In 1127, King Henry I named his daughter, Matilda, his heir. This marked the first time a woman was the heir to the English throne. Historians know little about Matilda. "Her contemporaries, whether friends, enemies, or neutral observers, struggled to decide how to handle or to judge her, how to place her within a political narrative that expected its chief protagonists to be male."²¹

A portrait of Matilda comes from three sources. William of Malmesbury paints a sympathetic picture of her in his *Chronicle of the Kings of England*. Matilda "displayed her father's courage and her mother's piety; holiness in her found its equal in energy, and it would be hard to say which was more admirable."²² On the other end of the spectrum, was the anonymous author of *Gesta Stephani*, believed to be a cleric. *Gesta Stephani*, or *The Deeds of Stephen*, was less than complementary, describing Matilda as arrogant. The third contemporary, Oderic Vitalis, author of *Historia Ecclesiastica*, only referred to her in relation to her husband, identifying her as the countess of Anjou.

Matilda was born in 1102 near the town of Abingdon in Oxfordshire. At the age of eight, she was betrothed to the Holy Roman Emperor Heinrich V and left England for Germany.

²⁰ Julie Ann Smith, "The Earliest Queen-Making Rites," *Church History* 66 (Mar. 1997): 20.

²¹ Helen Castor, *She-Wolves: The Women Who Rule England before Elizabeth* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 50.

²² Quoted in Castor, *She-Wolves*, 50.

Although not officially married, the church recognized a betrothal as binding. As a result, Matilda was crowned Empress, a title which she retained for the rest of her life. Matilda and Heinrich were married in 1114, shortly before her twelfth birthday. Matilda won the respect of her husband and the people of Germany. At only sixteen, Heinrich chose her to rule as regent while he put down a rebellion in the north of his kingdom. Unfortunately, Heinrich died in 1125 and Matilda returned to England.

In 1120, the heir to the English throne, William, died when his ship, the *White Ship*, sank. When it became clear that his wife would not bear any more sons, Henry named Matilda his heir. Although there were no formal protests about Henry's declaration, Henry wanted to ensure the loyalty of his nobles. During Christmas of 1127, he asked all present to swear an oath of fealty to Matilda. There was a quarrel over who would be the first to take the oath. The privilege went to King David of Scotland who was Matilda's uncle.²³

The next year, Matilda married Geffroi, the son and heir of the count of Anjou. The marriage was unpopular, but proved a valuable alliance for Henry. In 1131, she returned to England and her father ordered the nobility to renew their oaths of loyalty to her. The honor of first oath at this event went to Matilda's cousin, Stephen. Stephen was Henry's favorite nephew and had earned a reputation as a good-natured man and good soldier.

In 1135, King Henry died. Matilda was across the Channel in Anjou, pregnant with her third child, and, thus, unable to travel to England to claim the throne. Stephen took advantage of the situation and quickly had himself crowned. Stephen's claim was slim. He was not the oldest male heir in his family and his royal blood came from his mother. However, "for all Henry's attempts to bind the future to his will, the only precedents so far established for the succession of

²³ For a description of this event, see Edmund King, *King Stephen* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 30-31.

the Norman kings of England favoured might over right.”²⁴ There was apparently no objection to Matilda’s sex. In fact, chroniclers said nothing about Matilda during this time and made no objection to Stephen’s move. “Meanwhile was his nephew come to England, Stephen de Blois. He came to London, and the people of London received him, and sent after the Archbishop William Curboil, and hallowed him to king on midwinter day.”²⁵ Most contemporaries seemed to accept Stephen’s accession to the throne as the will of God.

It was not until the spring of 1139 that Matilda had mustered enough forces to challenge Stephen. She was aided by her illegitimate half-brother, Earl Robert of Gloucester. This period is known as “The Anarchy” as nobles chose sides and the country erupted in civil war.²⁶ In February 1141, Matilda’s forces captured Stephen and Matilda rode to London in order to be proclaimed queen. Unsure of what title she should assume, Matilda assumed the title “Lady of the English.” Contemporary chroniclers referred to her as “regina”, the title given to queens consort. She was, in effect, the sole ruler of England, although not everyone in England recognized her authority.

When Matilda attempted to rule over her people, they rebelled. She attempted to emulate the two rulers she knew best: her father and her first husband. William of Newburgh stated that many were alienated by her “intolerable feminine arrogance.”²⁷ The people expected her to assume the authority of a king, but act like a queen consort. Contemporary chroniclers objected to her failure to show the proper reverence to “the chief men of the whole kingdom.”²⁸

²⁴ Castor, *She-Wolves*, 73.

²⁵ Ingram, Rev. James, trans., *The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* (London: Everyman Press, 1912), 170.

²⁶ For a detailed discussion about the war between Stephen and Matilda, see King, *King Stephen*, 115-269.

²⁷ Quoted in Beem, *The Lioness Roared*, 41.

²⁸ Castor, *She-Wolves*, 102.

In 1148 Matilda gave up her right to the English throne and Stephen was once again England's ruler. As a compromise, in 1153 Stephen recognized Henry, Matilda's eldest son, as his heir. The next year Stephen died and Matilda's son ascended the throne as King Henry II. Matilda was not the queen, but Henry allowed her considerable influence and she acted as regent when Henry traveled. To acknowledge his mother, Henry called himself Henry FitzEmpress. Matilda died in Normandy in 1167. Despite all she had done in her own right, the inscription on her grave describes her only in terms of men: "Great by birth, greater by marriage, greatest in her offspring, here lies the daughter, wife, and mother of Henry."²⁹

It was this time in history which weighed heavily on the mind of King Henry VIII when, in 1527, he informed his wife of eighteen years, Catherine of Aragon, that he believed their marriage to be invalid. Catherine's first husband was Arthur, Henry's elder brother. Arthur died shortly after his marriage and Catherine maintained that their marriage was unconsummated. Henry's only legitimate heir was his daughter, Mary, and Catherine was by this time beyond her child-bearing years. Henry believed he could not risk another civil war.

In 1533, Thomas Cranmer, Archbishop of Canterbury, dissolved Henry and Catherine's marriage. Henry quickly married Anne Boleyn, one of Catherine's ladies-in-waiting, who was pregnant with Henry's child. In March 1533, Parliament passed the First Succession Act. This act declared Mary a bastard and named Anne's unborn child the heir to the English throne.

On September 7, 1534, Anne gave birth to a daughter, Elizabeth. After two more pregnancies and miscarriages, Henry faced the same situation as he did with his first marriage, a daughter for an heir. In 1536, Anne was convicted of adultery and executed for treason. Eleven days later, Henry married Jane Seymour, one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting. After his marriage,

²⁹ Castor, *She-Wolves*, 126.

Parliament passed the Second Succession Act of 1536, which replaced the first act. This act declared both Mary and Elizabeth illegitimate. Because the act left Henry without a legitimate heir, Henry was given the power to name his heir in his will.

In October 1537, Henry's longed-for son, Edward, was born and the succession seemed secure. In 1543, Parliament passed the Third Succession Act, which returned Mary and Elizabeth to the line of succession behind Edward and any potential children of Henry and his current wife, Catherine Parr. It did not, however, remove the mark of illegitimacy for either Mary or Elizabeth.

In 1547, King Henry VIII died and his nine-year-old son became King Edward VI. In his will, Henry stipulated that should Edward die without an heir, Mary, and then Elizabeth, would succeed him. If Elizabeth died without any children, the throne should pass to the descendants of Henry's younger sister, Mary. Henry excluded the descendants of his older sister, Margaret, who had married King James IV of Scotland.

In 1553, King Edward was dying. He was unmarried and had no children. As a staunch Protestant, he did not want the throne passing to his Catholic half-sister, Mary. No doubt under the influence of John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland and the Lord Protector, Edward bypassed his sisters and named his cousin, Lady Jane Grey, as his heir. Jane was the eldest daughter of Henry Grey, 1st Duke of Suffolk and Lady Frances Brandon. She was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's younger sister, Mary. She was born in 1536 or 1537 and spent part of her youth under the guardianship of Thomas Seymour, who married Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's surviving widow, after the king's death. She lived with Seymour and Catherine until Catherine's death in childbirth and then lived with Seymour until his arrest and execution for treason in 1548. In 1553, she married Guildford Dudley, a son of the Duke of

Northumberland. Jane was known for her intelligence and, most importantly, her adherence to the Protestant faith.

In persuading Edward to alter the line of succession, Northumberland was most likely endeavoring to continue his position as “the power behind the throne.” Edward was not making a revolutionary statement on female sovereignty by naming Jane his heir. Instead, he was attempting to prevent Mary from turning England into a Catholic country. Edward’s half-sister, Elizabeth, while Protestant, remained illegitimate. By the rules of succession, the next in line should have been Mary Stuart, queen of Scotland, and the granddaughter of Henry VIII’s elder sister, Margaret. However, Mary was also Catholic and Henry VIII’s will stipulated that the descendants of Margaret be eliminated from the line of succession. Therefore, in Edward’s mind, the only possibility was Jane. In his will, Edward stated that the throne should pass to Jane’s “heirs male.”³⁰ Edward’s intention was that Jane would be the first and only queen regnant of England.

Edward died on July 9, 1553, and the Duke of Northumberland summoned Jane to his house. There, she found the duke and other members of the Privy Council who told her of Edward’s last wishes. Jane was horrified at the prospect: “The crown is not my right and pleases me not...The Lady Mary...is the rightful heir.”³¹ After some harsh persuasion by her parents and Northumberland, Jane reluctantly accepted the crown and the next day her accession was announced.

The first indication that all was not well was the silence on London’s streets when Jane’s queenship was declared. No bells were rung, no bonfires lit, no caps flung into the air. Instead, the news was met with a mixture of puzzlement and resentment under a muffling blanket of fear. The proclamation read out by the

³⁰ Castor, *She-Wolves*, 29.

³¹ Quoted in Castor, *She-Wolves*, 406.

heralds that day had detained its listeners for an unusually long time, in part because of the need to explain exactly who the new queen was.³²

On July 10, 1553, Lady Jane Grey became the first reigning queen in English history. Her contemporaries, including the envoys representing Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor, assumed that Jane's accession meant that her husband, Guildford, would become king. Jane, however, refused. She informed her councilors that Guildford would be raised to a duke, but no further. Despite Jane's initial reluctance to accept the crown, it appears she was determined to exert some authority and gain a measure of control.

In order for this coup to be complete, Henry VIII's elder daughter, Mary, had to be captured so that she could not gain support. As soon as she heard of Edward's death, Mary escaped to East Anglia and began gathering supporters. On July 14, Northumberland led a force to meet Mary. The Privy Council quickly changed their allegiance from Jane to Mary. On July 19, Mary was proclaimed queen and Jane was imprisoned in the Tower of London.

The widespread support for Mary had less to do with her religion or sex, but centered on the rights of inheritance. In his Third Act of Succession, Henry VIII stated that Mary would inherit the throne if her brother had no living heirs. To support this and to re-establish her legitimacy, in 1554, Parliament passed the Act Concerning Regal Power which addressed the debate over a woman's right to rule. The act stated that "The same regal power, dignity, honour, authority, prerogative...belong unto her Highness...in as full, large, and ample manner as it hath done heretofore to any other her most noble progenitors, kings of this realm."³³

³² Castor, *She-Wolves*, 407.

³³ Levin, *Heart and Stomach*, 121-122.

However, some still questioned whether a woman could rule. In 1554 Thomas Becon wrote:

Thou hast set to rule over us a woman, whom nature hath formed to be in subjection unto a man, and whom thou by thine holy apostle commandest to keep silence and not to speak in the congregation. Ah, Lord! to take away the empire from a man and to give it to a woman, seemeth to be an evident token of thine anger toward us Englishmen.³⁴

In 1557, Guivanni Michieli, the Venetian ambassador to England, wrote that Mary was “of a sex which cannot becomingly take more than a moderate part” in governing.³⁵ Her cousin, Emperor Charles V, offered the new queen his advice:

Let her be in all things what she ought to be: a good Englishwoman, and avoid giving the impression that she desires to act on her own authority, letting it be seen that she wishes to have the assistance and consent of the foremost men of the land... You will also point out to her that it will be necessary, in order to be supported in the labour of governing and assisted in manners that are not of ladies' capacity, that she soon contract matrimony with the person who shall appear to her most fit from the above point of view.³⁶

The uncertainty over the status and function of a reigning female was complicated further by the question of Mary's marriage. If she married an Englishman (Reginald Pole and Edward Courtenay, both of whom were of royal blood, were mentioned), then she risked raising a family too high, a problem that resulted during the many marriages of her father. Inheritance laws in England stipulated that when a woman married, her lands and inheritance passed to her husband. Therefore, if Mary married a foreign prince, would England become part of the prince's territory?³⁷

³⁴ Quoted in Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 12.

³⁵ Quoted in Castor, *She-Wolves*, 419.

³⁶ Quoted in Castor, *She-Wolves*, 419.

³⁷ For a discussion about Mary's marriage considerations and discussions, see David Loades, *Mary Tudor: A Life* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 199-205.

In the end, Mary chose to marry Prince Philip of Spain, the son of her cousin, Emperor Charles V. The proposed marriage was unpopular among the English. They worried about Philip's Catholicism and his status as Mary's husband. Mary tried to calm their fears declaring that her marriage to Philip would not take precedence over "over her marriage to the realm."³⁸ Despite this, rebellions broke out; the largest led by Thomas Wyatt the Younger, which led to the executions of Lady Jane and Guildford Dudley on February 12, 1544.³⁹

To clarify Philip's status in England, in April 1554 Parliament passed The Act for the Marriage of Queen Mary to Philip of Spain. The act stated that Philip would have the title of King, but none of the authority of a king. He could counsel his wife, but only so far as "laws privileges, and customs" allowed and Philip would not be able to claim Mary's throne when she died.⁴⁰ Furthermore, England would not participate in any wars that Philip chose to wage and Mary would not travel outside her realm. For Philip, his marriage to Mary was strategic in nature. He spent little time in England.

In 1557, Philip persuaded Mary to support his war against France. Ignoring her councilors, who objected for economic reasons as well as the fact that the action contradicted her marriage act, Mary sent troops to France. In 1558, French forces took Calais, the last English-held territory on the continent. It was an enormous loss to England and tainted the remainder of Mary's reign.⁴¹

In 1558, Mary was forced to accept that she would not have children and officially named Elizabeth her heir. She died a few months later. At her funeral, the Bishop of Winchester

³⁸ Loades, *Mary Tudor*, 214.

³⁹ For a discussion about Wyatt's Rebellion, see Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCullough, *Tudor Rebellions*, 5th ed. (London: Routledge, 2008): 92-101. Mary and her councilors suspected Elizabeth's involvement in the rebellion, leading to her arrest and imprisonment. See Jasper Ridley, *Elizabeth I: The Shrewdness of Virtue* (New York: Fromm International Publishing Co., 1987): 54-61.

⁴⁰ Castor, *She-Wolves*, 429.

⁴¹ For a more detailed discussion about the fall of Calais and its impact, see Loades, *Mary Tudor*, 294-297.

declared that Mary had been “a queen and by the same title a king also. She was a syster to her that by the like title and wryght is both king and quene at this present of this realme.”⁴²

For only the third time in English history, the rightful heir to the throne was a woman. Elizabeth, born on September 7, 1533, to King Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn, brought to her people a cautious optimism about the future. She inherited a nation divided by religious and economic strife. However, because of the short reigns of her cousin Jane and half-sister Mary, Elizabeth’s sex would not pose the same issues and complications as before. In the final pageant presented by the guilds of London during her coronation procession, she was compared to the Biblical leader Deborah, the only female judge mentioned in the Bible, who is portrayed as strong, righteous, and independent. Elizabeth would embrace her femininity and use it to her advantage when necessary, utilizing the precedents set forth by the queens of the past.

⁴² Quoted in Judith Richards, “Mary Tudor as ‘Sole Quene’? Gendering Tudor Monarchy,” *Historical Journal* 40 (1997), 895.

CHAPTER III
“THIS IS THE LORD’S DOING”:
THE CORONATION PROCESSION OF ELIZABETH I

On November 17, 1558, Parliament proclaimed Elizabeth “by the grace of God Queen of England, France, and Ireland, defender of the faith, etc.” and declared her “the only right heir by blood and lawful succession the crown of the foresaid kingdoms of England, France, and Ireland, with all manner titles and rights thereunto in anywise appertaining.”¹ After the problems of Queen Mary’s reign, the accession of a new queen offered hope to a troubled nation. The English greeted Elizabeth’s accession with enthusiasm, as bonfires were lit and church bells pealed out across the country. These celebrations, however, were somewhat muted as even Elizabeth’s staunchest supporters knew that the inexperienced monarch had inherited formidable problems as well as a weak and divided realm. “The first Elizabethans did not know they were Elizabethans.”² In the sixteenth century, the greatest threat to political stability was the attempted ascendancy of the nobility during the rule of a minor or a female, a disputed line of succession, or religious conflict. The new queen faced all three problems at the beginning of her reign.

Elizabeth had an image problem. There was no precedent for successful female rulers and most reigning monarchs were male. There was still a contradiction between the ideal monarch and the ideal woman. Queen Mary I had done little to change attitudes about the legitimacy of female rule. Elizabeth would have to overcome that prejudice.

Although Elizabeth’s accession was a peaceful one, particularly in comparison to that of her half-sister, there were two major threats to the peace of her realm. The years since the

¹ Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, ed., “Announcing Accession of Queen Elizabeth I,” in *Tudor Royal Proclamations, vol. 2, The Later Tudors (1553-1587)*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 99.

² Norman L. Jones, *The Birth of the Elizabethan Age: England in the 1560s* (Cambridge: B. Blackwell, 1995), 4.

English Reformation and the subsequent reigns of Edward VI and Mary I had left England a religiously divided country. At the time of her accession, Elizabeth's religious preferences were unknown, but both Catholics and Protestants placed their hopes in her. Protestant exiles returning from Geneva and Zurich saw Elizabeth as their savior. As the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth embodied the English Reformation. According to Catholics, Henry bigamously married Anne Boleyn in 1533 while still married to Catherine of Aragon. Catholics did not recognize this marriage and Elizabeth, born shortly after the dubious ceremony, was illegitimate under Roman Canon Law.

Elizabeth's legitimacy was indeed open to question. Henry's first Act of Succession in 1534 had declared Mary illegitimate, placing Elizabeth first in the line of succession. Then, after Anne Boleyn's execution and Henry's subsequent marriage to Jane Seymour in 1536, Parliament passed a second Act of Succession, which bastardized Elizabeth. A third act in 1544 placed Elizabeth third in line for the throne behind Edward and Mary, but did not legitimize her. As a result, not only was Elizabeth considered illegitimate under Canon Law, she could also be considered illegitimate by English law.³

These doubts about Elizabeth's legitimacy provided the pretext for a rival claim to the English throne by Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots and recently crowned Queen of France. Mary's claim to the English throne was at least as strong as Elizabeth's. Mary made a public statement of this at the wedding of Henry II's daughter to the Duke of Lorraine, when Mary's heraldic arms were quartered with those of England on the coats of arms of her servants.⁴ In addition to her Catholicism, there was no doubt about Mary's legitimacy. In his will, however, Henry VIII

³ Parliament never repealed the 1544 Act of Succession because "the crown covered all such flaws." J.E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1953), 34.

⁴ John Guy, *Queen of Scots: The True Life of Mary Stuart* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2004), 92.

eliminated the Stuart claim and declared that the Suffolk line would follow his children in the succession. English Catholics did not believe that the law could settle the succession, but were willing to accept Elizabeth's right provided she made some concessions to Catholics and that her new government was a success.

Therefore, in the first days of her reign Elizabeth would need to stress the validity of her claim to the throne. Emphasizing this was essential if Elizabeth were to overcome the doubts that surrounded her accession. She and her image-makers would need to create an image that counteracted the threats to her reign and emphasize three main points: Protestantism, Elizabeth's English heritage, and her femininity.

On November 23, 1558, Elizabeth left Hatfield House for London, where she captured the loyalty of the City of London in the first few weeks of her reign. Elizabeth's coronation procession was the culmination of this courtship as, through a series of pageants along the procession route, the people of London showed Elizabeth what they expected of her reign. The coronation procession planned for the new queen was quite different from those of her predecessors. The first processions were somber parades from Westminster Hall, the center of the realm's government, to Westminster Abbey, which housed the regalia and was the final resting places of past kings. The future king, led by a bishop on either side, walked to the abbey bare-headed and simply dressed. At the conclusion of the coronation, he would emerge at the head of the group with a crown of gold and jewels on his head, resplendent in the robes of state. "For an age whose mental premise was the image rather than the word the impact must have been overwhelming."⁵ All English monarchs since William the Conqueror in 1066 were crowned at Westminster Abbey, except Edward V, who was deposed by his uncle Richard III,

⁵ Strong, *Coronation*, 105.

and Jane Grey, who was never crowned. The coronation in Westminster Abbey connected the new king or queen to those who had ruled before and showcased the continuity of the monarchy.

By the Middle Ages, the coronation had changed in character. The procession to Westminster Abbey, once semi-ecclesiastical in nature, was now an occasion to show the new king in all his majestic glory. It also became an opportunity for the nobles of the land to showcase their importance in the realm and their relationship with the new king with the inclusion of the nobles in the coronation, the procession route became longer and more public. In 1308, at the coronation of King Edward II, the nobles demanded the right to carry the coronation regalia of St. Edward, which, one chronicler stated, “they ought not to have touched, for they are relics; only the king’s own Coronation regalia, in which he will return to the palace after mass and then sit at the fest do they have the right to bear.”⁶ Edward chose his favorite, Piers Gaveston, to carry the crown, which angered many.

The coronation celebration itself became more elaborate. While no coronation was alike because the circumstances changed from monarch to monarch, there was a series of events that occurred at each one. By 1558, coronation proceedings consisted of four events that occurred over a period of several days. First, the new monarch took possession of the Tower of London. Next was the sovereign’s procession, which followed the same route.⁷ After leaving the Tower, the procession passed through the city, along the Strand, to Westminster. The route travelled along conduits, which were generally wider and thus able to handle the large processions. This was particularly true of the Cheapside area where there were three conduits: the Great Conduit, the Little Conduit, and the Standard. Also, Cheapside was the site of a number of expensive shops and goldsmiths, so it would be ornately decorated. The culmination of these celebrations

⁶ Quoted in Strong, *Coronation*, 104.

⁷ See Appendix A for a map of the coronation route.

was the coronation itself, held the next day. Finally, a banquet was held in Westminster Hall after the ceremony.

For her coronation, Elizabeth consulted John Dee, an astrologer, for the most auspicious date to ensure a long and successful reign. He chose January 15. The length of time between accession and coronation varied for each monarch. In comparison to her predecessors, the eight weeks between Elizabeth's accession and procession was not uncommon. Because a coronation is a joyous occasion, planners must allow for a period of mourning following the death of the previous monarch. Also, there must be time for the arrangements. Henry VII's coronation occurred ten weeks after he was informally crowned on the battlefield after the Battle of Bosworth. Henry VIII's double coronation with Catherine of Aragon took place eight and a half weeks after Henry VII's death. Edward VI's coronation was a short three weeks after his accession. Mary's, however, took place nearly three months after Edward VI died. This was due to the Duke of Northumberland's attempted coup.

Coronations were "the most symbolically potent" of all ceremonies of state.⁸ The Tudors were the first to recognize the propaganda value of the coronation procession. The procession was an opportunity for the new monarch to emphasize royal position and popularity to foreign ambassadors and domestic subjects. As a result, the processions became more lavish and Elizabeth's was the climax of this transformation.

There is little surviving information about the coronation processions of Elizabeth's Tudor predecessors. The coronation of Elizabeth's grandfather, King Henry VII, took place on October 30, 1485. The coronation was a formal recognition of Henry's accession. He had already been crowned king on the battlefield after defeating Richard III on August 22, 1485, at

⁸ Anglo, *Images*, 106.

the Battle of Bosworth. The total cost of the coronation was £1,506. 18s. 10 ³/₄ d. There are no descriptions of the coronation. However *A litle devise of the coronacion of...Prince Henrie the vijth* gives some details about the preparations for the procession. The Little Device was intended for King Richard III and hastily adapted for the new king so much so, in fact, that not all the names of the participants in the new king's procession were correct.

The Little Device gave specific instructions for the dress of the monarch and the arrangement of the participants in the procession. It was based on previous entries and, thus, gives a glimpse of past entries. The procession included nobles, Knights of the Bath, the Lord Mayor of London, dignitaries, knights, esquires, and yeomen. The king, bareheaded, splendidly dressed, and wearing a gown trimmed with ermine, entered the city riding a richly caparisoned horse beneath a canopy supported by four knights. The king was preceded by two squires dressed to represent the duchies of Guyenne and Normandy, his sword bearer, the Lord Great Chamberlain, and the Earl Marshal.

On October 27, Henry entered the City of London. The mayor and representatives of the guilds greeted Henry at London Bridge and the king proceeded to the Tower of London. Two days later, Henry, following the instructions set forth by the Little Device, made the procession from the Tower to Westminster “arrayed in a long gown of purple velvet furred with ermines...bare-headed...beneath a canopy supported by four knights marching on foot.”⁹ Henry's majestic appearance stood in stark contrast to the processional dress of medieval kings. The surviving narratives make no mention of any pageants performed.

Henry VII died on April 21, 1509, and preparations began for the new reign. After marrying his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon, on June 11, 1509, the new king, Henry VIII,

⁹ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 14.

declared that he and his bride would be crowned together in a double coronation. The coronation was to be held on June 24, 1509. Following tradition, Henry and Catherine arrived at the Tower of London on June 21 and the new members of the Order of the Bath were created the next night. On June 23, the couple made their way from the Tower to Westminster for the coronation.

The procession once again followed the instructions set forth by the Little Device, which was intended for a double coronation. Henry VIII's father chose to be crowned alone, rather than with his wife, Elizabeth of York, so the instructions for the coronation of a queen were used for the first time. The Little Device directed that the queen should be carried in a litter, wearing cloth of gold and a mantle of ermine. She was to wear her hair loose, ornamented by a circlet of gold. A canopy of white damask for cover was carried by four knights. The queen was surrounded by lords, knights, and the men and women of her household.

The coronation procession of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon was a lavish affair. The royal train, spectacularly decorated, passed through streets hung with tapestry and lined with spectators. The king wore a robe of crimson velvet, trimmed with ermine. His jacket was cloth of gold, decorated with diamonds, rubies, and pearls. Catherine wore a gown of gold, silver, and velvet. Her circlet was set with precious stones. As with the procession of Henry VII, there is no mention of pageants. The only diversion involved a group of virgins symbolically dressed in white, holding branches made of white wax.

King Henry VIII died on January 28, 1547; however, the announcement of his death was delayed until January 31 so that a smooth transition could occur because the new king was only nine years old. Five days later the Council issued a proclamation setting the date of Edward's coronation for February 20. Masques and entertainments became increasingly popular at the courts of Henry VII and Henry VIII, in particular. In keeping with the trend, the organizers

planned to have a number of pageants to greet the new king on his route to Westminster. With only three weeks to prepare, however, organizers found it necessary to borrow where they could. Costumes were borrowed from the Office of Revels. Even the script for the largest pageant was borrowed from John Lydgate, who had died nearly 100 years earlier. “The fact that the coronation of Edward VI was marked by ‘no very memorable show of triumph or magnificence’ underlines the novelty of the accession of a minor.”¹⁰

On February 19, Edward made the journey from the Tower to Westminster. The first pageant was elaborate, consisting of a number of parts. At the entrance to the conduit in Cheapside, two actors representing Orson and Valentine greeted the young king. Orson and Valentine were characters from medieval literature, twin brothers separated at birth. Orson was raised by a bear; while Valentine was found by King Pepin of France. The two are eventually reunited and live again as brothers. The connection between two brothers and Edward is weak, but perhaps alluded to the imperial status that Edward inherited from his father.

The pageant could also represent the English monarch’s claim to the throne of France. In 1328, King Edward III claimed the throne of France after the death of his uncle, King Charles IV. Edward was the late king’s closest adult male relative. France observed Salic law which stated that a woman could not inherit and, thus, only a male could become king. Edward’s claim was through his mother Isabella, and the French instead chose Philip, Count of Valois, the late king’s first cousin. Philip’s claim was through his father. Edward, who was also Duke of Aquitaine, refused to pay homage to the new king, leading to the Hundred Years’ War. Subsequent kings and queens continued to claim the throne of France and England held

¹⁰ Starkey, “Intimacy and Innovation” in Starkey, *The English Court*, 121.

territories in France until the loss of Calais in 1558. The English claim to the French throne continued until the passage of the 1800 Act of Union.

On the other side of the conduit four children stood in front of a fountain that ran with wine. The four children represented Grace, Nature, Fortune, and Charity. Each child gave a short speech. Next, seven actors stood representing the seven liberal sciences – arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, grammar, logic, music, and rhetoric. At the end of the conduit was a double scaffold. The upper level represented the heavens. A phoenix descended to the lower stage filled with red and white roses. A lion wearing a crown approached the phoenix, “making semblance of myty unto the bird, moveing his head sundry tymes.”¹¹ Then a young lion appeared and was crowned by two angels. Then the lion and phoenix left, leaving the young lion alone. This was an obvious reference to Edward’s parents. The phoenix was in Jane Seymour’s badge. Jane was Henry VIII’s third wife and Edward’s mother. The elder lion and younger lion represented Henry and Edward, respectively. A young child wearing cloth of gold and crimson satin sat on a throne, upheld by four children – “Regality with a scepter, Justice with a sword, Truth with a book, and Mercy with a curtana.”¹² Finally, there was a scene that represented the story of Jason and the Golden Fleece. The story, however, did not have any relevance to the new king and its purpose may have primarily been to add to the visual appeal of the entertainment.¹³

¹¹ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 289.

¹² Anglo, *Spectacle*, 290.

¹³ Renaissance scholars and humanists often drew upon Greek mythology as topics for pageants and masques. See “Social and Intellectual Foundations in English Humanism” in Fritz Caspari, *Humanism and the Social Order in Tudor England* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1954): 1-44; Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Humanist Learning in the Italian Renaissance” in Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and the Arts: Collected Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990): 1-19; and Paul Oskar Kristeller, “Renaissance Philosophy and the Medieval Tradition” in Paul Oskar Kristeller, *Renaissance Thought and Its Sources*, Michael Mooney, ed., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979): 106-133.

Next, the king's entourage moved to the Standard in Cheapside, where an actor was meant to give a speech encouraging Edward to use his father as a model of good kingship, but Edward passed by too quickly for the speech to be delivered. The same thing happened at the Little Conduit where an "anycyent man" who represented Edward the Confessor sat on a throne with a mechanical golden lion laying at his feet.¹⁴ Nearby on a separate stage was St. George. A child was to have explained the scene, but could not "for lacke of time...his grace made such speed."¹⁵

At the churchyard of St. Paul's Cathedral, the procession stopped to watch a tightrope walker descend from the steeple of the cathedral. The king and his companions laughed "right hartely" and spent "a good space of time" watching the entertainment, a contrast to the haste with which they passed the civic entertainments.¹⁶ The last pageant was at the Great Conduit in Fleet Street where three children, representing Truth, Faith, and Justice, stood on a stage and addressed the king. The king then passed Temple Bar, decorated with banners and flags, before proceeding to Westminster Abbey. Thus ended what Sydney Anglo describes as a "totally undistinguished royal entry into London – perhaps the most tawdry on record."¹⁷

Mary's procession was the forerunner to Elizabeth's and was the first prepared for a reigning queen. It occurred on November 30, 1553. She entered the city wearing a gown of blue velvet and ermine with a circlet of gold on her head. Elizabeth took part in Mary's coronation procession, riding behind her sister in a chariot with Henry VIII's fourth wife, Anne of Cleves. Unfortunately, little is known about Mary's coronation. No verses survive and the few descriptions that do are inadequate. It is impossible to discern any theme. From the evidence

¹⁴ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 291.

¹⁵ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 291.

¹⁶ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 293.

¹⁷ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 294.

available, the three pageants performed by foreigners living in London eclipsed the pageants performed by the Londoners.¹⁸ In addition, there are no surviving descriptions of Mary's reactions to the pageants.

Genoese merchants presented the first pageant for Mary at Fenchurch Street. The pageant had included four giants and a girl who represented either Mary or regality in general. There is no record of a speech or explanation of what occurred. "Easterlings", or Hanseatic merchants, presented the second pageant at the corner of Gracechurch Street. The pageant boasted a mountain and a wine fountain. Four children greeted Mary and a man dropped down by some type of mechanism. It is impossible to discern what occurred during the pageant.

The most complete descriptions that exist are about the third pageant, presented by the Florentines, at the end of Gracechurch Street, although these descriptions are still inadequate. In the middle of three gates, four pictures were erected beside which an angel stood with a trumpet in his hand. In the other gates were tablets with verses written in Latin and in English. Six people stood beside the pageant and wished Mary good luck. There were also four statues representing Mary and the goddesses of Wisdom, Rectitude, and Virtue.

There are few descriptions of the remaining pageants. At the conduit in Cornhill were three children. The child in the middle represented Grace and carried a crown and a scepter. The child to her right was Virtue, who held a cup. Nature, holding an olive branch, stood on her left. The procession also stopped at pageants erected at the great and little conduits in Cheapside, the schoolhouse and Dean's house in St. Paul's churchyard, and the conduit in Fleet Street. The only

¹⁸ For a discussion about the prominent presence of foreigners in Mary's coronation procession see Scott Oldenburg, "Toward a Multicultural Mid-Tudor England: The Queen's Royal Entry Circa 1553, the Interlude of Wealth and Health, and the Question of Strangers in the Reign of Mary I" *English Literary History* 76 (Spring 2009): 99-129.

other feature fully described was an acrobatic performance at St. Paul's Cathedral given by a man called Peter.

The English enjoyed spectacles. They expected the coronation procession to be lavish and Elizabeth's was evidently worthy. Although an exact figure is unknown, the account books of the Office of Revels present a small portion of the expenses.¹⁹ From January 8 to February 2, 1559, the Office of Revels paid a total of 41 pounds [li] 3 shillings [s] 11 pence [d] in wages to forty tailors, eight painters, an embroiderer, two haberdashers, a basket maker, and three officers. For one time payments to those such as mercers, the Office paid a total of 39 li 19s 8d.²⁰ Finally, the Office paid 17s for a water carriage and 6s 8d for the construction of certain devices.

Pageants were animated shows "devoid of either action or dialogue, or at least only employing their aid by way of supplementing and explaining the living picture."²¹ Each pageant symbolized some aspect of the office and power of the ruler. An official pamphleteer wrote that the pageants in Elizabeth's procession were not just diversions and amusements. "In unmistakable language, verbal, pictorial, and symbolical," they pronounced a "new, revolutionary England which the citizens confidently expected her to inaugurate."²²

Elizabeth arrived at the Tower on Thursday, January 12. She traveled along the Thames in a beautifully decorated barge driven by forty oarsmen. Her arrival reminded Il Schifanoia, a

¹⁹ For a complete itemized list, see Albert Feuillerat, ed., *Documents Relating to the Office of the Revels in the Time of Queen Elizabeth* (Louvain: A. Uystpruyst, 1908), 85-87.

²⁰ Exemptions were payments for one-time services.

²¹ Defined by Sir Adolphus Ward in his *History of English Dramatic Literature*. Quoted in Withington, *English Pageantry*, 3.

²² James Marshall Osborn, ed., *The Queen's Maiesties Passage Through the Citie of London to Westminster the Day Before Her Coronacion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 13.

Venetian living in London, of the Ascension Day celebrations in Venice.²³ The next day, she created eleven new Knights of the Bath.²⁴

Elizabeth's coronation procession was on Saturday, January 14, the day before her crowning. The guilds of London performed the pageants that greeted Elizabeth on her procession. They combined the themes of Tudor stability, Protestantism, and Elizabeth's English heritage, in contrast to Mary's Spanish heritage. The guilds placed the five pageants at strategic stops on the procession route: at Gracechurch Street, at Cornhill, at Soper's Lane beyond the Great Conduit in Cheapside, at the Little Conduit in Cheapside, and at the Conduit in Fleet Street. The pageant at Gracechurch Street illustrated Elizabeth's Tudor ancestors. The second pageant advised Elizabeth of good and bad virtues in a ruler. At Soper's Lane, the actors portrayed the Eight Beatitudes. In the fourth pageant, the city of London revealed its Protestant ambitions. The guilds compared Elizabeth to the Biblical queen Deborah in the final pageant. Thus, the Londoners created a clear picture of the type of monarch they wanted: a good, wise, just, and Protestant ruler.

On December 7 the Court of Aldermen met to discuss the plans for the procession and week later four men were chosen to oversee the creation the pageants. Richard Hilles was a merchant tailor and member of the Worshipful Company of Merchant Taylors, one of the London guilds participating in the procession. Hilles was a prominent member of a reformist group during Henry VIII's time. Lionel Duckett, a mercer, was a member of the Merchant Adventurers Company, the leading guild of overseas merchants. Duckett eventually became

²³ For a more detailed discussion about the Ascension Day celebrations in Venice, see Muir, *Civic Ritual*, 121-125.

²⁴ The new members of the Order were: John Darcy, 2nd Lord Darcy of the North; John Sheffield, 2nd Lord Sheffield of Butterwicke; John Darcy, 2nd Lord Darcy of Chiche; Robert Riche; Roger North; John de la Zouche; John Berkeley; Edward Umpton; Henry Weston; and George Speke. William A. Shaw, *The Knights of England: A Complete Record from the Earliest Time to the Present Day of the Knights of all Orders of Chivalry in England, Scotland, Ireland, and of Knights Bachelors*, Vol. 1 (London: Sherratt and Hughts, 1906): 153.

Lord Mayor of London. Francis Robynson was a merchant tailor and member of the Merchant Adventurers Company. In 1564 he was elected a warden of the company. Richard Grafton was the most well-known of the four. He was a grocer, printer, and a Protestant reformer. He printed the official translation of the English Bible in 1540. He was most likely the scenarist of the pageant series. These four men planned the theme, how the theme would be executed, and hired the actors and writers. They were also charged 'to reform, alter or add unto the same as they with the advice of such as they shall call unto them shall think good.'²⁵ It is unknown how involved Elizabeth and her Council were in planning of Elizabeth's procession, but previous monarchs and councils took an active part in the planning of coronations so one can assume that the new Council did as well. In addition, given Elizabeth's perfect responses and actions during the procession, she most likely had advance knowledge of the proceedings.

Three contemporary accounts of Elizabeth's procession remain: a diary, letters to the Venetian ambassador, and the official account printed by Elizabeth's government. Henry Machyn, a Catholic living in London, began his diary in August 1550 after the funeral of Sir Thomas Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton, and continued recording the events he witnessed until 1563. Although there is little direct proof of his occupation, given the abundance of descriptions of funerals in his diary, he was most likely a merchant-tailor, or furnisher of funeral trappings.

In 1557, Giovanni Michiel, the Venetian ambassador to the court of Mary I, left England with Philip of Spain. The Signori of Venice did not replace Michiel with another authorized diplomatic representative until 1602 because of Elizabeth's Protestant leanings and ill-concealed hostility toward Rome. As a result, the majority of diplomatic dispatches concerning Elizabeth's

²⁵ Germaine Warkentin, ed., *The Queen's Majesty's Passage and Related Documents* (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2004), 37.

reign originated from the Mantuan ambassador at the court of France. From December 17, 1558, to June 27, 1559, the Mantuan ambassador received a series of letters from Il Schifanoja, who was in the service of Sir Thomas Tresham, the Prior of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem in England.²⁶ He explained to the ambassador that he “took the greatest pains to acquaint himself with the circumstances of the country and to report faithfully and honestly to his principals all that he heard and saw there.”²⁷ In his letters, Il Schifanoja described all aspects of Court life, including Elizabeth’s coronation procession and theatrical performances at her court.

Two editions of the official account of Elizabeth’s procession appeared in the form of a pamphlet ten days after the event. The author is unknown but was evidently someone who was close to Elizabeth throughout the procession because the pamphlet records the Queen’s statements. Some historians, such as J.E. Neale, assert that the author must have been a statesman or courtier. In 1935, Charles R. Baskervill attributed authorship to Richard Mulcaster, a London schoolmaster and humanist, after noting a payment to Mulcaster from the aldermen for the “making of the book.”²⁸ This theory is supported by John King and David Bergeron.²⁹ Schoolmasters were traditionally among those who devised pageants for royal entertainment. Richard Tottel printed both editions of the pamphlet. The two editions are similar in appearance, the only difference being the title of each edition. The first edition was titled *The Quenes Maiesties Passage through the Citie of London to Westminster the Day before her Coronacion*,

²⁶ Rawdon G. Brown and G. Cavendish Bentinck, ed, *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts Relating to English Affairs Existing in the Archives and Collections of Venice and in Other Libraries of Northern Italy 1158-1580*, vol. 7 (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1890), viii.

²⁷ Brown, *Calendar*, ix.

²⁸ Warkentin, *The Queen’s Majesty’s Passage*, 16.

²⁹ See Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 15; John N. King, “The Royal Image, 1535-1603,” in *Tudor Political Culture*, Dale Hoak, ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 122; and David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1971), 13.

and the second was *The Passage of our most drad Soueraigne Lady Quene Elyzabeth through the citie of London to Westminster the daye before her coronacion.*

The *Quenes Maiesties* marked the first time a new regime published accounts of the monarch's coronation procession and was the first piece of Elizabethan printed propaganda "intended to build in the minds of the citizenry the image of Elizabeth as their personal Queen."³⁰ It provides a written record of the events of January 14, 1559, not only preserving the events of the day in the minds of the citizenry, but also giving the procession a permanence that lasted after the removal of the stages. With the invention of the printing press and a rise in literacy, those who were not in London during the procession could read about its events. The pamphlet describes the colors, sounds, and sights of the event. The record of the events was more detailed than the descriptions of the processions of past monarchs. The author presents Elizabeth in a favorable light and the theme of the pamphlet is the love between the new queen and her subjects. She acknowledges even the most humble subject and attentively watches the pageants. Elizabeth is portrayed as involved in the action, as an actor in the theatrical experience. Readers of the pamphlet see the queen as always regal, but also approachable and available to her subjects. "Mulcaster wanted to convince Englishmen that Elizabeth was a worthy successor of her father."³¹

At two o'clock in the afternoon on January 14, Elizabeth left the Tower of London to make her way to Westminster for her coronation. Over four hundred guns fired in salute. Henry Machyn notes that she traveled

³⁰ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 6.

³¹ Richard L. DeMolen, "Richard Mulcaster and Elizabethan Pageantry" *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 14 (Spring 1974), 211.

with all the lordes and ladies [in crimson] velvet, and ther horses trapyd with the sam, and [trumpeters in] red gownes blohyng, and all the haroldes in ther cottis armur, and all the strettes stroyd with gravell.³²

Il Schifanoya, in his January 23 letter regarding the procession, noted that the whole Court “so sparkled with jewels and gold collars that they cleared the air, though it snowed a little.”³³ At the end of a procession of 1,000 horses, Elizabeth, dressed in a robe of cloth of gold, a plain gold crown, and covered with jewels, was ensconced in an open litter trimmed with gold brocade and carried by two mules. The people of London received their new queen warmly and cheered as she began her journey. Spectators noted that Elizabeth acknowledged any person who offered her flowers, heard their suits, and “on eyther syde ther was nothing but gladness, nothing but prayer, nothing but comfort.”³⁴ By contrast, chroniclers failed to note the reaction of those who witnessed Mary’s procession.

The procession made a total of eleven stops and watched five pageants. The first stop on the procession route was at Fenchurch. Here the citizens had erected a scaffold upon which were a group of men with instruments and a young boy who recited a speech in English. All the actors in the pageants were children. The speech was also written in Latin on a board fastened to the scaffold. The boy welcomed Elizabeth to London and stated the two gifts the citizens of London offered her. The first gift was “blessing tonges” which welcomed Elizabeth into the city.³⁵ These tongues praised their new queen, prayed for her success, and wished her a long life. The second gift from the people was that of “true hertes” who, the boy stated, loved Elizabeth and

³² Henry Machyn, *The Diary of Henry Machyn, Citizen and Merchant-Taylor of London, from A. D. 1550 to A. D. 1563*, John Gough Nichols, ed. (London: J.B. Nicholas and Son, 1848), 186.

³³ Brown, *Calendar*, 12.

³⁴ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 27.

³⁵ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 29.

“skip for joy, when as they heare thy happy name.”³⁶ Tottel’s pamphlet noted Elizabeth’s attentiveness during the speech. After the boy’s speech, the crowd cheered.

The first pageant of the procession was on Gracechurch Street. Elizabeth and her attendants passed under an arch and saw a stage with three tiers. Beside the stage was a wreath with the title of the pageant: The Uniting of the Two Houses of York and Lancaster. On the lowest stage were two actors representing Elizabeth’s paternal grandparents, Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, daughter of Edward IV. Henry stood in the red rose of Lancaster and Elizabeth in the white rose of York. The branches of these two roses joined and climbed up to the second tier. On this stage sat actors representing Elizabeth’s parents, Henry VIII and his second wife, Anne Boleyn with their respective emblems, a red and white rose and a white falcon with a gold crown. Since her execution, Anne’s name had scarcely been mentioned in public, but her image drew attention to Elizabeth’s English heritage. On the highest tier was an actor representing Elizabeth with her coat of armor and device. In addition, sentences about unity and red and white Tudor roses decorated the stage.

A young boy stood in the forefront and explained the meaning of the pageant. Children were often used in coronation pageants. Children represent innocence and hope for the future and so were a natural choice in pageants which portrayed the citizens’ hope for the future. The official pamphlet notes that Elizabeth asked the crowd to be silent so that she could hear him. He stated that the pageant showed how the marriage of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York signaled the end of the Wars of the Roses by uniting the houses of Lancaster and York. As the daughter and heir of Henry VIII, Elizabeth was the successor of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York and through this image the citizens of London stated their hope that Elizabeth’s reign would maintain

³⁶ Osborn, *Queenes Maiesties*, 29.

the promise of peace that had resulted in the joining of the houses of Lancaster and York. The pageant portrayed Elizabeth as an important part of the Tudor dynasty, which had brought peace and unity to England. At the end of the boy's speech, according to the pamphlet, Elizabeth promised the crowd that she would do all within her power to preserve the unity of the country.

Beside the water conduit at Cornhill, the guild members had erected a stage "no less handsome than the first, but not so high" for the second pageant.³⁷ Three open gates extended from one side of the street to the other. At the top of the center gate, sitting on a chair covered with the Cloth of State, or the Seat of Government, was a child who represented Elizabeth, crowned with the imperial crown. Next to the stage hung a wreath with the title of the pageant, The Seat of Worthy Governance, written on it "with perfite sight and understanding to the people."³⁸

The portrayal of the virtues suppressing the vices was a common theme in medieval art. It was used in past royal entries, such as the coronation procession of Edward VI where Royalty, Justice, Truth, and Mercy were portrayed. This pageant, however, expressed the Protestant bias of the people of London. Four virtues supported the Seat of Government while stepping on four vices, thus suppressing them: Pure Religion tread upon Ignorance and Superstition; Love of Subjects upon Rebellion and Insolence; Wisdom upon Folly and Vainglory; and Justice upon Adulation and Bribery. Each vice and virtue had her name written on a plaque so that the audience could identify her. Again, a child interpreted the pageant. True religion, or Protestantism, would suppress ignorance and superstition, which were, according to the Protestants, characteristics of Catholicism. Rebellion and insolence would not occur if subjects showed love toward their ruler, as was their duty. A ruler with wisdom and a sense of justice

³⁷ Brown, *Calendar*, 13.

³⁸ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 38.

would prevent folly and corruption. The child advised Elizabeth that she would remain in the Seat of Government as long as she embraced the virtues and suppressed the vices. He also implored the audience to do likewise. Il Schifanoia interpreted the pageant differently from the official account. He focused on the Protestant slant of the pageant, stating that it demonstrated that hitherto religion had been misunderstood and misdirected, and that now it will proceed on a better footing, which was exemplified by a queen seated aloft on her throne.³⁹

After the Queen thanked the actors and promised to do her best to maintain the virtues and suppress the vices, the procession continued down the route. Beside the great conduit in Cheapside at the end of Soper's Lane were three open gates. In the middle gate, eight children sat on three stages: four on the bottom, three in the middle, and one on top. The name of the pageant was The Eight Beatitudes, Expressed in the Fifth Chapter of the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Applied to Our Sovereign Lady Queen Elizabeth.⁴⁰ Written above each child's head was the blessing he represented. In the explanatory speech, the child attributed each of the Beatitudes to Elizabeth, telling her that if she remembered his words, she would receive the promised blessings. At the end of the speech, according to the pamphlet, the people wished that "as the child had spoke, so god woulde strengthen her grace against all her adversaries."⁴¹

³⁹ Brown, *Calendar*, 13.

⁴⁰ From Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He says to His disciples: "Blessed are the poore in spirite/for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that morne/for they shal be coforted. Blessed are the meke/for they shall inhereth the earth. Blessed are they which honger and thrust for rightuousnes for they shal be filled. Blessed are the mercyfull for they shal obteyne mercy. Blessed are the pure in herte/for they shall se God. Blessed are the mayteyners of peace for they shal be called the chyldre of God. Blessed are they which suffer persecution for ryghtuousnes sake/for theirs ys the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall reuyle you and persecute you/and shall falsly laye all manner of euyl saynges against you for my sake. Reioyce and be glad/ for greate is youre rewarde in heave. For so persecuted they the prophetis which were before your dayes." Quoted in Matthew 5: 1-12, William Tyndale, *The Newe Testament dylygently corrected and compared with the Greke by Willyam Tindale* (Antwerp: Marten Emperowr, 1534).

⁴¹ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 43.

At the upper end of Cheapside Master Randolph Chomeley, the Recorder of the City, presented Elizabeth with a crimson purse containing one thousand marks in gold. This was a common feature of coronation processions, representing the monarch's reliance on the City of London for revenue. The Recorder of London had given Mary the same amount of gold. While there is no account of Mary's response, there is one of Elizabeth's response and the people's reaction. The queen took the purse and thanked him "so pithily that the standers by, as they embraced entirely [sic] her gracious answer."⁴²

The fourth pageant, beside the Little Conduit in Cheapside, was the most elaborate of the entertainments. The pageant consisted of a cave in the middle of two mountains. The mountain on the north side of the pageant was barren and stony. On top of the mountain was an artificial tree, withered and dead. At the foot of a tree sat a boy "dressed in black velvet, melancholy, pale, and wan."⁴³ A Decayed Common Weal was written in English and Latin on the tree, followed by the causes for a decayed commonwealth: no fear of God, civil disagreement, disobedience, blindness of guides, rebellion of subjects, flattering of princes, bribery of magistrates, and unthankfulness.

The second mountain was green and fruitful with a healthy tree. A young boy, who was "well dressed, joyous, and jocund," stood under the tree.⁴⁴ Above his head, A Flourishing Common Weal was written in English and Latin, followed by the causes for a healthy state: fear of God, obedient subjects, and a wise and learned prince, virtue rewarded, vice punished, and love of the commonwealth. The barren hill, the spectator could infer, represented England under the reign of Mary I; the fertile one represented the citizens' hopes for Elizabeth's reign. In the

⁴² Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 45.

⁴³ Brown, *Calendar*, 14.

⁴⁴ Brown, *Calendar*, 14.

center of the two mountains was a cave with a door and lock. Elizabeth asked the significance of the pageant “and it was tolde her grace, that there was placed Tyme... ‘Tyme,’ quoth she, ‘and Tyme hath brought me hether.’”⁴⁵ Two people emerged from the cave. The first was dressed as an old man with a scythe in his hand. His name was Time. The second person was a young girl whose name was Truth, the Daughter of Time. The girl carried a book with The Word of Truth written on the cover. It was the New Testament written in English.

A boy stood on the left side of the stage and explained the meaning of the pageant. Time and his daughter, Truth, could now emerge from hiding after the oppression of the previous reign because of the promise of the new reign. The first mountain represented the damage and hopelessness of a decayed society, while the second one represented the hope and promise of a flourishing society. Like the previous pageant, the Cheapside entertainment demonstrated the Protestant leanings of Londoners:

We trust O worthy queen, thou wilt this truth embrace.
And since thou understandeth the good estate and nought
We trust welth thou wilt plant, and barrenness displace.⁴⁶

After the boy’s speech, he delivered The Word of Truth to the Queen. Elizabeth kissed the book, laid it upon her breast, and told the people of London she would read it often. Elizabeth’s gesture is interesting. For the second time, the people of London were showcasing their Protestant leanings to a queen whose religious leanings were largely unknown. This pageant in particular was a bold statement. As a Catholic, Mary asserted that the Roman Catholic Church

⁴⁵ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 44.

⁴⁶ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 44.

was the true religion so the message of this pageant was a contradiction to that assertion, proclaiming instead that the Protestant religion was the truth.⁴⁷

It is unknown how Elizabeth actually felt about the pageant's message. In the past, she had remained ambiguous about her religious leanings. During Mary's reign, she had attended mass and had given the appearance of being Catholic. In addition, her accession proclamation omitted the title Supreme Head of the Church of England, the title held by both Henry VIII and Edward VI. On the other hand, her coronation ceremony contained both Catholic and Protestant elements. For the hopeful Protestants of London, however, this gesture constituted a public announcement of the return of Protestantism to England. Elizabeth had signaled that she would return the Bible to its rightful place as a means of spiritual instruction, one of the foundations of the Protestant religion.

Another important aspect of this pageant is its symbolic censure of the previous queen's reign. After her accession, Elizabeth was careful to preserve the memory of her sister and even arranged a Catholic funeral for her. Elizabeth was unsympathetic toward those who criticized royalty. Her conviction that she reigned with the will of the people notwithstanding, Elizabeth believed in the divine right of kings. It was not a subject's place to pass judgment on his ruler. Despite this, she participated in a pageant that described her sister's reign as the cause of a decayed commonwealth. The reason for this was that Elizabeth was a politique and understood the need for an English monarch to gain and maintain the support of London.

From Cheapside, the Queen's retinue proceeded toward Fleet Street. As Elizabeth passed the City of London School, a child gave a speech in Latin comparing Elizabeth to Plato's philosopher king, the ruler of his utopian society in *The Republic*. Philosopher kings were those

⁴⁷ For a more in-depth analysis of Mary's religious policies during her reign, see Eamon Duffy, *Fires of Faith: Catholic England under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.)

who search for true knowledge. Thus, Elizabeth, known for her love of learning, was an ideal ruler. After passing a gate at Ludgate, a member of the entourage noted that Londoners had spared no cost for the coronation procession, a gesture that demonstrated the love toward their new queen. Elizabeth replied that she would try to do the same. The author of the *Quenes Maiesties* reacted to Elizabeth's response: "An honorable answer, worthie a noble prince, which may comfort all her subjectes, considering there can be no point of gentleness, or obedient love shewed towarde her grace, which she doth not most tenderlie accept."⁴⁸ The conduit at Fleet Street was the site of the fifth and final pageant of the procession. On a stage with four towers was a platform with a throne and an artificial palm tree. Sitting in the chair was a female who held a scepter in her hand and wore an open crown. She represented the Biblical prophetess Deborah, "The Judge and Restorer of Israel."⁴⁹ The title of the pageant was Deborah, With Her Estates, Consulting for the Good Government of Israel.

In the pageant, Deborah consulted the three estates of Israel for the greater good of the Jews. Six people represented the three estates: two nobles, two clergymen, and two commoners. A child described the meaning of the pageant. The *Quenes Maiesties*'s author noted that Elizabeth asked for quiet and had her litter moved closer so that she could hear the oration. The child explained that Deborah was an ideal queen for Elizabeth to emulate and, like Deborah, she should consult the estates of England for the good of her citizens. That, according to the pageant, was the key to a successful reign and to earning the love of her subjects.

Although the pageant on Fleet Street was the last formal one of the procession, the people of London presented three more entertainments for their Queen. At St. Dunstan's Hospital, a

⁴⁸ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 53.

⁴⁹ Deborah was a prophetess, judge, and military leader for the Israelites. This position was held by only two others: Moses and Samuel. She and Barak rescued Israel from Jabin, king of the Canaanites, and ruled Israel for forty years. Judges 4:1-23.

child stood with a group of governors. The *Quenes Maiesties* states that Elizabeth “did cast her eyes to heaven” and was overheard to remark, “I here see this mercifull worke toward the poore whom I must in the middest of my royaltie nedes remember.”⁵⁰ The child stepped forward and made a speech in Latin. He stated that the elaborate spectacles presented to Elizabeth by the guilds of London showed the love and loyalty of her subjects, but the Queen should remember that the most important “was the everlasting spectacle of mercy unto the poore members of allmighty God.”⁵¹ The child implored Elizabeth to follow the examples of her grandfather, father, and brother and continue with royal charity to the poor. The child then prayed for the long life of Elizabeth and for the defeat of her enemies.

At Temple Bar were two statues of Gogmagog the Albion and Corineus the Briton, whom Geoffrey of Monmouth mentioned in his history of England, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, written in the twelfth century. Once again, the people of London expressed their hopes for a Protestant nation. According to Geoffrey of Monmouth Brutus conquered ancient Britain. He founded a dynasty that culminated in the reign of Arthur, whose symbol was the red dragon. Before Arthur’s line ended, Merlin prophesized the triumph of the Britons over the Saxons, of the red over the white. The Tudors frequently alluded to this to legitimize their rule because the red rose of Lancaster triumphed over the white rose of York in the Wars of the Roses.

Additionally, because he had a British mother, Emperor Constantine had equated British kingship with Roman emperorship, giving Arthur and his line imperial status. “Thus,” according to J.J. Scarisbrick, “early Britain had sired an heroic dynasty upon which the first Christian emperor had bestowed a peculiar halo and from which would one day spring a conqueror who

⁵⁰ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 56.

⁵¹ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 56.

would reclaim the British heritage.”⁵² After the English Reformation, Henry VIII declared himself an imperial monarch, connecting him to Arthur. This imperial status was often portrayed by the use of a closed crown. As the daughter of Henry VIII and an English mother, therefore, Elizabeth was the descendant of the mythical leader.

The statues of Corineus and Gogmagog thus represented the Protestants’ hope that Britain would once again claim its imperial status and no longer be subservient to the Papacy. Corineus, for whom the county of Cornwall was named, was the leader of the Trojans. Brutus, the alleged first king of the Britons, first encountered him at the Pillars of Hercules, the outlying areas around the Strait of Gibraltar. Monmouth described Corineus as “a sober-minded man, wise in counsel, yet of great courage and audacity.”⁵³ Corineus defeated Gogmagog, who stood twelve feet tall and was the greatest and most repulsive of the giants.

The statues of Corineus and Gogmagog held a table in their hands, which explained the messages of the pageants in Elizabeth’s coronation procession in both Latin and English. The pageants had built their messages upon each other. The first pageant, at Gracechurch Street, had shown that “as true heyre unto thy father dere,” Elizabeth was a part of the so-called Tudor ‘House of Unity,’ and thus the rightful queen of England. The Cornhill pageant had placed Elizabeth in the Seat of Governance and advised her to uphold virtues and stifle resistance. By applying the eight Beatitudes to Elizabeth in the third entertainment, Londoners had implied that Elizabeth would receive God’s blessings. At the Little Conduit, Time and Truth had revealed the causes of a prosperous and a decaying commonwealth and presented Elizabeth with The Book of Truth to guide her. Finally, the people of London had advised Elizabeth to use Deborah as a

⁵² J.J. Scarisbrick, *Henry VIII* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970), 271.

⁵³ Geoffrey of Monmouth, *The History of the Kings of Britain*, Lewis Thorpe, trans. (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1966), 66.

guide and surround herself with good advisers. Now, in conclusion, the plaque reminded Elizabeth of her obligations to her subjects:

Therefore goe on O Queene, on whome our hope is bent,
And take with thee this wishe of thy towne as finall,
Live long, and as long raigne, adourning thy countrie,
With virtues, and maintain thy peoples hope of thee.⁵⁴

On the south side of the procession was a group of children singing songs. One child, dressed as a poet, gave Elizabeth London's farewell, stating that the City sent the Queen their hopes and prayers. He continued with the hope of all men that Elizabeth would allow virtue to rule, that she would not support errors, and that she would restore Truth; all men prayed that she lived a long life. Elizabeth promised that she would remember their words, but she remained vague about how she would accomplish what the people were asking. Next she passed on to Westminster to prepare for her coronation. Tottel's pamphlet noted that the City "received her grace at all places...with most tender obedience and love, due to so gracious a queen and soveraigne ladie" and that throughout the procession Elizabeth "shewed herselfe generallye an ymage of a woorthie Ladie and Governour."⁵⁵

At the end of the official pamphlet is a chapter called "Certain notes of the queens maiesties great mercie, clemencie, and wisdom" observed during the coronation procession.⁵⁶ The pamphlet cites three examples of this. At the far end of Cornhill, near Cheapside, a knight saw an elderly gentleman who wept and turned his back when the Queen passed. The knight suggested that the man wept out of joy and Elizabeth agreed.

⁵⁴ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 58-59.

⁵⁵ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 60.

⁵⁶ Osborn, *Quenes Maiesties*, 61.

In Cheapside, the queen smiled as someone in the crowd said, “Remember old king Henry the eight.”⁵⁷ Finally, the author noted that Elizabeth stopped her chariot when anyone wished to speak to her or offer her gifts. In addition to the Bible given to her at the Little Conduit, witnesses saw a branch of rosemary in her litter given to Elizabeth by a woman at Fleet Street when the procession arrived at Westminster.

The next day, Sunday, January 16, was Elizabeth’s coronation ceremony. The ceremony was one of the first occasions of her reign to proclaim her religious preferences. Although her coronation procession was well-documented, the actual ceremony itself was not. “So much so that scholars have suggested that the irregularities which occurred led to a reluctance to record what happened.”⁵⁸ Elizabeth had witnessed and taken part in the coronations of her brother, Edward VI, who was a Protestant, and sister, Mary I, who was a Catholic. Therefore, she was familiar with the coronation ceremony as both in the reformist and Catholic manner. Elizabeth, however, could not make many changes to the religion of the nation without the approval of Parliament who had yet to meet. “She had to undergo a Coronation at the hands of those with whom she had little or no religious affinity.”⁵⁹ Because of Elizabeth’s Protestant leanings, her council had difficulty finding a bishop who would perform the coronation rites. Most of the members of the Catholic hierarchy refused. The only one who agreed was Owen Oglethorpe, the Bishop of Carlisle, a minor see. However, Oglethorpe refused some of Elizabeth’s requests, notably to omit the Elevation of the Host during the Mass. This problem was solved before the ceremony and a compromise was reached.

⁵⁷ Osborn, *Queen's Majesties*, 61.

⁵⁸ Strong, *Coronation*, 208.

⁵⁹ Strong, *Coronation*, 208.

On the day of the ceremony, Elizabeth traveled from Whitehall Palace to Westminster Hall. She was preceded by trumpets to announce her arrival, knights, and lords then nobles and bishops followed clothed in scarlet robes, and finally footmen to wait upon the queen. Once she arrived at Westminster Hall, she dressed in the robes of state and she entered Westminster Abbey.

Entering the Abbey before the queen were a number of nobles and clergymen. First were the four swords of state. The sword of mercy, known as the Curtana, was carried by the Earl of Derby, who also carried the sword at Mary's coronation. The Earl of Rutland carried the second sword. Elizabeth later named Rutland the Lord President of the North. Another Catholic, the Earl of Worcester, carried the third sword. The final sword was carried by the Earl of Westmorland. Next came the Earl of Arundel who carried the sceptre. Arundel was the Lord High Steward at Elizabeth's coronation, the same position he held at Mary's coronation. The Marquis of Winchester, the Lord Treasurer, carried the orb. Winchester also carried the orb at Mary's coronation and had held offices during the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward, Mary, and Elizabeth. The Duke of Norfolk, Elizabeth's cousin, carried the crown. Next came the queen, escorted by the earls of Pembroke and Shrewsbury. Both Edward and Mary were escorted by a bishop and a noble during the opening procession into the Abbey, but Elizabeth did not give this privilege to one of the bishops. Her train was borne by her cousins the Countess of Lennox and Lord Howard of Effingham.

After she arrived in the Abbey, Elizabeth sat in the chair of estate facing the high altar and the ceremony began. The first part of the service was the recognition. Elizabeth stood between two lords and the bishop proclaimed her accession in four directions – north, south, east, and west – with trumpets sounding after each proclamation. The next part of the service was the

offering. The queen knelt before a bishop seated at the high altar and made an offering of gold. Then she returned to her chair and hear the sermon given by an unknown bishop. At the end of the sermon, Elizabeth knelt again and listened to the prayers of the people. Next, the queen took the oaths given by the bishop to keep the laws and customs of the land, to keep the peace, and to execute justice with mercy.

The next part of the ceremony, the anointing of the queen with holy oil, was the most sacred moment. Elizabeth removed her robes and coronation gown and wore a special garment for the anointing. Some sovereigns received the oil by lying prostrate before the altar, but Elizabeth chose to kneel instead. She was most likely anointed in five places: the palms of her hands, the breast, between her shoulders, the insides of her elbows, and on her head.

After the anointing she again donned her robes and coronation gown to prepare for the investment of the ornaments of power. The Earl of Shrewsbury presented the gloves. Lord Arundel accepted the sword of state on behalf of the queen. Then the queen received the orb and sceptre. Finally the Bishop of Carlisle crowned the new queen and she returned to her chair of estate to receive the homage of those present. The Bishop of Carlisle was first, followed by the peers, then the bishops. This was the reverse of the traditional order of those who paid homage and the first time, the nobles preceded the bishops.

The Mass was conducted after the investiture. The epistle and the gospel were read in both Latin and English. However, the queen left the worship area during the consecration of the elements. Where she went during this time is unknown and the sources are unclear. According to one source, “Her Grace returned into her Closett hearing the consecration of the Masse,” but another states that she withdrew “to her traverse.”⁶⁰ In 1571, Elizabeth recounted the event to

⁶⁰ Quoted in Strong, *Coronation*, 209.

the French ambassador, stating that “she had been crowned and anointed according to the ceremonies of the Catholic church and by Catholic bishops without, however, attending mass.”⁶¹

Elizabeth returned to the worship area wearing a coat of purple velvet trimmed with ermine fur in preparation for the final portion of the coronation ceremonies, the coronation banquet. She emerged from Westminster Abbey to shouts of acclamation by the people gathered there. Il Schifanoja noted “She returned very cheerfully with a most smiling countenance for everyone, giving them all a thousand greetings, so that in my opinion she exceeded the bounds of gravity and decorum.”⁶²

The coronation banquet followed the ceremony and was held at Westminster Hall. There, the queen’s champion, Sir Edward Dymock, rode into the hall wearing full armor and three down his gauntlet. He proclaimed:

If there be any manner of man that will say and maintain that our sovereign lady, Queen Elizabeth, is not the rightful and undoubted inheritrix to the imperial crown of this realm of England, I say he lieth like a false traitor, and *that* I am ready to maintain with him, and therefore I cast him my gage.⁶³

After no one answered his challenge, Sir Edward retrieved his glove and the queen drank to the health of her champion, then presented the cup to him as a reward. The festivities continued until early the next morning.

The people of London gave an impressive performance and, with at least two pageants, boldly gave their queen advice on the preferred religious direction of the country. The coronation procession was designed to be a test of a sovereign’s popularity. During Anne Boleyn’s coronation, the crowd had remained silent. Twenty-six years later, her daughter passed the test

⁶¹ Quoted in Strong, *Coronation*, 210.

⁶² Quoted in Anna Riehl, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 87.

⁶³ Quoted in Eva March Tappan, *In the Days of Queen Elizabeth*, (London: Lee and Shepard, 1902), 117.

spectacularly, leaving an indelible mark on the minds of the people of London. Elizabeth had tried to establish an intimate relationship, not just with foreign dignitaries and noblemen, but with the common people as well, which the official account stressed. Elizabeth understood that “the future of the monarchy no longer lay with the Church. Rulership was God-ordained, but it needed the support of the people.”⁶⁴ Elizabeth was at her best when she was before a large audience. She was a superb actress and could always be relied on to play the appropriate part. In the past, pageants had been one-sided, in which the subjects addressed their prince, but Elizabeth turned the process into a two-sided conversation. Her replies were as important as the message of the pageants: “She knew by instinct when to speak and when to listen attentively, when to smile and when to be solemn.”⁶⁵ Elizabeth’s goal for her coronation procession was to win the hearts of the people of London. The stages remained for the remainder of the day, allowing the crowds to retrace the steps of the route and see the decorations again. The pamphlets were published nine days later, preserving the pageant series and its messages. “Here we are at the roots of the later cult of the monarchy.”⁶⁶ Throughout her reign, she would state that she owed her throne to her subjects. By all appearances, Elizabeth succeeded. The Cult of Gloriana had begun.

⁶⁴ Strong, *Coronation*, 212.

⁶⁵ Neville Williams, *Elizabeth the First, Queen of England* (New York: Dutton, 1968), 56.

⁶⁶ Roy C. Strong, “Elizabethan Pageantry as Propaganda,” master’s thesis, University of London, 1962, pg. 38.

CHAPTER IV
“THE PERMANENT PAGEANT”:
THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROYAL COURT

By the time Elizabeth became queen, the court was the most important institution of its time. “Of all the institutions affecting the political, religious, and cultural life of early modern Europe, there were probably none more influential than the court.”¹ It was the setting in which the monarch lived and worked, combining his or her public and private lives. As a result, the court was not only the home of the monarch; it was the center of the affairs of the kingdom, the seat of government, and the cultural center. A basic function of the court was to serve as a medium for propaganda; to showcase the power and stability of the monarch to visiting ambassadors and domestic nobles. “In the sixteenth century polity so much lay in the eye of the beholder, and it was the function of the court to attract and train that eye.”²

Because of its importance and opportunities for access to the sovereign, the court also attracted men and women in search of power and advancement. King Alfonso the Wise, who ruled Leon and Castile in the thirteenth century, described his court as “the place where the king is to be found with his vassals and his own officials, who constantly advise and wait on him, as well as the great men of the kingdom who are present.”³ As a result, every member of the ruling order was present at court at least part of the year. So the court was made up of more than the king’s household. According to David Starkey, “The court was not only a machine of government; it was also a machinery for conspicuous expenditure.”⁴ The people who made this

¹ John Adamson, ed., *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics, and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500-1750*, (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 7.

² David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (Totowa: Barnes and Noble, 1987), 8.

³ Quoted in Glyn Redworth and Fernando Checa, “The Kingdoms of Spain: the Courts of the Spanish Habsburgs, 1500-1700” in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual, Politics, and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500-1750*, John Adamson, ed. (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 43.

⁴ Starkey, *The English Court*, 2.

possible resided at court. The court consisted of the monarch and his or her family, the monarch's ministers, privy councilors, government officials, peers of the realm, as well as those who worked in the house and on the estate.

However, the court presents problems for historians. Professor G.R. Elton observed that the Tudor court was "a baffling institution."⁵ Because the court centered on the monarch, the nature of the court depended on the personality of the monarch. In addition, the court was not a free-standing institution like Parliament or a court of law. It was itinerant and moved when the monarch moved. Thus, the number of those in attendance fluctuated depending on the time of year or location of the court. Many peers returned to their homes during the summer and, as a result, the population of court was considerably lower during those times. "What held things together was ultimately the monarch alone, and thus – for any continuity to be given – the ruling dynasty. A court was a dynasty viewed as institution."⁶

The English court, especially after Henry VIII's break with Rome, was indisputably the center of the English realm, perhaps more important to the country than any other European court. After the English Reformation the English sovereign was the supreme head of the government and church. In addition, England, along with France, Spain, and the Holy Roman Empire, was among the most powerful and wealthiest of the European monarchies, a status only enhanced after the Reformation, when the English monarch also became a leader in the Protestant world. Elizabeth's court, however, was the product of centuries of evolution of the definition of a court and influence from the outside world.

⁵ Quoted in Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 184.

⁶ R.J.W. Evans, "The Austrian Habsburgs: the Dynasty as a Political Institution" in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty, 1400-1800*, A.G. Dickens, ed., (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book, Co., 1977), 121.

Prior to the Norman Conquest in 1066, Anglo-Saxon kings kept their household numbers to a minimum as they were almost constantly on the move, never staying for long in one house.

This was due primarily to an almost constant state of warfare and campaigning.

Travel taught a king his job, for he needed to study his territories, roads, rivers, and fortresses; above all to know the local officials and vassals upon whom his rule depended. Likewise he needed to show himself to his populace, to impose upon all a sense of his grandeur and ubiquity, his personal share in lawgiving, his gracious paternalism in peace, his power and wrath against dissidents and rivals.⁷

In order to travel easily between houses, the king's household generally numbered around 100 people. After the Conquest, Norman kings continued the nomad tradition. Evidence relating to the houses of these early kings is sparse and little is known about William the Conqueror's household. The best information is found in a document created for King Stephen in 1136 called *Constitution Domus Regis*, or the Constitution of the King's Household.⁸ The document lists the principal servants in the king's household and can be taken to reflect the same type of household as that of Stephen's Norman predecessors.

William the Conqueror established houses at Westminster and Winchester to serve as the ceremonial centers of his kingdom. According to the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, the king wore his crown three times a year, on Easter at Winchester, on Whitsuntide (Pentecost) at Westminster, and on Christmas at Gloucester. At each of these celebrations, archbishops, bishops, abbots, earls, and knights were present. But none of these homes were considered the principal residence of the king. Perhaps as a result of these centers, from the twelfth century to the fourteenth century, the king's household grew steadily in size. By 1300, members of the king's

⁷ A.G. Dickens, ed., *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty, 1400-1800* (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), 17.

⁸ For more information see F.E.L. Carter, *Dialogus de Scaccario: The Court of the Exchequer and Constitutio Regis (the Establishment of the Royal Household)*, 2nd ed, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

household numbered about 500.⁹ This increase meant that the household was forced to move less frequently and kings began to focus more on the comfort of their surroundings.

Together with the increase in the king's household, came a reduction in the administrative function of the court. Beginning in the eleventh century, various administrative departments of the government set up permanent centers. The first to separate were the Treasury, the Exchequer, and the Chancery. All three departments were established at Westminster. As a result, regardless of where the king and his court resided at any given time, the administrative center of the kingdom was at Westminster and soon, Westminster became the official residence of the king. "Westminster quickly became the most extensive and frequently used of the king's houses until its partial destruction by fire and subsequent abandonment as a residence in the early part of Henry VIII's reign."¹⁰

From the early Middle Ages to the beginning of the fifteenth century, the court continued its trend toward permanence. The number of royal houses decreased, given to members of the nobility as rewards for service. Those that remained as possessions of the crown grew in size and comfort. Consequently, the number of those in the household increased and the court became less and less mobile. The Plantagenet kings spent the majority of their time at the castles at Windsor, Winchester, and Nottingham.

The court itself was still ill-defined and its numbers varied greatly at any given time. There were, however, some indications of what a court was in the Middle Ages. In the late fifteenth century Edward IV ordered the creation of the *Liber Niger*, or the Household Book of

⁹ Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life, 1460-1547* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁰ Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, 1-2.

Edward IV to record the makeup and division of the king's household.¹¹ The book divides the household into two sections: *Domus Providencie* and *Domus Regie Magnificencie*. The former was the domestic staff, which included those responsible for feeding the royal family, cleaning the castles, transporting the family, and other household related activities. Its origin and organization is clear because it is no different than the household of the great nobles of the land, except that the king's household was larger.

The origin and development of the latter, *Domus Regie Magnificencie*, however, is less clear. Its function was to "sustain and focus the *maiestas* of the ruler."¹² The influences of the English court come from a myriad of sources. Its roots lay in the courts of Anglo-Saxon kings, Charlemagne, the great courts of Burgundy and the French king, and the Papal court.

The men who surrounded and protected the king were kin to the men who aided Anglo-Saxon kings. These men were warriors and acted as the king's bodyguards and his constant companions. Those who performed the administrative duties of the kingdom are similar to the scribes and scholars who surrounded Charlemagne, who ruled the Holy Roman Empire from 768-814. Charlemagne's court is well documented and shows a deliberate attempt to "steer the barbarian peoples of western Europe back into the Roman tradition."¹³ Historians know quite a bit about Charlemagne's court due largely to Einhard's biography of the king.

The court itself was headed by a group of great officers in close contact with Charles. The Arch Chaplain – in two cases an archbishop – was minister for ecclesiastical affairs... Alongside him a Chancellor and a Count Palatine supervised secular business... The Seneschal, the Constable, the Chief Butler, together with the Masters of the Horse and of the Wardrobe, served not merely as household officials but as general administrators. Below them, what amounted to a chancery provided a major connecting link between court and local officialdom;

¹¹ For a detailed analysis and more thorough discussion of the *Liber Niger*, see A.R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV: the Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478* (Manchester: University of Manchester, 1959).

¹² Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 9.

¹³ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 13.

yet it seems to have been less formally organized than were the chanceries of later medieval time.¹⁴

What is remarkable about Charlemagne is that he chose to surround himself not only with warriors for protection, but also with scholars from around the known-world. These scholars came from Italy, Spain, England, Ireland, and with them came their cultures and influences. Their presence at Charlemagne's court prompted a renaissance of learning and promulgation of the arts that continued for more than a century. According to Dickens, it remains hard to find anywhere else in history a comparable propagation of culture by any single court.¹⁵

Two centuries after Charlemagne's rule, another Holy Roman Emperor, Frederick II, shared the Carolingian king's passion for *renovatio* and the return to ancient Roman culture. When men excavating the Italian city of Ravenna discovered ancient statues, Frederick used the sculptures to decorate his castles. He also surrounded himself with the intellectuals of the day, as well as astrologers and alchemists, most notably Michael Scot; a magician whose rumored dabbling in the occult earned him a place in Hell in Dante's *Inferno*.¹⁶ Frederick's importance in the evolution of the court can be seen in the courts of nobles and the rulers of Renaissance Italy. Frederick showed those who aspired to power how "the magnificence and wonder of a court could furnish a ruler with a political weapon of the first order...No medieval Emperor, Charlemagne apart, left livelier memories or more widespread anticipation of a Second Coming."¹⁷

¹⁴ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 16.

¹⁵ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 17.

¹⁶ Dante encounters Scot in the Eighth Circle of Hell, which was reserved for astrologers and sorcerers. "That other, who so narrow in the flanks, was Michael Scot, and truly well he knew to play the game of magical deceit." Quoted in Dante Alighieri, *A Translation of Dante's Inferno*, David Johnston, trans. (Bath: Chronicle Office, 1867), canto xx. 115-117.

¹⁷ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 27.

However, it was not Charlemagne's or Frederick's courts that best spread this idea of an imperial court. Instead, it was the papal courts of Rome. "More than any other royal household, the papal court existed to give exemplary public expression to the religious calendar of Catholic Christendom."¹⁸ Court life revolved around the feasts on the Christian calendar, beginning with Advent in the late autumn and ending with All Saints' Day on November 1.

Throughout the Middle Ages, popes sought to consolidate their power. Because the pope generally remained in a central location, rather than traveling throughout Christendom, it was necessary to create a bureaucracy that answered to the pope and carried out the pope's functions. It was this bureaucracy, known as the Curia, which monarchs began to imitate. In addition, the culture of the papal court also became a model for monarchs. European monarchs regularly sent diplomats to the court and those diplomats brought back descriptions of the architecture, art, music, and ceremony surrounding the pope. This was particularly true during the Avignon Papacy in the fourteenth century. The court's influence continued to be felt even after the Protestant Reformation.

The influence of the Italians on the English court came as a result of interactions with not only English diplomats at the Italians courts, but also intellectuals who conversed with Italians and studied and taught at Italian universities. This is how the English were introduced to humanism. John Gunthorp, who was King Edward IV's chaplain, studied in Ferrara and served at the court of Pope Pius II. He was briefly appointed Pope Pius II's chaplain. William Grey, who became Bishop of Ely, studied in Italy under the humanist Guarino da Verona. Upon returning to England, Grey became a patron of humanists and bequeathed his collection of works

¹⁸ Henry Dietrich Fernández, "The Patrimony of St. Peter: the Papal Court at Rome, c. 1450-1700" in *The Princely Courts of Europe: Ritual Politics, and Culture under the Ancien Régime 1500-1750*, John Adamson, ed., (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1999), 152.

on philosophy and other scholarly works to his alma mater, Balliol College, Oxford. In addition to English scholars traveling to Italy, Italian scholars also studied and taught in England, most notably Lorenzo da Savona, who taught rhetoric at Oxford in the mid-1400s, and Giovanni Gigli, who became Bishop of Worcester, and Pietro Carmeliano, an Italian poet who dedicated a book of Latin verses to King Edward IV.

It is unknown precisely when humanist learning became part of the English court, but it occurred during the reign of Edward IV. Earl Rivers, a prominent member of Edward IV's court, actively promoted the learning. The influence of the new learning did present itself in Edward's entry into London on May 21, 1471, after his victory of the Battle of Tewkesbury. As part of the entry procession, Edward paraded Queen Margaret, the queen of Henry VI, who had been taken captive during the battle. The spectacle has been described as "a Roman triumph," frequently used by rulers in Italy.¹⁹ Edward himself was not an active patron of the humanists. Direct influence of humanism would not present itself fully until the reign of Henry VII.

The growth of courts and the influence of scholars and artists in residence culminated in the advent of the idea of chivalry. Chivalry originated in France at the court of William IX of Aquitaine, who ruled in the late eleventh century. Chivalry was designed to "divert the warlike energies of Frankish warriors into morally constructive channels – the promotion of justice, the protection of the weak, and the defence of the faith."²⁰ For this reason church leaders actively promoted it.

A better known aspect of chivalry is courtly love. Courtly love increased the status of women at court. Women became more visible and were given more power in the traditionally

¹⁹ Quoted in Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 19.

²⁰ Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 11.

male-dominated world of court. Courtly love focused men's emotions on the women of the court and allowed the influence of women on the court.

[Courtly love] cannot be dismissed as a mere feminist game of revenge. In terms of courtly and feudal society, the cult involved the emotional and spiritual re-education of a rude warrior-class by refined ladies.²¹

The origins of courtly love lie in Arthurian legend and in Ovid's *Art of Love*. Ovid wrote his *Art of Love* during the reign of Emperor Augustus of Rome. The love that Ovid describes is sensual, but does not occur in the bounds of marriage. Marriage is not the object of love. "Love is a kind of warfare, and every lover is a soldier."²²

The idea of courtly love was introduced to the west by Eleanor of Aquitaine, wife of Louis VII of France and later Henry II of England. However, it was at the court of her daughter, Marie, which saw its codification. Marie was the wife of Henry, Count of Champagne. Their court at Troyes was home to a number of scholars and theologians and became known as the "courts of love."²³ In 1190, Andreas Capellanus, the royal chaplain of Marie de Champagne, daughter of Louis VII of France and Eleanor of Aquitaine wrote *De Arte Honeste Amandi*, a treatise on courtly love. This treatise serves as the main source of information about the art of courtly love and its practice in noble circles.

Love is a certain inborn suffering derived from the sight of and excessive meditation upon the beauty of the opposite sex, which causes each one to wish above all things the embraces of the other and by common desire to carry out all of love's precepts in the other's embrace. That love is suffering is easy to see, for before the love becoming equally balanced on both sides there is no torment greater, since the lover is always in fear that his love may not gain its desire and that he is wasting his efforts.²⁴

²¹ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 22.

²² Andreas Capellanus, *The Art of Courtly Love*, John Jay Parry, trans., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 5.

²³ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 20.

²⁴ Capellanus, *Art of Courtly Love*, 28.

The ideal object of one's courtly love was an unattainable lady, unattainable either because she was married or because she was of a higher social class. "The knight, in consequence, devoted his life to a hopeless quest, performing feats of valour in his lady's honour, singing her praises, rescuing her (should she by any fortunate chance be in need of it), and indulging in frequent poetic fantasies of an erotic nature."²⁵

"For all its absurdities, [chivalry] proved civilizing."²⁶ From the court at Troyes and Eleanor of Aquitaine's court at Pointiers, the cult of courtly love spread throughout Western Europe. The idea of chivalry influenced the literature of Western Europe for many centuries. Henry VIII in particular followed the ideals of chivalry and his reign saw a renaissance of the ideals of courtly love. Elizabeth herself used the ideas to her advantage as a means of focusing her court's loyalty on herself.

The renaissance of chivalry at the courts of Western Europe changed the nature of court. This can be seen in the reintroduction of the jousting tournament, where one adversary tilts against an opponent. "Jousts and tournaments were the supreme spectacle at court, combining physical courage and skill with the utmost display of aristocratic pride in heraldry and ardent gallantry exhibited to the ladies among the spectators."²⁷ Often each participant would wear a token of affection from the object of their courtly love. The joust was considered a test for nobility only and in the German cities, only nobles were allowed to participate.

The French and Burgundian courts "under its curious fifteenth-century rulers" would become the most influential courts in Europe and were particularly influential on the changing

²⁵ Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 11.

²⁶ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 22.

²⁷ C.A.J. Armstrong, "The Gold Age of Burgundy: Dukes that Outdid Kings" in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty, 1400-1800*, A.G Dickens, ed., (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), 72.

English court.²⁸ In the fifteenth century, the Burgundian court was the most spectacular of the courts. The relationship between the Burgundian court and the English court is best exemplified by the marriage of John, Duke of Bedford, King Henry VI's uncle and regent in France, and Anne of Burgundy. The Duke of Bedford lived in the Hôtel Sain-to-Pol, which was the traditional private residence of the kings of France. Anne's brother, Duke Philip of Burgundy lived at Hôtel d'Artois, his family's town house. The courts of the two dukes competed with each other over the "eloquence of their minstrels, the brilliance of their trumpeters and the agility of their tumblers."²⁹ This rivalry continued until the Duchess of Bedford's death in 1431 and shortly after the Duke of Burgundy sided with Charles VII of France against the English. The French influence on the English court, however, continued.

While the Burgundian court was pre-eminent, it was essentially French in nature. The court focused on the immediate family of the duke and thus centered on family occasions such as weddings and baptisms. The court was not a single household; it was the combination of numerous households because the king, queen, their children, and the brothers of the king each oversaw their own household. The king's household was the largest and generally served the dauphin, the heir to the French throne, as well. The aim of the French courts was to recreate the chivalric courts of the twelfth century and they came close to achieving this ideal.

By the end of the sixteenth century, the majority of European courts were maintained in a permanent place. There were a few exceptions, most notably Emperor Charles V, who proclaimed, "Kings do not need palaces."³⁰ By the accession of King Henry IV of France in 1589, the base of the French court was at the Louvre in Paris. This change from a nomadic court

²⁸ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 31.

²⁹ Armstrong, "Gold Age of Burgundy," 55.

³⁰ Quoted in Adamson, *Princely Courts*, 11.

to a primary residence changed the definition of the court. The court continued to be the place where the sovereign resided, but the permanent base of the sovereigns also became known as the court and included buildings within the palace, the household personnel, and the administrative staff of the government.

As courts grew in size, a clear distinction was made between the king's public and private presence. Access to the king was a highly sought after favor. As a result, kings were able to establish a hierarchy of those given access to his private apartments, which was generally mirrored in the public areas of the court.

French influences on the English court can best be seen at the court of King Edward IV. Edward himself did not have much experience with courtly culture, but in 1470, he and some of his allies were held hostage at the court of Charles the Bold. Edward returned from the court with a fondness for Burgundian and French court culture. For the next decade, the English court experienced a revival of court culture that reflected this influence.

This revival took advantage of an organizational change in the court which began during the previous century, during which a series of treatises were issued defining court structure and makeup. In 1442 the members of the House of Commons requested that King Henry VI

obtain and assign by the authority of this your said present parliament such and as many of your lords as it pleaseth your Highness to have sufficient power and authority to see, establish, appoint and ordain that good and sad rule be had in and of your said household, and that ready payment in hand be had for the dispenses of the same households.³¹

As a result of this request, in 1445 a set of "Provisions which be necessary for the king's household" was issued.³² The ordinances detailed the number and ranks of the servants of each

³¹ Quoted in Starkey, *The English Court*, 28.

³² Starkey, *The English Court*, 28.

household office. It shows a clear distinction between the public and private portions of the court. The king's household was separated from the queen's household, the Countinghouse, and other departments that made up the bureaucracy. In 1449 the Dean of the king's chapel wrote *Liber Regie Capelle*, which described the different servants in the king's household, but focused more on the ceremonial aspects. *Liber Regie Capelle* was dedicated to Alfonso V of Portugal, the king's cousin, and is an example of the way in which European kings influenced and attempted to impress each other using their courts.³³ In 1454 the Great Council issued another set of household ordinances in an attempt to curb spending due to an influx of royal servants. The 1454 ordinances separated not only the king's establishment, but also separated the servants in the Countinghouse from the other departments.

The Household Book of Edward IV, known as the *Liber Niger* or Black Book, was compiled in 1471. The Black Book describes the household makeup and ceremony at the English court. The ceremony of the English court parallels the Burgundian and French courts. "For the first time the English Court had a written code of etiquette expressly designed to create magnificence."³⁴ The book separates the court into two departments. The *domus regis magnificencie*, overseen by the Lord Chamberlain, encompassed the 'upstairs' or public part of the Court. The *domus providencie*, overseen by the Lord Steward, encompassed the 'downstairs' part of the court. Of the two, the *domus regis magnificencie* was the more important and more powerful since it was "the most direct expression of the king's style and personality."³⁵

So while the culture at Edward IV's court imitated that of the Burgundian court of Charles the Bold, the structure of the court institution was modeled on the courts of Edward's

³³ For more information on the *Liber Regie Capelle*, see Walter Ullmann and D.H. Turner, *Liber Regie Capelle: A Manuscript in the Biblioteca Publica*, (London: Henry Bradshaw Society, 2010).

³⁴ Thurley, *Royal Palaces*, 17.

³⁵ Starkey, *The English Court*, 72.

predecessors. In 1478 another set of ordinances was created that was more descriptive than the *Liber Niger* and provided more detailed job descriptions for the members of the household. In addition to the *Liber Niger* and the subsequent 1478 Ordinances, there were also regulations issued for the households of other members of Edward's family, including that of his brother, George, Duke of Clarence, the king's eldest son, Edward, and the king's mother, Duchess Cecily. "Brief though it was, it is that final generation of Plantagenet kingship which thus produced the bulk of medieval writing of this sort."³⁶

In 1485 Henry Tudor defeated King Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth and a new dynasty was born. The Tudors continued the tradition begun by the Lancastrian kings of setting themselves apart from their subjects and the members of their court. "As they did so, serving the king became (what it had not been before) different *in kind* from serving any other master. So different in fact that a new vocabulary was needed."³⁷ The period saw a drastic change in the institution of the court. Throughout the reign of the Tudor dynasty, the court consumed a large amount of the realm's resources. At its largest and most expensive, the Court required over a third of the Crown's revenue.

The elevation of the king and his family made access to the sovereign more desirable and harder to achieve. In 1485 King Henry VII created a new department in his household, the Privy Chamber, which transformed the household's organization and changed the power structure at court. The Privy Chamber had a small staff, consisting of a chief, the Groom of the Stool, and a small number of grooms and pages. Access to the Privy Chamber was only given to a few handpicked members at court. The members of the Privy Chamber had the most intimate access to the king. Henry appointed his favorite nobles and friends to these positions. In addition John

³⁶ Starkey, *The English Court*, 30.

³⁷ Starkey, *The English Court*, 3.

de Vere, Earl of Oxford, and Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, Henry appointed men who supported him in exile and at the Battle of Bosworth. These men became part of the king's 'new men.' Henry's Groom of the Stool was Hugh Denys, a younger son of a Gloucestershire family and member of the Grocer's Guild. The Groom of the Stool was one of the most powerful positions at court due to its intimate nature.³⁸ "As close to the king as he could possibly be, his position gave him unparalleled, intimate perspective on the realities of power."³⁹ Richard Foxe was the son of yeoman parents who met Henry in Paris when the latter was beginning his quest for the throne. Under Henry VII, Foxe was the new king's personal secretary and later Lord Privy Seal. Henry later appointed him Bishop of Durham and Bishop of Exeter. Sir Reynold Bray was the second son of a surgeon who fought with Henry at the Battle of Bosworth. Henry appointed him chief financial administrator and chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster.

The creation of the Privy Chamber was the culmination of a process to not only elevate the king, but also increase to the comfort of the king and his family. Up to the fourteenth century the king's private apartment, known as the Chamber, consisted of one large room. In this room, the king slept, took his meals, and conducted the majority of his business. By the fourteenth century the one-room Chamber was separated into three chambers. The first room was the Great or Guard Chamber, where the king's guards stood. The Presence Chamber was the second room. This is where the king conducted his public business. A throne and canopy dominated the room. It was where he received diplomats and other important visitors to court, where he dined in state, and where his Council met. The third and innermost room was the Privy Chamber, where the king slept and conducted his private business. When Henry created the Privy Chamber, he further separated the king's public and private affairs.

³⁸ The Groom of the Stool looked after the king's toilet.

³⁹ Penn, *Winter King*, 33.

Like Edward IV, Henry VII was also influenced by the Burgundian court, having spent time at the French courts while in exile. The Privy Chamber may have been directly influenced by the French court which contained a group of personal attendants who served the king like those in the English Privy Chamber. But England's Privy Chamber was different from its French counterparts in two ways. The first was that the Groom of the Stool and the members of his staff worked exclusively for the king. Also, these members were generally of a lower status. In this way, the Privy Chamber resembled the household of an Italian prince who chose men they could trust because of the intimacy of the servants' position.

Therefore suche as speake against great menne for making of their chamber persons Greate men of no great qualitie in other thinges but in knowing how to should make attende about their person (me thinke) commit an error.⁴⁰

While King Henry VII changed the makeup of the court, there was less of the magnificence and enthusiasm of the French courts. It was not until his son ascended the throne in 1509 that the culture of the court changed. During the early years of their marriage, Catherine of Aragon wrote her father "Our time is spent in continuous festival."⁴¹ King Henry VIII wanted to make his court the envy of Europe. To that end, he invited artists, sculptors, musicians, and scholars from all over Europe to the English court. In 1506 the Italian sculptor Pietro Torrigiano traveled to England with Baldesar Castiglione. Torrigiano introduced Renaissance art to England. Hans Holbein the Younger, one of the most celebrated portraitists of his time, came to England in 1526 on the recommendation of Erasmus and quickly found employment at Henry's court. By 1536 he was known as the 'King's Painter.' Nicolaus Kratzer was the King's

⁴⁰ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, Sir Thomas Hoby, trans., (London: David Nutt, 1900), 125.

⁴¹ Neville Williams, "The Tudors: Three Contrasts in Personality" in *The Courts of Europe: Politics, Patronage, and Royalty, 1400-1800*, A.G. Dickens, ed. (St. Louis: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1977), 154.

astronomer and “deviser of the king’s horologes.”⁴² Kratzer brought German science technology to the court.

Henry was a lover of music. He was skilled on at least six instruments, possessed a good singing voice, and showed some talent for composing music. “The King left his most enduring mark on music through his patronage of professional musicians.”⁴³ The majority of the instrumentalists at court were foreigners, including the Bosano family of Venice, whose descendants remained in royal service until the English Civil War. However, many members of the Chapel Royal, the leading choir in England, were English. In 1515 the Venetian diplomat thought that choir’s voices “really rather divine than human.”⁴⁴

Henry also supported authors and collected a library of books. The library of Whitehall Palace contained 1,450 books and the library at Greenwich Palace contained 329. During Henry’s reign books were decorated by hand. The most famous family in Tudor book illumination were Gerard, Lucas, and Susanna Horenbout from Flanders, who arrived in England in the mid-1520s.⁴⁵ Gerard Horenbout was a major figure in Flemish book painting and served Margaret of Austria. His son, Lucas, later became Henry’s court painter and produced one of the earliest examples of a portrait miniature in England,⁴⁶

⁴² Quoted in William Hackmann, “Nicolaus Kratzer: the King’s Astrologer and Renaissance Instrument-Maker,” in *Henry VIII: A European Court in England*, David Starkey, ed., (New York: Cross River Press, 1991), 70.

⁴³ Peter Holman, “Music at the Court of Henry VIII” in *Henry VIII: A European Court in England*, David Starkey, ed., (New York: Cross River Press, 1991), 106.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Holman, “Music at the Court”, 106.

⁴⁵ The family’s name is sometimes spelled Hornbebolte in English sources.

⁴⁶ The miniature is a small portrait of Henry, set within a red and gold border that incorporates the letters H and K by a knotted cord. An inscription describes Henry as “an[o] xxxv.” However, it is unknown if the inscription means that Henry was “in the thirty-fifth year of his age,” between June 28, 1525, and June 27 1526, or “at the age of 35,” between June 28, 1526, and June 27, 1527. Quoted in Janet Backhouse, “Illuminated Manuscripts and the Development of the Portrait Miniature,” *Henry VIII: A European Court in England*, David Starkey, ed., (New York: Cross River Press, 1991), 88-89.

The new king maintained his father's changes to the court structure, but transformed the personnel in the Privy Chamber. It was during Henry VIII's reign that the Privy Chamber came into its own. In 1526 a new set of household ordinances was released. Known as the Eltham Ordinances, they were the first major set of ordinances since Edward IV's *Liber Niger*. The Eltham Ordinances divided the household into three departments: the Household, the Chamber, and the Privy Chamber. Henry filled the Privy Chamber with his friends and companions. The Eltham Ordinances listed the requirements of members of the Privy Chamber:

ITEM, it is ordained that such persons as be appointed to the privy chamber, shall be loving together, and of good unity and accord keeping secret all such things as shall be done or said in the same, without disclosing any part thereof to any person not being for the time present in the said chamber, and that the King being absent, without they be commanded to go with his Grace, they shall not only give their continual and diligent attendance in the said chamber, but also leave asking where the King is or is going, be it early or late, without grudging, mumbling, or talking of the King's pastime; late or early going to bed.⁴⁷

The second major change that Henry VIII instituted was to move the court to a more permanent base. "Where the king resided, there, in theory, was the court."⁴⁸ The king acquired Whitehall Palace in Westminster after the fall of Cardinal Wolsey in 1529 and a statute in 1536 identified it as the "King's [new] Palace at Westminster" and established it as Henry's principal residence.⁴⁹ Henry's court was based at Whitehall from September to June, before leaving the city to go on a summer progress. Whitehall remained the primary residence of the English court for over a century.

Henry's reorganization of the household changed little in the century after his death. However, the culture of the court did change with the new monarch. Henry's heir was a nine

⁴⁷ J.S. Brewer, *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII, Volume 4: 1524-1530* (London: Longman & Co., 1875), p. 825-831.

⁴⁸ Adamson, *Princely Courts*, 95.

⁴⁹ Adamson, *Princely Courts*, 19.

year old boy. While King Edward VI did elevate his own friends and favorites to prominent positions at court, the majority of changes instituted were ordered on the king's behalf by Protector Somerset, rather than by the king. These changes were minor and the goal was to remove Somerset's enemies, namely the Howard family, from gaining power and influence over the young king. The main change to the household makeup was that the king's household became a department within Somerset's household. The Privy Chamber remained the focus of political power. Somerset appointed his brother in law, Sir Michael Stanhope, as Edward's Groom of the Stool. Stanhope also gained control of the Revels and, thus, was responsible for organizing the ceremonial aspects of the court.

In 1549 John Dudley, 1st Duke of Northumberland led a *coup d'état* that removed Somerset from power and replaced him as Lord Protector. Under Dudley, the Privy Chamber grew in power, becoming the administrative and financial center of the kingdom. In addition, the makeup of the Household changed. The office of First Gentleman was eliminated. In its place were four offices of the Principal Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, who stayed with the king at all times.

Mary's accession to the throne brought more substantial changes to the Privy Chamber. Since Mary was a female, the members of her Privy Chamber had to be female as well. As a result, Mary had more impact on the development of the Privy Chamber than her father. "For her accession in 1553 brought crashing down the whole impressive edifice built up over the previous forty years."⁵⁰ This, naturally, remained the case when Elizabeth ascended the throne.

In the early part of her reign, it was necessary for Elizabeth to impress upon a number of people that she was capable of ruling England. As a result, Elizabeth maintained an impressive

⁵⁰ Starkey, *The English Court*, 140.

court in order to project the image of power. Ceremony surrounded the queen and an efficient court was necessary to provide a backdrop to the queen's image. Everyday tasks required ceremony. For example, as Elizabeth moved throughout the palace guards would follow her, line up along the route, and trumpeteers would announce her arrival.

Elizabeth's household was one of the most efficient in Europe and functioned as a government unto itself. A stable household allowed the monarch to maintain the required splendor of a court by allowing the ceremonies and rituals necessary to support the queen's position and provided a backdrop to the queen. In 1596, Sir John Davies, an English poet and politician, described Elizabeth's court by stating that "around her the court shown like a thousand sparkling stars."⁵¹

Elizabeth's accession in 1558 marked a change in the function of the Privy Chamber, however much of the household structure remained the same as that of her father. She did not change the structure of the Privy Chamber to serve the needs of a female sovereign. Instead, she changed the function of the department. It was no longer the administrative center of the court, but focused on the domestic functions. She most likely modeled her household after that of her stepmother, Catherine Parr.

There were a maximum of sixteen paid female servants in Elizabeth's household. In 1558 Elizabeth named four Ladies of the Bedchamber: Catherine Asteley, Catherine, Lady Knollys, Elizabeth Norwich, and Blanch Parry. These were the women who were closest to the queen. Catherine Asteley, the Chief Gentlewoman of the Privy, performed the same duties as her father's Groom of the Stool. There were seven to eight Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber and four Chamberers. These women were generally married ladies of high rank. Six maids of

⁵¹ Quoted in Robert Southey, Fulke Greville, and Stephen Hawes, *Select Works of the British Poets, From Chaucer to Jonson*, (London: Longmans, 1831): 736.

honor were young unmarried daughters of ambitious parents. In addition, there were a number of unpaid members of the Privy Chamber, including an “extraordinary” group to serve “when the queen’s Majesty calleth for them.”⁵² At the beginning of her reign, this group consisted of Margaret, Duchess of Norfolk; Margaret, Lady Howard of Effingham; Elizabeth, Lady Clifton; Mary, Lady Sidney; and Anne, Lady Hunsdon.

Elizabeth expected much of those who surrounded her. Courtiers such as Robert Dudley were expected to be graceful, courteous, well-educated, athletic, and witty. Elizabeth wanted to be wooed and flattered in the courtly love tradition. Elizabeth expected councilors to be sober, hard workers, and pious. There was none of the flirtations that existed with courtiers.

In one of her first speeches after her accession, Elizabeth described her goals for her government advisors. “I mean to direct all my actions by good advice and counsel.”⁵³ Elizabeth’s council was smaller than her sister’s, twenty advisors instead of thirty, and she dismissed the majority of those who served Mary. She chose men who were loyal to her and who were Protestants. She separated her choices into three groups:

The first were ‘the ancient nobility, having your beginnings and estates of my progenitors, Kings of the realm,’ who should have a natural care in maintaining the commonwealth; then there were those ‘of long experience in governance’ under her father, brother, and sister; finally there were men who had not previously held high office but seemed eminently suitable to serve her.⁵⁴

Nine members of her council were nobles and six had strong regional ties and power. The council met twice a week. Because many of the members had obligations in their home counties,

⁵² Starkey, *The English Court*, 150-151.

⁵³ Quoted in Neville Williams, *All the Queen’s Men: Elizabeth I and Her Courtiers* (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1972), 35.

⁵⁴ Williams, *All the Queen’s Men*, 35.

a small group of members often ran the day-to-day operations of the government. These members included the Comptroller of the Household, the Lord Admiral, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Treasurer, the Secretary, the Treasurer, and the Earl of Leicester.

Elizabeth held her first council meeting in the great hall of Hatfield Palace. There she announced the appointment of William Cecil as her Secretary. Elizabeth's choice of William Cecil as her Secretary was not a surprise. He had served her brother and maintained a good relationship with Elizabeth. She said that she knew Cecil would serve her and advise her, regardless of her personal wishes. The position of Secretary was a powerful one because the Secretary controlled the flow of information to the monarch. William Cecil was well-respected as a good bureaucrat. William Camden once said of Cecil, "Of all men of genius he was the most a drudge; of all men of business, the most a genius."⁵⁵

Cecil's brother-in-law, Nicholas Bacon, became the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal. The Lord Keeper of the Great Seal presided over the House of Lords. The Marquess of Winchester, Lord Treasurer since 1550, was reappointed because of his great experience. William Hebert, Earl of Pembroke did not hold office at court, but regularly attended council meetings. Henry FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel, became the Lord Steward of the Household and had a seat on the council. In 1559, he was appointed High Constable of England for Elizabeth's coronation, the highest office a subject of the realm could hold. Francis Talbot, fifth Earl of Shrewsbury, was the wealthiest peer in England and would periodically come to court to sit on the council and for special occasions, such as Elizabeth's coronation. He served as the President of the Council in the North, a position he had held for ten years. The purpose of this council was to keep the northerners from rising up in rebellion like the Pilgrimage of Grace. Elizabeth also appointed

⁵⁵ Quoted in Jenkins, *Elizabeth the Great*, 63.

Edward Stanley, Earl of Derby, as well as another northern peer to her council. Robert Dudley, later created the Earl of Leicester, was a favorite courtier of the queen and also appointed as Master of the Horse. The Master of the Horse oversaw the royal horses, hounds, stables, and mews. It was one of the most important positions at court and allowed for an intimate relationship with the queen.

Like Henry VIII, Elizabeth saw her court as an “extension of her personality.”⁵⁶ She used the rituals, etiquette, and conventions associated with a sovereign’s court to her advantage. Her court became the vehicle by which she directed her subjects’ obedience to a woman, who was traditionally believed to be too weak to rule. “The court of Elizabeth...became a work of art in its own right.”⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Dickens, *Courts of Europe*, 162.

⁵⁷ Loades, *Tudor Court*, 7.

CHAPTER V
“THE LAND OF GOOD ADVICE”:
PLAYS AND MASQUES AT COURT

Tudor England was an oral culture. Because very few in the sixteenth-century could read or write, the use of the spoken word in theatrical performances had a greater impact on the public than written texts. The sixteenth-century mind, Norman Sanders states, was “thoroughly trained in the ‘interpretation’” of theatrical productions.¹ The performances of plays and masques were opportunities for patrons and writers to give advice on matters such as religion, ideals of kingship, and the marriage and succession issue in front of a royal audience.² After the Reformation, plays became the preferred means for court officials to persuade an audience, to popularize an idea, or to showcase royal power. Elizabeth encouraged the use of plays and masques as propaganda by both attending these performances and patronizing playwrights. The extent to which Elizabeth and her council attempted to control publications and performances of plays confirms their perception of the importance of drama. On May 16, 1559, for example, Elizabeth issued a proclamation titled Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes and Plays, Especially on Religion or Policy.³ The proclamation detailed the licensing procedure:

The Queen’s majesty [doth] straightly forbid all manner interludes to be played either openly or privately, except that same be notified beforehand and licensed within any city or town corporate by the mayor or other chief officers of the same, and within any shire by such as shall be lieutenants for the Queen’s majesty in the same shire, or by two of the justices of peace inhabiting within that part of the shire where any shall be played.⁴

¹ Norman Sanders et al., eds. *The Revels History of Drama in English*, Vol. 2 (New York: Methuen, 1980), 12.

² Plays and masques regarding the marriage and succession issue will be discussed in the next chapter.

³ Paul L. Hughes and James F. Larkin, ed., “Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes and Plays, Especially on Religion or Policy,” in *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, vol. 2, *The Later Tudors (1553-1587)* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), 115.

⁴ Hughes, “Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes”, 115.

It placed control of the acting profession into the hands of legal officers and noblemen accountable to the queen. Elizabeth instructed officials to deny licensing to plays that dealt with matters of religion or the governance of England. Those involved in the performance of unlicensed plays faced arrest and imprisonment for fourteen days “or more, as cause shall need, and further also until good assurance may be found and given that they shall be of good behavior and no more to offend in the like.”⁵ Consequently, it became necessary for playwrights and patrons to ascertain those subjects that pleased Elizabeth, setting the precedent for the deferential works of Edmund Spenser and William Shakespeare.

There were two types of dramatic entertainment at Elizabeth’s court: plays and masques. Like modern plays, Elizabethan plays were fictional narratives “in which the characters speak and move, performed in our presence by people who assume their roles.”⁶ The masque came to England from Italy. Italian *intermezzi* were performed between the acts of a play. Their purpose was to encourage the guests to socialize with the actors in the play. The first mention of a court masque occurred during the reign of Henry VIII on Twelfth Night in 1512 and the king himself participated in the production. A masque occupied a middle place between a pageant and a play. In most masques, there was very little speech. A group of masked or otherwise disguised players entered, usually dressed in exotic costumes, accompanied by torchbearers and music. The performers then danced choreographed numbers alone and with members of the audience. This intimacy between the performers and spectators separates the masque from a play.

The plot of the masque was less important than the magnificence of the spectacle. Performers needed only to have a noble appearance, be richly dressed, and move with dignity.

⁵ Hughes, “Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes”, 115.

⁶ John H. Astington, *English Court Theatre 1558-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 98.

Because performances required a large expenditure on expensive costumes, jewels, candles, music, and craftsmen, they became a popular form of entertainment for wealthy and ambitious courtiers. Elizabeth's courtiers sponsored the great spectacles that were a trademark of her reign. Elizabeth was too economical to spend the large amount of money required for a lavish spectacle, so most of the masques that she sponsored were dances, not pageants. She preferred stage plays, which were even less expensive. The texts of only a few of the plays performed before Elizabeth in the early part of her reign survive, a fact that makes them even more valuable. Information about performances comes from the account books of the Office of the Revels and scattered sources. Two departments were responsible for theatrical performances at court: the Office of the Works and the Office of the Revels. Both offices were under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain, who was the senior member of the Queen's Household. During the first decade of her reign, Elizabeth's Lord Chamberlain was her cousin Lord Howard of Effingham. Building and maintenance, including the construction of stages for performances was the responsibility of the Office of the Works: "The office of Revelles, comprising all Maskes, tryvmphes, Plaies, and other showes of Dispourte, with Bamquettinge howses and like devises, to be vsed for the Anornemente of the Queenes Maiesties moste roiall Courte and her highness recreacioun, pleasure and pastyme."⁷ The Revels Office oversaw all dramatic performances at court, including expenditures relating to rehearsals, staging, and costuming, such as amounts of fabric used, and workers' wages, and was primarily responsible for the decoration of the stage and costuming.

⁷ Quoted from an anonymous report concerning the organization of the Revels Office preserved among William Cecil's papers. E.K. Chambers, *Notes on the History of the Revels Office under the Tudors* (New York: Burt Franklin, 1967), 42.

The officer who oversaw the Revels Office was the Master of the Revels, an office of Tudor origin, created by Henry VII in 1494. Before the creation of the Master of the Revels, entertainments were overseen by the Lord of Misrule, a position that disappeared during Mary's reign. Although the responsibilities of the Master of the Revels changed over time, he remained a deputy of and accountable to the Lord Chamberlain, who supervised all Court functions.⁸ The Master of the Revels was a courtier, a learned and experienced man who was "neither gallant, prodigall, nedye, nor greedy."⁹ In the Court hierarchy, he was not a significant figure. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, the Master of the Revels was Sir Thomas Cawarden, appointed by Henry VIII in 1545. Cawarden remained in the position until his death in August 1559. Then, in 1560, Elizabeth appointed Sir Thomas Benger, an auditor in her household at Hatfield House before her accession and a servant of Cawarden's. She appointed Benger for his ability as a financial manager. He served as Master of the Revels until 1572. As Master of the Revels, Benger received 8d per day and a life grant to a house called "Egypt and Fleshall" and the adjoining house called "le Garneter."¹⁰ Richard Leys, a London mercer, was appointed Benger's deputy. As deputy, Leys received 8d per day, four yards of wool for livery, and a life grant to a house as a residence for him and his family.

The Office of the Revels oversaw court performances at all of the queen's palaces. Court theaters and audiences varied in capacity. The smallest performance space was in St. James Palace in London, which had room for only one hundred spectators. The largest space was in

⁸ W.R. Streitberger disputes the statement that the Office of Revels fell under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain, arguing instead that the Tudor Court was not a hierarchical bureaucracy but was a separate entity and not considered part of the Household, which removes it from the domain of the Lord Chamberlain. Streitberger points to the fact that the Master of the Revels and his clerks were appointed by patent, making them accountable to the Crown only. See W.R. Streitberger, "Chambers on the Revels Office and Elizabethan Theater History" *Shakespeare Quarterly* 59 (Summer 2008): 187-209.

⁹ Feuillerat, *Documents*, 17.

¹⁰ W.R. Streitberger, *Court Revels, 1485-1559* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 165.

Whitehall Banqueting House in London. This was the most commonly used performance hall, not only because of its size, but also because of its proximity to London, the historic center of England's monarchical power. The other places frequently used for dramatic entertainment were Greenwich Palace, Richmond Palace, Hampton Court, and Windsor Castle. The size of the audience depended on both the size of the performance hall and those present at court. During Elizabeth's reign, court performances occurred only during the Christmas and Shrovetide holidays, when members of the great noble families gathered at court and the Court was on a break from its regular business.

Small groups of professional and semi-professional players performed the plays at court. These actors were in the service of a nobleman. Unlike previous monarchs, Elizabeth did not have a royal playing company for the first half of her reign. Although records show a court performance by the Queen's Players during Christmas of 1558, these were probably under the patronage of Mary. There were no more recorded performances. Not patronizing a royal company obscured Elizabeth's image as a patron of the arts, however, and in 1583, she created a new company of players. This fact did not diminish her influence as courtiers competed to entertain her.

The Accounts of the Revels Office record performances by three men's companies and four children's companies. The first recorded court performance of a group of performers later known as the Earl of Leicester's Men, under the patronage of Lord Robert Dudley, was at Christmas 1560. The actors in the service of Lord Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, first performed at court in 1564. The first Court appearance of Lord Rich's Men, under the patronage of Robert Rich, was in 1567. The Children of St. Paul's Choir were evidently favorites of Elizabeth's, performing before the queen every year from 1559 until 1581. The Children of the

Chapel Royal most likely performed at court in 1559, but did not appear again until Christmas 1563. The first performance of the Children of Windsor Chapel was in 1568 and the Children of Westminster School presented a play before Elizabeth during Christmas 1563.

By Elizabeth's reign, the calendar of court playing was set. Court years began July 1st and ended June 30th. Elizabeth's revels began during the Christmas season, with performances on St. Stephen's Day (December 26), St. John the Evangelist Day (December 27), Innocents Day (December 28), New Year's Day (January 1), and Twelfth Night (January 6).¹¹ After Twelfth Night, there were no scheduled performances until Candlemas and Shrovetide in February. Additional performances took place "all other tymes accustomed for preparacion of anye thinge to be done with in the office, or for accomplishment of anye appointment by speciall warraunte ordre, or the Queenes maiesties pleasure," except during the season of Lent.¹² During the greater part of Elizabeth's reign, the number of plays performed in a year ranged from six to ten.

The Revels Accounts record all expenditures related to dramatic entertainment at court for only the first two years of Elizabeth's reign, including workers' wages and the cost of supplies. Staff hired for the performance season worked "for their dayes wages tenne howres and for their night wages sixe houres."¹³ There were four masques performed in January and February 1559: two masques as part of Elizabeth's coronation and two during Shrovetide. Expenses for the first two masques performed during "Christmas, Neweyeres tyde & Twelf tyde that yeare and ageanste the Coronacion foloinge after Twelftyde" include 64li 8d for workers' wages, 135li 14s 6d for one-time services by haberdashers, and 201i 16s 16d for a water carriage

¹¹ Sanders, *Revels History*, 36.

¹² Quoted in Chambers, *Notes*, 43.

¹³ Chambers, *Notes*, 38.

rental.¹⁴ The workers hired included tailors, painters, haymakers, basket makers, and officers. The sum total of wages for the masques performed during Shrovetide totaled 150li 9d.

There were four masques given during the summer of 1559, the first season of Elizabeth's reign. The sum of the workers' wages including those for tailors, painters, and basket makers was 27li 26s 1d and exemption expenditures, or payments for one-time services, total 69li 3s 11d. From May 31 to June 9, 1559, the Revels Accounts record a total of 9li 9s 5d spent for performances. From July 28th to September 30th, the Office of the Revels recorded 23li 18s for wages, in addition to expenditures for rent and carriages.¹⁵ From Christmas 1559 to April 1567, the Revels Accounts record only partial expenditures. There were five masques performed during the 1559/1560 winter season. The absence of the Revels Accounts make it difficult to construct a full catalog of masques performed between Shrovetide 1560 to Christmas 1571, but other sources suggest that the yearly performance of masques continued.

RELIGION

Religious concerns dominated Elizabeth's reign with the religious settlement the main issue in 1558 and 1559. Elizabeth was a *politique* and a moderate reformer, and her settlement reflected this attitude.¹⁶ Elizabeth's first Christmas revels related to her coronation entry. On January 6, 1559, Elizabeth sponsored the performance of a masque titled *Papists*, one of two performed by the Queen's Company at Whitehall. The masque included more performers than was customary: in addition to four cardinals and six priests, performers played popes, monks,

¹⁴ Feuillerat, *Documents*, 79.

¹⁵ For a detailed listing of expenditures during this period see Feuillerat, *Documents*, 79-108.

¹⁶ A *politique* places politics above religion. For more information about Elizabeth's religious settlement see John Guy, *Tudor England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 258-264; and Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 31-50.

friars, and vergers. Il Schifanoja described the masque in a January 23rd letter to the Castellan of Mantua:

As I suppose your Lordship will have heard of the farce performed in the presence of her Majesty on the day of the Epiphany, and I not having sufficient intellect to interpret it, nor yet the mummery performed after supper on the same day, of crows in the habits of Cardinals, of asses habited as Bishops, and of wolves representing Abbots, I will consign it to silence.¹⁷

For many, this masque confirmed Elizabeth's Protestant leanings. *Papists* marked the third time in twenty-five years, according to W.R. Streitberger, that "revels were used in the service of religious propaganda."¹⁸ Elizabeth's reaction to the masque is unknown, but given the date of its performance, it is certain she approved of the message. As in her coronation procession, Elizabeth had once again betrayed her religious views despite the ambiguity of her coronation service.

Papists was the last time Elizabeth allowed performances regarding her religious settlement. Elizabeth's 1559 proclamation about the licensing of plays forbade any discussion of religious issues in performances. As a result, playwrights looked to the parables of the Bible for inspiration and non-controversial topics. The two play texts that survive from this period are based on the parable of the prodigal son: *Misogonus*, performed on December 31, 1559, and *Heautontimoroumenos*, performed in January 1565.

The Children of the Chapel performed *Misogonus* before the Queen at Whitehall. The author of the play is unknown, but one or more of the three men whose names appear on the manuscript - Anthony Rudd, Laurentius Bariona, and Thomas Richards – probably wrote it. The play required a large cast by contemporary standards. There were eighteen speaking parts

¹⁷ Brown, *Calendar*, 11.

¹⁸ Streitberger, *Court Revels*, 219.

assigned to ten actors. Most of the characters are youths, servants, or old men, roles that boys excelled in playing.

Misogonus was written to be performed by schoolboys and is typical of the Renaissance dramas written for this purpose. It tells the story of the prodigal son in the style of a Latin comedy. Philogonus, a wealthy landowner, laments to his friend Eupelas about the exploits of his only son, Misogonus. Misogonus' mother died a week after his birth. Philogonus recognizes too late the consequences of the indulgence and idleness in which he has raised Misogonus and the unhappy father appeals to God after interrupting Misogonus' night of dancing, gambling, and drinking. In the next act, two of Philogonus' tenants reveal to him that his wife had given birth to twins. On the advice of a learned man, his wife sent the elder twin away. Overjoyed, Philogonus sends for his eldest son, but Misogonus overhears the conversation and plots to deter the courier. He fails and Philogonus acknowledges his eldest son, Eugonus, delighted finally to have a worthy heir. Misogonus' servants and friends desert him and he is finally convinced of his weakness and begs his father's forgiveness.

The play instructed its audience about inheritance, the upbringing of children, choice of companions, the problems of drinking and sexual misconduct, and the evils of the Catholic clergy. One of the characters, Sir John, is a member of the clergy and joins Misogonus' party during their night of debauchery. The performance displeased Elizabeth, according to Henry Machyn, who wrote:

The sam day at nyght at the quen ('s) court ther was a play a-for her grace, they wyche the plaers plad shuche matter that they wher commondyd to leyff off, and continent the maske cam in dansyng.¹⁹

¹⁹ Machyn, *Diary*, 221.

The reason for Elizabeth's unhappiness with the performance is unknown, but was perhaps due to the portrayal of the Catholic clergy.

The next known performance of the prodigal son story was more successful. In January 1565, the Children of Westminster School performed another version of it, *Heautontimoroumenos*, or The Self-Tormentor, before the Queen at either Hampton Court or Whitehall. The play has eleven speaking parts and dramatizes the relationship between parents and children. Terence, a Roman comic playwright, wrote the play during the time of the Roman Republic. Although not Biblically based, the story offers the same moral as *Misogonus*. The story takes place in the country near Athens and extends over two days. Chremes commands his pregnant wife, Sostrata, if she gives birth to a girl, to kill the child. Having delivered a daughter, Sostrata gives the child to her maidservant, Philtera. Instead, Philtera takes the child, calls her Antiphila, and raises her as her own. Clinia, the son of Chremes' neighbor, Menedemus, falls in love with Antiphila. This angers Menedemus, who eventually drives his son away. In order to punish himself for his son's disappearance, Menedemus exhausts himself each day by working from morning until night. When the play commences, Clinia has returned to Attica, but stays with the son of Chremes because he is afraid to enter his father's house. On the same day, Menedemus tells Chremes that he is anxious for his son's return. In the end, father and son are reunited and Menedemus consents to the marriage of Clinia and Antiphila.

Court members presented three plays with religious themes during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign. The first Court masque performed during Elizabeth's reign gave an insight into her religious leanings. By ridiculing the Catholic hierarchy in a masque performed by the royal performers that she sponsored, Elizabeth once again announced her affinity for the Protestant religion. Perhaps Elizabeth was using this opportunity to proclaim her Protestant leanings in a

less controversial manner and to present her wishes for the Religious Settlement. The two plays were less confrontational and offered moral guidance for their ruler. They told the story of the prodigal son and discussed the unconditional love of a parent and a child. As queen, Elizabeth portrayed herself as a loving mother to her subjects. In presenting *Misogonus* and *Heautontimoroumenos*, the actors asked their queen have the same patient and indulgent love for her subjects.

THE NATURE OF KINGSHIP

De Regimine Principum, a book written in the 1440s, listed six qualities of royal virtue: a good conscience, prudence, judgment, justice, mercy, and counsel.²⁰ It portrayed the monarch as responsible to God for the well-being of his or her subjects. Because of the growth of royal power after the English Reformation, there was an increased interest in the moral responsibilities of kings. With the fortunes of a nation so dependent on the office of kingship, abuse by a tyrant was a closely examined possibility. Elizabeth's father, Henry VIII, was often condemned as a tyrant. Not surprisingly, the 1560s and 1570s saw a number of plays exploring the nature of tyranny and the proper attitudes of subjects. One of the principal doctrines of Elizabethan tyranny plays was the idea that God would punish bad rulers. In *Damon and Pithias*, Eubulus, the wise councilor, articulated this view: "Upon what fickle ground all tyrants do stand."²¹ These works were a way for subjects to urge their ruler to live up to the highest ideals of the office. Playwrights offered tyrant plays as "mirrors for magistrates" and as a warning for

²⁰ Machyn, *Diary*, 221.

²¹ Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 5-6.

subjects.²² Subjects must submit to their ruler regardless of how evil the ruler may be because the power of vengeance belongs only to God. In churches throughout England, priests delivered sermons about the obedience due to kings and tragedies confirmed what the people heard in church. The plays portray a cruel tyrant who either reforms or providentially dies, “apparently confirming a conservative ideology of proper sovereignty and nonresistance.”²³ Therefore, the purpose of these tragedies, like that of public executions, was to demonstrate the consequences of tyranny or rebellion. The texts of four plays regarding the nature of kingship performed during the first years of Elizabeth’s rule still exist. Two, *Cambises* and *Damon and Pithias*, discuss the nature of tyranny and two, *Sapientia Solomonis* and *Miles Gloriosus*, offer rules of behavior for princes.

During Christmas 1560, Lord Robert Dudley’s company and the Children of St. Paul’s performed plays before Elizabeth at Whitehall. Records list the name of one of the plays as *Huff, Snuff, and Ruff*, and scholars surmise that this title is a substitute for a tragedy called *Cambises* by Thomas Preston because Huff, Snuff, and Ruff are the names of three of the play’s comic characters. Given the rowdy humor and violence on stage, historians believe that Leicester’s men performed *Cambises*. In addition, the play requires heavy doubling of parts with thirty-eight speaking parts for only six men and two boys.

The Prologue begins the play by warning rulers not to abuse their power or they will suffer the consequences:

By good advice unto a prince three things he hath commended:

²² Richard Edwards, “Damon and Pithias,” in *A Select Collection of Old English Plays*, vol. 4, 4th ed., W. Carew Hazlitt, ed. (London: Reeves and Turner, 1874), 51.

²³ Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 80. In 1572 the Church of England published a book of homilies including the Homily against Rebellion. See Church of England. *Certain Sermons, or Homilies, Appointed to be Read in Churches, in the Time of the Late Queen Elizabeth of Famous Memory: with an Index of Subjects and Names, and a Table of Texts of Holy Scripture*. London: Homily Society, 1852.

First, is that he hath government and ruleth over men,
Secondly, to rule with lawes, eke Justice (saith he) then,
Thirdly, that he must wel conceive he may not always raigne.²⁴

The Prologue then introduces Cambises, the ruler of Persia. Before leaving to attack the Egyptians, he installs Sisamnes, a wise judge, as regent on the advice of counsel. As soon as the king leaves, however, Sisamnes declares his intention to enrich himself through corruption. Ambidexter, the antagonist in the play, encourages Sisamnes to continue his evil ways until Cambises returns and orders Sisamnes' execution. This was Cambises' one good deed. The scene encourages rulers to punish corrupt officials for the sake of the kingdom.

As Cambises returns to his rule, Praxaspes, one of his counselors, warns Cambises about his excessive drinking. In response, Cambises orders his soldiers to bring Praxaspes' young son to him so that Cambises can prove Praxaspes wrong by shooting the heart of the child with an arrow. To the horror of the boy's parents, Cambises does this and kills the boy, "Is this the gain now from the king for giving counsel good/before my face with such despight to spil my sons hart blood?"²⁵ Cambises then orders the murder of his brother, Smerdis, after Ambidexter tells Cambises his brother was plotting the king's death. This causes great distress at court.

Cambises next forces his cousin to marry him against her will. At the wedding banquet, Cambises tells his queen a story of two lion whelps that fight and kill each other. The Queen draws a parallel to Cambises' murder of his own brother; Cambises, enraged, orders her death. After the Queen's execution, Cambises dies in a hunting accident. He observes that death is his reward for his evil deeds. The epilogue craves the patience of the audience and prays for the queen and the council:

²⁴ Thomas Preston, "Cambises," in *Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama*, Edmund Creeth, ed. (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1966), 446-447.

²⁵ Preston, "Cambises", 474.

As duty bindes us for our noble Queene let us pray,
And for her honorable council the trueth that they may use
To practice justice and defend her Grace eche day.
To maintain Gods word they may not refuse
To correct all those that would her Grace and graces lawes abuse,
Beseeching god over us she may reign long
To be guided by trueth and defended from wrong.²⁶

Preston uses history to teach a political lesson. As with the corrupt judge, Sisamnes, the taking of bribes was a constant source of trouble in Tudor England. The story of Cambises was from *The History*, by the Greek historian Herodotus and was widely recounted in the Middle Ages. The audience of the play would have been familiar with it. The main difference between Preston's Cambises and Herodotus' Cambises is the source of his evil deeds. Preston assumes that Cambises' deeds are the result of heavy drinking and an evil nature. According to Herodotus, Cambises was insane.²⁷ To the men of the Renaissance, however, he was not insane, but cruel. He is a tyrant who is guilty of murder, fratricide, and incest. He is thus responsible for his actions and deserving of his death.

Cambises portrays two contradictory aspects of the king, both of which Herodotus discusses in books three and five of his history. He performs one virtuous act, which was the punishment of Sismanes, but then begins his steady downfall with the shooting of Praxaspes' son to prove the steadiness of his hand after drinking, the murder of his brother, and the execution of his wife and kinswoman. Immediately after the Queen's death, Cambises kills himself after falling on the point of his sword as he attempts to mount his horse for a hunting expedition. In drama, tyrants seldom reign for long and generally die violent and unnatural deaths.

²⁶ Preston, "Cambises", 503.

²⁷ While in Egypt during festival celebrations, Cambises killed Apis, the Egyptian sacred calf, ordered the whipping of the priests, and the slaughter of Egyptians celebrating. "It was directly as a result of this, say the Egyptians – this deed of wrong – that Cambyses went mad, though indeed he was not in true possession of his wits before." Herodotus, *The History*, David Grene, trans., (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 223-224.

From a contemporary point of view, Cambises' death is the ideal solution to the problem of his tyrannical reign. He died by divine intervention and not by the hand of his subjects. The word "tyrant" had several distinct definitions for Elizabethans. They still used it in the classical sense to describe an absolute ruler, but it was frequently employed with the connotation of an unjust or cruel reign. Contemporary theorists made a distinction between tyrants who usurped their thrones and those who inherited their position. Despite the fact that he was a tyrant, Cambises was an anointed king. Cambises' subjects, the play implies, tolerate the evil rule of their king with passive obedience. This reinforces the idea that God will punish evil rulers. This message had a contemporary significance in an age torn by religious strife.

In 1564 performers presented a masque and four plays during the Christmas revels at Whitehall. The Earl of Warwick's company performed two plays and the Children of St. Paul's performed one play, the names of which are unknown. The Children of the Chapel performed *Damon and Pithias* by Richard Edwards, who was the Master of the Chapel at Merton College in Oxford. The play marked Edwards's debut as a dramatic poet. Like many of his fellow Renaissance dramatists, Edwards drew his inspiration from various classical sources, combining them with his own originality. It has twelve speaking parts and nine Muses who sing, but do not speak.

Damon and Pithias takes place in ancient Syracuse during the rule of the tyrant, Dionisius. In a monologue by Stephano, the mutual servant of Damon and Pithias, Edwards describes Dionisius:

Every day he show some token of cruelty,
With blood he hath filled all the streets in the city:
I tremble to hear the people's murmuring,
I lament to see his most cruel dealing:

I think there is no such tyrant under the sun.²⁸

The play opens with a court philosopher, Aristippus, and corrupt courtier, Carisophus, discussing philosophy and court life. They eventually swear a friendship that turns out to be false. Damon, Pithias, and Stephano are young Greeks visiting the city. Stephano warns his masters that Dionisius is a tyrant who condemned a man to death that morning for dreaming about the king's death. Damon later meets Carisophus, who, after failing to trick Damon into uttering a treacherous remark against Dionisius, accuses Damon of being a spy and has him arrested. Stephano reports to Pithias that Dionisius has sentenced Damon to death. Damon appears before the king and asks leave to return home to put his affairs in order. Dionisius grants his request after Pithias agrees to stand in Damon's place.

On the scheduled day of the execution, Damon has not returned to Syracuse and preparations continue for the execution of Pithias. Pithias declares himself happy to die for his friend. Just before the blow is dealt, Damon enters and the two friends argue for the right to die for each other. Overcome by the scene, Dionisius pardons Damon and reforms his tyrannical ways. He invites Damon and Pithias to remain in Syracuse and share Dionisius' wealth. Eubulus delivers the final speech:

A gift so strange and of such price, I wish all kings to have;
But chiefly yet, as duty bindeth, I humbly crave,
True friendship and true friends, full fraught with constant faith,
The giver of all friends, the Lord, grant her, most noble Queen Elizabeth.²⁹

Damon and Pithias examines kingship and tyranny, the nature of friendship, and court life. It is one of the most important expressions of attitudes toward friendship expressed by sixteenth-century humanists. Edwards contrasts the true friendship between Damon and Pithias

²⁸ Edwards, "Damon and Pithias", 56.

²⁹ Edwards, "Damon and Pithias", 104.

with the false friendship among courtiers: “a rare ensample of friendship true, it is no legend-lie”.³⁰ Damon and Pithias’s friendship also convinces Dionisius to change. According to Elizabethan moralists, while a tyrant reigned he was unhappy because his conscience tormented him. When he saw his own image, he was shamed and repented as Dionisius did.

In January 1565 the Children of Westminster presented *Miles Gloriosus* or *The Braggart Warrior* by Plautus, a major comic author in the Roman Republic. The play is an attack on human vanity and arrogance. It has twelve speaking parts in addition to minor roles as attendant slaves. The main character, Pyrgopolynices, is a soldier who has made fantasy a way of life. Peter Smith states that “He occupies the ultimate comic position where absolute lack of self-knowledge creates a black-and-white contrast between appearance and reality.”³¹

The play is set in the Greek city of Ephesus. Pyrgopolynices enters with a series of dependents and boasts of his exploits. After he exits, a slave named Palaestrio explains how he became the soldier’s slave. Palaestrio served a young Athenian, Pleusicles. Pyrgopolynices kidnapped his girlfriend Philocomasium. When Palaestrio tried to reach his master to give him the bad news, pirates kidnapped the slave and sold him to the soldier. After Palaestrio smuggles a letter to Pleusicles, the Athenian travels to Ephesus and stays with the soldier’s neighbor. With the slave’s aid, Philocomasium and Pleusicles meet secretly. Palaestrio eventually enlists the help of the soldier’s neighbor and the group tricks the soldier into releasing Philocomasium and Palaestrio. Pyrgopolynices learns the error of his vainglorious ways, thus providing a moral for

³⁰ Edwards, “Damon and Pithias”, 12.

³¹ Titus Maccius Plautus, “Miles Gloriosus,” in *Three Comedies*, Peter L. Smith, trans. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 14.

those in the audience if they listen: “No one alone can know it all. I’ve seen a lot of people sail right past the land of good advice and never set foot on the shore.”³²

The next play that discussed kingship, *Sapientia Solomonis*, or *The Wisdom of Solomon*, presented Elizabeth with the model of a ruler worth emulation. The Children of Westminster performed the play in January 1566, at Whitehall before the Queen and her guest, Princess Cecilia, the sister of the King of Sweden and wife of the Margrave of Baden.³³ The performance was part of the festivities celebrating the seventh anniversary of Elizabeth’s coronation. The play relates the biblical parable of Solomon and compares Elizabeth’s virtues with those of the biblical king. Sixt Birck, a German schoolmaster and dramatist, wrote the original text, but an anonymous writer adapted the tragicomedy drama for performance in England.

Sapientia Solomonis has twenty-two speaking parts. It is a play about a good ruler, Solomon, the son of King David. The play describes him as “pious, brave, rich, and powerful.”³⁴ After God offers to grant him any wish, Solomon asks for the gift of the wisdom suitable to his authority. God grants his wish and he rules justly and righteously. As an example of his wisdom, *Sapientia Solomonis* presents the story of two women who ask King Solomon to resolve a quarrel concerning their sons, one of whom is living and one of whom is dead. Solomon cleverly discovers the identity of the mother of the living child.³⁵ Finally, two monarchs who hear about his reputation - Hiram, King of Tyre, and the Queen of Sheba - visit Solomon. Hiram brings

³² Titus, “Miles Gloriosus”, 71.

³³ Princess Cecilia traveled to England on a state visit. In addition to attempting to convince Elizabeth to marry her half-brother, King Eric XIV of Sweden, the princess also attempted to negotiate an alliance between England and Sweden to aid in the war between Sweden and Denmark, and to recruit English pirates to attack Danish ships in the Baltic Sea.

³⁴ Elizabeth Rogers Payne, ed., *Sapientia Solomonis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), 55.

³⁵ Solomon orders that the living child be cut in half and given to each mother. One mother agrees with the plan, but the other begs Solomon to give the child, in full, to the other woman. Solomon declares this is the mother of the child. “This is the true mother; she shows it by the love which flows from a mother’s heart.” Quoted in Payne, *Sapientia*, 91.

cedar wood as a gift and Solomon begins the construction of his temple. The Epilogue compares Elizabeth to the wise and righteous King Solomon:

Solomon was just; our Queen is unjust to no man. Solomon was merciful; our Queen is mercy itself. The King, exceedingly skillful, gave the living offspring to the true parent and assigned the dead child to the wicked mother. Our Queen restored her sons to the true Church, but she gave back to the adulterous mother the false progeny, of a heavy maternal yoke. Solomon built a holy temple to God; our Queen held nothing more important than to renew quickly the ritual of holy worship which had been overthrown.³⁶

Finally, the Epilogue compares the visit of Princess Cecilia to Elizabeth's court to the visit of the Queen of Sheba to the court of Solomon, noting Cecilia's long voyage to look "upon her who is the rival of pious Solomon."³⁷

In the preceding plays, Elizabeth's subjects presented the two sides of kingship. Cambises was a tyrant who did not listen to his councilors and whose actions against his subjects eventually led to his death. This was a lesson to all rulers: rule wisely or face punishment from God. In *Damon and Pithias*, Dionisius was a tyrant who, faced with the unconditional love and friendship of Damon and Pithias, renounced his autocratic nature, and became an example to all rulers. In *Miles Glorious*, the slave of Pyrgopolynices, the Braggart Warrior, easily cuckolded his master because of Pyrgopolynices' narcissistic nature. The moral was clear to the audience, dramatizing what can happen when rulers believe the flattery of courtiers. Finally, *Sapientia Solomonis* offers the model of an ideal ruler, mirroring the presentation of Deborah during the coronation procession. King Solomon was wise, devout, and just. His successful rule was a testament to his nature. For the sake of their subjects and their sovereignty, rulers should strive to emulate Solomon and resist imitating Cambises, Dionisius, and Pyrgopolynices.

³⁶ Payne, *Sapientia*, 91.

³⁷ Payne, *Sapientia*, 91.

SOMETIMES A PLAY IS JUST A PLAY

Not all plays and masques portrayed a greater message or acted as propaganda. Some purely displayed the wealth and magnificence of Elizabeth's court. The utility of princely magnificence was a sign of intrinsic power meant to impress foreign visitors. Admission to court entertainments was a sign of favor and privilege. In addition, attendance by courtiers was an appropriate sign of favor and respect to foreign dignitaries. Important visitors on arranged visits would have entertainments mounted especially for them, a fact noticed by those at court, emphasizing the guest's significance. Those who arrived at Christmas or Shrovetide attended the scheduled revels, as Princess Cecilia did when she watched the performance of *Sapientia Solomonis*. The Revels Accounts and other sources note four occurrences when visiting dignitaries were present at masque performances. Unfortunately, little is known about these masques except their occurrence.

On May 24, 1559, Henry Machyn noted the arrival of the embassy of the Duc de Montmorency, Constable of France: "The xxiiij day of May the imbassadurs the Frenche [were] broght from the byshope['s] pallas by land thurgh Flet-street [unto] the quen's pales to soper, by the most nobull men ther was abowt the cowrt."³⁸ The reason for their visit is unclear; however, that night, Elizabeth gave the ambassadors a banquet "as goodly as has be[en seen]," and performers presented *A Masque of Astronomers*.³⁹ On January 1, 1560, Elizabeth sponsored a masque for the visit of the Duke of Finland. The title of the masque was *A Maske of Barbarians* and featured six Barbarians and six Venetians. On June 9, 1564, there were three masques presented for the French ambassador, Artus de Cosse, Seigneur de Gonnor, who arrived at the

³⁸ Machyn, *Diary*, 198.

³⁹ Machyn, *Diary*, 198.

English court to confirm the Treaty of Troyes.⁴⁰ The performances highlighted the importance of the guests and their visit because of the expense involved in mounting a performance. For the visit of the Grand Prior Francis of Lorraine and his entourage, Elizabeth presented *A Masque of Wise and Foolish Virgins* performed by her maids of honor, between October 25 and October 28, 1561, at Whitehall. The Grand Prior, who was returning to the French Court, was the French escort of Mary, Queen of Scots when she returned to Scotland in August. Machyn marked their arrival in his diary:

The xxv day of October cam rydyng from skotland serten Frenche-men through London, my lord of Bedford and my lord Monge and my lord Strange was ther gyd with a M. horse through Fletstreet, and so to my lord of Bedord('s).⁴¹

A notice of the masque appears in the memoirs of Pierre de Bourdeilles, Abbe et Seigneur de Brantome, and a member of the French party. Although one could infer a hidden message to the Scottish queen in the title of the masque, given the animosity between Elizabeth and her cousin, Mary Stuart, there is no evidence of this.

The primary function of all Court entertainment was social. These entertainments served as a gathering point for the people of the court, to put aside their differences and show a common allegiance to their queen. Because of this, the only information about some performances comes from scattered sources and little is known about the content or context of the performance. There are three such notices: one from the Il Schifanoia and two from Henry Machyn.

In a letter to Ottaviano Vivaldino, the Mantuan Ambassador with King Philip at Brussels, dated February 6, 1559, Il Schifanoia notes that on the previous evening “double mummery was

⁴⁰ In an attempt to regain Calais, Elizabeth was persuaded to send English troops to fight on the side of the French Huguenots. The English withdrew after the French granted the Huguenots some religious tolerance. The treaty of Troyes was signed in 1562. Part of its terms required that the English give up their claims to Calais. See Guy, *Tudor England*, 268.

⁴¹ Guy, *Tudor England*, 270.

played: one set of mummers rifled the Queen's ladies, and the other set, with wooden swords and bucklers, recovered the spoil."⁴² The Shrove Sunday performance was performed at Whitehall, possibly by the Queen's Company. The title of the masque was *A Masque of Swart Rutters*.

On July 11, 1559, Henry Machyn wrote about a masque performed in the banqueting house at Greenwich Palace following a joust given by the queen's pensioners: "After the Queen ('s) grace cam down in-to the parke [and] toke her horse, and rod up to the bankett howse, [with] the inbassadurs and the lordes and lades, and so to soper [and] a maske."⁴³ Nothing else is known about this performance. Machyn discusses another masque given on February 1, 1562, at Whitehall by the Queen:

The furst day of Feybruary at nyght was the goodlyest maske cam owt of London that ever was seen, of a C. and d'g gorgyously be-sene, and a C. cheynes of gold, and as for trumpettes and drums, and as for torche-lyght a ij hundreded, and so to the cowrt, and dyvers goodly men of armes in gylt harness.⁴⁴

The only evidence for some performances comes from the Account of the Office of the Revels. The accounts list five masques performed between 1559 and 1565 in which only the name of the masque and location of the performance are known. On Shrove Tuesday, February 7, 1559, *A Masque of Fishermen, Fisherwives, and Marketwives* was performed before the Court at Whitehall. Elizabeth also commissioned two masques, *A Masque of Italian Women* and *A Masque of Patriarchs* at Whitehall on January 6, 1560. Then on February 27, 1560, there was a performance of *A Masque of Diana and her Six Nymphs Huntresses* at Whitehall. Finally, the queen sponsored a performance of *A Masque of Hunters and Nine Muses* at Whitehall on

⁴² Brown, *Calendar*, 27.

⁴³ Machyn, *Diary*, 204.

⁴⁴ Machyn, *Diary*, 276.

February 18, 1565. The Revels Accounts also show expenses for plays and masques whose titles and content have been lost to history. In some cases, the performance date is unknown as well.

The plays and masques discussed in this chapter were not revolutionary. Their messages about religion, morality, and the ideals of kingship were the same as those performed before king and queens before Elizabeth, but the drama performed during Elizabeth's reign contributed to the image that Elizabeth perpetuated. Her court became a work of art in its own right and became the patron of the most lavish forms of dramatic entertainment of the period. The plays chosen by patrons for the royal audience did so at the pleasure of the queen. The queen's reaction to plays was recorded and spread throughout the court. As a result, in an effort to gain favor, patrons only sponsored those plays that corresponded with the image Elizabeth wished to project to her people. A performance at court was a sign of favor that the playwrights subsequently publicized on the title page of published plays, thus alerting readers to the play's message. Therefore, Elizabeth was the only audience member whose presence was key for the purpose of propaganda. The entertainments, however, gave Elizabeth the opportunity to promulgate her image of a ruler whose magnificence is on display for all at court to see and a ruler who takes her subjects' advice to heart.

CHAPTER VI
“A SPUR TO ACTION”:
THE MARRIAGE AND SUCCESSION ISSUE

After the settlement of the religion question in 1559, the most pressing issue in the 1560s was Elizabeth’s marriage and the settlement of the succession. Despite Elizabeth’s proclamation forbidding the licensing of plays discussing politics, Elizabethans performed plays before the queen revealing their opinions on these two issues. Elizabeth was the greatest matrimonial prize in Europe and she had her choice of consorts. Everyone assumed she would marry. At the beginning of her reign, the succession issue was looked upon in terms of her marriage: she was young and most assumed she was capable of bearing children. When Parliament met in 1559, the House of Commons urged Elizabeth to marry. Marriage was her duty both as a queen and as a woman.

Everyone talked about the queen’s possible marriage and the many candidates for her hand. The country wished to see the succession settled; however, opinions on the choice of a candidate differed. In October 1559, there were ten foreign ambassadors competing for Elizabeth’s favor.¹ Among her suitors were two kings, including her former brother-in-law, Philip of Spain, two archdukes, five dukes, and two earls. The King of Sweden offered his eldest son, Eric, who remained optimistic about his prospects in spite of a formal rejection and three subsequent informal rejections.

The Holy Roman Emperor offered his two younger sons, the Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles, but he soon withdrew the Catholic Ferdinand due to Elizabeth’s Protestant leanings. Of all the suitors Archduke Charles was the best match for the queen politically, and she used this match as a type of cover against the Privy Council and Parliament’s pressure to marry. There

¹ Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 75.

were two main obstacles to Elizabeth's marriage with Charles. The first was religion. The idea of "one king, one faith" was essential to political stability, but Charles was a Catholic and Elizabeth could not risk the anger of her Protestant subjects by allowing Charles and his entourage to hold Mass. In addition, she could not afford the danger of taking a husband who might become the focus of Catholic intrigue. The second obstacle was more personal. Elizabeth declared that she would not marry anyone she had never met, but the Emperor refused to allow a meeting, because, he declared, "It was undignified; it was not the way princes wooed; it would make a laughing stock of them in the case of failure."² Therefore, Charles's suit was abandoned until a compromise could be reached.

Among the English nobility, two names stood out: Henry FitzAlan, Earl of Arundel and Sir William Pickering. Arundel had little but rank and family to recommend him. He was middle-aged, not handsome, ignorant, and ill mannered. He also had two previous marriages and two married daughters. Pickering was a more appealing choice. He was in his early forties, handsome, and considered a "ladies' man." It was these qualities, not rank or fortune, which made him attractive. Pickering, a commoner, was the favorite of Londoners, but most considered marriage to a subject too demeaning for a queen. Such a marriage could cause conflicts among the noble families.

Marriage to a foreign prince, however, was dangerous. Mary I's marriage to Philip of Spain was unpopular and had caused many of the Queen's problems among her subjects. Marriage to a foreign prince would upset the balance of power in Europe and force a permanent choice of allies and, possibly, enemies. Finally, since many of the eligible suitors were Catholic,

² Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 77.

Elizabeth might have to make religious concessions that would upset her Protestant subjects. Her marriage would require a consensus among the people if she were to be successful. As a result, Elizabeth hesitated.

Elizabeth's relationship with Robert Dudley complicated the marriage issue. The Dudleys were a notorious family. Henry VIII executed Robert Dudley's grandfather Edmund, one of Henry VII's councilors, for treason. Elizabeth's sister, Mary, ordered the execution of Robert's father, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, after his failed attempt to place Lady Jane Grey on the throne after the death of Edward VI. Robert Dudley and Elizabeth had known each other since childhood. Upon her accession, Elizabeth had appointed Dudley her Master of the Horse, a position that kept him close to the queen. The Master of the Horse oversaw the maintenance of the monarch's stables, coach houses, and kennels. He was the type of man whom Elizabeth wanted for a husband and the only man to tempt her to enter into the state of marriage. The only obstacle was Dudley's wife who lived away from Court at Cumnor Place, near Oxford.

Members of the Court began to notice the intimacy between Elizabeth and Dudley in April 1559. On April 18th, the Spanish Ambassador, Count de Feria, wrote of the relationship in his letter to King Philip:

During the last few days Lord Robert has come so much into favour that he does whatever he likes with affairs and it is even said that her Majesty visits him in his chamber day and night.³

Dudley was an accomplished courtier, handsome, tall, and cultured; and he was an expert joustier. The situation distressed her Privy Council. In September, de Feria reported to Philip that the

³ Martin A.S. Hume, *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, Preserved Principally in the Archives of Simancas, vol. 1, Elizabeth 1558-1567* (London: Kraus Reprint, 1971), 57-58.

queen's Principal Secretary, William Cecil, had told the ambassador that he was considering retirement:

He said it was a bad sailor who did not enter port if he could when he saw a storm coming on, and he clearly foresaw the ruin of the realm through Robert's intimacy with the Queen, who surrendered all affairs to him and meant to marry him.⁴

On September 8, 1560, the situation changed when servants found the body of Dudley's wife, Amy Robsart, at the foot of the stairs of Cumnor Place. Free to marry again, Robert Dudley began courting the queen in earnest despite the suspicious circumstances of his wife's death and the fact that he was officially in mourning. Elizabeth believed completely in Dudley's innocence, but, although a coroner's jury brought in a verdict of accidental death, the damage to Dudley's reputation was too great. The scandal attaching Dudley to his wife's death, combined with jealousy among Elizabeth's councilors and the nobility, made a marriage between the Queen and Dudley impossible. Although the relationship continued, the crisis had passed by the summer of 1561.

As the queen's reluctance to marry became clear and after a near-fatal bout with smallpox in December 1562, Parliament pressured Elizabeth to name a successor. Many believed that if the queen died without issue and with unsettled succession arrangements, the country would once again be plunged into civil war. This belief was in part the result of Tudor propaganda, which argued that monarchy was the key to social stability and that civil wars were the consequence of a disputed succession. The Wars of the Roses began because of a disputed succession and ended when Henry Tudor defeated Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. After he married Elizabeth of York, Henry VII combined the red rose of Lancaster with the white rose of York, demonstrating the joining of the two families. Their son, Henry VIII, married six times in

⁴ Hume, *Calendar*, 174.

an effort to secure the succession. After Edward VI's death and the Duke of Northumberland's attempted coup, the people of London supported Mary's claim to the throne over that of Lady Jane Grey because they believed in the superiority of dynastic claims over religious allegiances. If Elizabeth died without an heir, there would be no clear line of succession and the English did not want another civil war.

There were at least seven individuals whose claim to the throne merited consideration. The four with the strongest claims were Lady Margaret Strange; Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon; Catherine Grey; and Mary Stuart, Queen of Scots. Lady Margaret Strange was a member of the Suffolk family and the cousin of the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey. Although her claim was weak, in Mary I's time, some considered it stronger than those of Jane Grey's sisters because of the taint associated with Jane's execution. Henry Hastings was the only male of the group. He was Robert Dudley's brother-in-law and descended from Edward III on his father's side and Edward IV on his mother's side.

The struggle to be heir presumptive, however, was ultimately between Mary Stuart and Catherine Grey. The question was whether the claim of the Stuart line or the Suffolk line was stronger. Mary Stuart was the granddaughter of Henry VII's elder daughter, Margaret, who had married James V of Scotland in 1503. Catherine Grey was the granddaughter of Henry VII's younger daughter, Mary, Queen of France and Duchess of Suffolk. In his will, Henry VIII had disinherited the Stuarts, but Elizabeth did not share his view.

Mary Stuart had the better hereditary right. Not only was the Stuart line the elder, but the purity of her descent from Henry VII was not in question. She was, in fact, Henry's only living

descendant whose lineage could not be challenged by alleging a doubtful marriage.⁵ Other arguments were more favorable to Catherine Grey. One argument was a common-law rule against a foreigner inheriting property.⁶ The Scottish-born Mary Stuart's father was Scottish and her mother was French. Catherine Grey was English, like Elizabeth. The lines were drawn, dividing the Court, as each side attempted to persuade Elizabeth to either marry or name a successor. The performance of drama provided an opportunity for each side to state their case to as many influential people as possible.

In 1559, Elizabeth assured Parliament that she wished to remain unmarried, but if "it might please God to incline her heart to marry, her choice would light upon one who would be as careful for the preservation of the realm as she herself."⁷ If, however, she continued to live unmarried, she would make provisions for the succession to the throne. The Parliament of 1563 met under the shadow of fear resulting from Elizabeth's near-death from smallpox. Naturally, the succession issue rose to prominence because of this. On January 28th, Thomas Williams, the Speaker of the House of Commons, stated the House's wish for Elizabeth to name an heir to prevent the "unspeakable miseries of civil wars, the perilous intermeddlings of foreign princes... the waste of noble houses, the slaughter of people, subversion of town."⁸ Elizabeth declared that she would name a successor, but would do so later. The House of Lords was more discreet and focused on Elizabeth's promise to marry. Their message was clear: "Marry where you please, whom you please, and as soon as you please – but marry."⁹ Because of this, Elizabeth

⁵ In addition to the legitimacy of the marriage of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, there was some doubt that Catherine's grandfather, Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, was divorced before he married Mary Tudor.

⁶ The rule had its origin after the loss of Normandy, "when the English found it expedient to deprive the Frenchmen of their lands in England." Mortimer Levine, *The Early Elizabethan Succession Question 1558-1568* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1966), 99.

⁷ Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 74.

⁸ Quoted in Neale, *Parliaments*, 106.

⁹ Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 142.

resuscitated the marriage negotiations with Archduke Charles. She would have needed, however, to create strong support for any decision.

Three and a half years passed before parliament met again in 1566 and it faced the same situation as in 1563 – Elizabeth was still unmarried and the succession was still unsettled. The years had not simplified the succession question. Critics considered Elizabeth’s hesitation irresponsible and careless. In answer to these calls, Elizabeth responded that the time was not convenient to name an heir. About the requests that she choose a husband, she answered, “I will marry as soon as I can conveniently, if God take not him away with whom I mind to marry, or myself, or else some other great let happen...And I hope to have children, otherwise I would never marry.”¹⁰ Finally, the House of Commons agreed to give Elizabeth more time.

Elizabeth, however, continued to refuse to name an heir. She risked chaos after her death for the sake of stability while she lived. During Mary I’s reign, Elizabeth, as the heir-presumptive, had been the focus of discontent. She did not want the same to occur during her reign. In addition, the succession was not a gift; it was a right. Once given, it could not be withdrawn. By not naming an heir, Elizabeth strengthened her position. The uncertainty made her survival essential and focused her subjects’ loyalties on her alone.

During the first two years of Elizabeth’s reign, no performances touched on the queen’s marriage. The plays performed before Elizabeth after 1561 did not celebrate her virginity. Instead, marriage was the preferable state to chastity. The plays performed that touched on the marriage and succession issue include *Gorboduc*, considered a landmark in English literary history, *Gismond of Salerne*, and three plays whose names are unknown.

¹⁰ Quoted in Neale, *Parliaments*, 147.

Because of Elizabeth's 1559 proclamation, lawyers developed theatrical conventions to protect both the playwrights and the performers. The performers allowed the most license were the law students at the Inns, many of whom were current or future politicians and administrators who found employment in the service of the crown, government, or in noble households. Although many of the dramas presented by the law students discussed contemporary subjects, unlike in civic pageantry, the actors did not impersonate contemporary politicians. Another protection for the members of the Inns was in Elizabeth's proclamation, which allowed plays concerning matters of state "written or treated upon but by men of authority, learning, and wisdom, nor to be handled before any audience but of grave and discreet persons."¹¹ The men of the Inns were able to perform their dramas without anyone questioning their loyalty to the queen.

A final way the lawyers were able to perform their entertainments was an idea called "the Queen's two bodies." It was used to describe the balance between the monarch and the state. The Queen's two bodies were the body politic and the body natural. The body politic was the office of the monarch and was unerring and eternal. The body natural was the person in the office, subject to error and death. The idea of the two bodies was an attempt to explain a paradox: "men died and the land endured; kings died, the crown survived; individual subjects died but subjects always remained to be governed."¹² Using this theory, the lawyers of the Inns could perform their plays because they were criticizing the person, not the office. They were imploring Elizabeth to strive for the ideals of her position. The idea of the Queen's two bodies never became a law and remained controversial, but it allowed the Elizabethan lawyers to portray divisive issues such as the queen's marriage safely.

¹¹ Hughes, "Prohibiting Unlicensed Interludes", 115.

¹² Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977), 12.

Gorboduc, or Ferrex and Porrex, was the first play to offer advice in the ongoing debate about Elizabeth's marriage and the succession. The play, first performed during Christmas, 1561, at the Inner Temple in London, was part of the Inns of Court seasonal revels. Under the patronage of Robert Dudley, the students of the Inner Temple performed the tragedy and a masque a second time before Elizabeth at Whitehall on January 18, 1562. Machyn recorded the performance in his diary:

The xvij day of January was a play in the quen('s) hall at Westmynster by the gentyll-men of the Tempull, and after a grett maske, for ther was a grett scaffold in the hall, with grett tryhmpe as has bene sene; and the morrow after the scaffold was taken done.¹³

These were the only two performances of the play.

The five-act play is significant in the history of English drama because it was the first to use blank verse, the earliest English play to employ the use of dumb-shows before each act, and the first classical tragedy and history play written in English. The authors of the play were two students of the Inner Temple, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville. It requires a large cast, with twenty-one speaking parts, at least nine actors in the dumb shows, and four members of the Chorus. Such lavishness was characteristic of the performances of the Inner Temple.

The story chronicles the consequences of King Gorboduc's attempt to alter the succession and disregard the rule of primogeniture. Each act, divided into two scenes, begins with an allegorical dumb show that illustrates the moral of the act and foreshadows the ensuing action. The acts end with a chorus that repeats the moral. *Gorboduc* begins with a dumb show illustrating, with the use of a cluster of sticks, the strength of a realm in unity and its weakness in disunity. Six men, clothed in leaves, enter, the first wearing the sticks. The men try,

¹³ Machyn, *Diary*, 275.

unsuccessfully, to break the group of sticks. Then, one man takes a single stick and breaks it, followed by the other men breaking individual sticks. The meaning of the dumbshow and its attempt to persuade is clear: “Hereby was signified that a state knit in unity doth continue strong against all force, but being divided, is easily destroyed, as befell upon King Gorboduc dividing his land to his two sons, which he before held in monarchy, and upon the dissension of the brethren, to whom it was divided.”¹⁴

The first act commences with Queen Videna telling her eldest son, Ferrex, of his father’s plans to split his kingdom, leaving half to Ferrex’s younger brother, Porrex. In the next scene, King Gorboduc discusses his plan with his three councilors, Arostus, Philander, and Eubulus. Arostus supports Gorboduc’s plan to split the kingdom and advises that the king should abdicate in favor of his sons because the burden of rule is easier when shared. Philander also supports the division of the kingdom but states that Gorboduc should remain on the throne: “When fathers cease to know that they should rule, the children cease to know they should obey.”¹⁵ Eubulus argues against the plan, warning that civil strife would ensue, stating, “Divided reigns do make divided hearts.”¹⁶ Gorboduc decides to follow the advice of Arostus and abdicates.

The second dumb show dramatizes the effects of good and bad advice by portraying a king who refuses wine in a glass, but accepts poison in a golden goblet and dies. A king enters with members of his nobility. The king refuses a glass of wine offered by an elderly gentleman, but accepts a golden goblet filled with poison offered by a young and lusty man. The message of the dumb show is that, like the clear glass of wine, a good councilor is plain and open. The golden goblet represents flattering advisers who destroy their king with pleasant words. This

¹⁴ Thomas Sackville and Thomas Norton, *Gorboduc or Ferrex and Porrex, Regents Renaissance Drama Series*, Irby B. Cauten, Jr., ed. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970), 8.

¹⁵ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 19.

¹⁶ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 21.

foreshadows the actions of Ferrex and Porrex who listened to bad advice and, thus, brought about their destruction.

The second act opens with Ferrex complaining to his councilors, Hermon and Dordan, about King Gorboduc's decision to split the kingdom. Hermon urges Ferrex to attack Porrex's half of the kingdom, while Dordan opposes this, stressing that Ferrex rules the richer part of the realm. Ferrex decides not to attack his brother but prepares for a possible invasion by Porrex. In the next scene, Porrex discusses Ferrex's military build-up with his ministers and decides to invade his brother's land.

In the third dumb show, a group of people in mourning enter, signifying the sorrow at the murder of Ferrex by his younger brother. Then, King Gorboduc appears and asks for vengeance to punish him and not his sons. A messenger arrives to tell the former king of his sons' preparations for war and another enters to inform the assembly of Ferrex's death by the hand of his younger brother.

The three Furies appear in the fourth dumb show displaying the names of kings and queens who have murdered their own children, foreshadowing the murder of Porrex by his mother, Videna. The Furies move across the stage three times and exit, illustrating the massacre of King Gorboduc and Queen Videna by their subjects. The play continues with Videna vowing revenge on Porrex for the murder of her favorite son, Ferrex. Gorboduc appears and Porrex, grieving over his actions, goes to him. Once Porrex leaves, Videna kills him. An offstage mob then murders Gorboduc and Videna.

The final dumb show uses a company of armed men who illustrate the "tumults, rebellions, arms, and civil wars" which continue for five years after the death of Gorboduc and

his sons because of the uncertain succession.¹⁷ The nobility of the country appear and vow vengeance, but Eubulus stresses obedience: “In act nor speech, no, not in secret thought the subject may rebel against his lord.... Though kings forget to govern as they ought, yet subjects must obey as they are bound.”¹⁸ The group exits, leaving Fergus, Duke of Albany, who reveals his intention to take advantage of the instability in the realm in an attempt to take the crown for himself. The nobles appear and a messenger informs them that the Duke of Albany wants the crown. The play ends as Eubulus reflects on the dangers caused by the absence of a clear line of succession and expresses his hope for the restoration of the crown to a lawful heir:

Then parliament should have been holden,
And certain heirs appointed to the crown,
To stay the title of established right
And in the people plant obedience
While yet the prince did live whose name and power
By lawful summons and authority
Might make a parliament to be of force
And might have set the state in quiet stay.¹⁹

The authors of *Gorboduc*, Thomas Norton and Thomas Sackville, were both law students of the Inner Temple. According to the title page of the play, Norton wrote the first three acts and Sackville wrote the last two. Thomas Norton had been a tutor in the household of Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset before entering the Inner Temple in 1555. He was a member of Mary's last parliament in 1558 and of Elizabeth's 1563 and 1566 parliaments. A staunch Puritan, he produced the first English translation of John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Thomas Sackville, Elizabeth's third cousin on her mother's side, was closer to the center of

¹⁷ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 58.

¹⁸ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 60.

¹⁹ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 73.

power. He was also more moderate in his religious sympathies than Norton. He was a member of Mary's 1558 parliament and joined the Privy Council in 1586.

The story of King Gorboduc is based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *The History of the Kings of Britain* and generally follows his account.²⁰ In Geoffrey of Monmouth's account, Ferrex and Porrex quarrel after the king becomes senile. Ferrex escapes to Gaul after learning that Porrex intends to ambush him. He returns to fight Porrex, who kills him. Their mother, Judon, murders Porrex in retaliation. As a result, Britain becomes embroiled in a civil war. The stories of Geoffrey of Monmouth would have been familiar to the Elizabethans. The message to rulers is clear: "Rule until you die, and make sure you leave an intact kingdom to a clear successor."²¹

Gorboduc's first audience saw the performance as a direct commentary on contemporary political events, specifically in the context of the marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Eric of Sweden. Robert Beale, an administrator and courtier, sat in the audience with Elizabeth and gave an account of it in his working notes for a chronicle detailing matters associated with Robert Dudley. He discussed the messages in the dumb shows:

Ther was a Tragedie played in the Inner Temple of the two brethren Porrex and Ferrex K[ings] of Brytayne...It was thus used. Firste wilde men cam[e] in and woulde have broken a whole fagott, but could not, the stickes they brake being severed [i.e. the dumb show before Act 1]. Then cam[e] in a king to whome was geven a clere glasse, and a golden cupp of golde covered, full of poison, the glass he caste under his fote and brake hyt, the poyson he drank of [the dumb show before Act 2], after cam[e] in mom[m]ers [the dumb show before Act 4]. The shadowes were declared by the Chor[us] first to signyfie unytie, the 2 howe that men refused the certen and toocke the uncerten, wherby was ment that yt was better for the Quene to marye with the L[ord] R[obert] knowen then with the K[ing] of Sweden...Many things were handled of mariage, and that the matter was to be debated in p[ar]liament, because yt was much banding but th[at] hit ought to be determined by councell. Ther was also declared howe a straunge duke seying the realme

²⁰ According to Geoffrey of Monmouth, King Gorboduc is known as Gorbodugo.

²¹ John E. Curran, Jr., "Geoffrey of Monmouth in Renaissance Drama: Imagining Non-History," *Modern Philology* 97 (Aug. 1999): 12.

at dyvysion, would have taken upon him the crowne, but the people would none of hytt. And many thinges were saied for the succession to put thinges in certenty.²²

There is no reason to doubt that the audience also understood the play's message. In addition to the play, the men of the Inner Temple also performed a masque titled *The Masque of Beauty and Desire*. It was an allegorical statement of the suitability of Robert Dudley as a husband for Elizabeth. In the masque, Prince Pallaphilos represents Dudley. Prince Pallaphilos is the founder of the Order of Pegasus, probably an allusion to Dudley's position as the Master of the Horse. He is a model political advisor and a defender against the threat of Catholicism. The masque is a narrative of Prince Pallaphilos' courtship and marriage. The implication of the performances of *The Masque of Beauty and Desire* and *Gorboduc* is two-fold. The masque advanced the suit of Dudley and the play concentrated on the succession issue.

Gorboduc can be interpreted as the first Elizabethan succession tract. The performance reinforced the petition presented to the queen by the House of Commons in 1559. The tragedy, according to Greg Walker, "provided its royal audience at Whitehall with a spur to action in the vision of a realm thrown into chaos by an unresolved succession."²³ Norton and Sackville's purpose in writing the play was to warn Elizabeth of the dangers posed by an unsettled succession and to urge her to choose an heir. If Elizabeth refused to name an heir, according to the authors, then Parliament should choose the successor.

Then parliament should have been holden,
And certain heirs appointed to the crown,
To stay the title of established right.²⁴

²² Quoted in Henry James and Greg Walker, "The Politics of *Gorboduc*," *The English Historical Review* 110 (Feb. 1995): 112-113.

²³ Greg Walker, *The Politics of Performance in Early Renaissance Drama* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 203.

²⁴ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 73.

The authors, however, discourage Elizabeth from appointing Mary Stuart as her heir, calling the rule of a foreigner unnatural. The name of the villain in the last act, the Duke of Albany, is suggestive of this, “Ne suffer you, against the rules of kind, your mother land to serve a foreign prince.”²⁵ Albany was a Scottish title, traditionally held by a member of the Stuart family.

The final topic discussed in *Gorboduc* is the relationship between rulers and their subjects. The authors frequently stress the necessity for a prince to follow the advice of wise and experienced councilors. The play expresses widely accepted concepts about the possessor of the crown, including the divine right of kings. The monarch is responsible for the welfare of the nation, but if he or she abuses this power, God will punish both the ruler and the country because the ruler is indivisible from the commonwealth. Because of this, the ruler must listen to the guidance of good advisors. If, however, a ruler abuses the power of the position, the subjects may not question their ruler, a message characteristic of Tudor plays:

If not, those traitorous hearts that dare rebel,
Let them behold the wide and hugy fields
With blood and bodies spread of rebels slain,
The lofty trees clothed with the corpses dead
That, strangled with the cord, do hang thereon.²⁶

Not everyone in the audience shared the opinions of Norton and Sackville. At its first performance, the authors had sought to persuade a skeptical audience of the merits their case. Besides a queen who resisted the idea of marriage and appointing an heir, others opposed the idea put forth by the play of Parliament choosing the next ruler. Some members of the Inner Temple maintained that Henry VIII had no right to alter the succession in his will. God, not man,

²⁵ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 70.

²⁶ Sackville, *Gorboduc*, 66.

chose the line of succession. As early as 1537, Robert Aske, a lawyer and the leader of the Pilgrimage of Grace, stated that since the Norman Conquest “no King declared his will to the crown of the realm.”²⁷ In the 1560s, another lawyer, Edmund Plowden, repeated Aske’s views and advised against following Henry VIII’s will. William Rastall, a judge on the Queen’s Bench, fled the country the day before the second performance of *Gorboduc* so he did not have to give his opinion on the succession “declaring as it is suspected, that there is no certain heir...the selection of a king devolves upon the nation itself.”²⁸ No records of Elizabeth’s reaction to the performance exist.

After the performance of *Gorboduc*, more plays and masques were performed in an attempt to persuade the Queen to stop the potential succession crisis. On July 5th, 1564, at the house of Sir Richard Sackville, Elizabeth asked the Spanish ambassador, Guzman de Silva, to watch a comedy. In a letter to King Philip, de Silva wrote, “I should not have understood much of it if the Queen had not interpreted, as she told me she would do. They generally deal with marriage in the comedies ...The comedy ended, and then there was a masque of certain gentlemen who entered dressed in black and white, which the Queen told me were her colours.”²⁹ In some works of heraldry from this period, the use of the colors black and white symbolized perpetual virginity. If de Silva’s version of the event is correct, the play was an important element in Elizabeth’s efforts to create support for her choice of chastity.

During Shrovetide, 1565, the gentlemen of Grey’s Inn gave a performance of a tragedy, sometimes called *A Debate on Marriage*, at Whitehall. The characters in the play are Juno, who advocates marriage, and Diana, who promotes chastity. The characters argue their cases before

²⁷ Quotes in Walker, *Politics of Performance*, 215.

²⁸ Walker, *Politics of Performance*, 215.

²⁹ Hume, *Simancas*, 367-368.

Jupiter, who gives a verdict in favor of matrimony. At the conclusion, according to de Silva, Elizabeth turned to the Spanish ambassador and said, “They are all against me.”³⁰ She evidently saw the production in a personal light.

The gentlemen of the Inner Temple performed another play, *Gismond of Salerne*, whose topic was the subject of marriage. The tragedy was performed at Whitehall sometime between February 24 and February 26, 1566. Although this cannot be verified, the play is generally believed to have at least four authors: Rodney Stafford (act one), Henry Noel (act two), Christopher Hatton (act four), and Robert Wilmot (act five). The author of act three is unknown. The play has ten speaking parts. It is the first English tragedy based on an Italian novel and “the first with two people in love with each other as hero and heroine.”³¹

Gismond is the only daughter of Tancred, the king of Naples and prince of Salerne. He reluctantly marries her to a foreign prince, who soon dies, and Gismond returns to her father. Tancred declares that Gismond will not marry again because he does not want to be parted from her once more. Gismond, however, wishes to marry again:

But yet abide: I may perhappes devise
some way to be vnburdened of my life,
and with my ghost approche thee in some wise,
to do therein the dutie of a wife.³²

She falls in love with and begins an affair with Count Palurine. The lovers agree to meet.

Gismond instructs the Count to follow a forgotten vault, whose entrance is under Gismond’s bedroom floor. During one of the lovers’ meetings, Tancred enters his daughter’s chamber and,

³⁰ Hume, *Simancas*, 404.

³¹ Annette Rottenberg, “The Early Love Drama,” *College English* 23 (Apr. 1962): 583.

³² John W. Cunliffe, “Gismond of Salerne,” in John W. Cunliffe, *Early English Classical Tragedies*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1912), 171.

finding her absent, decides to wait for her. Gismond and Palurine enter the chamber and Tancred, upon discovering his daughter's secret, waits until the lovers leave before exiting.

Tancred vows revenge on Palurine and orders the count's arrest and execution by strangulation. The executioner cuts Palurine's heart out and Tancred sends it to his daughter in a gold cup. Gismond cries into the cup and fills it with poison. She then drinks from it. Tancred rushes to his daughter's side to comfort her. Before she dies, Gismond requests that her father bury her with Palurine "for perpetuall memorie of their faithfull loue."³³ Tancred commits suicide out of grief for his cruelty.

The story of *Gismond of Salerne* is loosely based on the first novel of the fourth day of Boccaccio's *The Decameron*. Boccaccio describes Tancred as a just and merciful ruler who "would have enjoyed that reputation to this day, had he not stained his hands with the blood of two lovers in his old age."³⁴ Like the play, a widowed Gismond returns to her father's court and searches for the love and happiness she found with her late husband. Boccaccio's Gismond, however, falls in love with her father's valet, Guiscardo, but the message of true love conquering its enemies remains the same. Once again, the gentlemen of the Inner Temple were attempting to show Elizabeth the desirability of marriage.

The final known play concerning the marriage issue performed during the first decade of Elizabeth's reign was performed on April 13, 1567. The performance was for the visit of the Spanish Ambassadors. Although nothing is known about the play, in his letter to King Philip, de Silva wrote this evaluation:

The hatred that this Queen has of marriage is most strange. They represented a comedy before her last night until nearly one in the morning, which ended in a marriage, and the Queen, as she told me herself, expressed her dislike of the woman's part.³⁵

³³ Cunliffe, "Gismond of Salerne", 166.

³⁴ Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. Frances Winwar, (New York: The Modern Library, 1955), 227.

³⁵ Hume, *Simancas*, 633.

A woman ruling alone was inconceivable to sixteenth-century men. Most expected a quick announcement of the queen's forthcoming marriage after her coronation. When that failed to occur, Parliament pressed Elizabeth to do her duty for the sake of the kingdom. After Elizabeth nearly died from smallpox in 1562, the settlement of the succession became a necessity. Through the use of drama, Elizabeth's subjects interjected their opinions on the two most critical questions of the day and reminded her that their futures lay in her hands: "Englishmen could not fail to realize upon what a slender thread – a woman's life – depended the tranquility of their land."³⁶

³⁶ Neale, *Queen Elizabeth*, 121.

CHAPTER VII
“EVERY NOBLEMAN’S HOUSE IS HER PALACE”:
THE PROGRESSES OF ELIZABETH I

In his *Description of England*, William Harrison wrote, “When it pleaseth her in the summer season to recreate herself abroad, and view the estate of the country, every nobleman’s house is her palace.”¹ Elizabeth’s annual progresses through the countryside were a trademark of her reign. While it was not unusual for a Renaissance monarch to travel between palaces, Elizabeth’s progresses were characterized by the spectacle and pageantry that was emblematic of her reign. A Tudor progress occurred when the monarch and the Court left London, usually during the spring and summer, and journeyed through the countryside staying at royal palaces or the homes of loyal noblemen. It was difficult for Elizabeth to establish a rapport with those who were not members of her court. These progresses provided an opportunity to show herself to as many of her subjects as possible and provided an opportunity for them to demonstrate their loyalty and adoration for their Queen. Mary Hill Cole states that Elizabeth traveled as she ruled – “with fanfare, caution, and care for the preservation of royal authority and royal life.”² During the major progresses of the decade, Elizabeth visited several corporate towns, including Winchester in 1560 and Coventry in 1565. She also visited both university towns: Cambridge in 1564 and Oxford in 1566.

There were many reasons, both practical and political, for the monarch to go on progress. During the summer months, there was always a danger of the plague and so it was advantageous to be away from London where a large population in confined spaces meant that diseases spread

¹ Quoted in Ian Dunlop, *Palaces and Progresses of Elizabeth I* (New York: Taplinger Publishing Co., 1962), 115.

² Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1999), 24.

quickly. In addition, with the lack of sanitation there was always a need to clean the palaces. There were usually hundreds of people present at court. The available resources generally ran out quickly and waste built up. The Tudors also traveled for fun. For example, King Henry VIII liked to hunt.

Finally, one could lower the expenses of the Court by visiting the various noblemen who paid for the chance to entertain the queen, although the visits did not save her much money. William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief adviser, calculated that these progresses cost Elizabeth one thousand pounds a year.³ Although the various hosts provided meals for the Court, Elizabeth had to feed her Court when it was en route to its destination. The fact that Elizabeth, a fiscally conservative monarch, committed her financial resources to maintaining the Court on progress demonstrates the perceived importance of the investment.

The most important motive for these travels, however, was to see and be seen. The citizens of a European town expected a monarch's first entrance into a city to accomplish a variety of purposes and the entries were generally more lavish than those in England. In the Duchy of Brabant in the Netherlands, the entry ceremony was a reiteration of the privileges first granted to the area in 1356. During their first visit to the principal cities, sovereign rulers swore to respect and uphold the laws and customs of the city. In return, the citizens pledged their fidelity. If the ruler broke the oath, then the citizens could suspend their obedience. Sovereignty, therefore, "was contractual and invested by the subjects."⁴ In contrast, a French monarch's entry into Paris exalted the monarch and reinforced the ideals of kingship. The king did not participate in the spectacle, but observed it. From the fourteenth through the seventeenth centuries, the

³ Lisa Hopkins, *Elizabeth I and Her Court* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 136.

⁴ Margit Thofner, "Marrying the City, Mothering the Country: Gender and Visual Conventions in Johannes Bochius's Account of the Joyous Entry of the Archduke Albert and the Infanta Isabella into Antwerp," *Oxford Art Journal* 22 (1999): 27.

entry was one of the principal ceremonial occasions to dramatize political concepts: “The royal entries had been staged to impress on the public memory the importance of the king’s first visit.”⁵ The French court moved constantly during the sixteenth century. French monarchs traveled throughout the country, even as far as the Spanish border, in order to show the king to his people. However, unlike their Tudor counterparts, French nobles did not stage spectacles because “such ostentation from a subject might appear, in royal eyes, to assert an unwelcome rivalry and ambition.”⁶

What distinguished Elizabeth’s progresses from those of other monarchs was their intrinsic role in her monarchy; “they were like an endlessly repeated coronation, the tool without which she could not or would not rule.”⁷ Maintaining her popularity was the most important aspect of government to Elizabeth. Locally based rebellions were one of the greatest threats to the survival of the Tudor dynasty. Each of her predecessors had faced at least one major rebellion. A ruler who was just a name to her subjects might find that, in a rebellion, their loyalty went to their local lord, whom they knew personally, rather than to their queen. Lisa Hopkins states that Elizabeth seems to have felt “that her magnificent appearance, enhanced by the presence of her retinue of handsome, well-dressed courtiers, and her undoubted personal charm would help her win the hearts of as many of her subjects as could see her.”⁸

Elizabeth also used these progresses as a vehicle to propagate the burgeoning Cult. Her subjects displayed their love and loyalty through pageantry and spectacle. Ceremony gave

⁵ Lawrence M. Bryant, *The King and the City in the Parisian Royal Entry Ceremony: Politics, Ritual, and Art in the Renaissance* (Geneve: Librairie Droz S.A., 1986): 30.

⁶ Mary Hill Cole, “Monarchy in Motion: An Overview of Elizabethan Progresses” in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments on Queen Elizabeth I*, Jayne Elizabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight, eds., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 29.

⁷ Cole, *Progresses*, 18.

⁸ Hopkins, *Elizabeth I*, 136.

structure to the queen's visit. At all stops on the journey Elizabeth listened to orations and watched the presentation of pageants and masques. All the performances contained compliments to the queen. This was particularly characteristic of Elizabeth's visits to private houses. Unlike those not at court, courtiers knew how Elizabeth liked to be portrayed and were anxious to advertise this because it showed their familiarity with the Queen. Unfortunately, there is little surviving evidence of the pageantry shown at private houses visited during her first progresses, but there is no reason to doubt that noblemen attempted to exceed their contemporaries and impress the queen with their entertainments.

Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII, went on his first progress in March 1486, seven months after defeating Richard III at the Battle of Bosworth. "The pomp of his coronation, the business of his first parliament, his marriage with Elizabeth of York and his first provincial progress were all steps towards political stability."⁹ He traveled to the counties York, Worcester, and Gloucester, before journeying to Bristol. The men of the north had supported Richard III during the Wars of the Roses and, according to Polydore Virgil, were "more savage and eager than others for upheavals."¹⁰ By traveling to these counties, the new king intended to show himself to supporters and enemies alike. The king, splendidly dressed, with a large retinue provided a visual reminder of the king's authority. Henry often used progresses for political reasons, especially during times of unrest. By showing himself to the people in his realm, Henry could "thereby impress the populace with the reality of an authority which must, frequently, have seemed very remote."¹¹

⁹ C.E. McGee, "Politics and Platitudes: Sources of Civic Pageantry, 1486" *Renaissance Studies* 3.1 (Mar 1989): 29.

¹⁰ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 21.

¹¹ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 21.

Civic officials intended for the pageants that greeted Henry to demonstrate the support of his subjects and to absolve the cities from their recent opposition to the new king. The civic pageants created “a privileged meeting place between itself and its king and define the real relationship between them in ways that transcended both the neutrality of convention and the tact of silence.”¹² York, which supported Richard during the Wars of the Roses, used pageants to stress its support. Surviving correspondence between city leaders and the king show that Henry was involved in the planning of the pageants. In the first pageant, a figure representing King Ebraucus, the legendary founder of York, stated:

It is knowen in trowth of great experience /
ffor your blod this Citie made neuer digression
Os Recordeth by the great hurte for blode of your excellence
Wherfor the Rather I . pray for compassion
And to mynd how this Citie of olde & pure Affeccion
Gladdeth & enloyeth your highnesse And commyng
With hole consente knowing you ther soueraigne & king.¹³

A second pageant included King Solomon, who asked King Henry to support the city and in a third pageant King David asked for Henry’s “gracious complacence” for York.¹⁴ Pageants also greeted Henry at other stops along the way. It is unknown if the other cities communicated with the Court regarding themes, but since Henry was involved in the York themes, it is likely that there was communication. The themes in the pageants at Bristol and Hereford had similar themes to York pageants “marking its route merit study, both as an expression of the thematic material and symbolism which contemporaries believed would appeal to the King, and because these themes did, in fact, become fundamental elements of Early Tudor propaganda.”¹⁵ Once

¹² McGee, “Politics and Platitudes” 29.

¹³ McGee, “Politics and Platitudes,” 31.

¹⁴ McGee, “Politics and Platitudes” 31.

¹⁵ Anglo, *Spectacle*, 35.

Henry felt his place on the throne was secure, he did not participate in as many great spectacles of kingship.

Henry's son Henry VIII loved to travel. Until the dissolution of the monasteries, he frequently stayed at monasteries for their convenient lodging and hunting. One of the main differences between the progresses of Henry and Elizabeth is that many of Henry's progresses were between his own homes rather than a nobleman's. By his death he owned over sixty palaces and great houses. For this reason, Henry generally traveled in the south and in the east of England.

However, there were some progresses that took Henry further from his base. He also used the progresses for both political gain. His most famous ceremonial expedition was the Field of Cloth of Gold in 1520. In 1535 Henry and Anne Boleyn traveled to Gloucestershire where he stayed in Acton Court, the home of Sir Nicholas Poyntz, who built a new wing onto the house for the visit. The purpose of the visit to the West Country was to promote the newly-formed Church of England. He traveled to the north in 1536 after the Pilgrimage of Grace to calm dissension in that area. The furthest north he traveled was in 1541 when he journeyed to York with Catherine Howard to meet King James V of Scotland. Civic entertainments continued until the king, "in his old age grew irritable and put an end to the public festivities."¹⁶

None of Henry's children left Britain. Before he became king, Edward VI lived in Wales, but stayed close to London after ascending the throne. His only lengthy progress was in 1552 to Portsmouth. Mary also lived in Wales as a child and accompanied her father on progress in 1526. Once she became queen, however, she traveled very little. In 1554, she traveled to Winchester for her wedding to Philip of Spain, however, they stayed in royal residences so they

¹⁶ Cole, *Portable*, 18.

were not entertained by others. Because of ill health and the unpopularity of her marriage, her movements outside London decreased. With the exception of coronations and entries into London, court festivities were limited to the Christmas season.

With the exception of 1562, Elizabeth took her court on progress every year during the first decade of her reign. These progresses usually began in July, ended in September, and were between forty-eight and fifty-two days in length.¹⁷ Her visits to a nobleman's house lasted an average of two days. The Vice-Chamberlain set the itinerary and made the arrangements with the towns and houses Elizabeth would visit. As time passed, decisions about destinations became political in nature. The Queen used these occasions to communicate her views on the various controversial issues of the time, particularly religious conformity. For her first progresses in 1559 and 1560 the queen, who was organizing her government and restructuring the church, stayed close to London and visited trusted friends in the countryside. Increasingly the queen became more confident and traveled further, but once again stayed close to London after the Northern Rising in 1569. The primary purpose of these progresses, however, was to show her person to as many people as possible.

Elizabeth's progresses were limited in their geographic scope.¹⁸ Her travels often occurred in a forty-mile radius around London. She never traveled outside the areas under her direct royal authority. In the first years, Elizabeth traveled to fifteen of the fifty-three counties she governed: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Essex, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Kent, Middlesex, Northamptonshire, Oxfordshire, Surrey, Suffolk, and Warwickshire. The lack of distance traveled was not just due to bad roads and slow transportation; there were political reasons as well. Elizabeth did not travel to areas with rugged

¹⁷ Cole, *Portable*, 22.

¹⁸ For a map of the English counties and a list of those that Elizabeth visited, see Appendix B.

terrain, or those known for their Celtic heritage or Catholic sympathies. Instead of attempting to bring stability to troubled areas, she used the progresses to validate royal authority and social stability where it already existed thereby guaranteeing a successful progress. Tales of her visits, of the welcome she received from her hosts, and her popularity among the people along the way spread throughout the realm, further fostering the image of Elizabeth as a successful and appealing monarch.

The competition to entertain the Queen was great. For hosts, these royal visits were an opportunity to encourage local pride and provided access to powerful guests. It was an opportunity to entice royal favors. The requests varied. Some asked for land grants or offices, some asked for judicial exemptions or Elizabeth's intercession in a legal dispute. Sir John Fortescue, at whose home Elizabeth stayed multiple times while traveling through Oxfordshire, petitioned the queen to ask for the bailiwick and keepership of Whichwood Forest and Cornbury Park, which Fortescue had held since 1560, to remain in his family as "a quyetnes" to his heirs.¹⁹ The family had land holdings in the area and the continuation of the offices would ensure the family stayed in Oxfordshire. If denied, then Sir Fortescue could not guarantee that Elizabeth would be able continue visiting and being entertained in the manner to which she was accustomed while in the area since, according to Fortescue's petition, there was no "other place for hir matie receyuing when it pleaseth hir to come into these parts but my house only."²⁰ The queen approved the petition. In 1588 Sir Fortescue and his son Francis were granted the two offices for life.

Progresses were state functions. In addition to a great retinue, the Great Officers of the State – the Lord Treasurer, the Lord Chamberlain, the Lord Admiral, the Secretary of State, and

¹⁹ Quoted in Cole, *Portable*, 81.

²⁰ Quoted in Cole, *Portable*, 81.

prominent noblemen – traveled with the Queen. The Privy Council met every few days, as the occasion required. Although individual hosts suffered depleted finances by lodging, feeding, and entertaining up to two hundred people, the financial burden must not have been too prohibitive. Most noblemen willingly hosted their queen and she was expensively entertained. In 1561 Sir William Petre spent £136 entertaining the queen for four days at his home in Ingatestone and the Earl of Oxford spent £273 on the queen’s visit to his home at Hedingham for six days.²¹ In addition, the logistics of entertaining the queen was problematic because the retinue sometimes appeared days earlier or later than originally planned. Her ministers, however, opposed the progresses because they generated more work for them. The government had to keep working, but had to rely on the slow exchange of letters between the Privy Council and London to communicate. In addition, the courtiers who traveled with the queen had to abandon their estates, posting letters to their families to make decisions and share news. “No one in the retinue enjoyed the progresses quite as much as Elizabeth herself.”²²

Civic hosts also incurred expenses from royal visits. From the preparations involved, it is apparent that the towns regarded these royal visits with enthusiasm. Civic entertainments were more formal than those in private houses. The citizens of the city fixed the facades of the buildings, guilds organized pageants, and the council chose a gift for the Queen, usually a purse with coins or a gold cup with gold coins in it. For Elizabeth, the success of a visit corresponded to the generosity of her host. At her visit to Coventry, after the town officials gave her a purse of £100, she responded “I have but few such” gifts.²³ During the visit, town officials wore official gowns of black or scarlet. The city recorder and a schoolmaster or promising scholar of the

²¹ Cole, “Monarchy in Motion”, 40.

²² Cole, “Monarchy in Motion”, 32.

²³ Quoted in Cole, “Monarchy in Motion”, 39.

grammar school presented an oration. In a cathedral town, the Court attended a service. In the university cities, there were speeches, sermons, academic disputations, and plays.

Royal progresses enabled the cities to construct a corporate identity. When Elizabeth visited a corporate town, the whole town, not just one person, acted as a host. Officials used money from the town's treasury to extend a proper welcome to the visiting Court; however, the Queen contributed to her own maintenance in the form of food, supplies, staff, and transportation. For her 1561 progress to Ipswich, the town passed a general tax to pay for her visit. Many towns took advantage of the queen's visit to petition her for special favors. These requests usually centered on economic aid for local improvements, the relocation of courts, and intervention in local disputes. Before her visit to the university town of Cambridge, officials asked Elizabeth to intervene in a dispute between the town and the university over the rights to license alehouses. The power to regulate alehouses was a common issue particularly in university towns where there was already a poor relationship between the "town and gown" populations.²⁴ University officials in Cambridge claimed that the mayor of Cambridge was interfering with "the school's ancient privilege of licensing tipplers and victuallers."²⁵ The mayor, meanwhile, claimed his right to issue licenses because of a statute which gave the power to justices of the peace. Elizabeth sided with the university because universities were granted a special status exempted them from statutory provisions and the mayor was ordered not to "intermeddle in those affairs again."²⁶

Each progress was a large undertaking for the court as well. Once the Lord Chamberlain set the itinerary for the progress, a group of ushers and grooms from Elizabeth's chamber were

²⁴ Cole, *Portable*, 114.

²⁵ Cole, *Portable*, 114.

²⁶ Cole, *Portable*, 115.

sent to act as an advance team. The team prepared the houses for the Queen's arrival. At royal residences, they opened the house to air it and then determined sleeping arrangements for the members of the retinue. At private homes, the advance team worked with the noblemen to organize accommodations. Often the houses could not lodge everyone so some were housed at nearby inns and private homes.

In addition to providing a bed for all members of the queen's retinue, servants and hosts had to feed everyone. The members of the court, along with their equipment, comprised a caravan of up to 250 horse-drawn carts. "For the 1561 progress into Essex and Suffolk, Thomas Weldon, cofferer of the household, kept a tally of the Queen's expenses at each of the places she stayed during the seventy-six-day trip. The courts expenses varied from £83 to £146 per day, with a total cost of £8,540."²⁷

The queen's visit encouraged citizens to work together and present a face of unity. For her first progress in 1559, Elizabeth visited Kent and Surrey. On July 17th, she left Greenwich Palace and traveled to Dartford in Kent. She visited Cobham Hall, the home of Lord Henry Cobham, "and there her Grace was welcomed with great cheer."²⁸ Next, she visited Gillingham and Otford in Kent on her way to Eltham Palace. On August 5th, she left Eltham for Nonsuch Palace where the Earl of Arundel was her host. Henry Machyn wrote:

ther her grace had as gret cher evere nyght, and bankettes; but the sonday at nyght my lord of Arundell ('s) howse mad her a grett bankett at ys cost...for soper, bankett, and maske, with drums and flutes, and all the mysyke that cold be, till mydnyght.²⁹

²⁷ Cole, "Monarchy in Motion", 35.

²⁸ John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth Among Which are Interspersed Other Solemnities, Public Expenditures, and Remarkable Events, during the Reign of that Illustrious Princess*, vol. 1 (London: John Nicholas and Sons, 1823), 73.

²⁹ Machyn, *Diary*, 206.

The next night the children of St. Paul's, under the direction of Master Sebastian, presented a play. On August 10th, according to Machyn, the Court left Nonsuch for Hampton Court Palace. After a visit to Croyden in Surrey, the home of Mathew Parker, Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Edward Fiennes de Clinton, the Lord Admiral, entertained the Court at his home in West Horseley, Surrey. Lord Edward presented *A Masque of Shipmen and Maids of the Country* in a banqueting house built specially for the Queen's visit. Unfortunately no records of the performance, the sets, or the costumes exist.

In 1560, Elizabeth traveled to Surrey and Hampshire. On July 29th, she left Greenwich for Lambeth, where she visited the Archbishop of Canterbury. She visited the homes of Sir Henry Weston, John White, Bishop of Winchester, and Edmund Clerk. She reached Southampton in Hampshire. She also visited Winchester and Basing, the home of the Marquis of Winchester, Elizabeth's Lord Treasurer, "with whom she was most splendidly entertained."³⁰

Elizabeth's 1561 progress took her through Essex, Suffolk, and Hertfordshire. It was a long progress, lasting two months. On July 14th, she left London and her subjects, according to John Nichols lined the streets to see their Queen and her retinue:

all the houses were hung with cloth of arras and rich carpets, and silk; but Cheapside was hung with cloth of gold and silver, and velvets of all colours; all the crafts of London standing in their liveries from St. Michael the Quern to Aldgate.³¹

From London, she entered Essex where she visited twelve private houses. The homes belonged, for the most part, not to the old aristocracy, but to the "new" families – men enriched during the reign of Elizabeth's father or who were officials in her court. Among those she visited were Lord John Grey, the second son of the Marquis of Dorset and Sir William Petre, a member of

³⁰ Nichols, *Progresses*, 87.

³¹ Nichols, *Progresses*, 91-92.

Elizabeth's Privy Council. By visiting these particular families, Elizabeth emphasized the new nobility's reliance on the monarchy and its reliance on the nobility.

While on this progress, Elizabeth was entertained by three corporate towns. She visited Colchester on August 1st and Harwich from August 2nd through August 5th. Harwich presented a pageant for Elizabeth, the subject of which is unknown. After the magistrates escorted her out of town, Elizabeth asked if they had any requests. The magistrates replied they wished for nothing but a safe journey for their queen. Elizabeth replied, "A pretty Town, and wants nothing" and continued to Ipswich in Suffolk.³² In Suffolk, she stayed at the homes of Robert, Lord Rich and the Waldegrave family before returning to Essex. On her way back to London, she visited the home of Sir Ralph Sadler, a Privy Councillor, and the town of Hertford, although no records remain of the visit. On September 8th, 10,000 people met Elizabeth as she returned to London, "such was their gladness and affection to her."³³

There was no progress in 1562. The reason for this is unclear, but was probably due to a smallpox epidemic at court, which nearly killed Elizabeth in October. The only recorded trip was on January 15th, when Elizabeth dined with the Earl of Pembroke at Baynard's Castle. Machyn wrote, "At nyght there was grett chere and a grett bankett, and after a maske, and here grace tared all nyght."³⁴ The next year's progress was short. She visited the scholars at Eton, near Windsor. In July, the Archbishop of Canterbury entertained her at Lambeth in Surrey and she visited Stanwell in Middlesex.

Elizabeth's 1564 progress began at William Cecil's house, Theobalds, in Hertfordshire. This was her first visit to Theobalds, but she became a frequent visitor. Cecil's home was a short

³² Nichols, *Progresses*, 97.

³³ Nichols, *Progresses*, 104.

³⁴ Machyn, *Diary*, 275.

distance from London. Each visit cost him two or three thousand pounds because Elizabeth would sometimes entertain ambassadors at his house. A contemporary wrote, “His Lordship’s extraordinary charge in entertaining of the Queen was greater to him than to any of her subjects. But his love to his Sovereign, and joy to entertain her and her train, was so great, that he thought no trouble, care, or cost, too much.”³⁵ This was typical of those noblemen who entertained Elizabeth on her progresses. The amount of money spent was worth the prestige of a royal visit.

One of the most successful progresses during Elizabeth’s first decade was her 1564 visit to Cambridge. Elizabeth’s visit to Cambridge was “momentous” because “not since 1522 had a monarch paid a formal visit to the University and the town.”³⁶ It is also one of the few with extant contemporary descriptions of the entertainments. Four accounts remain. Matthew Stokys, the University Registrar, wrote the chief account in English and an anonymous author wrote a shorter narrative. Abraham Hartwell of King’s College wrote a description of the festivities, titled *Regina Literata*, in Latin. Nicholas Robinson, a Fellow of Queens’ College, wrote a final Latin account, *Commentarii Hexaemeri Rerum Cantabrigiae actarum*. These accounts are not only important for their description of Elizabeth’s visit, but also give some of the earliest descriptions of Elizabethan staging methods.³⁷ The fact that these accounts still exist proves the impression Elizabeth’s visit left on the students.

³⁵ Quoted in Nichols, *Diary*, xxvii.

³⁶ Siobhan Keenan, “Spectator and Spectacle: Royal Entertainments at the Universities in the 1560s” in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, Jayne Elizabeth Archer, Elizabeth Goldring, and Sarah Knight, ed., (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 87.

³⁷ Extracts and translations of these descriptions can be found in Frederick S. Boas, *University Drama in the Tudor Age* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914); Nichols, *Progresses*; and Mary Susan Steele, *Plays and Masques at Court during the Reigns of Elizabeth, James, and Charles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1926).

Elizabeth's visit to Cambridge was a compliment to Sir William Cecil, whom she had appointed Chancellor in 1558. On July 17th, Cecil sent official notification of the queen's intentions to his Vice-Chancellor, Edward Hawford, Master of Christ's College:

Although youe may here in rumors of the Quene's Majestie's intention to repayre thither in her Progresse, and to remayne in that Universitye three days...yet I, considering the place I holde to be your Chauncellor...have thought mete to impart the same unto youe.³⁸

Hawford and the heads of the colleges appointed Richard Kelke, Master of Magdalene College and Archdeacon of Stowe, to "to set fourt and to teache suche ye Playes as should be exhibited before her Grace."³⁹ The students of Cambridge performed three plays for Elizabeth: *Aulularia* by Plautus, *Dido and Aeneas* by Edward Haliwell, and *Ezechias* by Nicholas Udall. On July 27th, Robert Dudley wrote a letter to Hawford, reassuring him about his choice of plays, "let this perswade youe, that nothinge can be with better will done by youe, that yt wil be graciously accepted of her."⁴⁰ The Office of the Revels helped the university authorities with their preparations, most likely in the form of staging supplies and costumes.

The Cambridge authorities prepared a written account of the order for Elizabeth's entrance. On August 5th, the Duke of Norfolk, the Earl of Sussex, the Bishop of Ely, and other important persons escorted the Queen from Haslingfield to Cambridge. She arrived at the university town at two o'clock in the afternoon.⁴¹ Robert Lane, the Mayor, the aldermen, the burgesses, and the Recorder met Elizabeth's retinue and the Recorder gave an oration in English. The mayor then gave the Queen the mace and a gold cup, worth nineteen pounds, containing

³⁸ Nichols, *Progresses*, 151.

³⁹ Boas, *University*, 91.

⁴⁰ Nichols, *Progresses*, 155.

⁴¹ Nichols, *Progresses*, 158.

twenty gold coins and Elizabeth entered the town.⁴² The students, Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor, Proctors, and Bedells assembled at King's College to meet the Queen. Rushes covered the lane between King's College and Queen's College and there were flags and verses hung from the walls of the buildings. Elizabeth "was of all the students...honorably and joyfully received."⁴³ As the Queen passed them, the scholars kneeled and cried 'Vivat Regina.' She received orations from the Scholars, the Bachelors of Arts students, and the Masters of Arts students. The students then departed to their respective colleges. The authorities instructed them to not attend the Court, the Disputations or the plays.

As Elizabeth approached the west door of the chapel at King's College, Cecil knelt and welcomed his queen to Cambridge, showing her the order of the doctors. Next, the Bedells knelt, kissed their staves, and gave them to Cecil. He kissed the staves and delivered them to Elizabeth. She gave them back to Cecil, "willing him and other Magistrates of the University, to minister justice uprightly, as she trusted they did."⁴⁴

Next, Mr. William Master of King's College delivered an oration in which he praised the Queen's virtues, praise which she stated she did not deserve, and gave an account of Cambridge's history. That night Elizabeth attended a reception at King's College Chapel. While at Cambridge, "the daies of her abode were passed in scholasticall exercises of philosophie, physicke, and divinity; the nights in comedies and tragedies, set forth partly by the whole University, and partly by the Students of King's College."⁴⁵

⁴² Nichols, *Progresses*, 159-160.

⁴³ Nichols, *Progresses*, 149.

⁴⁴ Nichols, *Progresses*, 160.

⁴⁵ Nichols, *Progresses*, 150.

With the exception of one play, these performances were not political in nature. In his account of the royal visit, Nicholas Robinson writes that the authorities chose the plays “in order that she might drink in as it were with a certain pleasure the sweetness of all these things, if she should be willing, amid the weightier affairs of the commonwealth, to adapt herself to these light jests.”⁴⁶

Elizabeth’s visit to both university towns highlighted her magnificence, learning, and patronage. The first play, presented the night of August 6th, was the comedy *Aulularia*, also known as *The Pot of Gold*, by Plautus. For the performance, builders constructed a stage in King’s College Chapel that stretched the breadth of the chapel. Plautus’ plays were popular at the university and so *Aulularia* was a natural choice for the opening night. Students from several colleges, chosen by Dr. Kelke, performed.

The complete text of the play has not survived, but enough exists to know the plot. *Lars Familiaris*, a household deity, allows Euclio, an elderly man, to find a pot of gold buried in his house and Euclio maniacally guards his gold from both real and imaginary threats. He has a daughter of marriageable age named Phaedria. Unknown to Euclio, Phaedria had an affair with a young man named Lyconides and was pregnant. Euclio decides to marry Phaedria to his rich and elderly neighbor, Magadorus, who happens to be Lyconides’ uncle. Eventually Lyconides confesses to Euclio that he is father of Phaedria’s child. Meanwhile, Lyconides’ slave steals Euclio’s pot of gold. The rest of the play is lost, except for a few fragments. Lyconides returns the pot of gold to Euclio, who gives his permission for his daughter and Lyconides to marry. Euclio finally gives the pot of gold to his daughter as a wedding present.

⁴⁶ Steele, *Plays*, 17.

The comedy, performed in Latin, apparently appealed to the queen more than others in her retinue. Robinson writes that while some “either sleepy, or ignorant of the Latin dialogue, with difficulty endured the waste of so many hours,” Elizabeth showed no sign of weariness.⁴⁷ After the performance, she returned to her lodging for the night.

The next day, Elizabeth listened to disputations in St. Mary’s Church regarding the previous day’s sermon. That night, the students of King’s College performed the tragedy *Dido and Aeneas*, written by Edward Haliwell, formerly a Fellow of the college. This is the only play performed during this visit that was political in nature, touching on the subject of Elizabeth’s marriage. Dido’s sister, in attempting to convince her to marry, says to Dido what Elizabeth’s subjects tried to articulate:

...Must you go on alone?
And spend all your years of youth in mourning
Without knowing the pleasure of having children
- And that is not all that love has to offer.⁴⁸

Haliwell’s tragedy is based on Book Four of Virgil’s *Aeneid*. Dido, the Queen of Carthage, falls in love with a Trojan warrior named Aeneas and the two go through a type of marriage ceremony. After Aeneas returns to his homeland, Dido asks her sister to build a pyre so that she can burn all reminders of him. Dido curses him, ascends the pyre, and falls on the sword given to her by Aeneas. Aeneas and his men see the burning pyre and guess what happened.

Although the work is a tragedy, by marrying, Dido was a model for Elizabeth, with whom the House of Commons pleaded to marry in the previous year. Robinson writes that the play was well received, although some were critical of the length. Elizabeth singled out Thomas Preston, who later wrote the play *Cambises*, performed before the queen in 1560, and granted

⁴⁷ Steele, *Plays*, 17.

⁴⁸ Virgil, *The Aeneid*, trans. C.H. Sisson (Manchester: Carcanet, 1986), 84.

him twenty pounds a year for his performance.⁴⁹ The queen's reaction to this bold advice is not recorded. Given that she rewarded Preston, however, it can be assumed that she enjoyed the performance.

The final play, performed on August 8th, was *Ezechias*, written by Nicholas Udall and performed by the students of King's College in English. The text of the play no longer exists, but is based on the story of King Hezekiah of Judah, found in 2 Kings, chapters eighteen through twenty. Hezekiah introduced religious reform and abolished idolatry in his kingdom, as Elizabeth abolished Catholicism in hers.

From contemporary descriptions, an account of the play can be pieced together. The play begins with Hezekiah's destruction of idolatrous images. He builds Jewish altars, but the heathens rebel and destroy the altars. The prophet Isaiah declares that punishment will come to the heathens as a messenger arrives, announcing the approach of the invading Assyrians. Hezekiah asks God to save Israel, which he does, convincing the heathens of his existence. The audience member's account ends with a description of the fate of the Assyrians. Despite appearances, Robinson calls the play a comedy: "How much wit and charm in so grave and sacred a matter, and yet how much truth in a fixed, uninterrupted course!"⁵⁰ Elizabeth then retired for the night.

On August 9th, Elizabeth visited all the colleges of Cambridge University. Master Edward Leeds and his company received the Queen at Clare Hall and gave an oration. Next, she entered King's College, where Philip Baker, the Provost, gave an oration and presented her with a book covered in red velvet, containing verses his students wrote for the royal visit, in addition

⁴⁹ Steele, *Plays*, 20.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Steele, *Plays*, 20.

to a biography of the founder of King's College and the names of benefactors and dignitaries. From King's College, Elizabeth traveled to Trinity Hall, Gonville College, and Caius College, where she heard orations. From there, she heard a Greek oration, given by Master Robert Beaumont at the East Gate of Trinity College. After another oration at St. John's College, Elizabeth heard a Greek oration at Christ's College and responded in Greek. Master Edward Hawford presented her with a pair of gloves in remembrance of her great-grandmother, Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and founder of that college. That afternoon, Elizabeth heard disputations at St. Mary's Church and gave a speech in Latin to the assembled students.

The next day, Elizabeth left Cambridge and, after dining with the Bishop of Ely at Long Stanton, journeyed to Hinchinbrook Priory in Huntingdonshire, the home of Sir Henry Cromwell. A group of Cambridge students followed the Queen to Hinchinbrook and performed a masque. The only description of it is included in an August 19th letter written by the Spanish ambassador to the Duchess of Parma. Although de Silva was not present at the performance, there is no reason to doubt the accuracy of his account:

The actors came in dressed as some of the imprisoned Bishops. First came the bishop of London carrying a lamb in his hands as if he were eating it as he walked along, and then other with different devices, one being in the figure of a dog with the Host in his mouth. They write that the Queen was so angry that she at once entered her chamber using strong language, and the men who held the torches, it being night, left them in the dark, and so ended the thoughtless and scandalous representation.⁵¹

It is unknown what happened to the actors who performed the play. Elizabeth concluded her progress with visits to homes in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, and Middlesex.

⁵¹ Hume, *Simancas*, 375.

As time passed, Elizabeth became more secure in her position and aware of the value of the showing her person to her subjects. She began to travel farther from London and the progresses lasted longer. Her 1565 progress was extensive, but, unfortunately, few descriptions survive. Elizabeth journeyed through Berkshire, Surrey, and Warwickshire. The highlight of the progress was her entry into Coventry. On July 16th, she attended a feast at Durham Place given in honor of the marriage of Henry Knollys, the son of Elizabeth's Vice-Chamberlain, to Margaret, daughter of Sir Ambrose Cave. The Spanish Ambassador, de Silva, was present. In his July 23rd letter to King Philip, de Silva wrote, "After supper there was a ball, a tourney, and two masques, the feast ending at half-past one."⁵² Unfortunately, there are no descriptions about the plot of the masque. It is unclear where she traveled from here, but she may have stopped at homes in Berkshire.

On August 17th, Elizabeth entered Coventry. There are records of the visit in the city annals, but they are brief and not descriptive. The sheriffs, Julius Hearing and William Wilkes, dressed in scarlet cloaks, and twenty young men "of honest reputation & well horsed, all in one Livery of fine puke, mett her grace."⁵³ Each man carried a white rod that he presented to Elizabeth and she returned. The men escorted the Queen into the town where the mayor, Edmond Brownell Draper, and other town officials met the group. John Throgmorton, the town Recorder, presented an oration in which he praised Elizabeth's wisdom and virtue: "Of your profound learning and policy, seldom to be found in any man comparable, much less in any woman."⁵⁴ He

⁵² Hume, *Simancas*, 452.

⁵³ R.W. Ingram, ed., *Records of Early English Drama: Coventry* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1981), 232.

⁵⁴ Nichols, *Progresses*, 193.

continued by giving a history of the city. At the end of the oration, the mayor gave Elizabeth a gift of one hundred pounds in gold. According to the records in Coventry:

When the Queen Receaved it her guard sayd to the lords it was a good gift she had but few such, for it was one hundred pounds in gold to Whome the Maior answered very boldly & it like your grace there is a great deale more in it. What is that sayd the Queene...the Maior answered againe & sayd it is the faithfull hartes of all your true Loving subiectes, I thanke you Master Maior sayd the Queene it is a great deale more indeed.⁵⁵

Next, the Queen continued through the city, passing four pageants performed by the guilds. Precisely what these pageants were is uncertain; there are no surviving descriptions. The tanners erected a pageant at Saint John's Church; the drapers stood at the Cross; the blacksmiths at Little Park Street; and the weavers at Much Park Street. The Coventry account book lists the payments to each guild and others in preparation for the royal visit, including payments for rehearsals, supplies, and wages for actors and singers.⁵⁶ The book shows payments ranging from four pence to three shillings four pence to the weavers' guild for members playing Simon, Joseph, Jesus, Mary, Anne, and Simon's Clerk, in addition to two angels and a child. There was more money for the drapers, including payments for keeping the fire, opening and shutting the door, and fetching the ladder. Characters in their pageant included three souls, four angels, and two demons, paid between two shillings and three shillings four pence. There were also singers and a trumpeter. Other payments include six shillings for bread and ale and six shillings nine pence for walkers. That night Elizabeth retired to White Friars, where she dined with the mayor and the council.

The next day, Elizabeth visited nearby Kenilworth Castle, home of Robert Dudley, the newly created Earl of Leicester. She invited the mayor of Coventry and other officials to

⁵⁵ Ingram, *Coventry*, 233.

⁵⁶ For a detailed listing of expenditures for the city, see Ingram, *Coventry*, 234-243.

Kenilworth, where they were “well-entertained.”⁵⁷ While there, Elizabeth knighted Mr. Throgmorton, the Recorder of Coventry. She concluded her progress by passing through Lincolnshire and Huntingdonshire before returning to London.

Elizabeth’s 1566 progress was another successful and extensive journey. On July 1st, Elizabeth attended a masque performed at the marriage of Thomas Mildmay to Frances, sister of Thomas, Earl of Sussex, at Bermondsey in Surrey. De Silva wrote to King Philip on July 6th, “There was a masquerade, and a long ball, after which they entered in new disguises for a foot tournament, in which there were four challengers and 32 adventurers.”⁵⁸ Elizabeth visited noblemen in the counties of Middlesex, Hertfordshire, Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire. In Middlesex, she stayed at the home of Edward Herbert, a son of the Earl of Pembroke and a nephew of Queen Kathryn Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII, with whom Elizabeth lived for a short while following her father’s death. She visited Michael Pulteney, William Warren, and Rowland Lytton, the governor of Boulogne, while traveling through the county of Hertfordshire. In Bedfordshire, Elizabeth was a guest of Dame Ellensbury, William Gery, the Duchess of Suffolk, and John Gostwick, King Henry VIII’s former Master of the Horse. In Huntingdonshire, the queen visited the home of Thomas Wingfield, and finally she stayed with her Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Walter Mildmay, in Northamptonshire. On August 5th, according William Cecil, she stayed with him at Stamford in Lincolnshire.

The highlight of this progress, however, like her visit to Cambridge two years earlier, was a visit to the university town of Oxford. Elizabeth’s visit to Oxford was a compliment to the Earl of Leicester, whom she made Chancellor of the university in 1564. She intended to visit Oxford

⁵⁷ Nichols, *Progresses*, 198.

⁵⁸ Hume, *Simancas*, 565.

sooner, but “her intention being diverted by the dregs of a plague then remained there, deferred her coming till this year.”⁵⁹ Elizabeth arrived the evening of August 31st, accompanied by Cecil, de Silva, and other nobles. There are two surviving accounts of the visit. Nicholas Robinson, who was also present at her Cambridge visit, wrote an account in Latin, *Of Actes Done at Oxford When the Queen’s Majesty was there*. The other account, *Commentarii Sive Ephemerae Actiones Rerum Illustrium Oxonii Gestarum in Adventu Serenissimae Principis Elizabethae*, was written by John Bereblock, a Fellow at Exeter.

The Earl of Leicester, four doctors, and eight Masters of Arts students met the royal retinue at Wolvercot. The three present Esquire Bedells delivered their staves to Leicester, who gave them to Elizabeth. She returned the staves to him and the Provost of Oriel College gave an oration. The group continued toward the town. One half mile from the city, the mayor of Oxford, Thomas Williams, the aldermen, and thirteen burgesses met Elizabeth. Williams gave her a mace, which she returned, delivered an oration in English, and presented a cup of silver worth ten pounds containing forty pounds in gold. This marked the first time the university presented a gift of money to a monarch.⁶⁰ Elizabeth entered Oxford in a chariot. The scholars lined the streets of the university and Robert Deale, from New College, gave an oration in the name of the students. Mr. Lawrence, a professor of Greek at King’s College, made an oration in Greek at Quatervois and Elizabeth thanked him in Greek, once again emphasizing her education. Mr. Kingsmyll, the Orator of the University, gave a final oration at the door of Christ Church.

Like her visit to Cambridge, Elizabeth spent the days during her stay at Oxford listening to disputations and the nights attending plays. The two plays presented were traditional

⁵⁹ Nichols, *Progresses*, 206.

⁶⁰ In the past, according to Nichols, the custom was that the citizens of Oxford gave a visiting monarch “five oxen, as many sheep, veales, lamb, and sugar-loaves.” Sir Francis Knollys, the City Steward, changed the custom. Nichols, *Progresses*, 208.

university performances and not political in nature. On September 2nd, Elizabeth attended disputations in Christ Church Hall. That night the students performed the first half of Richard Edwards's *Palamon and Arcyte*. Edwards was a former student of Christ Church and author of *Damon and Pithias*, performed at court in 1564. Officials chose this play because it offered opportunities for spectacular effects. Before the performance began, however, a part of the stage collapsed, three audience members died, and five were injured. John Bereblock describes the accident:

At the approach of night, they came together for the play that has been made ready...Moreover, the presence of the Queen, of which they had been deprived for two days now, had added such a great desire for it in the minds of all that the number was far greater and more infinite on that account...Scarcely had the Queen come in...and taken her seat on the lofty throne, when all the approaches to the theatre...were thronged with so great crowd, and the steps were already so filled with people, that by their violent pushing they disturbed the common joy by a frightful accident. A certain wall of great square stones had been built there; it was a bulwark propping each side of a pair of steps to bear the rush of people going up; the crowd became too dense, the rush too great, the wall, although quite firm, could not stand the strain; it gives way from the side of the stairs.⁶¹

The three men who died were a scholar at St. Mary Hall named Walker, a brewer named Penrice, and John Gilbert, a cook at Corpus Christi College. The five injured men recovered. The accident, however, did not postpone the performance and “could by no means destroy the enjoyment of the occasion.”⁶²

The text of *Palamon and Arcyte* no longer exists. Bereblock's summary of the performance indicates that the play was a dramatization of The Knight's Tale from Geoffrey Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The play tells the story of two knights, Palamon and Arcyte, who are imprisoned by Theseus, Duke of Athens. While in prison, they both fall in love with Emily.

⁶¹ Quoted in Steele, *Plays*, 30.

⁶² Steele, *Plays*, 30.

The knights are released from prison and compete in a tournament arranged by Theseus. The prize is Emily's hand in marriage. Arcyte wins the tournament, but dies before he can claim his prize, and Palamon subsequently marries her. The play was "acted with very great applause in Christ Church Hall."⁶³

The next day, Elizabeth heard disputations in natural and moral philosophy at St. Mary's Church. Due to the length of the disputations, the second half of *Palamon and Arcyte* was delayed because, according to Bereblock, Elizabeth "could not be present at the play without some risk to her health."⁶⁴ On September 4th, Elizabeth heard disputations in civil law at St. Mary's Church. That night, she attended the performance of the second half of *Palamon and Arcyte*. When the play ended, Elizabeth called for the author and gave him thanks. Then, she recited part of the play to Edwards:

By Palaemon, I warnet he dallieth not in love when he was in love indeed; by Arcyte, he was a right martial knight having a swart countenance and a manly face; by Trecatio, God's pity, what a knave it is; by Perithous throwing St. Edward's rich cloak into the funeral fire, which a stander-by would have stayed by the arm with an oath, Go fool, he knoweth his part, I warrant.⁶⁵

Unfortunately, the context of this quote is lost. It evidently left an impression on those assembled and contributed to Elizabeth's growing popularity. Like her coronation procession, Elizabeth once again had the right words for the occasion.

The next day Elizabeth listened to disputations in physics and divinity and attended a performance of *Progne*, a Latin tragedy written by Dr. James Calfhill, a canon of Christ Church. Calfhill adapted the story from book four of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and from a play of the same name written by Gregorio Corraro. Nicholas Robinson described the performance: "In the

⁶³ Nichols, *Progresses*, 210.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Steele, *Plays*, 30-31.

⁶⁵ Nichols, *Progresses*, 212.

silence of this night there is exhibited on the stage how King Tereus devours his son, slain and prepared by his wife Progne on account of her outraged sister.”⁶⁶ The play was well received, but was not as popular as *Palamon and Arcyte*.

Two days after this performance, Elizabeth left Oxford. The cost to the colleges was considerable. For example, the “Expenses of Christechurche by occasion of the Queenes Maiesties cominge thether” records the total cost for Christ Church College was 148 li 2 s 1 ¾ d.⁶⁷ On September 6th, Sir Henry Norris entertained the Queen at his house in Rycot, located eight miles from Oxford. She continued through Buckinghamshire and Surrey before returning to London.

Details of the final three progresses of the 1560s are sketchy; most of the evidence comes from Cecil’s diary. In 1567, Elizabeth visited Berkshire, Surrey, and Hampshire. She visited Oatlands, Guildford, and Farnham, and was entertained by Francis Carew and the Bishop of Winchester. In 1568, she traveled to Kent, Essex, Hertfordshire, Berkshire, and Northamptonshire. From Greenwich, she traveled to Essex, where she spent a week, and continued to Berkshire, staying with gentlemen such as Sir Thomas Heneage, Sir John Fermor, Sir Henry Norris, and Thomas Perry. While in Berkshire, de Silva noted how Elizabeth sought the affection of her subjects. He wrote that she ordered her drivers to take her carriage into the thickest part of the crowds: “She was received with great acclamations and signs of joy, as is customary in this country; whereat she was extremely pleased and told me so, giving me to understand how beloved she was by her subjects.”⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Quoted in Steele, *Plays*, 32.

⁶⁷ Boas, *University*, 106.

⁶⁸ Quoted in Haigh. *Elizabeth I*, 156.

Elizabeth's 1569 progress took her to Surrey and Hampshire. From Richmond, she traveled to Guildford and Farnham in Surrey. Her visit to Farnham was a political one. While dining with the Duke of Norfolk, she discussed the issue of his rumored marriage negotiations with Mary Queen of Scots, who escaped to England the previous year. Elizabeth advised him, "To be very careful on what pillow he laid his head."⁶⁹

Next, she visited the Earl of Leicester at Tichfield. The highlight of this progress was her September 8th visit to Southampton, a town, according to John Nichols, famous for "for the number and beauty of its buildings, its different inhabitants, and the resort of numerous merchants."⁷⁰ There are no surviving accounts of her visit. The Queen and her court traveled through Hampshire and Surrey before returning to Windsor in October.

It was not unusual for a Renaissance monarch to travel among the palaces in his or her realm. In addition to sanitary reasons, it was to the monarch's advantage to show her person to her subjects and gain their loyalty. In this, Elizabeth was no different from her predecessors or contemporaries. Elizabeth's travels were different because of the pageantry and ceremony involved in the progresses. Both noblemen and corporate towns entertained the Queen. Although the great spectacles that characterized the summer progress occurred in the second decade of Elizabeth's reign, these first progresses laid the foundation for these later entertainments as each nobleman and town tried to outdo the other to prove their love and loyalty for their monarch. As always, Elizabeth played her part perfectly. In 1568, she told the Spanish ambassador that she

⁶⁹ Quoted in Nichols, *Progresses*, 257. The Duke of Norfolk was executed in 1572 for treason for his part in conspiracies with Mary Stuart.

⁷⁰ Nichols, *Progresses*, 259.

attributed her popularity “to God’s miraculous goodness” and her propaganda machine took full advantage of the spectacle.⁷¹

⁷¹ Quoted in Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, 156.

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth I became the most celebrated monarch in English history, ruling during a golden age of theater, literature, and art. At the time of her accession, however, her subjects were unsure about their new queen. The reigns of her brother and sister left England weak, penniless, and divided. Elizabeth was a woman, branded a bastard by her father and sister, with no experience in governing. Despite this, her subjects greeted their new queen with joyous celebrations. Taking advantage of this, Elizabeth employed the spectacle associated with royalty and used it as propaganda which made her the focal point of her subjects' loyalties. Although other monarchs had many of the same resources available to Elizabeth, she was the most effective at utilizing these resources. David Loades states that she was "one of the greatest image-builders the world has ever seen."¹

Pageantry and civic theater has existed in England in some form since Roman times. Over time, the Church saw the potential and molded it to its own needs. Throughout the Middle Ages, pageantry focused on glorifying not only the monarch, but the Church as well. In the thirteenth century, pageantry became more secular in nature, but it was not until the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation that the monarch became the sole focus of the pageantry. State festivals such as coronations became more elaborate. Monarchs began dressing in a more princely manner. With the birth of humanism, artists and authors used pageantry to express ideas and spread messages.

The new queen faced obstacles and prejudice as a woman, which pageantry would help her overcome. Although women were expected to stay out of the political realm, there were precedents for female rulers both abroad and in England. Queen Boudica was a strong female

¹ Loades, *Tudor Court*, 35.

ruler at a time when women were accepted. The potential of a female ruler in England in the twelfth century and a disputed succession led to a civil war. Although contemporaries did not initially have an issue Empress Matilda's sex, her arrogance and masculine ways when she gained power, lost supporters and cost her the throne. Elizabeth's predecessor and half-sister, Queen Mary I, ignored the will of the people, enacting unpopular measures and entering into an unpopular marriage. All gifted Elizabeth with lessons for having a successful reign.

Elizabeth's first test for the people's acceptance was her coronation procession. On January 14, 1559, Elizabeth and her retinue traveled from the Tower of London to Westminster. Seizing the opportunity to open a line of communication, the London guilds developed five pageants that articulated the wishes of the people, in addition to the requisite speeches proclaiming the queen's many virtues. The pageant at Gracechurch Street established Elizabeth's English heritage, confirming her place in the Tudor dynasty. According to Tudor propaganda, the Tudors brought peace to England after decades of civil war. At Soper's Lane, the guilds, in order to prove that Elizabeth was worthy of her position, applied St. Matthew's Eight Beatitudes to her. Two pageants showed the Protestant bias of the citizens of London. *The Seat of Worthy Governance*, located at the water conduit at Cornhill, showed four virtues crushing four vices, including pure religion triumphing over ignorance and superstition. The pageant at Cheapside was more obvious. The guild erected two mountains, symbolizing the rules of Mary I and Elizabeth. The first mountain was decaying, the second flourishing. Truth delivers an English Bible, *The Word of Truth*, to Elizabeth, which she kisses, betraying her Protestant sympathies. Finally, the guilds, giving the queen an example of a ruler who listened to the advice of her advisors, portrayed the Biblical queen Deborah.

Elizabeth was an active participant in the procession. A published pamphlet recorded her perfect responses to the pageants and to members of the public. She listened attentively to the speeches, moving closer or silencing the crowd when necessary. The author of the pamphlet noted that she smiled when those in the crowd recalled the image of her father and accepted gifts from all, including a branch of rosemary that she carried with her to the end of the procession. Elizabeth left an indelible impression on those present at the procession and, because of the pamphlet, on others throughout England and Europe.

Much of Elizabeth's life centered on the royal court and the royal court revolved around her. The court was the most influential institution in the nation. The court included some of the most important people in the nation and abroad. The court was the center of government, but Elizabeth's court was more. Elizabeth invited painters, artists, authors, and intellectuals from all over England and the Continent. It was at court that the mechanisms for the Cult of Gloriana were stationed and given reign to express themselves.

In an illiterate culture, plays and masques were powerful instruments, as evidenced by Elizabeth's 1559 proclamation regarding the licensing of plays. The queen's court provided playwrights and patrons with an audience of ambassadors and court members. Elizabeth's attendance was another means of sculpting her image. Playwrights highlighted plays performed before a royal audience, bringing the attention of those not in attendance to the play's subject and message. There were six to ten performances a year discussing the issues of religion, kingship, the queen's possible marriage, and the settlement of succession. The purpose of some performances, however, was to merely entertain, display the magnificence of the court, and draw attention to the visits of foreign dignitaries. Upon her accession, the religious settlement was the most important issue. During her first Christmas revels, she revealed her Protestant leanings by

patronizing the performance of a masque, *Papists*, which ridiculed the Catholic hierarchy. After she forbade the licensing of plays concerning religion, playwrights presented parables. Because Elizabeth propagated the image of herself as a mother to England, the story of the prodigal son was popular, as dramatized in *Misogonus* and *Heautontimoroumenos*.

As the power of the ruler grew under the Tudors, the nature of kingship and the relationship between monarch and subject were common subjects. Tudor propagandists stressed the divine right of kings and the importance of submissive subjects, reminding them that only God has the right to punish. Plays displayed both good and bad rulers. *Cambises* was a warning to what will happen to unrepentant tyrants. *Miles Gloriosus* illustrated the consequences of believing flatterers. Dionisius, the tyrant in *Damon and Pithias*, however, changes his oppressive nature and becomes an ideal ruler. Finally, *Sapientia Solomonis* presents the story of King Solomon, a wise and just ruler worth imitating.

Throughout her reign, the most important issues were the question of the queen's marriage and the identity of the next ruler of England. There was no precedent for an unmarried female ruler. Elizabeth's subjects pressed her to marry and there were many candidates. There was, however, no consensus about who should be the queen's husband. The unpopularity of Mary I's marriage to Philip of Spain showed the danger of a foreign marriage. Marriage to a subject was considered undignified. Despite this, subjects patronized plays that highlighted the virtues of marriage, including a masque at the house of Sir Richard Sackville and *A Debate on Marriage*. As it became clear that she would not marry, Parliament urged her to name an heir for the sake of the realm because a disputed succession could lead to civil war. Under the protection of the legal principle of the Queen's Two Bodies, the gentlemen of the Inns presented their opinions on these subjects. In *Gismond of Salerne*, the heroine dies for love, the ultimate

sacrifice of courtly love. *Gorboduc* was a statement against the accession of Mary Stuart and pointed out the importance of a settled succession. *The Masque of Beauty and Desire*, performed in conjunction with *Gorboduc*, was a proclamation of Robert Dudley's suitability as a husband for the queen.

Elizabeth's annual progresses were another opportunity to shape her image and enabled her to establish a link with her subjects. Although she only visited fifteen of the fifty-three counties in England and Wales, the stories of her visits spread. Noblemen and towns competed to entertain the queen and her retinue. Besides the compliment paid to the hosts, a royal visit gave noblemen access to powerful guests, the opportunity to ask favors and fostered civic pride. In anticipation of a visit, towns were decorated and entertainments planned to please the queen. During her visits to the university towns of Cambridge and Oxford, she listened to disputations and attended plays. There was no political significance to where or whom Elizabeth chose to visit; rather, it was the spectacle of seeing the queen and the ceremonies that left an impression on her people.

Every part of royal ceremonies symbolized the majesty and magnificence of the ruler's office. These symbols "not only constituted easily comprehended treatises in political theory for the benefit of the illiterate...it could also present a sophisticated world view, intelligible only to the highly intelligent."² Some historians have questioned the value of such propaganda and whether the public understood the message. Sydney Anglo argued that scholars neglect an important fact. "One of the greatest obstacles barring the way to a sensible appreciation of the ways in which Renaissance rulers were perceived by their contemporaries is that we know a great deal more about these kings and queens than did even the best informed of their subjects."³

² Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 6.

³ Anglo, *Images*, 1.

We have access to paintings, to a multitude of sources, and to the hindsight of history.

However, Jennifer Loach states that the spectacle and pageantry court festivals and ceremonies had an important political purpose: “to transmit a message about the dynasty and its ambitions, and to claim for England a place among the cultural elite of Europe.”⁴ Kevin Sharpe goes one step further, arguing that Elizabethan propaganda was not a top-down operation, but was a cooperation between the government and the people. The pageants and plays presented by the people to the queen showcase a conversation between the two sides, portraying the hopes and wishes of the populace.

Symbolism surrounded people in the sixteenth century, in religious services and dramatic performances. Thus, they were accustomed to thinking in allegorical terms and the language of symbolism was universal. The effectiveness of Elizabeth’s propaganda is evident in the queen’s growing popularity and the ensuing Cult of Gloriana. There is no evidence that Elizabeth consciously participated in shaping her image and in beginning the movement that became the cult. No letters, journals, or speeches exist stating such. However, she did believe that monarchs could shape their image through language and that language created images in the minds of the audience. In 1583 she wrote to King James VI of Scotland:

Among your many studies, my dear Brother and Cousin. I would Isocrates’ noble lesson were not forgotten, that wills the Emperor his sovereign to make his words of more account than other men their oaths, as meetest ensigns to show the truest badge of a Prince’s arms.⁵

Elizabeth reference advice given to a prince from Isocrates’ *To Nicocles*, which states that a prince should ensure that his word is more trusted than any other. Elizabeth’s appearance in the audience of those plays and masques performed for her was a tacit

⁴ Jennifer Loach, “The Function of Ceremonial in the Reign of Henry VIII”, *Past & Present* 142 (Feb. 1994), 43.

⁵ Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 4.

approval of the message within the performance. By making herself the heart of her subjects' loyalties in order to heal the wounds of years of turmoil, Elizabeth I, benefiting from a renaissance of drama, created a persona that intrigues historians four hundred years after her death.

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APPENDIX A: THE CORONATION ROUTE OF ELIZABETH I



1. Fenchurch, where the Queen received the greeting from the City
2. Gracechurch Street, the site of the first pageant
3. Cornhill, the site of the second pageant
4. Soper's Lane, the site of the third pageant



5. The Little Conduit in Cheapside, where the City presented 1,000 marks to the Queen and the site of the fourth pageant
6. St. Paul's School, where a child delivered an oration
7. Ludgate, end of the city proper
8. The Conduit in Fleet Street, the site of the fifth pageant
9. Temple Bar, the site of the giant images of Gogmagog and Corineus

APPENDIX B: COUNTIES VISITED DURING ELIZABETH'S PROGRESSES



Counties Visited One Time

Cambridgeshire

Kent

Leicestershire

Oxfordshire

Suffolk

Warwickshire

Counties Visited Two Times

Berkshire

Buckinghamshire

Essex

Lincolnshire

Counties Visited Three Times

Bedfordshire

Hampshire

Hertfordshire

Northamptonshire

Counties Visited Four or More Times

Huntingdonshire

Middlesex

Surrey

VITA

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