

Elizabeth Tudor: Her Youth, Education, and the Development of the Legend of the Virgin Queen

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ELIZABETH TUDOR:
HER YOUTH, EDUCATION, AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGEND OF THE
VIRGIN QUEEN

by

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B. A. University of Alabama, 2011

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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ABSTRACT

Elizabeth Tudor, the Virgin Queen, has received extensive attention from historians, especially since the advent of gender studies in the last forty years or so. Historical studies, movies, and television shows present Queen Elizabeth I as a remarkable character with legendary skills as a ruler despite her gender and the era in which she ruled. None of these studies delve into Elizabeth's childhood in an attempt to address how her experiences as a child and her education allowed her to establish her power early on in her reign. By looking at her childhood and education, this study shows that her skill as a ruler and her unique characteristics developed out of a natural scholarly ability as well as a unique schoolroom agenda set by her tutor, Roger Ascham. The primary ability which set her apart was her skill in rhetoric, taught to her by Ascham. Young girls from every social stratum in Early Modern England were expected to remain silent, but Elizabeth was encouraged to speak. Her ability to speak allowed her to project her power and cement her legitimacy from the beginning of her reign.

This study first reviews letters written and translations completed by the Princess between the years of 1544 and 1548 to establish the primary focus of her childhood years. The focus then shifts to her education and the influences on it that helped her develop into a skilled speaker despite expectations for her gender. Finally, the study finishes by examining the speeches Elizabeth gave in the first years of her reign, between 1558 and 1572. Through these and other sources this study shows that Elizabeth Tudor's education prepared her for a throne she was never expected to sit upon and allowed her to express her power in ways that were beyond the scope of most female monarchs up to that point in time.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, William and Juliana, who have always encouraged me to be the best student, teacher, and person possible. Their love and encouragement has made it possible for me to complete this project.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

TIMELINE	1
INTRODUCTION: THE SUCCESS OF ELIZABETH TUDOR	2
Historiography	9
Methodologies.....	17
Outline	20
CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILDHOOD OF ELIZABETH TUDOR.....	21
Religion	22
Religion in Letters and Translations	23
Religion in Translations as Gifts.....	24
Religion in Content of Translations	25
Religion in Prayers	30
Family.....	30
Family in Letters and Translations.....	31
Family in Letters	32
Public Image in Letters.....	35
Conclusion	40
CHAPTER TWO: THE EDUCATION OF ELIZABETH TUDOR	41
Demonstrating her Exceptional Traits through Education	41
Education in Letters.....	42
Education in Translations	44
Influences on her Education	45
Katherine Parr	47
Roger Ascham.....	49
What Makes her Education Exceptional?.....	53
Languages	54
Experiences	55
Gender	59

Conclusion	63
CHAPTER THREE: YOUNG QUEEN ELIZABETH: EARLY MANIFESTATIONS OF HER POWER	64
Letters	66
Mary, Queen of Scots in Letters	67
The Northern Rising in Letters	72
Translations	75
Queen Elizabeth's <i>Sententiae</i>	76
Queen Elizabeth's Translation of Seneca's <i>Epistulae Morales 107</i>	80
Speeches	82
Marriage Question in Speeches	82
University Orations	87
Speeches from her Later Reign	90
Conclusion	92
CONCLUSION	94
REFERENCES	100
Published Primary Sources	100
Secondary Sources	105

TIMELINE

1533—Henry VIII marries Anne Boleyn; Elizabeth Tudor is born

1536—Execution of Anne Boleyn

1543—Henry VIII marries Katherine Parr

1544—William Grindal appointed tutor to Elizabeth

1547—Henry VIII dies; Edward VI becomes king

1548—Grindal dies; Roger Ascham replaces him as Elizabeth's tutor

1553—Death of Edward VI; Mary I becomes queen

1554—Elizabeth briefly imprisoned in the Tower accused of involvement in Wyatt's Rebellion

1558—Death of Mary I; Elizabeth becomes queen at the age of twenty five

1559—Elizabethan Religious Settlement finalized

1569—The Northern Rising

1588—Spanish Armada; Tilbury Speech

1603—Death of Elizabeth Tudor

INTRODUCTION: THE SUCCESS OF ELIZABETH TUDOR

Elizabeth Tudor is remembered by the writings of historians and even in movies and television shows as an extraordinary monarch. Queen Elizabeth I successfully ruled England for more than four decades, despite the fact that she was never expected to inherit the throne. Henry VIII's second child but third heir grew up leading a fairly average life for any young aristocratic female in sixteenth century England. Additionally, the people of England likely had low expectations from Elizabeth and only truly cared about whom she would marry.¹ Her brother and sister were both disappointments to the English people, so it is only logical that the same failures would be expected from their sister. As queen, Elizabeth is remembered as both a powerful and a capable ruler. Thus, the question arises of how she was able to assert this power, at what time in her reign did she establish her right to rule, and what aspects of her childhood and education allowed her to project this power.

As early as 1615, historians were discussing the victorious reign of Queen Elizabeth I. William Camden, historian and court herald, published the first history of the reign of Elizabeth I. The first edition appeared in 1615 and he titled it *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth, late Queen of England : containing all the most important and remarkable passages of State, both at home and abroad (so far as they were linked with English affairs) during her long and prosperous reign.*² This title alone is enough to demonstrate how

¹ Larissa J. Taylor-Smith, "Elizabeth I: A Psychological Profile," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1984), 48.

² See William Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth, late Queen of England : containing all the most important and remarkable passages of State, both at home and abroad (so far as they were linked with English affairs) during her long and prosperous reign* (London: Printed by E. Flesher for Charles Harper and John Amery, 1675).

impressed he was by the reign of Elizabeth, despite his insistence that he wrote without prejudice as he knew this would shadow his judgement.³ As this is the first history of the reign, it initiates the historiography that is remarkably positive in its assessment of the queen.⁴ This was published shortly after Elizabeth's death and Camden would not have placed the late queen in a negative light. The conception that Elizabeth was a strong monarch has certainly been present from the point of her death on. The question remains of how her experiences as a child and in her education gave her the abilities to assert her own power and at what time did she solidify her right to rule.

This study will look into her childhood and determine what skills she acquired as a child allowed her to cement her legitimacy and exercise power. Ultimately it will address how her humanist education and how her tutor Roger Ascham's focus on language and rhetorical skills prepared her for a role she likely never expected to fill. The first two chapters of this study will focus on her younger years, primarily from the time that she was about eleven years old and up until her early twenties (1544-1556). The third chapter will look at the speeches from the first fourteen years of her reign (1558-1572) to demonstrate the skills with speech she acquired as a result of her humanist education. Analysis of these speeches will also seek to prove how she projected power even at the very beginning of her long reign.

Elizabeth Tudor was a prolific writer. Thus, there is a plethora of primary source material to use as a basis for this study. The first chapter focuses on letters that Elizabeth wrote

³ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, xvii.

⁴ For additional analyses of Elizabeth I from the 17th and 18th centuries see John Lane, *An elegie vpon the death of the high and renowned princesse, our late Soueraigne Elizabeth* (By I.L. Imprinted at London: [By W. White] for Iohn Deane, at Temple-barre, 1603) and Palaepophilus Anglicanus. *The conduct of Queen Elizabeth, Towards the Neighbouring Nations; And particularly Spain; Compared with that of James I. In View of the late and present Behaviour of Great Britain* (London: printed for J. R. and sold at the booksellers and pamphlet shops in London and Westminster, 1729).

as a child as well as translations that she completed.⁵ Much of this source material must be taken with a grain of salt as the princess likely wrote in a manner that was expected of her. These letters and translations still serve to demonstrate the main focuses of her young life: religion, family, and education. The next chapter will continue to discuss some of these letters and translations but in the context of how it demonstrates not only her education, but also her adoration for and skills with learning. It will also use the pedagogical manual of her tutor, Roger Ascham, to describe how his outlook on education benefitted the princess.⁶ Finally, the last chapter of this study will use the speeches of the young Queen Elizabeth to demonstrate how she applied the skills in languages and rhetoric that she learned as a young girl.⁷ Throughout this study multiple secondary sources will be addressed as they serve to not only present the successful monarch that Elizabeth is remembered as, but also to provide context for the arguments made in this study.

Elizabeth Tudor was born the only child of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn on September 7, 1533. Her mother was executed before her third birthday, on May 19, 1536. Thus she did not have the influence of her biological mother throughout her life. Instead, it was her third stepmother who was the most influential on Elizabeth's youth and education. Henry VIII married his sixth wife, Katherine Parr, in 1543 when Elizabeth was approaching her tenth birthday. From that point forward she took charge of her education. As early as 1544, Katherine brought tutor William Grindal to take charge of the princess's education.⁸ Grindal was a student

⁵ See Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose, eds., *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000) and Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel, eds. *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

⁶ See Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* (London: Printed by Abell Ieffes, 1589), Reprint, 2012, Kindle Edition.

⁷ See Marcus, Mueller, and Rose, eds. *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*.

⁸ Alison Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth* (New York: Stein and Day, 1971), 75.

of Roger Ascham and he remained Elizabeth's tutor until his death in 1548. It was at that point that Ascham, one of the most respected men in education at that time, became Elizabeth's tutor.⁹ Elizabeth was fifteen years old. Elizabeth Tudor ascended the throne on November 17, 1558, shortly after her twenty-fifth birthday. She remained in power until her death on March 24, 1603, after forty four successful years as queen. She was almost seventy years old when she died.¹⁰

Elizabeth's birth was shrouded by controversy and she was a great disappointment to her father for the simple fact that she was a female.¹¹ Her father had separated from the Roman Catholic Church in order to marry her mother in hopes of producing a male heir. Thus, the birth of a girl was devastating. After the execution of her mother, Elizabeth's childhood was anything but stable. She spent much of her young life surrounded in uncertainty; she got little to no attention from her father and her future was undefined.¹² No one knew if she would be promised to a foreign prince as a tool of English diplomacy or if she would ever ascend the throne herself.¹³

Despite all this uncertainty, Elizabeth impressed people even at a young age. In his introduction Camden discussed the princess and how she was always in good grace with her brother, the nobility, and the people. He described her as beautiful and claimed that she was "well-deserving a crown".¹⁴ She was very well-liked long before it was clear that she would

⁹ Ibid, 75.

¹⁰ For a more in depth timeline of Elizabeth's life, reference John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxfordshire: Oxford University Press, 1988).

¹¹ Paul Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 9.

¹² Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), 8-10.

¹³ Ibid, 5.

¹⁴ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, xxx.

ever actually become queen. She did in fact become queen after both her brother and her older sister unexpectedly died without heirs.

Elizabeth I was Queen of England for forty-four years and her reign was anything but easy. Her first task as monarch was to reestablish the Protestant religion in her country. She did not do so in as abrupt a manner as her sister had established Catholicism. Instead she actually maintained Catholic members of her sister's council on her own council.¹⁵ The wisdom to keep her "enemies" close at the start of her reign is demonstrative of the other wise and responsible decisions she made for her country. As part of the eventual Elizabethan Religious Settlement, which was finalized in 1559 less than one full year into the reign, the queen maintained some Catholic ceremonies and rituals such as the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed. Both were used in English as opposed to in Latin as would have been the norm in a true Catholic mass.¹⁶ She demonstrated a remarkable ability to maintain balance and keep all of her subjects happy, even within just a few months of ascending the throne.

The religious settlement was only one of the many challenges Elizabeth took on as queen. She also had to handle various marriage proposals from various suitors. One of the most insistent suitors was her sister's widower, King Philip II of Spain, who began making marriage proposals during the first year of her reign. Philip was concerned over maintaining access to the Netherlands by sea. He knew if England fell to incursions from France and Scotland he would lose this access. Thus he chose to keep Elizabeth as an ally in order to ensure she was protected

¹⁵ Ibid, 4. For discussions of members of Edward VI's, Mary I's, and Elizabeth I's council members, see John Guy, *Tudor England*, 200, 215, 228, 254-257. Elizabeth's main councilor, William Cecil, was a member of Edward's Privy Council under both Somerset and Warwick. Additionally, the Earl of Arundel was a councilor under both Mary and Elizabeth.

¹⁶ Ibid, 8.

from being overwhelmed by the French and the Scots thereby threatening his Dutch interests.¹⁷ Elizabeth was well aware of the need for allies, but she also knew that marrying her sister's widower would have required a papal dispensation. She knew that doing so would then make her own birth unlawful because her father had declared that his own dispensation was not valid. She also knew that marrying Philip, a Catholic King of Spain, would threaten the restoration of Protestantism in England.¹⁸ Once again she demonstrated intelligence in a manner that was far beyond her two and a half decades of life. She knew that accepting this proposal was not worth the personal, moral, and even political repercussions she would face. So, as she would do with many other suitors throughout the reign, Elizabeth put him off with tact by behaving with "maidenly shamefacedness."¹⁹ Instead of marrying she maintained her focus on the needs of the realm.

In fact, she used her determination to not marry a foreign monarch as a way of developing a peaceful relationship with France. She promised the King and Queen of France that her priority remained with her country and she had a "motherly love to England." She ensured them that she would never risk the security of her nation for the sake of any future husband.²⁰ Due to this guarantee Elizabeth was able to establish a friendly relationship with neighboring Catholic France. Unfortunately this friendship did not last as the king of France died and his son and daughter-in-law inherited the throne in July of 1559. Almost immediately Francis and his wife, Elizabeth's cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, declared themselves king and

¹⁷ Guy, *Tudor England*, 260.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 6.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 6.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 15.

queen of England and Ireland.²¹ This was only the beginning of an ongoing family feud between Elizabeth and Mary that would ultimately end with the execution of that latter. Throughout these struggles Elizabeth did her best to handle the situation with tact and grace.

Only about five years into her reign, Elizabeth also had to deal with conspiracies to claim her throne. Many argued that Mary, Queen of Scots had a stronger claim to the English throne and they conspired to proclaim her queen of England. Also, Lady Katherine Grey, the younger sister of Jane Grey who Edward had named in his succession above his two sisters, was Elizabeth's cousin and the great-granddaughter of Henry VII. She had become pregnant through a legitimate marriage and thus this threatened Elizabeth and the succession.²² The queen never overly concerned herself with these matters and maintained focus on international issues threatening the safety of her own realm. In 1569 the controversy surrounding her claim to the throne broke out in open rebellions. The Northern Rebellion included members of the nobility as well as the laity. This rebellion was inspired by their loyalty to Catholicism and was the first threat to domestic peace since Elizabeth became queen.²³ Many of the rebels were caught and executed while others were convicted of treason.²⁴ This was not the end of controversy for the queen. Another rebellion broke out and this time it included an attempt to free Mary, Queen of Scots who had been hiding in England after escaping prison in Scotland where she had been held on accusations of murdering her second husband. Once again the rebels were defeated.²⁵ Elizabeth demonstrated her ability to handle strenuous situations and maintain the loyalty of the majority of her subjects. Notably, all of these major issues happened and were handled

²¹ Ibid, 25.

²² Ibid, 49.

²³ Ibid, 125.

²⁴ Ibid, 126-127.

²⁵ Ibid, 127.

masterfully by Elizabeth Tudor within the first twelve years of her reign. The struggles continued until the moment she died. Her ability to handle these challenging situations so well at such a young age, with no formal training for rule, and with no husband to guide her demonstrates just how remarkable of a ruler she was and how she was able to construct her own power from the earliest years of her long reign.

Historiography

The historiography on Elizabeth Tudor is extensive. Historians, poets, authors, and playwrights have been fascinated by her since the time she was queen. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, during and immediately following her lifetime, the texts written about her were respectful in nature and always honored the queen. This trend remains even to this day. Most of the biographies and monographs written about Elizabeth I are overwhelmingly positive. Most of these texts focus on her reign and the major events of those forty-four years while only a few look at her younger years. Several articles and books look at Elizabeth's persona and how she is represented or compared to goddesses and the like thus speaking to how history presents her in a remarkably positive light. There was also a surge in texts focusing on Elizabeth between the 1970s and 1990s that coincided with the advent of women's studies. For the purpose of this study, the texts published between the eighteenth and twenty-first centuries are treated as secondary sources. Any text published in the sixteenth or seventeenth century is treated as a primary source. For example, William Camden did not publish his history on Queen Elizabeth until the mid-seventeenth century but he was a court herald tasked with writing this history by Elizabeth's most trusted advisor, William Cecil. Thus he had personal exposure to the queen and

was entrusted with this task by the man who likely had some of the most exposure to her. As such this text is treated as a primary source. Poet John Lane wrote an elegy upon the death of the monarch in 1603 and this is also considered a primary source. Even though he likely never met the queen, he recounts his experience upon her death and his feelings towards his queen. Although this is addressed in the historiography below as it is one of the first texts published after her death, it is still considered a primary source.

Lane's elegy was one of the first texts written about Queen Elizabeth I after her death and it indicates that as early as the time of her death she was being recognized for her success in exercising power. In *An Elegie upon the death of the high renowned princesse, our late souveraigne Elizabeth*, Lane expressed that the death of the queen interrupted the joy of spring. The world went from hearing the sweet songs of the birds to listening to "broken straines of grief, songs of pity."²⁶ Lane also compared Elizabeth to Cynthia, an epithet for the moon. He explained that "...silver Cynthia has eclipsed her light, And with her absence makes eternal night."²⁷ In other words, Elizabeth was the light that shone upon all of England, and her death brings darkness and sadness into the world. It is remarkable that someone of such a social standing as a poet would be so affected by the death of a monarch he likely never even saw. This is demonstrative of how the general population felt about their queen and how devastated the entire country was at the loss of their "high renowned princesse." Thus, the post-humus historiography of the success of Elizabeth Tudor began as early as her death in 1603.

²⁶ Lane, *An elegie vpon the death of the high and renowned princesse, our late Soueraigne Elizabeth*, A2.

²⁷ *Ibid*, A3.

Shortly thereafter, William Camden was commissioned to write his history of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.²⁸ Camden's primary concern with writing this history was that he did not want to neglect the memory of his most "renowned Queen" and "most excellent princess".²⁹ The court herald appeared to be quite fond of his late queen and he, in many ways, initiated the historiography on the queen. Despite his overwhelming goal to find the real truth and be as unbiased as possible, Camden repeatedly refers to Elizabeth in a positive tone, referring to her as an "incomparable princess" of "admirable beauty" who was "well-deserving a crown."³⁰ From the point of the publication of this text until the presents, historians have been presenting Elizabeth I as a successful monarch who wielded her own power with skill and grace.

In 1729 Palaeophilus Anglicanus continued this trend when he published his history comparing the conduct of Queen Elizabeth towards foreign countries with that of King James I. *The conduct of Queen Elizabeth, Towards the Neighbouring Nations; And particularly Spain; Compared with that of James I* is focused on the successive reigns of Elizabeth and James. Anglicanus argued that these two reigns were the most distinctive successive reigns in English history.³¹ He described Elizabeth as illustrious, but called James obscure and contemptible.³² Anglicanus was not reflecting upon the reign of a current or recent monarch; his text was published over one hundred years after the death of James I. Thus, he did not have any personal experience with either monarch. He made it clear that even a century later Elizabeth was far

²⁸ William Cecil, Lord Burghley gave Camden the queen's rolls, memorials, and records, asking him to write a history of the reign in approximately 1605. Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, xv.

²⁹ Ibid, xv.

³⁰ Ibid, xv, xxx.

³¹ Anglicanus, *The conduct of Queen Elizabeth, Towards the Neighbouring Nations; And particularly Spain; Compared with that of James I*, 3.

³² Ibid, 3.

more loved and respected than her successor. “One of these princes dissipated the gloomy clouds which eclipsed her first Arising, and shone with uninterrupted lustre to the end of her course.”³³ Not only did he show that Elizabeth had uninterrupted success as queen, he also identified her as a “prince”, possibly alluding to the fact that the issue of her gender had long been forgotten and her character as an “honorary male” was remembered. Anglicanus said Elizabeth inherited a weak and distracted kingdom but she was a “mighty woman” who improved the kingdom and allowed her people to bask “...in the splendor and warmth of her government.”³⁴ On the other hand, James caused irretrievable damage and disgrace to the kingdom and his reign was “unactive and inglorious.”³⁵ Even over a hundred years after her death, the social norm of woman being of lesser stature than men remained. Anglicanus expressed that gender was not an issue to be concerned about in regards to these two reigns. He did not see James as a successful king, nor did he see Elizabeth as a weak monarch due to her gender. The characterization of Elizabeth’s success withstood the test of time and remained intact throughout the seventeenth and into the eighteenth centuries.

There has been a burst in the scholarship surrounding Elizabeth I from the mid-twentieth century on. Much of this scholarship was produced in the 1970s and 1980s as there was a surge in women’s history around this time. Many of these histories only focus on certain aspects of Elizabeth’s life as opposed to attempting detailed life-long biographies. Alison Plowden’s *The Young Elizabeth* from 1971, for example, only looks at Elizabeth’s early years.³⁶ This narrative history discusses her youth, education, and even the time she was held prisoner during her

³³ Ibid, 3.

³⁴ Ibid, 4, 8.

³⁵ Ibid, 33, 61.

³⁶ Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*.

sister's reign. Plowden discusses the struggles of Elizabeth's childhood and how her own judgement and strength of character still allowed her to become a powerful queen. Other historians, such as Kathi Vosevich, have looked specifically into Elizabeth's education which sets it apart from other, more general narrative histories.³⁷ Vosevich argues that Elizabeth's humanist education, in comparison to her sister's moral education, better prepared the younger Tudor daughter for the role of monarch. This supports this study's focus on the role of Elizabeth's education in the development of her ability to exercise power.

Allison Heisch also digs into more specific topics surrounding Elizabeth. She discusses her skills in rhetoric as well as her continuance of male dominated society help contextualize her abilities as queen.³⁸ Despite the fact that she was arguably the most powerful woman in the world, according to Heisch, Elizabeth did nothing to advance the status of women. Rather, she maintained patriarchal governance and part of this consistency is why she was so successful.³⁹ Heisch's articles contribute greatly to the historiography in that they address why Elizabeth was successful.

Throughout the duration of her reign, Elizabeth's speeches demonstrated her extraordinary capabilities as a ruler to the various audiences she expressed them to. These speeches are indicative of the importance of her education in her development into a successful and powerful monarch. For example, she gave several Latin orations at the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Historian Linda Shenk indicates that these speeches were the times

³⁷ Kathi Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," In *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, 61-76 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

³⁸ See Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I: Parliamentary Rhetoric and the Exercise of Power," *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn 1975), 31-55 and "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy," *Feminist Review*, no. 4 (1980), 45-56.

³⁹ Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy," 45.

when Elizabeth's education was most clearly demonstrated as she addressed crowds of learned men. Shenk explains that Elizabeth used her education to project herself as a wise and virtuous monarch. Additionally, she used her skills at rhetoric to demonstrate her power.⁴⁰ Shenk is not the only historian to address Elizabeth's rhetorical skills. Janet M. Green described Elizabeth I as an "artist at expressing sentiments that fit the occasion" in her discussion of Elizabeth's speech at Tilbury Camp.⁴¹ Thus, Elizabeth acquired skills in languages and speaking during her childhood and education. She used these skills throughout her reign to demonstrate her power and authority in a variety of speeches to a variety of audiences. These speeches, along with some letters, help to prove how she used her education and skills with rhetoric to project power and establish her right to rule.

In her 1985 compilation of essays, *Silent but for the Word*, editor Margaret Patterson Hannay presents essays that discuss how writing was the primary way that women could express themselves during the Early Modern Period in England as they were expected to remain silent in the company of men. She also discusses how women often translated religious texts. Elizabeth translated several religious texts, especially in her young life. Though this book does not specifically address the topic of Elizabeth Tudor, she was an Early Modern English woman and writer and thus Hannay's analysis applies to her.⁴² *Women Letter Writers in Tudor England* by James Daybell and "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange" by Jane Donaworth follow Hannay's model. Published two decades after Hannay's work, these texts

⁴⁰ Linda Shenk, "Turning Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy: Elizabeth I's Learned Persona and Her University Orations," In *Elizabeth I: Always Her Own Free Woman* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003), 78-79.

⁴¹ Janet M. Green, "I My Self": Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1997), 423.

⁴² Margaret Patterson Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works* (Kent: Kent State University Press, 1985).

contribute to the historiography surrounding Elizabeth and other women of this time by discussing letters and poetry in addition to Hannay's discussion of religious texts.⁴³

Gender is an inherently important point to review in any discussion of Elizabeth I. On August 9, 1588, Elizabeth gave one of her most significant speeches to the troops gathered at Tilbury preparing to face the Spanish Armada. While attempting to motivate her troops she proclaimed "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king..."⁴⁴ Elizabeth Tudor was well aware of her gender and purposefully presented herself in masculine terms in order to exercise her authority. Additionally, her awareness of her gender and how she carried herself in moments like these were key elements of her success. Elizabeth played successfully with gender constructs to establish her legitimacy. She stepped out of the realm of women in order to claim and exercise power that was typically reserved for men. Historians have been addressing the "woman ruling in a man's world" since her reign.⁴⁵ Allison Heisch described Elizabeth as an "honorary male" in her 1980 article "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy." She argues that Elizabeth essentially behaved as a man and this is why she was so successful.⁴⁶ Larissa J. Taylor-Smith agrees with Heisch that Elizabeth functioned as a king, but she takes a unique look at the psychological profile of Elizabeth. She claims that Elizabeth behaved with sexual ambiguity as a result of her

⁴³ James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Jane Donaworth, "Women's Poetry and the Tudor-Stuart System of Gift Exchange," In *Women, Writing, and the Reproduction of Culture in Tudor and Stuart Britain*, 3-18 (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000).

⁴⁴ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 326.

⁴⁵ See Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*. Camden refers to Elizabeth as "prince" or "king" throughout his history of her reign, thus demonstrating the issue of gender and "a woman ruling in a man's world" even in the time immediately following her reign.

⁴⁶ Heisch, "Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy."

psychological development.⁴⁷ Later on, historians such as A.N. McClaren and Kathi Vosevich also treat Elizabeth in male terms and attribute her success to her sexual ambiguity. Vosevich goes even further as to say that Elizabeth's education is what fosters this gender identity. Tutor Roger Ascham inadvertently prepared Elizabeth for kingship by teaching her skills in writing and in speech.⁴⁸ She used these skills in rhetoric throughout her reign to exercise her authority. Thus, Elizabeth's education and her behavior as an "honorary male" are evidence of how she was able to establish her power during her reign.

Historians largely agree that Elizabeth I was a successful and stable monarch. Even historians who look at the Tudor period as a whole, such as John Guy in his general history *Tudor England*, treat Elizabeth in a slightly more positive light than they do much of her family members.⁴⁹ John Guy also published the most recent text on Elizabeth I in 2016. *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years* discusses Elizabeth's reign once she reaches about the age of fifty. Guy argues that prior to the age of fifty, Elizabeth struggled to assert her authority and continuously battled with advisors who were pushing for her to get married and settle the succession. Once she turned fifty and the hopes of a marriage were gone, Guy argues that Elizabeth truly began to rule and exercise her own power.⁵⁰ While Guy essentially argues that her skill at exercising power did not appear in Elizabeth until she was much older, he certainly agrees that she was remarkable and successful. Thus, the research on Elizabeth Tudor has gone through waves of narrative biographies that have focused on various aspects and time periods during her life.

⁴⁷Taylor-Smith, "Elizabeth I: A Psychological Profile," 47.

⁴⁸A.N. McClaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558-1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) and Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors."

⁴⁹Guy, *Tudor England*. This narrative history is an elaborate look into the reigns of the Tudor monarchs. John Guy is one of the foremost historians of the time period. Despite looking at the Tudors as a whole, Guy devotes seven full chapters just to the discussion of Elizabeth and her successes as monarch.

⁵⁰John Guy, *Elizabeth: The Forgotten Years* (New York: Penguin Random House, LLC, 2016).

This study will contribute to the existing historiography on Elizabeth I by suggesting that Elizabeth's education and skills with rhetoric solidified her right to rule and allowed her to exercise power successfully from an early stage in her reign. By examining her childhood and early reign this study establishes that the process of constructing power began in her early years and truly took hold once she became queen. The focus will remain on Elizabeth's younger years as much of the historiography on her, including John Guy's most recent work, focus on her later life. This study will also look into her education in depth in a way that few historians have before. Many address her education, but most do not discuss its uniqueness or its overall impact on the development of the legendary queen. By looking into her childhood and education this study will determine how Elizabeth's formative years truly fostered the development of her ability to project power cement her right to rule, thus allowing for history to recognize her as a remarkable and almost legendary ruler.

Methodologies

Elizabeth I is a challenging topic to undertake for a variety of reasons, most significantly that there is already such a broad existing scholarship surrounding her. The goal of this study is to look at Elizabeth Tudor through the lens of her childhood and to establish what aspects of her upbringing contributed to how she is remembered as a remarkable woman and ruler. Using sources such as letters she wrote and translations she completed as a child will determine what the focus of her childhood was. For example, one of the first translations Princess Elizabeth

completed was Marguerite de Navarre's *Mirror of the Glass of the Sinful Soul*.⁵¹ This text is thoroughly religious thus suggesting, based on Elizabeth's decision to translate it, that she maintained a focus on her faith while she was a child.

The types of sources that will be used for this study can mostly be attributed to Elizabeth's own hand. Princess Elizabeth wrote many letters to family members and even other members of the nobility. These letters serve to demonstrate what the priorities of the young princess's life were. Additionally, she translated several texts, like *Mirror of the Glass of the Sinful Soul*, as a young girl. All of these texts are remarkably religious in nature and demonstrate the centrality of faith in her young life. Another significant source is her tutor Roger Ascham's pedagogical manual, *The Schoolmaster*. This source is significant because it discusses Ascham's philosophy on education. As this study focuses so much on what role Elizabeth's education played in the development of her skills as queen, this source is invaluable. It serves as a way to understand how Ascham taught all of his students, but most importantly how he educated Elizabeth and how much of an influence he had on her development. Once she became queen, Elizabeth gave several memorable speeches. These speeches demonstrate the skills with languages and rhetoric that she acquired through years of study and will thus demonstrate how that education helped her to establish her power through her words. The time period for the letters and speeches that this study will cover ranges from between 1544 and 1572, thus maintaining focus on her childhood and the earliest years of her reign. Some speeches, such as the Tilbury Speech to the troops about to face the Spanish Armada, are so remarkable that even

⁵¹ Marguerite de Navarre, *Le Miroir de L'âme Pécheresse*, Translated by Elizabeth Tudor 1544, In *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, edited by Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 45.

though they do not fall into this time period, they will be addressed in this study. *The Schoolmaster*, however, was not published within this timeline, but as it is reflective of Elizabeth's development during that time period it is still considered a primary source.

As is the case with most historical studies, these sources do present some problems. For example, letters are not necessarily truly indicative of Princess Elizabeth's feelings as they were written with some level of formality. As such, these letters will be taken with a grain of salt. Also, translations are problematic as they are more reflective of the original author than of Elizabeth herself. For that reason, this study will focus on the subject matter of those translations and how that was indicative of the interests and concerns of the person completing the translation. Many sources, namely William Camden's history of Elizabeth's reign, clearly favor and praise Elizabeth despite his insistence that he wrote the text without prejudice.⁵² Camden's history of the reign is used for much of the historical background for this study. In those places the flattery and praise is left off and the facts alone are used for background. As this study focuses on the success of Elizabeth I, there are some places in which his praise for the queen is appropriate to include.

There are several key terms that will be used throughout this study that are used quite intentionally. First of all, the term "childhood" is used to refer to any time prior to Elizabeth's ascension to the throne. The goal of this study is to demonstrate the centrality of her younger years on the development of her ability to rule and as such much of the focus remains on her childhood years. The term "kingship" appears frequently to demonstrate the gender ambiguity in her life and education. As mentioned above several historians treat Elizabeth as an "honorary

⁵² Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, xvii.

male” and this gender ambiguity played a role in her development. For instance, tutor Roger Ascham taught Elizabeth skills of rhetoric which was something that even with the advent of humanism in education was entirely unacceptable for a woman. Thus, he inadvertently prepared her for “kingship.” Similarly, the term “prince” is also used in reference to gender and gender ambiguity while it is often used as a generic term for a ruler.

Outline

The first chapter of this study addresses the primary focuses of Princess Elizabeth Tudor. Using letters and translations, this chapter will demonstrate that in many ways the young Elizabeth was actually an ordinary girl. The one factor in her young life that makes her stand out was her education. The discussion of her outstanding skills in learning and languages will transition into the second chapter of this study which looks at Roger Ascham’s *The Schoolmaster*. The goal of this chapter is to establish what factors of her education as provided to her by Ascham helped to develop the skills she would ultimately use as queen to establish her power and her right to rule. Finally, chapter three will delve into speeches and letters from Elizabeth’s early reign to demonstrate how she used the rhetorical skills taught to her by Ascham to demonstrate that power.⁵³

⁵³ Most of the focus of this study remains on young Elizabeth. However, as is the case with the Tilbury Speech from 1588, Elizabeth gave many remarkable speeches later in her reign that will be addressed in this study due to their overwhelming importance in demonstrating her skill as a ruler.

CHAPTER ONE: THE CHILDHOOD OF ELIZABETH TUDOR

Elizabeth Tudor's life was bound to be extraordinary from the moment she was born. As the daughter of King Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, the couple who irrevocably rewrote English history, Elizabeth's life would never be simple. As queen, Elizabeth is remembered as the Virgin Queen and the victor over the Spanish Armada. She was only the second queen regnant of England, following her sister's brief rule, and her reign was nothing short of extraordinary. Due to her success in domestic and international politics as well as the overall remarkable nature of her forty-four-year reign, the overwhelming majority of historical work addressing her lifetime is focused from the time she ascended the throne until her death. In order to determine the influence her upbringing had on the development of her noteworthy traits that allowed her to become a successful queen, one must understand the predominant themes of her childhood. Based on letters she wrote as a child, as well as translations she completed, Princess Elizabeth's early years were focused on religion, education, and family. In many ways this is demonstrative of any aristocratic female child in Early Modern England. In terms of her education and her natural abilities to learn, Elizabeth's exceptional traits are recognizable even at a young age. These apparent skills serve as a glimpse into the successful ruler she would ultimately become.

At least twenty-three letters from Elizabeth's childhood survive, along with a couple of prayers and several works that she translated. The recurring themes of religion, education, and family are apparent both in her letters as well as in the translations. In this chapter, each theme is

addressed in terms of how it is apparent in Elizabeth's letters as well as how it can be seen in her translations. In some instances the letters and translations overlap because the princess wrote letters describing each of the translations she completed. Additionally, prayers written by the princess during her time in the Tower are discussed solely under the theme of religion. The theme of religion is also further broken into how the translations as gifts demonstrate her focus on faith as well as how the subject matter of the translations reinforces this. The final theme that can be seen throughout Elizabeth's writing is her concern with her image and how people felt about her. That is addressed separately as it is seen only in her letters. Finally, the theme of her education is presented at the end as this was where her exceptional nature was truly apparent in her childhood.

Religion

Elizabeth Tudor was born into an age where religion was the central topic of concern for everyone. In fact, she was the product of the union that caused all of the religious turmoil in England in the mid-sixteenth century. Even at a young age Elizabeth exemplified a typical Reformation era female by devoting much of her time and study to her faith. In her introduction to a compilation of articles on Tudor women as writers, Margaret Patterson Hannay explains that women during this time were expected to remain silent as a sign of chastity. The only time women were permitted to break their silence was through expressing their own religious devotion.⁵⁴ The theme of religious devotion is present in all of the letters, prayers, and

⁵⁴ Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*, 4.

translations created by the princess. Thus, in terms of religion, Elizabeth Tudor largely fit the mold of all females living in Early Modern England.

Religion in Letters and Translations

The only surviving letter from Elizabeth to her father demonstrates her concern with her faith. The letter prefaced the gift of a translation that she gave him for New Year's 1545 when she was twelve years old. She described the book that she translated as having a pious message that was fitting for a king and for a head of the church.⁵⁵ Not only did she reference their faith, but also her father's status in the Church of England. This demonstrates her awareness of how to address her father in terms that would flatter him and get his attention. The translation she completed as a gift to her father was Katherine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations*. This choice is significant because Katherine was not only Elizabeth's stepmother, but also Henry's wife. Again the princess proved that she was aware of how to impress those around her through flattery. Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* was intended to be a devotional text for the laity.⁵⁶ It was published and accessible throughout England. The intent was that it would assist the average English citizen in their relationship with God. This text is demonstrative of the centrality of personal faith during this time. Princess Elizabeth translated this text into three different languages meaning she was interacting with the religious context repeatedly. Elizabeth was surrounded by religious influences during her early life and the consequence of this was her focus on her own faith and that of her family.

⁵⁵ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Henry VIII, December 30, 1545, In Elizabeth I: Collected Works, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 10.

⁵⁶ Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, 130.

Religion in Translations as Gifts

Based on Elizabeth's decision to work so closely with a text written by her stepmother, it is apparent that Katherine Parr was a huge influence on princess's growth. Not only did she make sure to develop a relationship with her stepchildren, but she also played a pivotal role in Elizabeth's education.⁵⁷ Additionally, Katherine was the first queen of England to be a published writer and she wrote only religious texts, as was expected of women of that time.⁵⁸ Thus, due to her influence on Elizabeth's upbringing, the princess would have valued any writing completed by her stepmother. According to Linda Porter, Katherine's *Prayers or Meditations* and the other texts Elizabeth translated as a child, such as John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, were heavy reading materials for a young girl. These texts were full of religious rhetoric that most young girls would not be comfortable reading, not to mention translating. Porter explains that Elizabeth was an exceptional child.⁵⁹ In this instance, Elizabeth's ability to interpret and translate the words of more experienced writers demonstrated that she was skilled with languages and had unique abilities for a girl her age. Her education and comfort with foreign languages demonstrate her exceptional characteristics even as a child. These abilities eventually allowed her to exercise her power in a way that would prevent anyone from questioning her right to rule. The fact that her reading and translations remained focused on religion reinforces that much of her life did not vary greatly from the lives of other young, aristocratic girls at the time.

⁵⁷ Linda Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother," *History Today* (March 2010), 19.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 18.

⁵⁹ Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother", 21.

Elizabeth also gifted translations of religious texts to Katherine Parr. The first was a New Year's gift in 1544 and was a translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'âme Pécheresse*. The subject of this text is the writer's inability to achieve salvation without God's grace.⁶⁰ Once again it is clear that Elizabeth's reading and education largely centered on religious subjects. The next translation Katherine received from her stepdaughter came a year later. It was the first chapter of John Calvin's *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne*. In her prefatory letter to the Queen, Elizabeth explained that she chose this text because of its inspiring message of making God known to even the most ignorant.⁶¹ Elizabeth received a powerful message from Calvin's work: that everyone needs to know God because that is what God wants. She seems to have felt a responsibility to share that knowledge of God with the people closest to her by sending family members translations of the religious texts that inspired her.

Religion in Content of Translations

The translations completed by Princess Elizabeth speak volumes to the type of person she was in her early life. The topics of each of the translations she endeavored to complete reinforce how significant her faith was. The princess tackled the translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Glass of the Sinful Soul* in 1544 when she was only eleven years old. Editors Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel discuss the consequences of Elizabeth taking on this translation in their introduction to the translation in *Elizabeth I: Translations*. They argue that Elizabeth's appetite

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 31, 1544, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 7.

⁶¹ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 30, 1545, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 12.

for contemporary religious writing was stimulated and she developed a pious personality.⁶² At this time, Elizabeth was at a tender and impressionable age. Translating this work shaped who she would become as it directly influenced the development of her own religious beliefs.

Marguerite de Navarre prefaced her own work with a disclaimer about how she was simply a woman with the wish that people would see what God does when he grants his grace to man.⁶³ The original author's intentions were simple: she wanted readers to understand and appreciate the glory and grace of God. Marguerite de Navarre possibly never anticipated that Princess Elizabeth would read her text, and she certainly did not expect her to translate it into English. By interacting with *The Glass of the Sinful Soul* closely enough to translate it, the princess was thoroughly exposed to the belief in God's grace by not only reading this work, but also by translating it into English. In order to complete the translation Elizabeth obtained a deeper understanding of the text and its intentions than if she had simply read it for pleasure. *The Glass of the Sinful Soul* served as a personal reflection about Marguerite's sins. She questioned if there was a hell that could truly punish her for her numerous sins.⁶⁴ She also knew that mortal man was incapable of saving her and she could only expect to reach salvation through God, though she did not deserve His goodness.⁶⁵ Not only does this speak to the centrality of belief in God in Elizabeth's life, it also addresses the overwhelming sense of inadequacy she was forced to feel throughout her life as the daughter of Anne Boleyn. Marguerite also even mentioned that man would not help any woman find salvation: brothers would not help their

⁶²Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, 26.

⁶³ Marguerite de Navarre, *Le Miroir de L'âme Pécheresse*, Translated by Elizabeth Tudor 1544, 45.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 47.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 49-51.

sisters and fathers would not help their daughters.⁶⁶ Gender was a recurring topic of tension in Elizabeth's life. Not only did she have to cope with the fact that she was not the son Henry VIII expected out of Anne Boleyn, she would also eventually become a woman ruling in a man's world. There can be no doubt that as a princess and a queen, Elizabeth struggled with the issue of her own gender. Marguerite's belief that God was the only hope for woman's salvation likely reached Elizabeth deeply, even before she was queen.

There is no certainty of Elizabeth's motivation behind choosing to translate this or any other text. According to Anne Lake Prescott, it is unclear if Elizabeth chose to complete this translation or if it was pressed upon her, but it is possible that Katherine Parr encouraged Elizabeth to work with this text.⁶⁷ As the princess was not even in her teenage years when she completed this translation, it is highly likely that someone else influenced her in choosing this text and potentially even helped her with the translation. Most of Elizabeth's translation is accurate to the original source but there are places where she veered off of the original which indicates that these changes are intentional.⁶⁸ Thus, as it was unconventional for Tudor women to form their own opinions or ideas, Elizabeth's changes in her translation of *Le Miroir* speak to how she did tend to stray from what was expected of women and girls of the time.⁶⁹ Elizabeth was blessed with significant influences on her childhood and education, her stepmother included.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 55.

⁶⁷ Anne Lake Prescott, "The Pearl of the Valois and Elizabeth I: Marguerite de Navarre's *Miroir* and Tudor England," *Literature Criticism from 1400-1800* 118 (2005), 237.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 239.

⁶⁹ For a detailed discussion of the expectations of women to remain silent as a show of chastity see Margaret Patterson Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word*. In the introduction to her compilation Hannay discusses how formulating original thoughts was a masculine trait and thus Tudor women overcame the gender hurdle by completing translations of religious texts and including their own additions to the texts in order to silently express themselves without being condemned by society.

Katherine may have directed Elizabeth towards this text, but since she did modify parts of the text in her translation her ability to think for herself is apparent.

Gender is a central theme in Katherine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* as well. The strategy for Katherine's work was to break away from the masculine norms of most prayers and instead universalize the gospel to apply to all people.⁷⁰ Although this would have been recognizable to Elizabeth when she read this work, unfortunately the de-gendering is not noticeable in her translations since the Romance languages she translated this piece into require the use of the masculine form of words as it is more inclusive.⁷¹ Elizabeth was therefore not only influenced by Katherine's own focus on religious belief but was also exposed to her developing belief in universalizing religion.

The same year the princess ventured to translate her stepmother's words, she also tackled a chapter of one of the most important Protestant reformer's work. John Calvin wrote his *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne* with the intent of explaining what was necessary for man to achieve salvation. Elizabeth translated the first chapter which focuses on scripture being the primary means by which God expresses himself to man.⁷² Once again the topic of a text the young girl translated is decidedly religious. The centrality of man's access to scripture during the Reformation was undeniable. Thus it is notable that Elizabeth Tudor chose this particular chapter of Calvin's work to translate. She was demonstrating her reformed education and her focus on her own relationship with God. Calvin explained that man had two primary tasks in life: to know himself and to know God. He argued that if man was aware of themselves and

⁷⁰ Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 130.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 131.

⁷² Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 203.

aware of the greatness of God, their disgust at their own flaws will naturally draw them closer to God.⁷³ Elizabeth, more so than most twelve year old girls, was at least somewhat aware of herself when she completed this translation in 1545. Thus, if she agreed with Calvin's interpretation, she would have had a close relationship with God.

The final translation completed by Princess Elizabeth was Bernadino Ochino's *Che Cosa è Christo* in 1547. Around this time Ochino, a friar who supported the concept of justification by faith, had recently arrived in England. As he was becoming a fairly well known reformer and was in England, Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel argue that it was only logical for the princess to take on this translation.⁷⁴ The context of Ochino's writing is overwhelmingly reformed. He discussed how not knowing God was a "harmful ignorance" and the He was closer to people than their own souls.⁷⁵ Elizabeth was in the heart of the English Reformation and was bombarded with reformed influences throughout her young life. Ochino's *Che Cosa è Christo* may have been introduced to her by one of her tutors, but the fact that she worked with it closely enough to translate it from the original Italian into Latin shows that she had a clear understanding of the material. Although women and girls were only expected to work with religious texts during this time, Elizabeth was naturally influenced by what she was reading and translating. Once again, it is evident that as a princess Elizabeth was fairly ordinary as she solely worked with religious texts, as was the only acceptable course for females in Tudor England.

⁷³ John Calvin, *Institution de la Religion Chrestienne, Chapter One*, Translated by Elizabeth Tudor 1545, In *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, edited by Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 219.

⁷⁴ Mueller and Scodel, *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 292-293

⁷⁵ Bernardino Ochino, *Che Cosa è Christo*, Translated by Elizabeth Tudor 1547, In *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, edited by Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 305.

Religion in Prayers

Elizabeth's relationship with her sister was anything but stable, especially during the short reign of Mary I. During Wyatt's rebellion in 1554, those closest to Mary insinuated that Elizabeth was involved in the plots against her. Despite never finding any evidence to incriminate her, Mary and her council were convinced of Elizabeth's guilt and the princess was sent to the Tower.⁷⁶ While the princess was imprisoned, she did not forget or question her faith. She wrote two prayers during her imprisonment that demonstrate her ongoing concern with her relationship with God. In the first she prays that God help her because he was her only friend.⁷⁷ In other words, rather than question why God would allow this to happen to her, she instead questioned everyone around her. She begged that God build her up on a strong foundation so that nothing and no one could knock her down.⁷⁸ At least by all appearances, Elizabeth's faith in God never wavered, not even in the most troubling times of her younger years.

Family

Elizabeth Tudor's family situation was anything but ordinary. Her father was responsible for the death of her mother. He also made her a bastard once her mother was executed and he married Jane Seymour in 1536. Even though Henry VIII eventually restored all of his children to the succession, once he was king her brother tried to eliminate her from it again. Most dramatically, her sister accused her of being part of a plot against her and had her imprisoned in

⁷⁶ Alison Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 251-253.

⁷⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Prayer 1, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 48.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 48.

The Tower.⁷⁹ Despite all of this, Princess Elizabeth's letters and translations indicate that at least by all appearances she felt an overwhelming sense of loyalty to her family and her devotion to them.

Family in Letters and Translations

Before her eleventh birthday in 1544, Elizabeth wrote to her stepmother Katherine Parr while her father was away on a military campaign. In this letter she stated that she had been deprived of Katherine's presence for a year. She also asked Katherine to pass a message along to her father wishing him well and also begged her to pray for his safe return.⁸⁰ Her apparent love for her father and stepmother was so strong that she chose to give them both the translations that she completed for New Year's gifts in 1544 and 1545. She gave her father her translation of Katherine's *Prayers or Mediations* in hopes that it would appeal to him since he wife wrote the original text and his daughter completed the translation.⁸¹ Not only did the completion of this translation serve to help the princess express her religious devotion, it also expressed her respect for both her father and her stepmother. Additionally, since Katherine Parr was the original author, her choice in the text to translate also speaks to how much family played a central role in her young life.

⁷⁹ For a detailed history of the Tudors, see Guy, *Tudor England*. For a contemporary history of the struggles of her childhood see William Camden's introduction to his history of her reign: Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, July 31, 1544, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 5-6.

⁸¹ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Henry VIII, December 30, 1545, 10.

Family in Letters

After her father's death and her younger brother Edward became king, Elizabeth's concern for her family did not wane. She wrote several letters to her brother expressing her concern for him and his health. In February of 1547 she apologized for not writing to him sooner and begged that he forgive her as she had headaches that prevented her from writing. She also thanked him for showing her kindness and sending her a ring.⁸² Elizabeth appeared to care so much about what her family thought that she wanted to make sure her brother knew she was thinking about him despite her poor health. Elizabeth and Edward were always much closer than Elizabeth ever was with their older sister. The two were closer in age, both lost their mothers, and both were raised and educated reformed.⁸³ Elizabeth wrote to her brother frequently when he was king thus proving that their closeness endured despite the fact that he had ascended the throne.

All of the Tudor children suffered health issues. Elizabeth wrote in a way that makes it appear that she was concerned with Edward's health. She often wrote to him once he recovered from an illness thanking God for bringing him through it alive.⁸⁴ Not only did she appear care about his well-being, she also seemed to want to make sure that he was aware of her concern. The next year the siblings were able to visit each other. Elizabeth wrote a follow up letter to her brother in February 1548. She said grateful for the favors he gave her but sad because she would never be able to reciprocate these gifts. Despite this sadness, she attempted to thank her brother

⁸² Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, February 14, 1547, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 13-14.

⁸³ Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII*, 17.

⁸⁴ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, September 20, 1547, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 14-15.

for his kindness and consideration.⁸⁵ Later on that year she wrote another letter to her brother expressing concern that she appeared ungrateful for all the gifts and favors he had been sending her. Once again, she attributed her lack of communication to an illness and begged his forgiveness even though she was certain she could never repay him for all of his kindness.⁸⁶ The princess's letter indicates that she was certainly concerned with how her brother felt about her. If family had not been such a major factor in her young life, she would not have taken the time to reach out to her brother on several occasions to express her gratitude and love to him as her king and her brother.

Shortly before Edward died, Elizabeth sent him another letter. She again expressed concern over his health, especially since it seemed much more serious this time. She also added that she was concerned that her brother had been alienating her.⁸⁷ For someone who cared as much about family as Princess Elizabeth did, it is not hard to imagine how difficult this treatment was for her to accept. Edward was, in fact, alienating both of his sisters as he signed his "Device for the Succession" that eliminated both of the Tudor princesses from the succession. Despite this disaffection, Elizabeth still attempted to reach out to her brother and continue their relationship in the final months of his life.

⁸⁵ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, February 2, 1548, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 15-16.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, Summer or Fall 1548, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 21.

⁸⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, circa Spring 1553, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 38-39.

Katherine Parr remained a motherly figure to Princess Elizabeth and their connection did not fade after the death of her father. Tension developed between them when it appeared that Katherine's new husband, Thomas Seymour, developed feelings for the princess. Elizabeth was so distraught that she was forced to leave Katherine's presence in 1548.⁸⁸ When the princess received letters from the dowager queen later that year she responded with gratefulness, but she said she would rather be in Katherine's presence.⁸⁹ Despite the awkwardness in their relationship due to Thomas Seymour's supposed inappropriate feelings towards Elizabeth, the princess and the dowager queen appear to have had unshakable bond based on the way they communicated in these letters. Elizabeth's biological mother was ripped away from her before she turned three and Katherine filled that void for the rest of her life.

Elizabeth and her older sister Mary had an unconventional relationship. Mary was seventeen years older than her younger sister so rather than develop a sisterly bond; Mary actually assisted their stepmother in filling the emotional void and behaving as a maternal figure towards Elizabeth when they were young. Elizabeth lost her mother, and Mary stepped in briefly.⁹⁰ Elizabeth wrote to her sister in 1552 expressing her concern for her since she had received word that Mary was ill. She added that she loved receiving letters from Mary and explained that was the reason she wrote to her so often.⁹¹ Elizabeth was likely genuinely

⁸⁸ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Dowager Queen Katherine, circa June 1548, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 17.

⁸⁹ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Dowager Queen Katherine, July 31, 1548, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 20.

⁹⁰ Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII*, 12.

⁹¹ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Princess Mary, October 27, 1552, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 37-38.

concerned for her sister's well-being since she was such a big part of her childhood. She insinuated that she was not receiving as many letters from Mary as she thought was appropriate. She thanked her sister for writing and added "And you may well see by my writing so oft, how pleasant it is to me."⁹² She seems to have been hinting that she wrote to Mary often as an indication that expected to hear from her more frequently. Young Elizabeth at least wanted to keep up appearances and maintain her relationship with her sister even after they no longer lived in the same household.

When Mary became queen and accused her sister of being involved in Wyatt's Rebellion, the princess attempted to reach out to Mary's humanity and affection for her as a family member. She wrote a letter in March of 1554 begging her not to condemn her without evidence and pledging her loyalty. She begged an audience with the queen.⁹³ The princess seems to have hoped that if she were able to speak directly with her sister, Mary would immediately see her innocent young sister and realize that she was wrong. In her apparent youthful innocence, Elizabeth addressed her sister in an attempt to use their connection as family members to persuade her sister of her innocence.

Public Image in Letters

In addition to being overwhelmingly concerned with her faith, education, and family, Princess Elizabeth also appeared to care about what other people thought about her. For instance, when she translated *The Glass of the Sinful Soul* for Katherine Parr, she prefaced it with

⁹² Ibid, 38.

⁹³ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Mary, March 17, 1554, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 41-42.

an apology for the mistakes in her translations. She also begged her stepmother to not share her translation with anyone else.⁹⁴ Young Elizabeth seemingly had no desire for anyone else to see that she had made mistakes. This overwhelming desire to keep her flaws hidden even as a child could have been for political reasons. Elizabeth may have felt confident that she would rule one day and she did not want people to believe that she had any flaws. Thus, she was aware of the importance of her public image even at this young age.

One of the most controversial times of Elizabeth's life came after the death of her father in 1547 when she was living with her stepmother and her new husband, Thomas Seymour. As previously discussed, this scandal had a profound impact on the relationship between Elizabeth and Katherine Parr.⁹⁵ Rumors abounded of an inappropriate relationship between Thomas and the princess. This was the time in Elizabeth's life during which she cared the most about how other people viewed her, especially those closest to her. She wrote to her stepmother desperately in June 1548. Elizabeth appears to have been overwhelmingly concerned with how Katherine felt about her.⁹⁶ The princess's letter was an expression of her supposed devastation that her stepmother may think badly of her. Katherine was potentially the most influential adult in Elizabeth's young life. The thought that this mentor disliked or distrusted her because of rumors destroyed the teenage Elizabeth.

Elizabeth wrote her testimony in the treason trial of Thomas Seymour to his brother, Lord Protector Edward Seymour in early 1549. She claimed that she never and would never consent

⁹⁴ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 31, 1544, 7.

⁹⁵ For a discussion as to how the alleged relationship with Thomas Seymour affected Elizabeth's relationship with her stepmother, see the preceding section on "Family in Letters".

⁹⁶ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Dowager Queen Katherine, circa June 1548, 17.

to the courtship of Thomas Seymour, especially not with the explicit permission of the Lord Protector.⁹⁷ Thus, not only was she pleading her innocence but she was also pledging her loyalty. At the time Edward Seymour effectively served as king since Edward was so young. Elizabeth knew that he controlled her fate to a large extent. She made sure to convince him that she would never involve herself in any courtship that was not arranged or approved by the Lord Protector. She was a princess and she knew it was her duty to marry for the sake of England, rather than the sake of personal interests. This pledge not only shows how much she cared about how people feel about her, but also how well she knew how to play the princess game. Later on she promised that she would tell the Lord Protector everything he wanted to know about the time she and Thomas Seymour had spent together.⁹⁸ She wrote as if she had nothing to hide and wanted to ensure that Edward Seymour and the Privy Council maintained a high opinion of her.

Princess Elizabeth and Lord Protector Edward Seymour maintained ongoing communication regarding the Thomas Seymour scandal. In one letter, Elizabeth was so concerned with the impression people held of her that she adopted a defensive tone with the Lord Protector. She claimed that she was open and honest with him about the situation and did not understand why he seemed to have taken her previous communication so negatively.⁹⁹ She wrote in a manner that indicates that she was so concerned with how people felt about her that she appears to have been personally offended by the way Edward Seymour received her letter.

⁹⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, January 28, 1549. In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 23.

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, February 6, 1549, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 31.

⁹⁹ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, February 21, 1549, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 32.

She also seemed to become more opinionated around this time as well. Regarding her being placed in the custody of Lady Denny, the princess told Seymour that she would do what the council told her to, but she did not agree with them.¹⁰⁰ At this point Elizabeth was almost sixteen years old and had been through some troubling times in her short years. She appears to have reached the point where she was unable to keep her opinion to herself any longer. She was also growing from a child into a young woman and the self-assuredness that she inherited from her father came through.

In closing this letter Princess Elizabeth begged Lord Seymour to have the council dispatch messages to all of the counties in England dispelling all of the rumors about her being either pregnant or sexually involved with Thomas Seymour.¹⁰¹ As a princess, her purity was one of the only resources she had to offer. All women were expected to remain maids until they were married. If they did not, they would not be fit for marriage. Elizabeth knew this even at a young age and wanted to make sure the country knew she remained pure and eligible for marrying in a manner that would be beneficial to the country. The council never did send these messages.¹⁰² Based on the request alone Elizabeth was aware of how significant her public image was.

Once again her apparent interest in how people, especially family members, felt about her was noticeable in her late appeal to her brother. As Edward was alienating her and her sister, she

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 32.

¹⁰¹ Ibid, 32.

¹⁰² Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, March 7, 1549, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 33.

reached out to him expressing her affection, loyalty, and concern for his health.¹⁰³ She also made sure that he knew she was aware of the way he had been distancing himself from her. This certainly bothered her because she truly cared about the impression she had on others.

Her apparent concern for how her siblings felt about her is apparent when she reached out to her sister for an audience as well. The princess begged her sister to believe that she was a loyal subject that did not deserve to be imprisoned.¹⁰⁴ She outwardly expressed that she did not want her sister to believe that she was capable of being involved in any plots against her. Elizabeth was certainly also begging for her sister's understanding because she did not have any desire to be imprisoned in the Tower of London but the princess also appeared to be concerned with the opinion her sister held of her.

Throughout her young life, Princess Elizabeth Tudor constantly searched for validation and affection from those around her. She kept up communication with all of her family members despite the longstanding tensions between them for varying reasons. All young girls search for some sort of acceptance, and Elizabeth was no different. She was a bright girl with an outstanding education and she knew how important it was that her family and those closest to her respected her. For instance, if she did not earn respect from her siblings and their councils, she could never expect to receive any respect from the people of England. Fortunately, she was able to keep up appearances throughout her young life because eventually, against all odds, she did become queen and her people adored her.

¹⁰³ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, circa Spring 1553, 38-39.

¹⁰⁴ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Mary, March 17, 1554, 41-42.

Conclusion

Elizabeth Tudor spent most of her childhood focusing on her studies, practicing her religion, and remaining close to her family members. Most young girls of high social status in England would be doing largely the same things. As a queen, Elizabeth was undoubtedly remarkable. As a princess she was, in many ways, quite ordinary. She studied and translated only religious texts, as was expected of all women and girls at the time. She devoted herself wholeheartedly to her family in order to keep up appearances because of how well she understood the importance of the public image of a princess. Through analysis of her letters and translations it is apparent that Elizabeth's young life followed all of the expectations for elite females of the time. Although it is clear that much of her youth was typical for girls of her social status, Elizabeth truly did demonstrate extraordinary abilities in education.

CHAPTER TWO: THE EDUCATION OF ELIZABETH TUDOR

Princess Elizabeth Tudor was, for the most part, a typical aristocratic girl raised in Early Modern England. Her remarkable traits became apparent in the arena of her education. Despite being an unwelcome disappointment to her father, Elizabeth still received an education befitting a royal child.¹⁰⁵ William Camden reflected upon how she was “...indefatigably given to the study of learning” as a child and this was noticed by many people at court.¹⁰⁶ Her education and training was not designed to prepare her for the monarchy, yet she still developed remarkable scholarly abilities and skills in languages.¹⁰⁷ These learned abilities would eventually prove to prepare Elizabeth better for the throne than her sister Mary’s moral education did for her.¹⁰⁸ The influences of her stepmother Katherine Parr and her humanist tutors, most notably Roger Ascham, are apparent in her writing, translations, as well as speeches once she became queen. Their emphasis on the written word and encouraging the princess to speak would inadvertently prepare her for a job she never expected to have. Elizabeth Tudor’s education fostered her remarkable characteristics and contributed to the development of her ability to exercise power.

Demonstrating her Exceptional Traits through Education

Evidence of Princess Elizabeth’s scholarly abilities is apparent throughout the letters she wrote as a child as well as in the translations she completed. Not only did she demonstrate impressive abilities as a scholar, she also proved to have a love for learning as well as a desire to continue to improve her own knowledge and abilities. When writing to her stepmother,

¹⁰⁵ Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect*, 7.

¹⁰⁶ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, xxx.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 10.

¹⁰⁸ Vosevich, “The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors.”

Katherine Parr, prefacing her 1544 New Year's gift of her English translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Glass of the Sinful Soul*, Elizabeth states "...even as an instrument of iron or of other metal waxeth soon rusty unless it be continually occupied, even so shall the wit of a man or a woman wax dull and unapt to do or understand anything perfectly unless it be always occupied upon some manner of study."¹⁰⁹ This powerful quote is impressive in light of the fact that it came from the mind of an eleven year old girl. Elizabeth's writing clearly demonstrated her unrelenting thirst for knowledge and her belief that she must always exercise her mind for fear that if she did not, it would grow rusty.

Education in Letters

Not only did Princess Elizabeth appreciate her education, she was marveled at the ability to write and speak. When addressing a translation she intended to give to Queen Katherine in 1545, she mentioned how impressed she was with the invention of writing. She said man had always had some way to record history and that the development of all arts and sciences fascinated her. The invention that impressed the young princess the most was the invention of writing.¹¹⁰ Thus, not only did she appreciate the development of scientific study and the arts, she also appreciated writing as a form of expression. In this letter she expressed that the intentions and desires of man could be more clearly understood through the use of writing. Elizabeth valued the ability to read and write so she could understand people. This was certainly an important skill that she honed in order to be an efficient monarch. Not only does her fascination with writing serve to prove that she was concerned with education in her younger years, it also

¹⁰⁹ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 31, 1544, 7.

¹¹⁰ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 30, 1545, 11.

confirms the centrality of religion to her young life. She explained the value of the words of the Bible. Elizabeth said that Scripture allowed readers to interact with the invisible and spiritual nature of the Bible in a way that paintings and sculptures could not.¹¹¹ She not only valued the ability to read, she valued the ability to have access to God's word and the ability to develop her own personal understanding of the invisible aspects inherently associated with faith. Despite strides made in education in the Early Modern Period due to the advent of Humanism, most women were only expected to study classical and, more importantly, Christian literature.¹¹² Therefore, Elizabeth's own emphasis on religion within this letter actually indicates that she did, in some ways, receive a similar education to that of other early modern English girls. Elizabeth's young life revolved around practicing her reading, writing, arithmetic, and religion.

In 1549, when Elizabeth was a little older and her brother was king, she sent Edward a portrait of herself at his request. She explained that she was happy to provide the portrait because he asked for it, but she would rather present her mind. "For the face, I grant, I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present."¹¹³ The fifteen year old princess was somewhat embarrassed about sharing her physical appearance with her brother, but she would have been proud to share her mind. In this way, Elizabeth did not fit the mold of most teenage girls; she was not particularly proud of her outward appearance. Instead, she wanted men to see her intelligence and wit. Over time the colors on a picture would fade but Elizabeth

¹¹¹ Ibid, 12.

¹¹² Alice T. Friedman, "The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England," *History of Education Quarterly* 25, no. 1/2 (Spring- Summer 1985): 64.

¹¹³ Elizabeth Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Edward VI, May 15, 1549, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 35.

presented herself with a certainty that time would never wear her mind dull.¹¹⁴ Not only was she an intelligent young girl, but she was also very proud of that intelligence and wanted to show it off.

Education in Translations

The translations Elizabeth undertook in her early years not only prove that religion played a central role in her life due to the content, but they also reinforce how education was a large part of her life. When the princess translated Marguerite de Navarre's *Glass of the Sinful Soul*, she was only eleven years old. The original text was in French and she was fluent enough in that language to translate it to English. She even apologized to her stepmother, who was receiving the English translation as a gift, for the mistakes and errors she was sure she made while translating.¹¹⁵ Additionally, she asked her stepmother to clean up her mistakes and to also not share her translations with others because she does not want others to know of her imperfections.¹¹⁶ Her desire to apologize for any mistakes likely stemmed from the high expectations for someone in her position. A Tudor princess would be expected to be strong and intelligent, like her father. This particular princess was most concerned with demonstrating her intelligence. Princess Elizabeth did not care if people saw imperfections in her physical appearance, but she would have done anything to prevent anyone from seeing flaws in her education.

The young princess took on her next translating challenge roughly a year later as another New Year's gift, this time to her father. She chose to translate her stepmother's *Prayers and*

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 35.

¹¹⁵ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 31, 1544, 7.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, 7.

Meditations. This decision certainly showed her religious devotion and respect for her stepmother. Additionally, Elizabeth translated the original English version into three different languages: French, Latin, and Italian.¹¹⁷ Historian William Camden remarked that the princess was proficient in these three languages by the time she was seventeen years old.¹¹⁸ Her triple translation of her stepmother's *Prayers or Meditations* proves that she was fluent in these languages as early as twelve years old. This proficiency with foreign languages alludes to not only her level of education, but also to her aptitude for learning. If the princess did not have a deep desire to learn and to exercise her mind, she would not have had the discipline or desire to translate this text three times. Around this same time Elizabeth's younger cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots received a similar education that emphasized skill in multiple languages. She began learning Latin, French, Spanish, and Italian before the age of five.¹¹⁹ Thus Elizabeth's exposure to foreign languages was not unique in terms of royal female children in Europe at that time. Historians have argued that Mary never became as accomplished as a linguist as Elizabeth did.¹²⁰ This indicates that Elizabeth was a more dedicated and naturally talented student than her Scottish cousin.

Influences on her Education

As a royal child many individuals had a hand in the education of Princess Elizabeth.

Two people stand out as having the strongest influence upon the growth and development of the

¹¹⁷ Mueller and Scodel, *Elizabeth I: Translations*, 131.

¹¹⁸ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, xxx.

¹¹⁹ David Hay Fleming, *Mary Queen of Scots: from her birth to her flight into England: a brief biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1897), 12.

¹²⁰ T.F. Henderson, *Mary, Queen of Scots: her environment and tragedy: a biography* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1905), 78.

princess. Elizabeth's step-mother, Katherine Parr, cared deeply for each of Henry's children and took an active role in the upbringing of both Edward and Elizabeth.¹²¹ By the time Katherine married Henry VIII in 1543, his eldest daughter Mary was already in her late twenties. Thus, Katherine would not have been quite as influential on her as she was on the younger children. She still remained a supportive and motherly figure towards the elder princess.¹²² The sixth queen of Henry VIII was more of a mother towards his children than any of his other wives. She was especially concerned with the education of Edward and Elizabeth. Additionally, she was involved in the appointment of the tutors to both of these children.¹²³ One of the tutors appointed to Elizabeth was humanist Roger Ascham. Ascham became Elizabeth's tutor when her previous tutor William Grindal, who happened to be a pupil of Ascham himself, died in 1548. Elizabeth was a teenager by this time. Under the influence of Ascham, Elizabeth received an education that was more focused on academic abilities and less centered on faith. Ascham did argue that a Christian education was important, but his focus in teaching the princess remained on academics and rhetoric.¹²⁴ Thus, under the influence of Katherine Parr and Roger Ascham, Elizabeth Tudor received an education that was unique for young girls of this time. This education, focused on speaking abilities and rhetoric, are what allowed for the princess to develop into a powerful queen.

¹²¹ Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother," 17.

¹²² Ibid, 17.

¹²³ Ibid, 19.

¹²⁴ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," 61, 71, 75-76.

Katherine Parr

Elizabeth's passion for learning mirrored that of her stepmother, Katherine Parr.¹²⁵ This respect and adoration was likely a contributing factor in Elizabeth's decision to translate Katherine's *Prayers or Meditations*. Katherine took an active role in Elizabeth's education and ensured that she was provided with the best tutors and books.¹²⁶ A mind like Elizabeth's needed to be exercised and in that regard Katherine proved to be a blessing to the princess. Katherine took a serious interest in the lives of all of Henry's children. It is likely that Elizabeth benefited the most from this interest. Katherine was responsible for reorganizing Edward's and Elizabeth's educations and in 1544 she had a hand in the appointment of William Grindal as Elizabeth's tutor. Grindal was a Cambridge man and thus brought the influence of Cambridge humanists to the princess as her teacher.¹²⁷ At this time Elizabeth was only ten years old, but her education in languages and classical studies was set into full force. If not for the influence of Katherine Parr on the selection and appointment of the younger Tudor children's tutors, Elizabeth may have received a more traditional education for a young girl like her sister had. As the first queen of England to be a published writer, Katherine herself challenged the status quo for women at the time.¹²⁸ Thus, her own passion for learning drove her to ensure that Elizabeth received an education that would set her apart as well.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 21.

¹²⁶ Clark Hulse, *Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 11.

¹²⁷ Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, 75. Grindal was actually a student of Ascham. At the time that Grindal was appointed Elizabeth's tutor, Ascham was assisting Sir John Cheke in the education of Prince Edward. Grindal remained Elizabeth's tutor until his death in 1548, which is when Ascham stepped in and became her primary tutor.

¹²⁸ Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother", 18.

Princess Elizabeth truly respected her stepmother and always looked to her for approval.¹²⁹ As such, she was always concerned with what Katherine thought about her. This was demonstrated when she begged the queen to overlook her errors and faults in her translation of *Glass of the Sinful Soul*.¹³⁰ Additionally, when Elizabeth was a little older and living in the household of Katherine Parr and her new husband Thomas Seymour, the princess was distraught when she was made to leave their household due to suspicion over the relationship between the princess and Lord Seymour.¹³¹ Thus, the influence and importance of a stepmother such as Katherine Parr on Princess Elizabeth is evident. If not for her filling in the void of motherly love in Elizabeth's life and taking such an active role in her upbringing and education, Katherine would have meant little to the princess as she was her fourth stepmother. As Katherine's first task from the moment she married Henry VIII was to get to know his children, her influence on the princess is unmistakable.¹³²

Katherine's passion for study would not allow her stepdaughter to get by with a basic education. Princess Elizabeth Tudor was never expected to become queen so her education did not prepare her for the monarchy. Rather, Elizabeth's education was meant to prepare her to be an ornament of the House of Tudor.¹³³ In other words, she was to be a shining beacon of Tudor women. Thanks to the influence of Katherine Parr and her humanist tutors, Elizabeth would end up outshining most of those around her. At a young age Elizabeth developed study habits that

¹²⁹ Ibid, 18, 21.

¹³⁰ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Queen Katherine, December 31, 1544, 7. See discussion of Elizabeth's concern over her mistakes in this translation in the previous section "Education in Translations".

¹³¹ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to Dowager Queen Katherine, circa June 1548, 17. See discussion of the Seymour affair and Elizabeth's distress over the chance of losing her relationship with Katherine in the "Family in Letters" section of the previous chapter.

¹³² Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother", 18.

¹³³ Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII*, 10.

would endure the rest of her lifetime. The princess was clearly very intelligent and had a passion for learning.¹³⁴ Elizabeth's intelligence and passion for education proved that she was the daughter of Henry VIII.

Roger Ascham

William Grindal died in 1548 and at that time Roger Ascham became Elizabeth's tutor. At this time the princess was a young teenager and at a very impressionable age. Despite her youth, her remarkable traits became quickly apparent to her new tutor. When Elizabeth was only sixteen years old, Ascham commented that her mind had no "womanly weakness" and that her dedication to her studies equaled that of any man.¹³⁵ Even such a respectable tutor as Roger Ascham thought that she was a bright young girl and that she cared deeply about continuing in her studies. Even though he became her tutor when she was an older teenager, his impact on her development was profound.

Ascham attributed masculine characteristics to Elizabeth when he admitted she was as bright as her male counterparts and quickly learned and remembered what she was taught. For much of Elizabeth's life, especially while she was queen, she was compared to men and given masculine qualities. This trend of calling Elizabeth a "prince" or later a "king" stems from the influence of Ascham. Elizabeth's gender was not a factor in Ascham's methods of teaching the young princess.¹³⁶ Ascham focused on teaching scholarly abilities as well as written and oral skills as he would have with any male pupil.¹³⁷ This alone is enough to have fostered unique and

¹³⁴ Ibid, 11.

¹³⁵ Hulse, *Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend*, 11.

¹³⁶ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," 68.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 61.

remarkable characteristics in Elizabeth. Women at this time were never expected to have oral or rhetorical skills. Most women in Early Modern England would not have received the same rhetorical training that Elizabeth did. In fact, women were largely expected to remain completely silent, especially in public.¹³⁸ Thus, by encouraging Elizabeth to speak, Ascham helped to develop significant abilities and characteristics within her that would ultimately allow her to project power in ways that were not expected from a woman at that time.

Roger Ascham was such a significant educator in Early Modern England that in 1563 Secretary of State William Cecil, Lord Burghley asked Ascham to write a manual on how to best educate children.¹³⁹ Ascham's response was expectedly quite humble and he expressed that he was not the right person to take on this task. Cecil countered with the fact that he knew Ascham was capable of writing such a book as he was responsible for the education of the queen. He told him that he was blessed to be the schoolmaster for the "best scholar that ever were in our time" and thus it would benefit the whole of England if he were to share his methods with the rest of the country.¹⁴⁰ Despite his hesitations, Cecil's words of flattery seem to have convinced Ascham and he wrote a short pedagogical manual on his educational methods. Published after his death, *The Schoolmaster* serves not only as a guide for other tutors and educators but also grants insight on how Ascham educated Elizabeth Tudor. This provides an understanding of how Elizabeth's education allowed her to become such a successful monarch.

Ascham believed that a student's education was the most significant factor in their development. Ascham posed that "...if taught well by a good teacher at a young age, a child will

¹³⁸ Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word*, 9.

¹³⁹ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 13.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 14.

grow up to serve God and country by virtue and wisdom.”¹⁴¹ Ascham appears to have understood the burden he carried in educating any child, not to mention a royal child. He knew that a child’s education would have repercussions for the rest of their lives. If they succeeded in school they would succeed in life. He never took on the challenge of educating a child without this in mind. Roger Ascham was a perfect teacher for someone of such a high standing as Elizabeth Tudor.

As a teacher, Ascham was most concerned with teaching students other languages, namely Latin. He contended that skills with the Latin tongue would allow students to develop the ability to use their knowledge to govern decisions and guide conversation.¹⁴² Ascham alluded to his belief that educated persons should think before they speak. He also claimed that the best way for them to have the ability to use their knowledge when in conversation was by developing skills in Latin. Elizabeth was a skilled linguist and was proficient in more than just Latin, but Ascham’s emphasis on the use of foreign languages in a student’s curriculum is still apparent with the princess. In his pedagogical manual Ascham presented the best way to teach a student Latin as through translations.¹⁴³ Once again, Elizabeth was a shining example of this emphasis on translating. Although she started learning other languages and translating texts before Ascham was assigned to her, the translations and letters that survive from her began in 1544. This is roughly when William Grindal became Elizabeth’s tutor. Grindal was a notable

¹⁴¹ Ibid, 34.

¹⁴² Ibid, 21.

¹⁴³ Ibid, 17-18.

scholar in his own right but he had been Ascham's pupil.¹⁴⁴ As such, Grindal's methods of teaching would have mirrored those of his own teacher.

Apart from the actual steps of teaching a child and what to teach them, Ascham also presented his outlook on correcting children in *The Schoolmaster*. He explained that correcting children through the use of discipline was not appropriate or even beneficial. Instead, young children would be more likely to achieve in learning if they were treated with love and respect rather than corrected by beating.¹⁴⁵ Ascham even remarked that Plato himself believed that teaching by play and pleasure rather than compulsion and fear was much more productive.¹⁴⁶ Ascham's goal was to treat each of his students with respect in order to foster within them a love of learning. If a student hated their schoolmaster, they would hate learning.¹⁴⁷ Thus the opposite holds true as well. If a student loves and feels loved by their schoolmaster, they will also develop a love for education. This was certainly the case with Elizabeth and since she developed such affection for learning she was able to develop skills that other students would not. Thus, the influence of Ascham on any of his students was significant and this certainly holds true for his most famous student, Elizabeth Tudor.

Ascham was such a significant influence on Elizabeth that he remained quite close with her even after she had become queen. She kept him close to her at court and he served as Secretary for the Latin Tongue.¹⁴⁸ She was even known to invite him to private dinners with

¹⁴⁴ Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, 75.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, 12.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid, 33.

¹⁴⁸ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 112. In his role as Latin Secretary, Ascham was responsible for composing the Queen's official letters to foreign rulers.

members of her privy council.¹⁴⁹ Ascham's focus on creating a bond between student and master was certainly effective for his most famous student. The skills she learned under his influence remain apparent for the duration of her lifetime. Because of his emphasis on teaching the princess skills of rhetoric and speaking, she was able to transform into a dominant and powerful figure once she became queen despite expectations for her gender.

What Makes her Education Exceptional?

Elizabeth Tudor received a humanist education befitting any English prince. This is largely why her education had such a strong bearing on who she would become as a queen. Rather than train Elizabeth to be a wife and a mother, Ascham ensured that Elizabeth was trained in languages and written and oral skills. Thus, while most early modern English women remained silent and chaste, her sister included, Elizabeth became wise and well-spoken. From this wisdom and rhetorical skill came a monarch who was able to use her education in order to project an image of a skilled and virtuous ruler.¹⁵⁰ At this time even learned aristocratic women were expected to hold their tongues, especially in public.¹⁵¹ In fact, the only time that women were allowed to "break their silence" was in order to express their religious devotion.¹⁵² This is largely why all of Elizabeth's translations as a young girl were religious in nature. Once she became queen she was skilled enough in rhetoric and oration that she was easily able to deliver speeches to powerful men. Elizabeth Tudor broke the mold for the expectations of silence for women thanks to her humanist education that inadvertently prepared her to be a king.

¹⁴⁹ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 12.

¹⁵⁰ Shenk, "Turning Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy: Elizabeth I's Learned Persona and Her University Orations," 78.

¹⁵¹ Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word*, 8.

¹⁵² *Ibid*, 4.

Languages

The emphasis on Elizabeth's skills with languages remained prominent for the duration of her reign. The importance of being able to demonstrate one's education as a ruler was significant. The languages Elizabeth studied and mastered as a young girl gave her the right to depict herself as a "practical prince." Her ability to demonstrate her education through the use of these languages and her oral skills gave her the ability to prove that she was deserving of the throne.¹⁵³ If Elizabeth were unable to demonstrate her ability to rule, she would not have been successful. Public image and impression of a ruler was as important in the Early Modern Period as it is now. Thus, Elizabeth's ability to speak and demonstrate her political power and prowess made her an extremely efficient monarch. She would not have developed these skills if she had not received the education in languages that Grindal and Ascham provided for her.

Ascham was so proud of his star pupil that he used her as an example to taunt the gentlemen at court in his book *The Schoolmaster*. He admonished these men that "It is your shame, (I speake to you all, you young Ientlemen [sic] of England) that one mayd should go beyond you all, in excellencie of learnyng, and knowledge of diuers tonges."¹⁵⁴ Not only did he shame these men for not being as accomplished as they could be, he also added a little burn to his remark by emphasizing that the best example of what education has to offer was a maiden woman. His intent was to encourage them to follow the queen's example but also to push their children to follow the educational model he provided for them. Ascham told these men that Elizabeth's skills were perfect in Latin, Italian, French, and Spanish. He even told them that she

¹⁵³ Shenk, "Turning Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy," 78.

¹⁵⁴ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 47.

continued to exercise her skills with Greek every day.¹⁵⁵ He expressed that she excelled beyond all of the gentlemen at court in learning and knowledge of languages and that these men should be ashamed of themselves for that. “Pointe forth six of the best giuen Ientlemen [sic] of this Court, and all they together, shew not so much good will, spend not so much tyme, bestow not so many houres, dayly orderly, & constantly, for the increase of learning & knowledge, as doth the Queenes Maijestie her selfe.”¹⁵⁶ Ascham was clearly quite proud of his pupil. His intent here was to better the future of education for English gentlemen. He knew that he could accomplish that by telling these men that they have done worse than a woman and need to ensure to not fail their sons in the same way. Based on the methods he used to educate her, Ascham did not appear to have any bias against the princess because of her gender. If he could get the nobility to educate their children in the same manner that Elizabeth was educated England would become even more of a force to be reckoned with in the world.¹⁵⁷ In other words, he was so confident in what he had accomplished with Elizabeth that he hoped to encourage those around her to follow her model. If they did, England could be even more successful.

Experiences

Elizabeth’s knowledge of languages was not the only aspect of her education that had an influence on her development. Possibly more significant were the experiences she had as a child and young woman. Elizabeth’s childhood was difficult, especially when it came to family. Her father was largely absent, especially in her youngest years before he married the compassionate

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, 47.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 47.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 48.

Katherine Parr.¹⁵⁸ She also did not have much of a motherly figure prior to this marriage. She was struck from the succession and was out of favor once her mother was executed in 1536. Despite all of this negativity she remained at court and was treated as the king's daughter. She even gave off an impression to others that she was "her father's daughter."¹⁵⁹ Henry VIII was an imposing figure known for his confidence and intelligence. At a young age Elizabeth began to demonstrate similar characteristics. Despite being in and out of favor throughout her childhood, the second child of Henry VIII had many experiences in her young life that would, along with her education, shape her into the powerful monarch she would become.

The royal children of Henry VIII did not stay in one place for very long. It was important for them to be constantly moving as a preventative against outbreaks of disease. Thus young Elizabeth traveled the countryside throughout her life. From this constant movement came experience. Elizabeth learned the country that she lived in and became aware of the world around her.¹⁶⁰ The princess did not live an isolated life that kept her hidden from the country she would eventually rule. Instead, she traveled and learned the world around her. This knowledge of the country would prove important later in her life as queen. In fact, as queen Elizabeth was known to take many progresses. She would travel around the country and interact with the people she ruled and demonstrate her accessibility and success as a monarch.¹⁶¹ Elizabeth knew the importance of traveling the country and visiting her subjects. She used these trips as a stage

¹⁵⁸ Porter, "An Ideal Stepmother", 19.

¹⁵⁹ Weir, *The Children of Henry VIII*, 7.

¹⁶⁰ Plowden, *The Young Elizabeth*, 67-68.

¹⁶¹ For an in depth discussion behind the logic of these many progresses see Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999).

from which to maintain the support of her subjects.¹⁶² Elizabeth's progresses ensured that she was visible and accessible for people to petition her directly as well as guaranteed some level of popularity and support from her subjects.¹⁶³ Elizabeth's visits throughout England allowed her to display her royal authority to all those whom she visited.¹⁶⁴ Although most monarchs would have traveled in such a manner at this time, Elizabeth used the opportunity wisely and to connect with her people in similar ways as she had when she was a child.

Although she traveled throughout England and gained many experiences within her own country Elizabeth would never travel abroad for any educational experiences as others did. Her mother Anne Boleyn, for example, traveled to France in her youth.¹⁶⁵ Elizabeth's tutor was adamant that traveling abroad was of little use in the education of a child. He explained that learning would teach a child more in one year than an experience abroad would in twenty.¹⁶⁶ When asked by a peer what he thought of the trend of sending children to Italy to gain learning experiences Ascham responded vehemently against it, explaining that it would do more harm than good.¹⁶⁷ Therefore, largely due to her tutor's disdain against it and partially due to the fact that it was dangerous for a royal child, Elizabeth would never travel abroad to obtain learning experiences. Yet she did travel England throughout her young life. This is potentially why she developed such a love for her country and always placed the needs of her country ahead of her

¹⁶² Ibid, 1.

¹⁶³ Ibid, 1-4.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 1.

¹⁶⁵ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, xxiv.

¹⁶⁶ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 44.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 50-60.

own, specifically when it came to the issue of marriage.¹⁶⁸ Elizabeth was a confident woman but she was a humble queen who always placed emphasis on her country's needs over her personal needs.

Potentially the most important formative experience Princess Elizabeth had was being the daughter of King Henry VIII. It is apparent that she was a bright young girl and she would have certainly observed her father from a young age. She studied how he ruled and would ultimately end up following much of his example even though it was never certain whether or not she would ascend the throne.¹⁶⁹ Even though she remained illegitimate for much of her childhood and her father did not devote much attention to her, Elizabeth remained near him and observed him. She projected an admiration and respect for him when she addressed him in the only surviving letter she wrote to him: "To the most illustrious and most mighty King...Elizabeth, his majesty's most humble daughter, wishes all happiness, and begs his blessing."¹⁷⁰ Despite the uncertainty of her position for the entirety of her childhood, Elizabeth remained the devoted and loyal daughter of King Henry VIII. Through observations of her powerful father, Elizabeth followed his example when she exercised her own power on the throne. The experiences Elizabeth had as a child, coupled with her remarkable education, allowed her to become a successful and strong monarch despite expectations, or lack thereof, for someone of her gender.

¹⁶⁸ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 15. William Camden explains that Elizabeth's motherly love to her country would not allow her to sacrifice the country's security for the sake of a marriage arrangement and this is why she declined King Philip of Spain's offers of marriage. Elizabeth herself expressed as much in later speeches to Parliament. See Queen Elizabeth's Conversations with the Scottish Ambassador, William Maitland, Laird of Lethington, September and October 1561, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 65.

¹⁶⁹ Hulse, *Elizabeth I: Ruler and Legend*, 11.

¹⁷⁰ Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Henry VIII, December 30, 1545, 9.

Gender

One of the reasons Elizabeth's education set her apart from her counterparts was that Roger Ascham treated her like a prince, rather than a princess. As a result of this, Elizabeth would always carry herself as a king. This approach would prove to be a practical and effective political measure.¹⁷¹ In Elizabeth's most well-known speech, she addressed her troops at Tilbury Camp prior to the battle with the Spanish Armada. She encouraged the troops to have faith in her and expressed "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too."¹⁷² Not only did Elizabeth demonstrate knowledge of the challenges of her gender, but she also turned it in her favor by attributing masculine characteristics that she inherited from her father. This awareness of her gender and her ability to use it as a strategy for political control stemmed from the influence of Roger Ascham. Throughout her reign Elizabeth was able to successfully work around gender constructs to secure her right to power that was generally reserved for men.

Mary and Elizabeth Tudor received very different educations. Mary's tutor, Juan Luis Vives, was appointed by her mother Katherine of Aragon. The defining factor of his education plan for Mary was his emphasis on the role of a woman. He believed, along with much of England, that a woman should be subordinate and silent.¹⁷³ In fact, Vives argued that the only reason a woman should be educated was to benefit her husband. His focus on the education of women, as written in his *The Education of a Christian Woman*, was chastity and virtue. If a woman was sufficiently learned in the importance of chastity, then Vives believed her education

¹⁷¹ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," 61.

¹⁷² Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588, 326.

¹⁷³ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," 63.

was complete.¹⁷⁴ As these were the beliefs of her tutor, Mary was trained in skills with needlework and house crafts with an emphasis on honest and chastity.¹⁷⁵ Mary was raised to meet the expectations of any aristocratic girl of the age. Due to this feminine education Mary was much more aware of her gender as queen and she always fulfilled the submissive role, especially when it came to her husband Philip, despite the fact that she was the queen regnant.¹⁷⁶ Mary Tudor is remembered as “Bloody Mary” and a largely unsuccessful queen. This could be attributed to the education she received as a child.

On the other hand, her younger sister Elizabeth was not educated in the same manner. Instead, Elizabeth’s tutor Ascham emphasized scholarly abilities and written and oral skills.¹⁷⁷ While women of this time were expected to be silent and chaste and never received education in rhetoric, Ascham completely broke the mold with Elizabeth. He treated her as a prince and encouraged her to speak. Italian humanist Leonardo Bruni said that rhetoric lay outside of the realm of women, and Mary’s tutor Juan Vives agreed.¹⁷⁸ Multiple men who were influential on educational theory expressed that the skill of rhetoric was inappropriate for women. Ascham seems to have disagreed. Ascham never expected his pupil to be silent and submissive. Rather, he expected her to be an educated prince and even allowed her to read political pieces, which was largely unacceptable for a woman according to the social standards of the time.¹⁷⁹ Thus, thanks to Ascham’s emphasis on speaking and rhetoric, Elizabeth was better prepared to hold the

¹⁷⁴ A.D. Cousins, “Humanism, Female Education, and Myth: Erasmus, Vives, and More’s *To Candidus*,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* 65, no. 2 (April 2004): 223-224.

¹⁷⁵ Vosevich, “The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors,” 64.

¹⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 67.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 61.

¹⁷⁸ J.K. Sowards, “Erasmus and the Education of Women,” *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 13, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 79 and Friedman, “The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England,” 63.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 72.

throne that she was never really expected to obtain. Even long after she became queen Ascham referred to Elizabeth as “this most excellent prince.”¹⁸⁰ Ascham was probably unaware of how significant his decision to treat Elizabeth in gender ambiguous terms would be. This decision proved to be one of the most influential on her development into a successful ruler.

Elizabeth’s sister Mary was not the only female queen regnant in Europe at the time who was not educated to the extent that Elizabeth was. Mary, Queen of Scots was nine years younger than her cousin Elizabeth. Her education began in earnest at a young age as well. She learned multiple languages like Elizabeth but as discussed earlier, she never mastered them the way that Elizabeth had.¹⁸¹ The Scottish queen’s young life was dominated not by education, but by plans for her marriage. She was sent to France when she was not quite seven years old in order to be with her future husband, the Dauphin of France.¹⁸² While a young girl in France Mary’s education continued and she excelled at music, needlework, dancing and horsemanship.¹⁸³ In other words, Mary was meeting the expectation for most women of the time despite having some added exposure to languages that girls outside of a royal household would never receive.

The Early Modern Period in England is one that is characterized as a time of educational growth due to the advent of humanism but that growth had its limits. As much as ninety percent of females from all classes remained illiterate.¹⁸⁴ While noble families tended to educate their daughters more than the laity, the extent of their educations was nothing in comparison to those

¹⁸⁰ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, 48.

¹⁸¹ Henderson, *Mary, Queen of Scots: her environment and tragedy*, 78.

¹⁸² Fleming, *Mary Queen of Scots: from her birth to her flight into England*, 14.

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, 17.

¹⁸⁴ Friedman, “The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England,” 57.

of their male counterparts.¹⁸⁵ The arrival of Protestantism in England stressed the importance of literacy, although simple literacy was enough for women. Not everyone was fortunate enough to receive a full humanist education, and this was certainly the case for most girls.¹⁸⁶ Some young girls did receive better educations than others. Even noble girls only acquired skills that would allow them to entertain others through reciting or reading aloud in polite society.¹⁸⁷ What is most remarkable is that young women, even under the humanist tradition, were not expected to learn Latin.¹⁸⁸ Royal girls like Mary and Elizabeth Tudor and Mary, Queen of Scots were certainly the exception. Elizabeth was the only woman in England to take that education out of the private sphere.¹⁸⁹ As queen, Elizabeth gave many speeches and several Latin orations.¹⁹⁰ Her mastery of Latin as well as use of it in public made her truly remarkable as a queen and allowed her to demonstrate her right to rule in a man's world. Even Erasmus, one of the most influential men in education during this time, advocated for women's rights but did not advocate for women's education. All of his major educational works were addressed to boys and their teachers.¹⁹¹ Even Thomas More, who educated his own daughters, expressed that the ideal woman only contributed in the private sphere as the perfect *mulier economica* in his poem *To Candidus: How to Choose a Wife*.¹⁹² Most educational philosophers of the age, Erasmus, Vives, and More included, believed that women were to remain in the private sphere and only be educated to the extent that it would benefit their husbands. Thus, Roger Ascham's insistence on

¹⁸⁵ Ibid, 57.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, 58.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 64.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 60.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 64.

¹⁹⁰ For an in depth discussion of Elizabeth's speeches and Latin orations, see chapter 3.

¹⁹¹ Sowards, "Erasmus and the Education of Women," 77.

¹⁹² Cousins, "Humanism, Female Education, and Myth: Erasmus, Vives, and More's *To Candidus*," 218.

training Elizabeth in languages and rhetoric challenged the status quo for all women. Her education stood apart from that of most English girls and the skills she developed set her apart from even other royal young women.

Conclusion

A child's education is potentially the most formative factor in their life. This especially holds true for a royal child. Elizabeth Tudor was fortunate enough to have the exceptional education that would allow her to become a powerful monarch. She had a natural ability and love for learning and was given the best tutors and best books available. If not for the influence of Katherine Parr, William Grindal, and Roger Ascham, Elizabeth may not have developed into the powerful ruler she became. She could have had a tutor like Juan Luis Vives who insisted that it was inappropriate for women to develop skills in rhetoric because they were never supposed to speak in public. Elizabeth was fortunate enough to receive an education suited to her natural abilities to learn. Additionally she had a tutor who knew the importance of fostering a love for learning in his students. Her humanist education that emphasized languages as well as written, oral, and rhetorical skills fostered in her the ability to break the mold of women at the time by speaking and carrying herself in gender ambiguous, if not masculine, terms. These skills become almost immediately apparent in her speeches to parliament and other government officials even at the onset of her reign.

CHAPTER THREE: YOUNG QUEEN ELIZABETH: EARLY MANIFESTATIONS OF HER POWER

Elizabeth Tudor, second child and third heir to Henry VIII, ascended the throne and became Queen of England upon the death of her sister, Mary, in November 1558. As the youngest female Tudor child, she was never expected to become queen. Elizabeth unexpectedly took the crown at the ripe old age of twenty-five years old after both her brother and sister failed in producing any heirs. William Camden expressed that she had been taught by experience and adversity.¹⁹³ Although she never received any formal training in statecraft, her upbringing, the challenges of her youth, and her remarkable education all allowed her to be more prepared for the throne than either of her siblings. She demonstrated wisdom beyond her years from the onset of her reign through actions such as her selection of her privy council. She included Catholic members of Mary's council and added her own Protestant members.¹⁹⁴ Despite the fact that her first goal as queen was going to be restoring Protestantism as the official religion in England, she demonstrated skill as a politician by allowing members of her sister's council to remain on her council. This would ensure balance in the council as well as please the Catholic citizens of England.¹⁹⁵ Her appointments demonstrated that she appreciated balance between points of view amongst her counsellors.¹⁹⁶ Additionally, she included experienced councilors from her brother's Privy Council. William Cecil, who became her most trusted advisor, served on Edward VI's Privy Council.¹⁹⁷ The Earl of Arundel was another member of both her brother's and her

¹⁹³ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 3.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 3-4.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁹⁶ Guy, *Tudor England*, 310.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 214, 254.

sister's councils whom Elizabeth retained for her own council.¹⁹⁸ Young Elizabeth recognized the importance of maintaining experienced advisors. Elizabeth I continued to demonstrate this wisdom throughout the duration of her reign.

Some of Queen Elizabeth's most remarkable accomplishments such as dealing with marriage proposals, handling her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots, and even reacting to a rebellion against her rule, happened in the earliest part of her reign. While most studies focus on later events like the Spanish Armada, this chapter emphasizes Elizabeth's skills as a ruler during the first fourteen years of her reign.¹⁹⁹ During these years Elizabeth had to secure her right to be obeyed and win confidence from her subjects.²⁰⁰ Additionally, she has to assert her dominance over her Scottish cousin and potential rival to her throne, Mary, Queen of Scots. As early as 1559 Mary and her husband the Dauphin of France attempted to claim Elizabeth's throne and she was forced to project her power over her.²⁰¹ Her humanist education that emphasized skills in multiple languages and speaking allowed her to achieve this in the first several years of her reign and at a young age. From the first speech she gave to Parliament to the last, she commanded respect from her government and her people. Her abilities to command that respect despite being a "woman ruling in a man's world" are what allowed her to wield power successfully. Queen Elizabeth's speeches, letters, and translations from the first several years of her reign not only demonstrate a dramatic shift in tone and context from when she was a princess, but they also reveal the first attempts to cement her legitimacy and exercise power in her own right.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid, 228 , 255.

¹⁹⁹ In some instances, this study will look at later speeches as they are defining moments in the reign and prime examples of her ability to project power through speech.

²⁰⁰ Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I* (London: Edward Arnold, 1993).

²⁰¹ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 24 and Guy, *Tudor England*, 265.

Letters

The tone and demeanor expressed in Elizabeth's letters as queen obviously changed greatly from when she was a child. As princess she wrote to others with a sense of deference and respect. For example, when writing to her father the princess refers to him as the "most illustrious and most mighty" king and prayed that God will protect him so everyone can live under his dominion for years to come.²⁰² Queen Elizabeth's letters to other monarchs like King Philip II of Spain and Mary, Queen of Scots are in stark contrast to this. Only four years into her reign, shortly after her twenty-ninth birthday, Elizabeth sent a letter directly to King Philip addressing her concerns about the growing tensions in France. She was direct and honest with the king and admitted that she was writing to him directly because she wanted to ensure that he understood her concerns with France.²⁰³ This letter indicates that Elizabeth was confident enough to take matters into her own hands even in the earliest years of her reign. She continued to address her concerns over the issues in France, but she shifted her focus to her own anger over not getting what was owed to her. In 1560, Elizabeth sent troops into Scotland to drive out French forces sent there to help the Guise family take control of England, which they believed was lawfully the right of Mary, Queen of Scots.²⁰⁴ Elizabeth's forces successfully besieged the French troops in Leith and the French asked for peace.²⁰⁵ The resulting agreement was the Treaty of Edinburgh. Not only was this treaty designed to ensure peace between France and England, it would also require the French to return control of Calais to England and Francis and Mary to renounce their claim to the English throne. Francis and Mary later refused to ratify the

²⁰² Tudor, Princess Elizabeth to King Henry VIII, December 30, 1545, 9-10.

²⁰³ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Philip II of Spain, September 30, 1562, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 113.

²⁰⁴ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 30 and Guy, *Tudor England*, 266.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 33.

treaty. While the issue was still being debated, King Francis died in December of 1560.²⁰⁶ King Francis's younger brother took the throne in France and Elizabeth never received what she believed was owed to her.

In her letter to Philip, Elizabeth expressed her anger at their refusal to renounce their claim to England and to ratify the treaty.²⁰⁷ She continued to tell him that she was going to act to reclaim Calais for England and not only did she expect Philip's approval, she also expected his help.²⁰⁸ Instead of beseeching him for his help and approval, she demanded it without hesitation. Her ability to deal with international and domestic issues early in her reign began to demonstrate her skill at rule. Two of the most troublesome issues Elizabeth dealt with during the first years of her reign were her cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots as well as the Northern Rebellion of 1569. Within letters that addressed both of these issues the queen projected qualities and skills that would later become associated with her success as a ruler.

Mary, Queen of Scots in Letters

Mary, Queen of Scots was the granddaughter of Henry VIII's sister, Margaret Tudor. Thus, she was one of the only surviving descendants from House Tudor apart from Elizabeth. From the moment Elizabeth became queen, Mary posed various problems and threats to her throne. Elizabeth generally handled her cousin with grace while still establishing her own dominance over her. After Mary's first husband, Francis II of France, died and she returned to Scotland, she remarried twice more. In both instances she received advice and approval, or disapproval, from Elizabeth. In 1564 Elizabeth wrote to her chief minister, William Cecil,

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 38.

²⁰⁷ Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Philip II of Spain, September 30, 1562, 113-114.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 115.

because she was unsure of how to respond to Mary's questions about potential matches.²⁰⁹ She had delayed in responding to her cousin's requests for her blessing for one of a few potential suitors.²¹⁰ At this point Mary had accepted Elizabeth's dominance to the point that she requested Elizabeth's blessing to marry again. The letter to Cecil could appear as the queen's timidity and uncertainty about how to handle an international issue. It is more likely a demonstration of her wisdom in deferring such important matters to the advice of good counsel.

From that point forward Mary, Queen of Scots and her own personal and political issues in Scotland remained a constant thorn in Elizabeth's side. Mary ultimately chose Henry Stuart, Lord Darnley, as her second husband. After the birth of their son, James, the eventual heir to the English throne, Lord Darnley was murdered in February 1567. Elizabeth wrote a letter to her cousin expressing her shock and grief at this tragic event. Elizabeth was particularly concerned because Lord Darnley was also her cousin.²¹¹ She expressed her concern for her cousin and told her she was more upset for her than she was for the late Lord Darnley. She also went as far as to offer advice to Mary, hoping that she would not act in anger and grief and seek revenge. She hoped that her cousin would handle the situation as a noble princess and loyal wife.²¹² Despite the fact that Mary had been a queen her entire life and Elizabeth had only been queen for less than a decade, the elder cousin projected an image of wisdom and asserted that she knew the appropriate way to handle the situation and how to behave as a grieving monarch and wife. The

²⁰⁹ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to William Cecil, Principal Minister, September 23, 1564, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 115.

²¹⁰ *Ibid*, 115. Mary's suitors included Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Prince Don Carlos of Spain, and Henry Stewart, Lord Darnley.

²¹¹ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Mary, Queen of Scots, February 24, 1567, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 116.

²¹² *Ibid*, 116.

majority of the letter seems to express genuine concern and care for her cousin but she ended the letter by shifting to her own personal needs. Elizabeth reminded Mary that she had yet to ratify the Treaty of Edinburgh.²¹³ Elizabeth told her cousin that ratifying the treaty and pleasing her would ultimately make Mary feel better. Elizabeth expertly shifted focus off of Mary's grief and onto her own desires. She presented herself as confident and behaved as if her needs came before those of her grieving cousin.

Only about four months later Elizabeth sent another letter to Mary, Queen of Scots. This time, instead of attempting to give her cousin advice over how to handle grief, Elizabeth wrote with the intent of admonishing her for secretly marrying again. Not only did she marry within months of her previous husband's murder, she married the man who was accused of being involved in that murder, James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell. Queen Elizabeth told Mary that she was going to be frank with her and stated that she did not approve of the marriage. Not only did Elizabeth not approve, she said that no true friend of Mary's could possibly approve of a marriage that was done with such little consideration.²¹⁴ As when she wrote the King Philip of Spain, Elizabeth's tone with others of equal standing as herself was quite firm, confident, and honest. She did not hold back her opinion of Mary's actions but rather blatantly told her she had made a mistake. Elizabeth projected her personal confidence as ruler who wielded power with skill and grace. Elizabeth continued to admonish Mary by explaining the legal reasons that it could not be valid. Bothwell had divorced his wife in order to wed the Queen of Scots. Elizabeth said that meant he could not legally marry another because he had "another wife

²¹³ Ibid, 117.

²¹⁴ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Mary, Queen of Scots, June 23, 1567, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 118.

alive.”²¹⁵ Not only did she disapprove for moral reasons, she also disapproved for legal reasons. Elizabeth even went as far as to tell her cousin that she should have been more concerned with finding Darnley’s murderer than finding a new husband.²¹⁶ With this statement Elizabeth demonstrated wit as well as disdain for Mary’s actions. From this point forward, Elizabeth seemed to be more short-tempered with her cousin based on her interactions with her through letters.

In another letter addressed to the Queen of Scots in early 1570 Elizabeth implied that she had heard negative rumors about how Mary felt about her. Elizabeth was offended and she prayed that God would help guide Mary in the right direction of amending their relationship.²¹⁷ She told Mary that her conscious should be troubled by how she had treated her.²¹⁸ Once again Elizabeth asserted her dominance over a woman who had been a queen since she was born. Her tone was very short and she essentially told Mary that she should feel remorse. Throughout the rest of the letter Elizabeth seems to scold Mary for not trusting her because she had never done anything against her Scottish cousin. Elizabeth reminded her that she did not even take any action against Mary when others attempted to claim the English throne in Mary’s name. She reminded her that she would have been well within her rights in invading but instead she chose diplomacy.²¹⁹ Elizabeth’s letter reminded Mary that she was the more powerful queen and could have squashed her at any point, but she explained that she chose not to because she felt a sisterly affection for her. At this point Elizabeth demonstrated a different kind of confidence than in

²¹⁵ Ibid, 118.

²¹⁶ Ibid, 118.

²¹⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Mary, Queen of Scots, February 20, 1570, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 120-121.

²¹⁸ Ibid, 121.

²¹⁹ Ibid, 122. Elizabeth referred to the French king claiming England in Mary’s name.

other instances. She seems to have known what she was capable of and that she had made the right decision in talking to ambassadors instead of sending troops. The letter continues with Elizabeth reminding Mary that she waited for years for the ratification of the Treaty of Edinburgh. She also brought up Mary's secret marriage and went as far as to tell her that many of the mistakes she had made were because she did not take her advice.²²⁰ Elizabeth wrote as if she felt she was the more powerful ruler and continuously put a fellow monarch down for her failings. This is a blatant expression of her confidence and belief in her own abilities as a monarch as compared to another queen regnant.

The next time Queen Elizabeth wrote to Mary, Queen of Scots she opened by telling her that she had received multiple letters from her but did not feel the need to respond to any of them.²²¹ This implies not only that Elizabeth did not believe that Mary's concerns were worthy of a response, but also that Mary had reached out to her cousin repeatedly for advice and help. At this point it appears that both queens have accepted Elizabeth's dominance. Elizabeth reprimanded Mary for including "uncomely, passionate, and vindictive" speech in her last letter.²²² Based on her own skills with language in both speaking and writing, Elizabeth seems to have believed that Mary was behaving in a manner inappropriate for a monarch. She even told Mary that she was not going to fall into the same trap by filling a long letter with sharp words but rather she appointed an ambassador to relay her advice to Mary directly.²²³ Essentially Elizabeth addressed her cousin as if she were better than Mary and had to remind her by telling her she

²²⁰ Ibid, 122-123.

²²¹ Digest of a Letter from Queen Elizabeth to Mary, Queen of Scots, February 1, 1572, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 130.

²²² Ibid, 130.

²²³ Ibid, 130.

would not stoop to the same type of behavior by writing a nasty letter to her. Finally, to add insult to injury, Elizabeth signed the letter “Your cousin that wisheth you a better mind.”²²⁴ This letter makes it seem that the Queen of Scots acted more on emotion than on knowledge, a skill Elizabeth took pride in. Thus, Elizabeth almost pitied her cousin for not having a stronger mind like her own. Once again Queen Elizabeth asserted her dominance and pride in her own abilities through a letter admonishing her Scottish counterpart for not being as successful as she was.

The Northern Rising in Letters

The Northern Rebellion was the first action to disturb the peace during Elizabeth’s reign.²²⁵ This uprising was incited by nobles in the north of England who remained loyal to Catholicism. These nobles wanted to depose the Protestant Elizabeth and replace her with her Catholic cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots. One of the rebels was Leonard Dacres, a relative of the Duke of Norfolk. On February 20, 1570, Dacres attempted to ambush a small force led by Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon. Despite great odds against him, Hunsdon was able to defeat the larger force and received a letter of praise from his queen.²²⁶ Elizabeth expressed how grateful she was for his success in the first fight against rebels during her reign. She told Hunsdon that her greatest wish was for Dacres to have been captured, but she was happy enough with him fleeing abroad with his band of rebels.²²⁷ Finally, she told him that she was glad that he had been God’s instrument for her glory in this fight.²²⁸ Once again Elizabeth used her skill with words to not

²²⁴ Ibid, 131.

²²⁵ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 125.

²²⁶ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, February 26, 1570, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 125-126.

²²⁷ Ibid, 125-126.

²²⁸ Ibid, 126.

only express gratitude to a loyal subject, but to also reiterate that her own glory as queen took precedence above all else. This allowed her to project an image of a grateful ruler but to also remind her subject that what he had accomplished in her name.

Prior to the outbreak of the rebellion, schemes to wed Mary, Queen of Scots to the Duke of Norfolk had been ongoing.²²⁹ After the rebellion two of his men, Barker and Bannister, had been imprisoned in the Tower. Neither would admit knowledge of his role in the rebellion and as such Elizabeth issued an order to torture them if necessary to get the information she desired.²³⁰ Elizabeth's willingness to torture men in order to get information in the wake of a rebellion against her crown demonstrates her commitment to her role as monarch and ability to wield her power through any means necessary but she also exercised mercy. She instructed the men who were tasked with the inquisition to attempt to scare these men first by taking them to the rack then if the fear was enough to make them talk to not actually carry out the torture.²³¹ The information they had about the Duke of Norfolk was important to her but she wanted to ensure that torture was the last chance possible to get information out of these men and hoped that it would not have to be used. Elizabeth ruled with both strength and mercy.

Prior to the letter permitting her inquisitors to torture the Duke of Norfolk's men if need be, the Duke of Norfolk himself, also imprisoned in the Tower, wrote a letter of remorse to the queen. Norfolk expressed his sorrow in an attempt to save his life. He admitted his transgressions and knew that he could not expect to ever return to Elizabeth's favor. He knew

²²⁹ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 119-120 and and Guy, *Tudor England*, 273.

²³⁰ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Warrant to Proceed, if Necessary, to Torture Two of the Duke of Norfolk's Men, September 15, 1571, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 127.

²³¹ *Ibid*, 127.

her track record of being a merciful monarch so he appealed to her forgiveness nonetheless.²³² Norfolk openly admitted his faults and begged that she and God forgave him.²³³ He explained that he did not hope to be excused and he admitted plotting to marry the Queen of Scots. Norfolk appeared to be so full of remorse that he went as far as to say that he did not even expect Elizabeth to consider him family any longer because that was an honor he did not deserve.²³⁴ This is a demonstration of a man who also had some manner of power submitting fully to a woman who held his life in his hands. His submission was likely somewhat for show and also expected of him under these circumstances. Ultimately his appeal to her mercy seems to have worked as Elizabeth chose to delay his scheduled execution. The queen wrote to William Cecil ordering him to defer the execution but refusing to explain why she made this decision.²³⁵ Ultimately she did not feel the need to explain herself and she also did not want to waste time writing an explanation because the execution could have been carried out in the meantime. Thus, Elizabeth brought a powerful man down to his knees to the point of forsaking his identity as a relative of the queen. Then instead of carrying out his execution she chose to take mercy on him. Elizabeth projected the image of a skilled and powerful ruler as she expressed authority over both foreign princes as well as on her own subjects. Even as a young female ruler she knew the importance of her ability to portray an authoritative image. This ability to project her power

²³² Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, Letter to Queen Elizabeth, September 10, 1571, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 128.

²³³ *Ibid*, 128.

²³⁴ *Ibid*, 129.

²³⁵ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to William Cecil, Lord Burghley, April 11, 1572, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 131.

through her words allowed for her to go down in history as one of England's most successful monarchs.

Translations

As discussed in Chapter One, Elizabeth Tudor completed multiple translations as a young girl. These translations were always of texts that were religious in nature, thus demonstrating her commitment to her faith. In most cases the princess would gift these translations to one or more of her family member as a demonstration of her devotion to her family. Finally, by translating complex texts to and from English, Latin, Italian, and even French, Elizabeth demonstrated her skills with languages and commitment to practicing her knowledge.²³⁶ In contrast, Elizabeth only completed one major translation in the early years of her reign and that was Seneca's *Epistulae Morales 107*.²³⁷ During this time she also took on the writing of her own Latin work. Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae* is dated in 1563, although she likely would have been working on them for many years. Her *Sententiae* is a collection of sentences that address the principles and responsibilities of a ruler. When she compiled these statements on rule, she used various sources. Most of her sources came from classical authors as opposed to Christian authors.²³⁸ This demonstrates a significant shift in the focus of Elizabeth's reading from when she was a child. As opposed to centering herself on religion, she began to focus on more secular texts. As a ruler she had a responsibility to attend to both the spiritual and secular needs of her people and

²³⁶ See Chapter 1.

²³⁷ Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*. Seneca's *Epistulae Morales 107* was originally written in Latin and she translated it to English. Elizabeth's *Sententiae* are also discussed in the "Translations" section because she originally wrote them in Latin and in turn editors Mueller and Scodel translated these sentences into English.

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 331.

as such it would have been appropriate for her to open herself to reading texts that aided her in accomplishing this.

Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae*

Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae* is broken into six sections: On Rule, On Justice, On Mercy, On Counsel, On Peace, and On War.²³⁹ This compilation of sentences demonstrate that she wished to be seen as educated, God-fearing, receptive to advice, and dedicated to the well-being of her country.²⁴⁰ Each of these qualities was essential to her success. The *Sententiae* indicated that she was proud of each of these characteristics, thus proving her acceptance and expression of her success as a ruler. Additionally, she wrote each of these sentences in Latin, demonstrating her mastery of that language. At the time, Latin was a language and skill typically reserved for males.²⁴¹ Once again, this demonstrates how Elizabeth's unique education fostered abilities and qualities in her that would ultimately allow her to go down in history as a powerful queen.

The first section, On Rule, explains Elizabeth's beliefs on how monarchs should carry themselves. First of all, she wrote that a ruler should tend to their people as a shepherd does his sheep.²⁴² As opposed to being a ruler who is cruel, Elizabeth aimed to be a benevolent ruler who tended to the well-being of all of her people. Elizabeth was always primarily concerned with the needs of her people. In fact, she chose to remain single so she could focus on the needs of the country as opposed to her own personal needs. At least this is what she told Parliament and her

²³⁹ Ibid, 331.

²⁴⁰ Ibid, 332.

²⁴¹ Ibid, 333.

²⁴² Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, 1563, In *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, edited by Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 347.

suitors when they repeatedly asked her to marry.²⁴³ Elizabeth also expressed that a ruler was part of the commonwealth, as opposed to the owner of it.²⁴⁴ Thus, Elizabeth placed herself alongside the people of England as opposed to above them. This demonstrates her affection for the people and was likely a contributing factor as to why the people of England adored her so much, especially early in her reign. She contradicted this statement in an earlier sentence claiming that rule does not fit those who are not better than their subjects.²⁴⁵ Elizabeth knew she needed to project an image of the people's monarch, but she also wrote as if she had the confidence to believe that she would not be queen if she were not suited for that role.

The following section, *On Justice*, presents Elizabeth's beliefs on how to be a fair ruler. She stated that a king cannot swing one way or another.²⁴⁶ In other words, Elizabeth's knew the importance of being an impartial monarch who did not play favorites. She also reestablished that she was a member of the commonwealth by stating that a ruler should also follow the laws that they put forth.²⁴⁷ Elizabeth was a queen who, at least in writing, believed in the rule of law and a monarch's accountability to the law in an age dominated by absolute monarchs. Once again she demonstrated her wisdom about how a modern government should function. Additionally, she stated that rulers should know that their personal matters would be public matters.²⁴⁸ She was aware that as a public figure she had an image to uphold. Thus, she knew the importance of behaving in a manner befitting her station. After all, everything she did was bound to become

²⁴³ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 17-18, 34, and Queen Elizabeth's Conversations with the Scottish Ambassador, William Maitland, Laird of Lethington, September and October 1561, 65.

²⁴⁴ Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, 1563, 351.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 349.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 355.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 356.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 357.

public knowledge. Elizabeth also took this sentence one step further by expressing that not only were her personal matters public, but also that all public matters would become her personal business.²⁴⁹ This is demonstrative of her overwhelming concern for her people and her country. She always placed the needs of her country above all else, and this statement in her *Sententiae* expressing her acceptance of all public matters as her own personal concerns shows as much.

Based on her decision to spare the life of the Duke of Norfolk despite his plans to marry her cousin and help take her throne, Elizabeth Tudor demonstrated how she valued mercy as one of the most important attributes a ruler could have.²⁵⁰ The queen valued mercy so much as a virtue that in the *Sententiae* she wrote that all of the other virtues were worthless unless a person also exhibited mercy.²⁵¹ The queen wrote that mercy and truth guarded a king and strengthened his throne.²⁵² In other words, a monarch could possibly lose their throne through various means if they did not use mercy as a virtue of their rule. With mercy, a ruler could guarantee to remain in power for the duration of their lives. The only impregnable defense for a king is the love of his people.²⁵³ Elizabeth included this sentence to demonstrate her understanding of the importance of mercy in developing favorable relations with the people of England. If she at least presented herself as a merciful ruler, the people of England would love and adore her. If the people of England supported her and her rule, she would maintain her throne and not risk losing it to popular uprisings. In fact, several of the instances of her exercising mercy were in cases against people who were implicated in plots against her, as was the case with the Duke of

²⁴⁹ Ibid, 357.

²⁵⁰ See previous section “The Northern Rising in Letters.” Tudor, Queen Elizabeth to William Cecil, April 11, 1572, 131.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 367. Additionally, the section On Mercy is the longest and most complete section of the *Sententiae*, an indication of how much the queen valued this particular virtue.

²⁵² Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s *Sententiae*, 1563, 364.

²⁵³ Ibid, 364.

Norfolk. Despite uprisings such as the Northern Rebellion, Elizabeth still explained that cruel governments did not last.²⁵⁴ Therefore, instead of executing all of her enemies, Elizabeth ruled through mercy. This indicates that Elizabeth was aware that she needed to project an image of a merciful ruler, especially towards those who worked against her, in order to maintain the support of her people.

Another contributing factor to Elizabeth's skill as a ruler was her wisdom to seek the best counsel. In fact, according to her *Sententiae*, Elizabeth argued that it was wise to seek counsel.²⁵⁵ Elizabeth was confident enough in her ability to govern that she certainly did not need advice. She knew that it was wise to seek advice anyways. William Camden explained that young queen Elizabeth demonstrated her wisdom from the onset of her reign through the choice in members of her privy council. She allowed Catholic members of her sister's council to remain and also appointed new Protestant members of her own.²⁵⁶ This would ensure balance in her council as well as an easy transition as she moved the country back towards Protestantism. In her first speech to some of her councilors she asked them to aid her in her reign and her attempts to preserve the commonwealth.²⁵⁷ She gave this speech three days after she ascended the throne on November 20, 1558. In other words she set the tone of her reign by deferring to the advice of councilors in making major decisions about government. She also expected her councilors to give her the best advice as opposed to "sweet counsel."²⁵⁸ By encouraging her

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 365.

²⁵⁵ Ibid, 371.

²⁵⁶ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 3 and Guy, *Tudor England*, 253-254.

²⁵⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's First Speech, Hatfield, November 20, 1558, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 52.

²⁵⁸ Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, 1563, 372.

councilors to give her honest and true advice as opposed to telling her what she wanted to hear, Elizabeth guaranteed that she would receive multiple perspectives on how to handle issues of governance before making any major decisions.

The final two sections of the *Sententiae* seem somewhat contradictory. In the section Of Peace, Elizabeth presented a strong country as one that is united and peaceful.²⁵⁹ In the section Of War, Elizabeth expressed that rulers must fight in order to lead.²⁶⁰ Throughout both of these sections the queen connects the two contradictory concepts of war and peace as necessary for the one another. In other words, a ruler must be ready to wage war in order to preserve peace.²⁶¹ She also cautioned rulers to not be so comfortable in peace to not be ready for war.²⁶² War and peace are the eternal waves that countries cycle through repeatedly. Elizabeth knew the importance of being prepared for both. Additionally, she knew that peace could only truly be achieved internationally if there was domestic peace and unity as well. Elizabeth's *Sententiae* was a guidebook for her own personal outlook on rule. Contemporaries were not likely to have read it but her focus on the virtues of a strong ruler was clear. The *Sententiae* built a powerful and perfect ruler. If Elizabeth met all of her own expectations for a monarch, she would have solidified her right to rule.

Queen Elizabeth's Translation of Seneca's *Epistulae Morales 107*

In comparison to Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, her translation of Seneca's *Epistulae Morales 107* does not speak as much to the creation of a successful and perfect ruler. Instead, this text served as a gift and advice book to Elizabeth's godson John Harrington. The Harrington family

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 380.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, 389.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 382.

²⁶² Ibid, 380.

preserved the text and catalogued it as a “...token of remembrance of her Highness’ painstaking and learned skill.”²⁶³ Not only did the family indicate that they appreciated the gift from the queen, they also recognized her skills with languages that she worked so long to master.

Seneca’s *Epistulae Morales 107* was intended to advocate for stoic morality for the masses.²⁶⁴ Stoicism, or virtue through wisdom, was a philosophy that appealed to Elizabeth as it emphasized learning and wisdom. Elizabeth took this piece and transformed it into a text fit for her six-year-old godchild and presented it as advice for the growing boy. Within this text Seneca, and to an extent Elizabeth herself, reminded their audience that people live in a world in which mishaps are common. Additionally, life is a journey that will involve failures as well as successes.²⁶⁵ As a monarch, she naturally experienced many failures and successes. Seneca urged his readers to shiver only when it was cold and deal with the heat when it came with summer.²⁶⁶ In other words, do not worry about things you cannot control and handle them as they come.

At the time that Elizabeth completed this translation, approximately 1567, she had been going through issues with Mary, Queen of Scots such as the murder of her husband and her elopement.²⁶⁷ To an extent, Elizabeth’s motive behind translating a text that reminds readers that life is not easy and one is constantly posed with various challenges was an inner reflection of the own challenges she was facing with her cousin. She also saw the value of presenting a young

²⁶³ Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, 409.

²⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 411.

²⁶⁵ Seneca, *Epistulae Morales 107*, Translated by Queen Elizabeth circa 1567, In *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, edited by Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 416.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 418.

²⁶⁷ Mueller and Scodel, *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, 413.

child with this advice. Thus the translation could have been meant for young John Harrington, but it was also self-serving.

Speeches

Queen Elizabeth I's speeches were the most direct demonstration of the skills in rhetoric and languages that she spent so long perfecting as a child. Additionally, her ability to speak in a manner that commanded both respect and obedience shows how remarkable she was as a female ruler in the sixteenth century. Speeches were a major part of her reign and they were an outward expression of how she explored and exercised power as queen.²⁶⁸ In other words, her skills in rhetoric and her ability to speak set her apart from other female queens of the time. Additionally, her speeches were an instrument of her power. Most of the speeches from the first several years of her reign, 1558-1572 specifically, focus on the question of proposed marriages and concerns over the succession. Additionally, some later speeches such as her speech to the troops at Tilbury and her university orations merit discussion. They do not fall into the time period of the other speeches, but they do show how her speeches were how she wielded her power, despite the fact that women of the age were expected to be silent.²⁶⁹ Thus Elizabeth's skills at speech and rhetoric taught to her by Ascham and others are the root of her ability to govern successfully.

Marriage Question in Speeches

Elizabeth Tudor became queen when she was twenty-five years old. She was at an ideal age for marriage and child-bearing. Thus, the question of who she would marry became the theme of the first several years of her reign. The majority of the population wanted the queen to

²⁶⁸ Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I: Parliamentary Rhetoric and the Exercise of Power," 31.

²⁶⁹ Hannay, ed. *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*.

marry and have sons. The belief was that the royal marriage would secure allies and children would ensure heirs for the succession. She ultimately refused and in doing so she not only shocked her people but also established herself as a phenomenon.²⁷⁰ Elizabeth's speeches in response to requests from Parliament for her to marry not only demonstrate her skills with the language, but they also show how she was unique in terms of both women and rulers of the age.

One of the first marriage proposals Elizabeth received came from her sister's widower, King Philip II of Spain, and within the first months of her reign.²⁷¹ Even though she was young, she had much experience with the controversies of marriage from observing her father. Elizabeth knew that marrying her sister's widower would require a papal dispensation. Securing that dispensation would also prove her birth to be unlawful. Her father married her mother because he declared the papal dispensation allowing him to marry his previous wife was unlawful.²⁷² Essentially, if Elizabeth accepted her own papal dispensation to marry Philip that would mean that the papal dispensation used to allow Henry VIII to marry Catherine of Aragon was also valid. If that first dispensation was valid, then Henry's marriage to Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, was not valid. This would mean that Elizabeth would be an illegitimate child of Henry VIII thereby invalidating her claim to the throne. She therefore turned down Philip, despite England's need for strong allies. For the next several years she eloquently turned down other marriage proposals in this same manner.²⁷³ She let all of her suitors down easily as opposed to harshly refusing them, once again demonstrating her wisdom and ability to handle matters of state with grace.

²⁷⁰ Alison Plowden, *Tudor Women: Queens & Commoners* (Thrupp, Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton Pub., 1998), 154-155.

²⁷¹ Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious princess Elizabeth*, 5.

²⁷² *Ibid*, 6.

²⁷³ *Ibid*, 34-35.

Elizabeth's first speech before Parliament occurred four months into her reign, on February 10, 1559. Even though this was the first time she addressed Parliament in person, she already had to respond to pressure from them for her to marry. She opened her speech by thanking them for their concern but also explaining that she was serving God's will and she believed she was doing well to that point.²⁷⁴ Elizabeth was prudent enough to attempt to flatter the members of Parliament by graciously thanking them. The queen explained to these men that she did not believe that she needed a husband in order to serve God and country. She also gently reminded Parliament that there was a chance that God would never want her to marry. Instead, He may guide her in choosing a successor that would be wiser and stronger than a child from her could be.²⁷⁵ She wanted people to believe that she knew that simply being the offspring of a ruler did not guarantee that one was fit to rule.

The House of Commons again petitioned the queen to marry on January 28, 1563. They expressed to their monarch that they thought the most important desire of the people of England at that time was continuing her government through "honorable issue" of her body.²⁷⁶ The Commons also flattered her by reminding her of the successes of her reign to that point and asked her how they could possibly handle such issues in the future if she were to die without an heir.²⁷⁷ The queen's response was equally as elegant as the Commons' petition. She first explained that discussing such a matter was embarrassing and inappropriate for someone of her

²⁷⁴ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's First Speech before Parliament, February 10, 1559, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 56-57.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 58.

²⁷⁶ Thomas Williams, The Commons' Petition to the Queen at Whitehall, January 28, 1563, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 73.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 76.

sex.²⁷⁸ She projected an image of a timid woman despite her own confidence; she knew that the men of Parliament would want her to be a submissive woman. Elizabeth continued her speech despite her reservations because God gave her the kingly throne and that meant she alone was able to talk about such things when other women could not.²⁷⁹ Not only did she set herself apart from other women but she also gave validity to her right to speak to the powerful men gathered before her. Essentially the queen chose to put off answering their petition for her marriage claiming she was not ready to make such an important decision. She did comfort the members of Parliament by ensuring them that she would not be careless when she ultimately did make a decision about her marriage, but she explained that she could not answer yet because she would not “...in so deep a matter wade with so shallow a wit.”²⁸⁰ Elizabeth knew this was an important decision and she had to ensure people knew she was wise enough to weigh all of the options and make the best decision both for herself and for her country. Once again the queen successfully projected the image of a powerful ruler through her skills with speech.

The next time Elizabeth received a petition from Parliament for her to marry it came from the House of Lords in February of 1563. They explained they were asking her to do something that they would ask of any prince. The Lords argued that it was essential that she marry so the succession could be solidified. They expressed that this was the most important issue because she could die unexpectedly at any moment and the country would be left without a ruler.²⁸¹

Elizabeth’s answer was short and to the point: she told the Lords to not worry about the

²⁷⁸ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s Answer to the Commons’ Petition that She Marry, January 28, 1563, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 70.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 70.

²⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 71-72.

²⁸¹ The Lords’ Petition to the Queen, circa February 1, 1563, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 81-82.

succession because she planned to live a long time.²⁸² The queen was not too harsh at this point but she did make it clear that she was not worried about who she would marry or who her heir would be. Her brief response essentially told the Lords that they were not going to achieve the result that they had hoped for right away but rather she was better prepared for the future than they thought.

Finally, in November of 1566, Elizabeth's patience with Parliament ended. After receiving several petitions for her marriage, she called a joint delegation of both houses to address the issue once and for all. The queen was angry that both the Lords and Commons thought she was being careless about her marriage and the succession. She did not understand why they did not trust her and said she would not repeat what she had already said in regards to her potential marriage.²⁸³ Her tone shifted dramatically from her previous speeches about this matter. She was sharp with her words and this indicates that she was irritated with Parliament. She continued by telling them that she had consulted learned men and no one would give her advice about the succession because it was such a dangerous topic. Elizabeth emphasized that she had studied government and knew that once an heir was established, even if they were the child of the current ruler, that ruler's safety was no longer guaranteed.²⁸⁴ If she declared an heir she would run the risk of rebellion in an attempt to take her off the throne and replace her with her successor. She also made sure that these great men knew that she was not an uneducated little girl but rather a well-read and powerful woman. Once again, she projected an air of

282 Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Answer to the Lords' Petition that She Marry, April 10, 1563, Delivered by Lord Keeper Nicholas Bacon, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 80.

²⁸³ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons, November 5, 1566, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 95.

²⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 97.

confidence and expressed her power through her words. This time she was sharp with her words and ensured that the men serving her in Parliament knew who was truly in charge.

At this point it appears that Queen Elizabeth I did not have any intent to marry. When discussing the state of affairs with the Scottish ambassador between September and October of 1561, she explained to him that she had seen so many controversies over marriages and rights to the crown that she did not want to go through those same troubles. She expressed that she was married to England and her people.²⁸⁵ Elizabeth seemed to have made up her mind about marriage long before her speech to Parliament where she essentially put the Lords and Commons in their place. She spent much of her life surrounded by the controversies of her father's many marriages and simply wanted to avoid that trouble. Despite her convictions she attempted to ease the concerns of other government officials through her eloquent speech. Ultimately those officials berated her with questions over the marriage and succession so much that she decided to exercise her power through her words.

University Orations

Queen Elizabeth gave several speeches to both Oxford and Cambridge Universities. These speeches did not address issues of state but instead reference both her education as well as her adoration for learning in general. Elizabeth used the languages she learned with Roger Ascham as her tutor to create an image of herself as a wise and virtuous monarch.²⁸⁶ She gave all three of these orations in Latin. This is remarkable because Latin was typically a language

²⁸⁵ Queen Elizabeth's Conversations with the Scottish Ambassador, William Maitland, Laird of Lethington, September and October 1561, 65.

²⁸⁶ Shenk, "Turning Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy: Elizabeth I's Learned Persona and Her University Orations," 78-79.

reserved only to men.²⁸⁷ The queen not only projected her passion for learning and her respect for the education she received from Ascham and other tutors by traveling to and giving these speeches to the most reputable universities in England. She also created an image for herself of a learned and almost masculine monarch that should be respected. Additionally, she demonstrated her remarkable nature by using a language most women were not educated in while addressing men who were the most educated people in England.

Elizabeth delivered her first university oration on August 7, 1564 at Cambridge. In a show of modesty, she opened by expressing how worried she was about giving an unprepared speech to such a respectable audience. She said that “feminine modesty” should prevent her from doing so, but she chose to speak anyways.²⁸⁸ Essentially Elizabeth accomplished two things with these opening statements. For one, she expressed humility in the face of men who were considered the best and brightest in England. Secondly, she subtly declared that despite cultural expectations of “feminine modesty” she would speak anyways because she was confident enough to and she did not fall into the realm of cultural expectations. Instead, Elizabeth Tudor was the exception to most expectations. The duration of this oration expressed her adoration and respect for the university. Ultimately she finished by declaring that she was not happy that she took the men in front of her away from their studies for so long.²⁸⁹ Whilst giving this speech Elizabeth at least attempted to indicate to the men listening that she had the utmost respect for education as a result of her own nurtured education.

²⁸⁷ Mueller and Scodel, eds., *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589*, 333.

²⁸⁸ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s Latin Oration at Cambridge University, August 7, 1564, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 87.

²⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 89.

The queen then gave a similar Latin oration at Oxford University on September 5, 1566. After spending some time observing the university she ultimately chose to give a speech to acknowledge how impressed she was by the university. She also expressed to the educated men gathered there that she was disappointed in her inability to demonstrate her own skills in learning and to show off the fruits of the labor of her teachers.²⁹⁰ She appeared to be quite proud of her education and wanted to present her knowledge to the men of Oxford and was not satisfied that she did not have the opportunity to do so. Education was a significant part of Elizabeth's young life and it remained important to her throughout her reign. In this speech she indicated that she respected education and was grateful for what she had learned from her tutors and her years of practice.

Elizabeth gave her final Latin university oration to Oxford in 1592. This speech came long after the other two. The lapse in time but her decision to return to the university to speak again shows that she was still concerned with education even as she aged and became more experienced as a ruler. Once again the queen apologized to the Oxford men, but this time because she felt that the years of rule and the cares of government had blunted her learning.²⁹¹ She knew that she would make various mistakes in her Latin speech despite the years she devoted to perfecting it in her youth. She had been queen for almost thirty-four years at that point and had not had many opportunities to practice with Latin because she was concerned with matters of state. Despite her own personal reservations and embarrassment, Elizabeth's

²⁹⁰ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Latin Oration at Oxford University, September 5, 1566, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 90-91.

²⁹¹ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth's Latin Speech to the Heads of Oxford University, September 28, 1592, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 327.

determination to speak to the heads of Oxford towards the end of her life demonstrates her devotion to and respect for learning. This also shows her natural skill as a life-long learner in that it had been years since she had practiced Latin but she was still able to deliver a speech in that language. Each of these university orations shows how Elizabeth was a remarkable and educated person as well as a capable ruler who knew the importance of developing an image that projected knowledge and power.

Speeches from her Later Reign

To this point this study has focused on speeches from the first several years of her reign, with the exception of the final university oration. This is to emphasize how Elizabeth's education played such a major role in the development of her skills as a monarch. Speech was a skill that Elizabeth fine-tuned and perfected throughout her reign. Towards the end of her reign she gave at least two speeches that are remembered as some of the most remarkable speeches given by any ruler. One was her speech to the troops gathered at Tilbury Field awaiting the Spanish Armada in 1588, and the other was her last speech to Parliament in 1601 which is remembered as her Golden Speech. Both of these speeches demonstrate a shift in tone from earlier speeches in how they emphasize her love for her people.

Elizabeth's Tilbury speech is one of the shortest surviving formal speeches she gave. It is still remembered as the prize of her speeches.²⁹² The audience in this occasion was unlike any audience she had addressed before. Instead of being a group of men in Parliament, this was a group of men preparing to fight a war for her sake. As such, she opened the speech by

²⁹² Green, "I My Self": Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp," 423.

addressing the troops gathered there as her loving people.²⁹³ In doing so she demonstrated the love and appreciation she always claimed she had for her people. She told the troops that people had warned her about presenting herself in front of armed men but she was not afraid of them but instead placed her life and her trust with them.²⁹⁴ Elizabeth trusted her subjects in front of her with her life and that was a show of confidence that the men likely needed to see prior to engaging in battle. From there she expressed her certainty that England would be victorious in this battle if the troops followed her. She declared “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the hearth and stomach of a king and of a king of England too.”²⁹⁵ This powerful quote is a demonstration of her understanding of the expectations of her to be a weak ruler simply because of her gender. Additionally, it instills in her troops the confidence that even though she was a woman she had the same abilities of any man to rule England. Thus, if they followed her command they would surely be victorious. Elizabeth Tudor was an artist at expressing sentiments that fit the occasion.²⁹⁶ The Tilbury speech as a whole and this quote especially are demonstrative of that ability. That ability came from years of experience, but also can be attributed to an education that fostered in her an ability to speak like no other woman. In this speech, she ultimately projected the image that she had been building throughout her entire reign. This speech is the culmination of the earlier cultivation of an image of a masculine and powerful monarch.

Elizabeth’s Golden Speech to Parliament on November 30, 1601 marked the symbolic end to her reign. Within this speech her tone shifts from one in which she demanded respect and

²⁹³ Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588, 325.

²⁹⁴ Ibid, 325-326.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 326.

²⁹⁶ Green, “I My Self”: Queen Elizabeth I’s Oration at Tilbury Camp,” 423.

obedience to one in which she was grateful for her people and her reign. Elizabeth proclaimed that the love of her people was the most precious jewel she could have and she was appreciative of being the queen to such a loving people.²⁹⁷ The queen explained that the love of a people was the strongest protection a monarch could have against insurrections and rebellions.²⁹⁸ At this point she expressed that she had achieved that love and was grateful to her people for that. Despite the overwhelming appreciative and loving tone of this speech, she also reminded Parliament that she did not fear any enemy, foreign or domestic, at any time during her rule.²⁹⁹ Although she no longer needed to project an air of authority and a need to be obeyed, she was still confident enough in her abilities and proud enough of her reign that she had to remind the men before her of that confidence. Ultimately this speech marks a shift in her tone and her outlook on her rule. She no longer appears to have felt the need to express her power through her words so instead she chose gratitude. All of Elizabeth's speeches were given for specific purposes and to achieve specific goals, and this one was no different.

Conclusion

The story of Elizabeth Tudor is nothing if not unexpected. She was not meant to be born the daughter of Henry VIII and she was not meant to be queen as she was third in line for the throne. She was not trained to be a ruler but she ruled longer than any other Tudor monarch. Elizabeth received a remarkable education as a young girl and started develop remarkable characteristics as she learned multiple languages and practiced skills in rhetoric. Once she

²⁹⁷ Elizabeth Tudor, Elizabeth's Golden Speech, November 30, 1601, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 337.

²⁹⁸ See previous section on the *Sententiae*. Tudor, *Sententiae*, 36 4.

²⁹⁹ Tudor, Elizabeth's Golden Speech, 340.

became queen she fine-tuned those skills in such a way that she was able to exercise her authority through her words. Her reign became a story of how authority is preserved through the application of intellect.³⁰⁰ In other words Elizabeth was able to use her education to ultimately project the image and abilities of a strong ruler, despite the fact that she was a woman. She used her words and her skills with rhetoric to develop an image of a skilled ruler from the onset of her rule. She wanted to appear confident in her knowledge and her strength as a monarch. She once declared to Parliament that “I thank God that I am indeed endued with such qualities that if I were turned out of the realm in my petticoat, I were able to live in any place in Christendom.”³⁰¹ Elizabeth did not need clothes or other worldly things to survive in life. She was equipped with extraordinary knowledge and abilities that not only allowed her to survive, but also caused her to succeed in ways that most people at the time never thought possible. This success can be attributed to her creation of the image of a strong ruler through her ability to speak. She used her words and skills with rhetoric to portray herself as authoritative and commanding. Elizabeth ultimately created an image of herself as a skilled, and arguably masculine, monarch. In doing so she established her right to rule and cemented her authority even at the beginning of her reign.

³⁰⁰ Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect*, 2.

³⁰¹ Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s Speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons, 97.

CONCLUSION

Elizabeth Tudor was born into a tumultuous time in England and within her own family. The controversy surrounding the marriage of her parents as well as her mother's supposed affair and later execution made for a challenging childhood. Despite all the uncertainty surrounding her birth and her mother's death, Elizabeth impressed people even at a young age. In his introduction Camden discussed the princess and how she was always in good grace with her brother, the nobility, and the people. He described her as beautiful and claimed that she was "well-deserving a crown".³⁰² She appears to have been very well-liked long before it was clear that she would ever actually become queen. The one area in which most historians seem to agree Elizabeth was particularly blessed was education. Camden described her as being "indefatigably given to the study of learning" and commented that she was fluent in Latin, French, Italian, and Greek by the ripe old age of seventeen.³⁰³ In fact, it is arguable that Elizabeth received better training and was even more proficient in Greek than was her own father.³⁰⁴ Thus, despite the challenges of her youth, Princess Elizabeth was at least fortunate enough to receive an outstanding education. Not only was she offered an exceptional education, she also excelled at learning. When Elizabeth was six years old, Sir Thomas Wriothesley visited court to present the King's Christmas greetings.³⁰⁵ Upon meeting the young princess he remarked that "She gave humble thanks, enquiring again of his Majesty's welfare, and that with as great a gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will

³⁰² Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, xxx.

³⁰³ *Ibid*, xxx.

³⁰⁴ Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, 11.

³⁰⁵ Sir Thomas Wriothesley was the First Earl of Southampton and was an influential minister of state in the later part of Henry VIII's reign.

prove of no less honour to womanhood than shall beseem her father's daughter."³⁰⁶

Wriothesley appeared to be so impressed by Elizabeth's education up to that point that he was confident that if her education progressed no further, she would still be an honor to her father. This assessment of the young princess was given long before Roger Ascham took control of her education. Despite the fact that the rest of her childhood met the expectations for most early modern English aristocratic girls, young Elizabeth began to stand out with her natural intellectual abilities as early as the age of six.

Elizabeth was fortunate enough to have Roger Ascham as a tutor, arguably the "greatest and wisest pedagogue of the age."³⁰⁷ Ascham contributed greatly to the development of the monarch Elizabeth would become. The biggest gift Ascham gave his student was the fact that he taught her without regard to her gender.³⁰⁸ In comparison, Elizabeth's older sister was trained as a woman. Her tutor Juan Luis Vives gave her a moral education and trained a good Christian woman who was silent and submissive. In fact, Vives asserted that women, by nature, were not suited to learning. He also asserted that rhetoric was a skill inappropriate for a woman and instruction in rhetoric should be left out of any plan of education for females.³⁰⁹ On the other hand, Ascham encouraged Elizabeth's scholarly abilities and helped her fine-tune her written and oral skills.³¹⁰ If Elizabeth had been raised more like her sister, she may not have been as successful of a monarch. She was skilled in languages and even Ascham was impressed by her speaking abilities.³¹¹ This particular skill in rhetoric was remarkable due to the overwhelming

³⁰⁶ Quoted in Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect*, 16.

³⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 17.

³⁰⁸ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors," 68.

³⁰⁹ Friedman, "The Influence of Humanism on the Education of Girls and Boys in Tudor England," 63.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 61.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, 69.

expectation for women of the age to remain silent.³¹² Despite the advent of humanism in education, women were still largely trained to remain in the domestic sphere. Even some of the most influential men in education, such as Thomas More and Erasmus, agreed that women should be raised to be perfect *mulier economica*.³¹³ Thus, Elizabeth Tudor was trained to be exceptional by her tutor Roger Ascham who unwittingly prepared her for kingship by encouraging her to speak.³¹⁴ Elizabeth's Scottish cousin, Mary, Queen of Scots, was also trained in languages and learned to speak Latin at an early age. A biographer stated that when she gave a Latin oration as a teenager that the applause from the crowd was in response to her charm as opposed to in awe of her speaking abilities.³¹⁵ In comparison to another queen regnant who ruled at the same time, Elizabeth's speaking abilities and skills with projecting her power through her words stand out.

Roger Ascham published his pedagogical manual titled *The Schoolmaster* in 1589. Although this was published long after his time spent as Elizabeth's tutor, this text explains Ascham's views on education and the psychology of learning.³¹⁶ *The Schoolmaster* presents an understanding of how Elizabeth was educated and what was unique about her education in comparison to that of other girls, such as her sister.³¹⁷ Ascham himself noted that of all of his

³¹² For a discussion of the roles and expectations of women in Tudor England see the introduction to Margaret Patterson Hannay, ed., *Silent but for the Word: Tudor Women as Patrons, Translators, and Writers of Religious Works*. The essays included in that volume go on to discuss how women would express themselves solely through writing. Elizabeth is well-known for having given many remarkable speeches which breaks the mold of the expectations of women at the time.

³¹³ See Cousins, "Humanism, Female Education, and Myth: Erasmus, Vives, and More's To Candidus".

³¹⁴ Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss)", 70. The use of the term "kingship" rather than "queenship" is very intentional. It is a reflection of how Elizabeth actually demonstrated masculine traits as queen and even embraced the title of "Prince" or "King". For a discussion of how Elizabeth carried herself as an "honorary male" see Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy," *Feminist Review*, no. 4 (1980), 45–56.

³¹⁵ Henderson, *Mary, Queen of Scots: her environment and tragedy*, 78.

³¹⁶ Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*.

³¹⁷ See Vosevich, "The Education of a Prince(ss): Tutoring the Tudors."

pupils, Elizabeth was his “brightest star.”³¹⁸ Not only did Ascham provide an excellent education for the princess, Elizabeth already had remarkable abilities in learning and education. A combination of these factors is what contributed to the development of this successful monarch. If a monarch proves to be well-educated, they demonstrate their ability to hold political office.³¹⁹ Elizabeth’s education was a fundamental element in her ability to rule because her aptitude with rhetoric allowed her to express her political power and skill.

Elizabeth was skilled in multiple languages and was particularly capable in rhetoric. These abilities fostered in her the ability to depict herself as a successful ruler.³²⁰ Her knowledge of multiple languages and her written and oral skills in these languages allowed her to demonstrate her intelligence and power in the multitude of speeches she gave to various audiences throughout her reign. For example, Elizabeth gave her first speech as queen to Parliament on November 20, 1558. This speech is one of her most important as it set the tone for the duration of her reign and how she would interact with the lords of her Privy Council. In this speech she expressed her trust in the men surrounding her and told them that she planned to make all decisions using their advice.³²¹ This shows her skill as a politician in that she demonstrated the understanding of the need to use the help of other government officials. Also, even if she ultimately did not follow the advice of these officials, she made them think that she did thus exercising her control over them. Therefore, Elizabeth appeared to be a natural ruler even in the days immediately following her ascension to the throne at the ripe old age of twenty-

³¹⁸ Quoted in Johnson, *Elizabeth I: A Study in Power and Intellect*, 17.

³¹⁹ Shenk, "Turning Learned Authority into Royal Supremacy: Elizabeth I's Learned Persona and Her University Orations," 78.

³²⁰ *Ibid*, 78.

³²¹ Elizabeth Tudor, Queen Elizabeth’s First Speech, Hatfield, November 20, 1558, In *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, edited by Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 52.

five years old. Elizabeth continued to give speeches in this manner for the duration of her reign. Her skills with languages and her ability to exercise her power through her speech are what made her reign so extraordinary.

Historians largely agree that Elizabeth I was a successful and stable monarch. For example, after years of religious instability in England during the reigns of her father, brother, and sister, Elizabeth took on the challenge of restoring Protestantism in England as her primary task at the beginning of her reign. By the middle of 1559, less than a year after she ascended the throne, Protestantism was restored and the laws Mary repealed were reestablished. The transition from Mary's Catholicism to Elizabeth's Protestantism was an easy transition due to the fact that it was not an abrupt change, but rather a gradual transition.³²² All of this, more commonly known as the Elizabethan Religious Settlement, is demonstrative of how successful she was as a monarch. In her first year as queen she was able to settle the issues of religion that had been racking England for a quarter of a century, which also happened to be her entire lifetime to that point. Historians have been addressing this success for centuries. This study unpacked the origins of that success by establishing what elements of her childhood and education allowed her to project power and establish her right to rule.

Despite a rather challenging upbringing and the question of her future looming over her head, Princess Elizabeth Tudor still proved to be an exceptional child and student. If not for her skills at learning and the unique education afforded to her by her tutor Roger Ascham, Elizabeth may not have become the "most renowned and victorious princess" that William Camden introduced her as. She was given extraordinary opportunities in her education and because of

³²² Camden, *The history of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth*, 9, 22.

that she was able to construct power in ways that other queens regnant of that time were not able. By examining her education and comparing it with that of other girls of the age as well as with other female monarchs, this study establishes that Elizabeth Tudor received an exceptional education. From those learned skills Queen Elizabeth was able to exercise her power through her words throughout her long reign. That ability allowed her to project herself as a strong and stable monarch and ultimately that is why the reign of Queen Elizabeth Tudor is characterized as the Golden Age of Elizabeth.

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