

# The Performativity of Female Power and Public Participation through Elizabethan Royal Progresses<sup>1</sup>

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*This article seeks to establish how royal progresses were instrumental in the facilitation of politics, the negotiation of power, and expressions of discontent during the Elizabethan period. Thereby, arguing that Elizabethan politics shifted from uncontested Tudor power, to relying on popular support and the performance of monarchy that were central to the negotiations of power in sixteenth-century England and Europe. The magnificent spectacles, sacred rituals, and visual propaganda created by the Tudor dynasty, especially during the reign of Elizabeth I, provided the model through which power and politics are performed to shape modern political exchange, social discourse, and cultural relevance. For Elizabeth, the effectiveness of her rulership and the legitimacy of her authority rested entirely on the successful performativity of female power and the public's acceptance and obedience to the Queen's authority. The study of progresses highlights the intersection of Elizabethan politics and culture that emphasised a unique dialogue that was performed between the monarch, government, court and the localities they visited. This article contributes to the theorising of performance and politics by employing Clifford Geertz's seminal work in the field of cultural anthropology that emphasises the performance of royal rituals and ceremony to focus on the cultural and social interactions between institutions of power and the public sphere. This important formative study will be paired with Jan Bloemendal's study of how the integrated public sphere emerged from the various perspectives from key players within society. Judith Butler's study will theoretically underpin the performativity of female power that emerges from the social and patriarchal constructions regarding early modern women. Throughout this article, my argument fulfils two objectives: 1) to contribute to the historical mapping of the performativity of politics and power that is the focus of this special edition of Liminalities; 2) to provide a vital study into the interplay of Elizabethan political culture, gender roles, and royal power to map out how the performance of rulership and political dialogue on royal progresses led to criticism, counsel, and responses. Thereby transforming how government structures operated, and illustrating how power was manipulated and exercised.*

In a time when Brexit dominates the British and European news cycles, and while race relations, gender inequality, and political discontent dominates American culture, the state of politics and institutions of power are the targets of public protests

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and criticism. However, what makes these situations and conflicts exceptional are the powerful displays created through visual imagery, and, more importantly, through performance via actions and words. These displays have significantly influenced the political landscape. The notorious public spectacles for Donald Trump in 2016 and 2018 have been characterised in two ways: as “part rock concert, part costume parade, part festival, all led by an unpredictable celebrity ringmaster” and numerous protests as a “display of defiance” to Trump’s leadership or lack thereof.<sup>2</sup> These two instances highlight the ways in which power and protest are performed. The use of visual displays and performances in gaining, reinforcing, or contesting power and of expressing discontent and opposition is not a modern invention. In fact, the use of performances to exhibit power and protest are rooted in Renaissance culture. The Tudors were exceptional in employing spectacles to display power, exercise authority, and to secure loyalty and allegiance. The practicality and value of displays were most evident and influential on royal progresses; travels made by the monarch around their kingdom. The magnificent spectacles, sacred rituals, and visual propaganda created by the Tudor dynasty provided the model through which power and politics are performed to shape modern political exchange, social discourse, and cultural relevance.

The town hall meetings, political rallies and campaigns, and large-scale protests are reflective of the forms and modes of Tudor visual propaganda and royal progresses. The music played at a Trump rally, mentioned above, was used to announce the arrival of the leader; whereas, similarly, the sound of horns and fanfare heralded the arrival of the monarch into a city or at the home of a host. For example, in 1564, during Queen Elizabeth’s visit to the University of Cambridge, the registrar, Matthew Stokys recorded that “Then cam the trumpetours and by sol-emne blast declared her maiestie to approche...”<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth I of England (1553—

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<sup>2</sup> Jenna Johnson, “Frozen in time, President Trump and his supporters celebrate at his campaign rallies as though it’s still 2016”, *The Washington Post*, 18 October 2018; Barbara Ellen, “Balloon Trump is the perfect British protest. An international tour awaits.”, *The Guardian*, 8 July 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Stokys’s Book, Cambridge University Library, University Archives, Misc. Collect. 4, fos. 66-67; also printed and annotated in the newly edited John Nichols Collection. Matthew Stokys was the University of Cambridge’s registrar from 1558-1591. He compiled the records of the university’s business and accounts. At the time of Elizabeth’s visit, he was an

1603)<sup>4</sup> used progresses to a greater degree than that of her predecessors. She went on twenty-three progresses and visited over 400 hosts during her forty-five-year reign. These progresses were not just recreational travels but were visual and performed political tools that were fundamental in cultivating Elizabethan politics and public loyalty, while consolidating and reinforcing the Queen's power. The nature and spectacle of royal progresses exhibited the performance of female power, bolstered royal authority, policed conformity, and secured allegiance, all while shaping popular monarchy. Simultaneously, the public, both courtiers and ordinary citizens, publicly participated in political discourse and articulated criticism of the Queen, her government, policies, and international relations.



Fig. 1: 'Procession Portrait of Queen Elizabeth I of England preceded by the Knights of the Garter', attributed to Robert Peake the Elder, c. 1603, Sherborne Castle. Available in the public domain through Wiki Commons.

This article seeks to establish how royal progresses were instrumental in the facilitation of politics, the negotiation of power, and expressions of discontent during the Elizabethan period. Thereby, arguing that Elizabethan politics shifted from uncontested power, to relying on popular support and the performance of monarchy that were central to the negotiations of power in sixteenth-century England

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officer in charge of the ceremonial events, known as the bedell, at the University of Cambridge. John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth I: A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources*, ed. Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke, Jayne Elisabeth Archer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), vol. I, 375, 393-394. All references to Nichols and relevant volumes will be written as 2:375, indicating volume and page number.

<sup>4</sup> For overview of the life of Elizabeth I of England, cf. Patrick Collinson, "Elizabeth I (1533-1603)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2012).

and Europe. For Elizabeth, the effectiveness of her rulership and the legitimacy of her authority rested entirely on the successful performativity of female power and the public's acceptance and obedience to the Queen's authority. The cultivation of loyalty, allegiance and obedience through performance enhances our understanding of how the establishment of royal power was conditional on achieving this devotion. The study of progresses highlights the intersection of Elizabethan politics and culture that emphasised a unique dialogue that was performed between the monarch, government, court and the localities they visited. While the study of royal progresses is not new, the examination of the interrelations between rulership, especially female rulership, public discourse and public performance during these progresses, and the role these interrelations had in shaping early modern society has not been given due consideration.

This article contributes to the theorising of performance and politics by employing Clifford Geertz's seminal work in the field of cultural anthropology that emphasises the performance of royal rituals and ceremony to focus on the cultural and social interactions between institutions of power and the public sphere.<sup>5</sup> This important formative study will be paired with Jan Bloemendal's study of how the integrated public sphere emerged from the various perspectives from key players within society.<sup>6</sup> Judith Butler's study will theoretically underpin the performativity of female power that emerges from the social and patriarchal constructions regarding early modern women.<sup>7</sup> This article will incorporate examples and a variety of manuscript materials from Elizabeth I's royal progresses such as the 1574 progress to Bristol, the 1575 progress to Kenilworth, and a case study of the 1578 progress to Norwich, and other instances to illustrate the performativity of female power and public participation. Throughout this article, my argument, fulfils two objectives: 1) to contribute to the historical mapping of the performativity of politics and power that is the focus of this special edition of *Liminalities*; 2) to provide a vital study into the interplay of Elizabethan political culture, gender roles, and royal power to map out how the performance of rulership and political dialogue on royal progresses led to criticism, counsel, and responses. Thereby transforming how government structures operated, and illustrating how power was manipulated and exercised.

While this article addresses major historical concepts such as political culture, the institution of monarchy, and early modern dialogue, the primary focus will be on the ways in which female power and public participation was performed on royal progresses. Therefore, the topic of political culture, institution of monarchy,

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<sup>5</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power", in *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretative Anthropology* (New York: Basic Books, 1983).

<sup>6</sup> Jan Bloemendal, "Reception and Impact: Early Modern Latin Drama, its Audience, and its Role in forming Public Opinion" in *Neo-Latin Drama: Forms, Functions, Receptions*, ed. Philip Ford, (Hideshiem: Olms, 2006); J. Bloemendal, Peter G.F. Eversham, and Elsa Strietman, "Drama, Performance, Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period: An Introduction", in *Drama, Performance, and Debate: Theatre and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden Brill, 2013).

<sup>7</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

and early modern dialogue will be briefly contextualised. Following this, the first section will be an analysis of female power during the reign of Elizabeth I and examples of progresses that highlight how female power was performed. The second section will examine the public's participation during Elizabeth's royal progresses.

*Performance of Power, Politics and Dialogue*

Elizabethan society, at large and especially for women, did not have a formal political role or were barred from political participation. Politics and public discourse in the Tudor period did not consist of individuals marching or picketing in a public protest to make their grievances known. Instead, ordinary subjects, primarily men, gathered together and aired their grievances to the nobility or the local gentry.<sup>8</sup> These individuals were the leaders that the discontented rallied behind, ultimately leading to unrest, riots or rebellions. This was the case with the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536, the Western Rebellion in 1547, Kett's Rebellion in 1548, and Wyatt's Rebellion in 1553; of which Kett's Rebellion will be examined in the second section. However, what these public protests reveal is that power and authority did not reside with the nobility or the local gentry, and the monarch did not always maintain absolute power — power was negotiated through performed dialogue and diplomacy. These leaders were merely agents of the local citizens who attempted to negotiate the boundaries of the sovereign's authority. Alternatively, royal power and supremacy via crown-appointed representatives were the dominant forms of control in Elizabethan society but power was also subject to the fulfillment of key conditions expected of the office of the monarchy by the public.

The operation of royal power and verbalisation of supremacy were complex and difficult processes. They came with a set of expectations and principles that had to be balanced with the ideals of being a just ruler, as well as catering to influences and competing agendas. The ability to wield royal power and communicate authority was not automatically acquired through successful victory on the battlefield or by inheritance. It also required a set of circumstances, traditions, rituals and ceremonies to be fulfilled. Over the course of the sixteenth century, Tudor authority and power necessitated a significant amount of engagement, on the sovereign's behalf, with the nobility and gentry, ecclesiastical leaders, government ministers and loyal subjects. But how was loyalty and obedience maintained? How did public discourse influence the balance of power? Ultimately, royal progresses contributed to the cultivation of loyalty and obedience, and provided opportunities for the public to engage with the monarch. However, the practice and use of royal progresses reflected personal monarchy. Therefore, Henry VIII of England (1491-1547)<sup>9</sup> did not use royal progresses to connect with his subjects and address his subject's concerns in the same way or to the extent that his daughter, Elizabeth,

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<sup>8</sup> John Guy, "Monarchy and Counsel: Models of State", in *The Sixteenth-Century, 1485-1603*, ed. Patrick Collinson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 115. Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. E.W. Ives, "Henry VIII (1491-1547)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2009).

had. These differences in the use of royal progresses reflected the issues and circumstances that each monarch faced and how royal progresses aided in addressing those issues. The royal progresses of Elizabeth, however, transformed the operation of power and assertion of authority.

Sixteenth-century monarchy rested on the foundational belief that the sovereign was a “divinely appointed ruler...who was subject to no earthly restraint.”<sup>10</sup> However, the rising tensions surrounding religious worship and court corruption, particularly between the 1530s to the 1550s, gave way to the ideas of popular monarchy or monarchs with “authority originally derived from the acclamation or consent of the people...[for the monarch] to perform a set of defined functions” that was specified “in their coronation oath.”<sup>11</sup> Accordingly, popular monarchy relied on the loyalty and allegiance of the people and the “co-operation of local elites and subjects.”<sup>12</sup> As a result, from the 1550s, English royal authority and society engaged in negotiations of power. The successful persuasion or negotiation of power hinged on the fact that “the early modern state...was a representational state in which political cris[e]s were bound up with cris[e]s of representation.”<sup>13</sup> Therefore, the effectiveness and influence of the monarch’s representation or presence allowed them to have the advantage over the negotiations and maintain the exercise of power. No monarch had a clearer representation than Elizabeth I, who “left so enduring an impression on the English memory” and was able to maintain control over the negotiation of power throughout her reign.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the reliance on the visible nature of monarchy contributed to the development popular sovereignty that emerged in the late sixteenth century, which “was the key stage in the evolution of early modern political consciousness.”<sup>15</sup>

Kevin Sharpe brilliantly asserts

One cannot understand regal representations in early modern England by separating words from images, woodcuts and coins from portraits, rituals from sermons, or any of them from [...] their ideological performances. The world of the Renaissance, early modern England, was an intertextual world, which we can only begin to comprehend, as contemporaries comprehended it, from multidisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary perspectives.<sup>16</sup>

This intertextual world gave meaning, significance, and legitimacy to objects and figures being represented. Visual imagery and spectacles conveyed messages across the social and cultural hierarchy of the early modern world. The use of imagery, performance, and symbolism facilitated national governance, “were an integral practice of international relations”, and were “prompts for broader political

<sup>10</sup> Guy, “Monarchy and Counsel”, 116.

<sup>11</sup> Guy, “Monarchy and Counsel”, 129-130.

<sup>12</sup> J.P.D. Cooper, “Centre and Localities”, in *The Elizabethan World*, eds. Susan Doran and Norman Jones (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), 130.

<sup>13</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), 55.

<sup>14</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 55 and 319.

<sup>15</sup> Guy, “Monarchy and Counsel”, 130.

<sup>16</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 39.

dialogue”.<sup>17</sup> Royal authority and power were expressed through dialogue and exhibited through various mediums of performance, which was common at Elizabeth’s court and was the primary intent of royal progresses. Dialogue came in the form of spoken language, primarily through the common use of rhetoric that persuaded subjects, and visual print. However, and more importantly for the basis of this article, the visual spectacles produced for Elizabeth’s progresses facilitated inclusive dialogues between the Queen and her subjects—from the leading members of the Privy Council to the subjects participating in the festivities during civic visits.



Fig. 2: ‘Queen Elizabeth I (The Ditchley Portrait)’, Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, c. 1592, NPG 2561, National Portrait Gallery. Available in the public domain on the National Portrait Gallery website.

While dialogue was verbalised or expressed, it was also performed. Therefore, the forms in which dialogue was initiated and performed, either by the monarch or

<sup>17</sup> Tracey A Sowerby, “Negotiating the Royal Image: Portrait Exchanges in Elizabethan and Early Stuart Diplomacy”, in *Early Modern Exchanges: Dialogues Between Nations and Cultures, 1550-1750*, ed. Helen Hackett (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing, 2015), 133-136.

their subjects, included: propaganda (visual and aural), petitions, pageants, entertainments (music and plays), art, literature, spoken conversations and exchanges, and physical actions. For example, the presentation of a petition (presented to the sovereign by their subjects) resulted in a response (from the sovereign or their councillors) in the form of either propaganda such as pamphlets, proclamations, or through spoken conversations with local authorities. In fact, the medium of dialogue was critically important in the sixteenth century, because it highlighted what Carole Levin articulates was the “great cultural development that often reflected and helped interpret political events”.<sup>18</sup> The interplay of culture and politics, along with the production of visual displays, were never more salient than during the Elizabeth’s progresses. More to the point, the use of rhetoric and the exchange of political dialogue was central to the performativity and negotiation of power on royal progresses. Performance is another key term that is important to distinguish and is closely intertwined with the term dialogue.

Early modern society operated by a series of rituals, ceremonies, movements, interactions and codes that highlighted and reinforced the social hierarchy—essentially it was the combination of performance and dialogue that guided the spectacles of royal progresses and maintained strict codes of conduct among the public. Performance was the outward theatrical expression and display of rituals, ceremonies, and movements within society, with specific messages being conveyed, including Renaissance ideas of chivalric honour. Performances also included the personality of the monarchy or highlighted the relationship between the ruler and ruled, that gave “authority [to] affective bonds, personations and myths...”.<sup>19</sup> To *perform* was to articulate the theatricality of symbolism and meaning. This performance illuminated what R. Malcolm Smuts identifies as “displays of majesty—gorgeous assemblages of all the trappings of wealth, rank and power known to society”.<sup>20</sup> Clifford Geertz establishes the centrality of performance within the court and between members of society by asserting

any complexly organized society...there is both a governing elite and a set of symbolic forms...[that] justify their existence and order their actions in terms of a collection of stories, ceremonies, insignia, formalities, and appurtenances...<sup>21</sup>

This governing elite not only relied on, but had to cultivate, the monarch’s favour. The interactions between the monarch and the royal court was a performance that “marks the center as center and give[s] what goes on there its aura of being not merely important but in some odd fashion connected with the way the world is built”.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, performance, particularly Elizabethan performance was “the elaborate mystique of court ceremonial [that was] supposed to conceal—that

<sup>18</sup> Carole Levin, *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 3.

<sup>19</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 5.

<sup>20</sup> R. Malcolm Smuts, “Public Ceremony and Royal Charisma: the English Royal Entry in London, 1485-1642”, in *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone*, ed. A.L. Beier, David Cannadine, and James M. Rosenheim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 67.

<sup>21</sup> Geertz, “Centers, Kings and Charisma”, 124.

<sup>22</sup> Geertz, “Centers, Kings and Charisma”, 124.



majesty is made, not born”.<sup>23</sup> This is crucial to understand because the monarch served as the centre and it was their responsibility to project and display this majesty, as well as ensure that those surrounding them contributed to this majesty. Progresses certainly exemplified this as Elizabeth was “at the center of everyone’s attention” and she “found power in the turmoil of an itinerant court and in a ceremonial dialogue with her subjects”.<sup>24</sup> Therefore, it is the notion of performance that serves as our point of departure from the traditional narratives Elizabethan popular politics and to focus on the performance as a means of dialogue and negotiation.



Fig. 3: Image from the pamphlet, *The Honorable Entertainement geven to the Queenes Majestie in Progresses, at Elvetham in Hampshire, by the right Honorable the Earle of Hertford*, London: 1591, held in The Royal Collection at the British Library. Licenced for sharing under the Creative Commons Licence.

### Royal Progresses

The historiography of the Elizabethan period has examined the significance of interactions in wielding royal power and the characterisation of Elizabeth’s queenship through patronage, social relations, court culture, familial networks, and gender roles. However, for the study of royal progresses, the royal court was a key institution. In examining the reign of Elizabeth, historian G.R. Elton was “baffled”

<sup>23</sup> Geertz, “Centers, Kings and Charisma”, 124.

<sup>24</sup> Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 5. Cf. the discussion of ceremonial dialogue in Mary Hill Cole, “Ceremonial Dialogue between Elizabeth I and Her Civic Hosts,” in *Ceremony and Texts in the Renaissance*, ed. Douglas F. Rutledge (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1996), 84-100.

by the Tudor court because “[a]t times it has all the appearance of a fully fledged institution; at others it seems to be no more than a...conceptual piece...covering people, certain behaviour, certain attitudes.”<sup>25</sup> David Loades’s influential study of the Tudor court reveals that the Tudor monarchy “succeeded in making” or, more specifically, succeeded in establishing the court as: the center of culture; the stage of where power was negotiated; the source of drama and propaganda; and the intersection of politics and diplomacy in the sixteenth century.<sup>26</sup> Both Elton and Loades, along with John Adamson, have tended to reduce progresses to one simple explanation, rather than highlight their complex nature.<sup>27</sup> Levin highlights how the court was instrumental in shaping Elizabeth’s queenship, through gossip, gender depictions and drama, as well as ceremony and ritual. Adding that much of the existing “evidence for popular reactions to the queen” is attributed to Elizabeth’s royal progresses.<sup>28</sup> This suggests that court culture served to validate not only Elizabeth’s constructed persona but also that the court provided the stage from which Elizabeth’s power, authority and queenship was performed and reinforced.

Natalie Mears asserts that court politics were not tied solely with “conciliar politics”, that “close personal relationships”, as well as “drama, art, and sermons” played a significant role in political debates at court.<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth’s royal progresses joined together the elements of personal relationships and conciliary politics to restrain her councilors and courtiers. Therefore, the primary mode through which the monarchy and the court were displayed to the people, thereby facilitating the performance of dialogues, elaborate spectacles, and public participation, was through royal progresses. However, it is Mary Hill Cole’s seminal work on Elizabeth’s royal progresses that this article builds upon. Cole’s intellectual contribution to the study of Elizabeth I and royal progresses through a queen centered approach, is two fold: firstly, she has provided quantitative and tabulated results of

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<sup>25</sup> G.R. Elton, “Tudor Government: Points of Contact”, in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government, Volume III: Papers and Reviews, 1975-1981*, ed. G.R. Elton (Cambridge University Press, 1983), 38. Controversially, Elton’s dismissal of particular administrative offices from the royal court has led to restricting the full investigation of the reach of courtly influence. David Starkey, Natalie Mears, and Patrick Collinson have all criticised Elton’s dismissal. David Starkey, “A Reply: Tudor Government: The Facts?”, *The Historical Journal*, 31:4 (Dec., 1988), 921-931; Natalie Mears, “Courts, Courtiers, and Culture in Tudor England,” *The Historical Journal*, 46:3 (Sept., 2003), 703-722; Patrick Collinson, “*De republica Anglorum* or, history with the politics put back”, in *Elizabethan Essays*, ed. Patrick Collinson (London: The Hambledon Press, 1994), 1-29.

<sup>26</sup> David Loades, *The Tudor Court* (Bangor: Headstart History, 1992), 184 and 192.

<sup>27</sup> John Adamson and Sydney Anglo both refer to progresses as a means of escaping the city of London from disease during the summer months. John Adamson, *Princely Courts of Europe, 1500-1750* (London: Weidenfield and Nicholson, 1999), 96. Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 104-105. Loades makes no clear distinction about royal progresses other than a passing mention of their being a part of an “...organization which provided for the feeding of the king and his family, for cleaning, transportation, and a host of other menial functions.” Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 9.

<sup>28</sup> Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 4, 69 and 129.

<sup>29</sup> Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71 and 106.

progresses for the entirety of Elizabeth’s reign; secondly, through presenting meticulously informative tables of Elizabeth’s reign and not on specific episodes, she begins to make sense of the overall legacy, symbolism, and impact of progresses that was a “reflection of the government” and “represented the...strengths and weaknesses of the Queen.”<sup>30</sup> Cole argues that these dialogues or “socializing” served to satisfy “the needs of courtiers, townspeople, and country residents.”<sup>31</sup> This argument serves as the starting point for this examination.



Fig. 4: ‘Elizabeth I arriving at Nonsuch’, Franz Hogenberg after Georg Hoefnagel. Hand-colored engraving from Braun and Hogenberg’s *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, ca. 1598. Folger Shakespeare Library, Folger Shakespeare Digital Image Collection. Licenced for sharing under the Creative Commons Licence.

The primary evidence for royal progresses – letters or histories, financial records, pageants and entertainments devised for the sovereign on progresses – all reveal that progresses contained one essential and important element: access to the monarch. Royal progresses have typically been associated with the need to escape the “plague-ridden capital” or to simply enjoy personal, pleasurable pursuits.<sup>32</sup> To generalise and apply this conclusion that royal progresses were peripheral activities of the monarch would be reductive and false. Henry VIII’s royal progresses certainly were recreational pursuits, with limited engagement with the public, namely members of his court. Henry primarily stayed within royal residences rather than the homes of his courtiers.<sup>33</sup> However, analysis of Elizabeth’s royal progresses has

<sup>30</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 5 and 12.

<sup>31</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 1.

<sup>32</sup> Adamson, *Princely Courts of Europe*, 96. Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, 104-105. Loades, *The Tudor Court*, 9.

<sup>33</sup> In a recent Historic Royal Palaces project that resulted in the successful Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) Network Grant, I concluded in an institutional report (unpublished) that Henry VIII’s progresses did not consist of many visits to the homes of his noblemen or courtiers. As indicated in a table produced for the report, most of the visits

demonstrated that she combined recreation with politics and religion. The Queen's movements identify two distinct types of visits that occurred on royal progresses: civic and private. Civic visits were Elizabeth's visits to "a variety of urban centers" as cities provided a "public arena for shaping royal and civic reputations."<sup>34</sup> Private visits took place at the homes of the noble and landed elite that enabled Elizabeth to express "a style of personal monarchy that depended upon direct contact with people important in their locality as well as at court."<sup>35</sup> However, these visits were not private in that the visits only consisted of the Queen and her host staying within the home. The entire court would have been on these royal progresses with Elizabeth and would have been accommodated by the host in some form. Additionally, these entertainments, meals, and activities of these visits included the court and sometimes the local communities. The privacy element of these visits is identified in two ways. First, the hosts of these visits would have been able to "discuss private matters" with the Queen. Second, while Elizabeth was a guest of the hosts, the spaces within the household were taken over by the Queen and access was restricted. One such measure to restrict access was the use of royal removing locks that were fitted in the doors at the host's home.<sup>36</sup> This use of locks indicates that upon the Queen's visit, the home would serve as a royal residence.

The restriction of access and thereby restricting the movement of people, especially members of the royal court, through various spaces highlights two things: 1) the lengths that were taken to provide security and protection, even in the homes of the Queen's courtiers; and 2) the act of fitting the lock signified royal ownership and visibly displayed Elizabeth's authority of the spaces, as well as demarcated the designation of private spaces. Only a few people had control and access to those spaces. The Queen and only a few high-ranking officers or ladies of the Privy Chamber would have possessed the keys. These 'by-keys' were specific to individual locks and were used on a "need to access" basis.<sup>37</sup> The act of replacing the locks within the host's home was the process of marking specific spaces as part of the royal establishment, and was consequently, the performance of asserting authority.

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on the king's progresses were buildings that were own by Henry or in the crown's possession. This raises the possibility that, while Henry VIII was known for his magnificent displays and spectacles, his royal progresses were in some ways private and that Henry was not interested in developing his relationship with his courtiers or with the populace.

<sup>34</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 97.

<sup>35</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 63.

<sup>36</sup> Victoria Nutt has provided a brief overview of the use of changing locks that were changed in the houses of hosts of Elizabeth I. Victoria Nutt, "Making Progress with the Queen" (MA Thesis, Royal College of Art Joint Course with Victoria and Albert Museum, 2007).

<sup>37</sup> Simon Thurley, *The Royal Palaces of Tudor England: Architecture and Court Life, 1460-1547* (London: Yale University Press, 1993), 83.



Fig. 5: The locks that replaced the existing locks of the Queen's hosts would have been similar to the Beddington Lock shown here. The Beddington Lock, Henry Romaynes, c. 1539-1547, V&A Museum, British Galleries, Room 58, case 4.

Progresses did provide the sovereign, like Elizabeth, with the ability to escape the confines of London, from the spread of diseases during the summer months and to engage with their favourite pursuits. However, progresses were also utilised to address political and religious concerns of Elizabeth and her government: from the lack of policing and enforcement within the cities and localities throughout England, to the increasing numbers of non-conformists from both sides of the religious divide. These visits often served to bestow honour on the host or exact punishment. Simultaneously, increased expressions of public concerns warranted the Queen to engage and respond to grievances. This engagement provided access that allowed both the sovereign and their subjects to communicate and negotiate the bounds of power. The communication exchanged illuminates the social and cultural discourse evident throughout England and highlighted problems that existed within the kingdom. Therefore, progresses remain a topic with which historians can approach “ritual and spectacle as a symbolic system and for the analysis of politics and power.”<sup>38</sup> Also, royal progresses can be a point from which to reassess the practicalities and performativity of power relations, as well as challenging the traditional notions of the public and private divide within royal and court studies.

Tudor royal progresses were a performance of image making to legitimise sovereign authority. This is certainly true for Elizabeth as progresses functioned as a way for the monarch to assert authority and power through the display of magnificence and legitimacy. These mobile spectacles conveyed the image of a benevolent and powerful queen and the expected acknowledgement of that power from her subjects. Additionally, providing her subjects with access and seeing the Queen outside the traditional environs of royal court and palaces, enhanced the Queen's royal persona, while providing an outlet for the public to verbalise their discontent and articulated their needs. Progresses were also a way for kings and queens to

<sup>38</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 50.

garner loyalty, obedience and allegiance; thus adding to this image making. The progress was a form of propaganda communicated by the Queen and her councillors to make sure that the “affairs of state continued” without disruption or widespread dissent.<sup>39</sup>

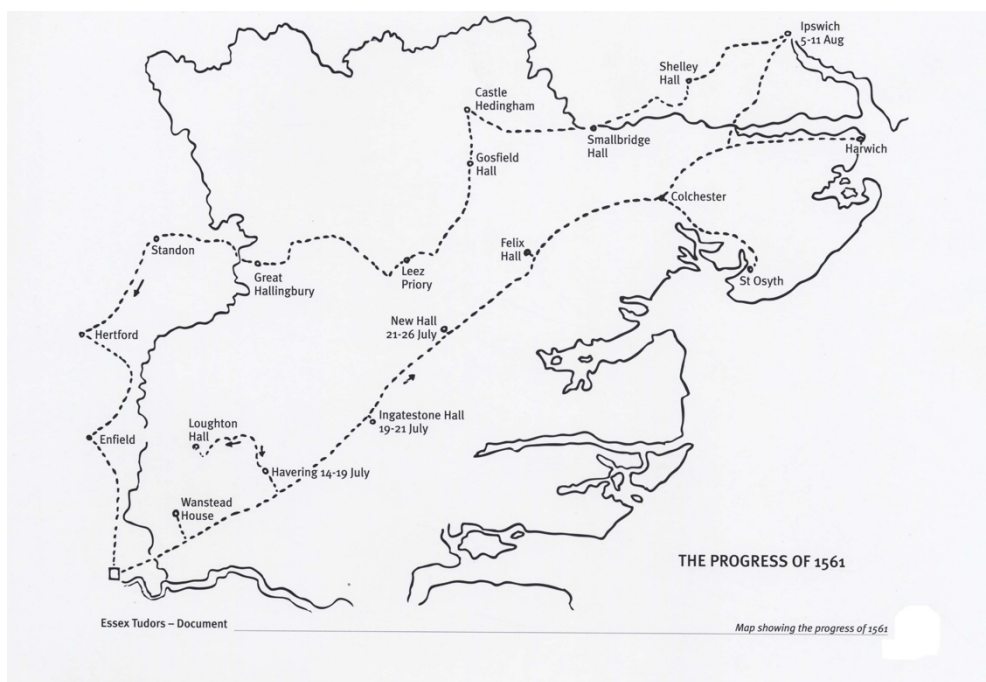


Fig. 6: Essex Record Office, Map of Queen Elizabeth I's 1561 progress, 2008. Available in public domain on National Education Network.

This interesting and important aspect of a sovereign's rule was crucial to the “unity—between ruler and ruled, monarch and land.”<sup>40</sup> In fact, Geertz remarks that “[w]hen kings journey around the countryside, making appearances, attending fêtes, conferring honors, exchanging gifts, or defying rivals, they mark it...as almost physically part of them.”<sup>41</sup> This is key to the ways in which the public informally participated in politics. However, the underlying purpose of progresses was to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Elizabeth's rulership through the performativity of power. Consequently, Elizabeth could not rule in the same manner that her father had. She had to navigate the patriarchal expectations of her gender and needed to show her contemporaries the success of female rule. Utilising the majesty of the monarchy and the chaos of royal progresses, Elizabeth loudly and astutely performed her female power.

<sup>39</sup> Zillah Dovey, *An Elizabethan Progress: The Queen's Journey to East Anglia, 1578* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press), 1-2.

<sup>40</sup> Jayne Elisabeth Archer and Sarah Knight, “Elizabetha Triumphans,” in *The Progresses, Pageants and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, eds. Jayne Elisabeth Archer, Elizabethan Goldring, Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 23 and 3.

<sup>41</sup> Geertz, “Centers, Kings and Charisma”, 125.

**'Monstrous Regiment of Women': The Performativity of Female Power<sup>42</sup>**

On 16 August 1578, Elizabeth entered the City of Norwich. After the initial greeting from civic leaders, the Queen was then approached by the mythological figure Gurgaunt, who was believed to be the first king of Norwich. The performed interaction at this stage of the dialogue contained in the mayor's oration consisted of the rhetoric of praise, honour and loyalty and the giving of "a faire standing cup of siluer and guilt...and in the Cup hundreth pounds in golde."<sup>43</sup> This was the custom of Tudor civic visits; performed rituals and ceremonies included the bestowing of gifts. This form of exchange was demonstrated "through actions, word, clothes, [and] objects" of which "both civic host and royal visitor participated."<sup>44</sup> In fact, the ritualised greeting mirrored the format and structure of the pageant presented on the civic progress to York that Elizabeth's grandfather, Henry VII of England (1457 – 1509)<sup>45</sup>, took in 1486. Henry's progress to York was "an important and traditional instrument of royal propaganda. The King [...] could show himself at various key-points of the realm, and thereby impress the populace with the reality of an authority which must [...] have seemed very remote."<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, upon Henry VII's arrival in York, he was received by "civic dignitaries." Again similarities arise when the King, much like Elizabeth, was thanked for his generosity to the city and then introduced to the mythological figure Ebrank, the founder of York, who greeted Henry as "the King and present[ed] him with the keys of the city, 'being thenheritance of the saide Ebrank, yielding his title and his crowne unto the King...'"<sup>47</sup> However, there was one point of departure between the two ceremonies, Henry was given the keys to the city, while Elizabeth was "yeilded...the sworde of the Citie." This is significant to note, especially as the sword was symbolic of warfare, martial power, and strength.

The very act giving Elizabeth the sword and the performance of Elizabeth holding the sword within the pageants connected the concept of martial power with spectacle of female power. The power dynamics between the sovereign and localities were performed through a structure of rituals and ceremonies, where civic authorities exercised local power but only with the Queen's permission. However, these ceremonies did not diminish Elizabeth's agency. Though this exchange is further explored in depth later in this article, the Queen used her agency to deliver a direct response after the oration, in an unscripted address through which she declares: "we come not therefore, but for that whiche in right is our owne, the heartes and true alleageaunce of our Subiects."<sup>48</sup> This remarkable declaration of Elizabeth

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<sup>42</sup> The reference to 'monstrous regiment of women' derives from John Knox's infamous *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous regiment of women*, 1558. Knox harshly spoke out against women's right to rule.

<sup>43</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:788.

<sup>44</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 9.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. S.J. Gunn, "Henry VII (1457-1509)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>46</sup> Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, 21.

<sup>47</sup> Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry and Early Tudor Policy*, 24-25.

<sup>48</sup> From Garter's *Ioyfull Receyuing of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich*, NRO, COL/7/1 (a), f. 5. Cf. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:790.

demanding allegiance highlights a unique moment where female power was performed. The demand for allegiance was a distinctive part of royal power. But to what extent was female power performed and how can it be identified? The answer lies in the performativity of gender.

The concept of performativity is rooted in feminist theory and the constructions and articulation of gender forged by Judith Butler's formative work on the "socially constructed character of gender."<sup>49</sup> To employ this concept with early modern studies of female power, I want to focus on the second aspect of Butler's explanation that performativity "is not a singular act, but a repetition and ritual, which achieves its effects through its naturalization of the context of a body, understood, in part, as a culturally sustained temporal duration."<sup>50</sup> Therefore, the performativity of early modern female power could be epitomised as the repetition and ritual whereby the female body is visually performing kingly magnificence or masculine acts to meet the conditions of monarchical rule, as well as demonstrating female capability through performances. These performances were incorporated in traditional ceremonies and rituals that served as the pillars of the institution of monarchy.

The focus on the performativity of female power does not diminish the performativity of male power. Male monarchs had to display and perform their royal power in order to legitimise their power and authority. Their performances included religious and civic ceremonies, and the use of royal progresses. Henry VII had established the Tudor dynasty on the basis that spectacles, majesty, and civic pageantry were integral for the public display and legitimacy of his kingship. The magnificence and performance of kingship evolved from the reign of Henry VII, to be completely transformed under Henry VIII, who "began a process of demystifying kingship" that resulted in, what has been suggested, as "monarchical identity...derive[d] more from the performance of royal acts than from sacred anointing."<sup>51</sup> Thus, kingship immediately became a performance aimed towards cultivating public loyalty and obedience. The spectacles and performance of power during the Tudor period has been characterised as the "theatricalization of monarchy"<sup>52</sup>, whereby this theatricalisation and performance of power were not only "exposed" to the "investigative gaze of an audience" but this performance of power was "contingent upon spectators."<sup>53</sup> The difference between the performance of male power and female power was the fact that male power was institutionalised and expected. The performance of female power not only had to achieve the expectations of rulership that was inherent to male monarchs, but had to also demonstrate the ways in which female power was similar to or fulfilled the idea of male power. It was Elizabeth who used the theatre of monarchy, to a greater degree than her predecessors, as a stage from which she performed her female power, particularly on royal progresses.

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<sup>49</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, x.

<sup>50</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xv.

<sup>51</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 77.

<sup>52</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 62.

<sup>53</sup> Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 77. Sharpe references the quote about "monarchical identity" from Thomas Heywood's play *If You Know Not Me*.



Traditionally, the institution of monarchy had no framework to accommodate female rule. This lack of institutional infrastructure required female monarchs to work within a patriarchal and unyielding power structure to bolster their authority. This fact is exemplified through contemporaries arguing for support of female rule for Mary I of England (1516–1558)<sup>54</sup> in the 1554 Act Concerning Regal Power, whereby it was concluded that “the most ancient statutes of this realm being made by kings then Reigning, do not only attribute and refer all prerogative...unto the name of King.”<sup>55</sup> This proclamation established that regal power could be attributed to a queen. Royal power and the sacred institution of monarchy was male and masculine. Rituals, ceremonies, and the social hierarchy did not see women as important participants, much less as agents of politics. However, the sixteenth-century saw an explosive change and shocking disruption to every aspect of life in the Reformation, that stimulated the emergence of public participation, increased political dialogue, and amplified monarchical expectations. Accordingly, it is not surprising that the institution of monarchy would be transformed, especially in light of the fact that female monarchs and their ability to rule for a significant amount of time had “reached unprecedented levels.”<sup>56</sup>

By 1550s, there were no viable male heirs to rule in England; only female descendants were available to maintain stability and continue the dynastic legacy. At the time of Edward VI of England’s (1537–1553)<sup>57</sup> death, there were no male successors with royal blood. The only viable candidates were Jane Grey (1537–1554)<sup>58</sup> and Edward’s half-sisters, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Consequently, to further the Tudor dynasty, and, more importantly, ensure the continuation of the Protestant faith, Edward drafted the “Device for the Succession.” The device stipulated that the Act of Succession would have to be by-passed and exclude his half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth.<sup>59</sup> Given the reality of female rule, the institution and definition of monarchy “became even more complex when women moved into positions of political power.”<sup>60</sup> Therefore, female power had to be performed through crafted spectacles, ceremonies and public displays to secure legitimacy, allegiance, and most of all, effectiveness.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ann Weikel, “Mary I (1516-1558)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>55</sup> “1554 Act concerning Regal Power (I Mary, st. 3, c. I)”, in *Tudor Constitutional Documents A.D. 1485-1603 with historical commentary*, ed. J.R. Tanner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1930), 122-124.

<sup>56</sup> William Monter, *The Rise of Female Kings in Europe, 1500-1800* (London: Yale University Press, 2012), 27.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. Dale Hoak, “Edward VI (1537-1553)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2014).

<sup>58</sup> Jane Grey was the granddaughter of Henry VIII’s sister, Mary Tudor (1496-1533). For information on Jane Grey see Alison Plowden, “Grey [married name Dudley], Lady Jane (1537-1554)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2014). For information on Mary Tudor, sister to Henry VIII of England, cf. David Loades, “Mary (1496-1533)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>59</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 39-41.

<sup>60</sup> Carole Levin, Debra Barrett-Graves, and Jo Eldridge Carney, “Introduction”, *High and Mighty Queens of Early Modern England: Realities and Representations*, ed. Carole Levin, Debra Barrett-Graves, and Jo Eldridge Carney (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1.

This complexity is the basis of new studies into the reassessment and, perhaps, the effectiveness of queenship and female power—from the nature of female rule to the specific cases of women acting as individual agents in the public sphere. As Sarah Jansen convincingly declares, “the narrative of early modern European (and English) political history looked very different....[when] focus[ing] on women” and, I add, when viewing it from the perspective female performativity.<sup>61</sup> In contributing to the approach of focusing on women, the analysis of female performativity within the context of royal progresses highlights the ways in which negotiations of power and political culture were bound together. In fact, these spectacles and displays were part of the larger propaganda machine that sought to repeatedly project the viability and strength of Elizabeth’s supremacy. However, the lack of a structure to guide the exercise of power by a female monarch allowed the Queen to exercise agency to control the message and the dialogue of these performances. Roy Strong articulated the importance of both the visual image and the ceremonial image, along with the ‘devices’ that created those images, by asserting “As in control of the painted image, the ceremonial one was deliberately and carefully composed” to “hold a divided people in loyalty.”<sup>62</sup>

From Elizabeth’s succession to her death (and afterwards), the subject of female power was commented on and, at times, declared “monstrous” by contemporaries. Most notably, John Knox (1514 – 1572)<sup>63</sup>, proclaimed that “it is more then a monstre in nature that Woman shall reign and have empire above a Man” and continued to argue that women were unable to command authority and exercise power because, by nature they were corrupt and easily persuaded by evil. Knox’s writing, though ill-timed (having been published during Elizabeth’s accession to the throne) and harsh, reflected the attitudes about female rulers and emphasised the concerns of Elizabeth’s succession by the prevailing patriarchy. Women could not hold the positions of power because they were unable to carry out the duties and characteristics of a ruler. This obligation included being a martial leader. In fact, Elizabeth’s father remarked that the battlefield was “unmeet for women’s imbecilities.”<sup>64</sup> Even her leading councillors, Francis Walsingham (1532 – 1590)<sup>65</sup> and

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<sup>61</sup> Sarah L. Jansen, *The Monstrous Regiment of Women: Female Rulers in Early Modern Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 5.

<sup>62</sup> Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Pimlico, 1999), 114-115.

<sup>63</sup> Knox was a religious reformer. Cf. Jane E.A. Dawson, “Knox, John (c. 1514-1572)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>64</sup> The National Archives (TNA), State Papers (SP) 1/215, f. 34.

<sup>65</sup> Walsingham was Elizabeth’s spymaster and principal secretary. Cf. Simon Adams, Alan Bryson and Mitchell Leimon, “Walsingham, Sir Francis (c. 1532-1590)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2009).

William Cecil (1520/21 – 1598)<sup>66</sup> were reconciling the idea of female power.<sup>67</sup> John Aylmer (1520/21 – 1594),<sup>68</sup> though defending Elizabeth's right to rule, accepted that women were not suited for monarchy and further asserted that "to rule...wemen be not so mete as men".<sup>69</sup> In 1558, the Archbishop of York, Nicholas Heath, actively argued against Elizabeth's authority to head the Church of England because she was "a woman by birthe and nature" and "not qualyfyed by God's worde to feed the flock of Chryst."<sup>70</sup> The debates concerning female power and women's political authority was even the basis of a 1561 legal dispute, through which English lawyers promoted the medieval concepts of the sovereign's two bodies—the body natural and the body politic. The argument of the sovereign's two bodies suggests that the body politic was performed and only legitimised through the anointing ritual of the coronation that conferred the body politic onto the sovereign's natural body. However, it was not only the leading authorities that commented on the sovereign's two bodies. In 1566, Elizabeth visited the city of Coventry where she was given an oration by the recorder of the City of Coventry. During his oration, the recorder expressed the city's delight in the Queen's "princelie estate" by remarking that

Callinge to our remembraunce that as the naturall bodie cannot longe conttynewe in safetie, excepte the heade as principall parte there of do enioye perfecte health, somuche more in the politique Bodie all the partes therof waxe weake and sone decaie.<sup>71</sup>

The city's reference to the Queen's dual body only served as an expression of their delight in seeing Elizabeth in good health, along with the body politic or government also being in good health.

As Stephen Greenblatt asserted, Renaissance self-fashioning was the representation of self in response to "something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile." Elizabeth's position as a female ruler possessing sovereign power was considered

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<sup>66</sup> William Cecil was Elizabeth's chief advisor serving first Elizabeth's secretary of state and then promoted to Lord High Treasurer. He headed the Queen's Privy Council and was a key and influential figure during Elizabeth's reign. He was elevated to Baron Burghley in 1572. Cf. Wallace T. MacCaffrey, "Cecil, William first Baron Burghley (1520/21-1598)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>67</sup> Digges published text copies of letters between Francis Walsingham and William Cecil about the Queen's ability to rule and other political matters. Dudley Digges, *Compleat Ambassador, or Two Treaties of the Intended Marriage of Qu. Elizabeth of Glorious Memory* (London: Thomas Newcomb, for Gabriel Bedell and Thomas Collins, and to be sold at their Shop at the Middle-Temple Gate in Fleetstreet, 1655), 362-364.

<sup>68</sup> Dr John Aylmer was Bishop of London during the reign of Elizabeth. Cf. Brett Usher, "Aylmer (1520/21-1594)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>69</sup> John Alymer, *An harborovve for faithfull and trewe subiectes agaynst the late blowne blaste, concerninge the gouernme[n]t of wemen. wherein be confuted all such reasons as a straunger of late made in that behalfe, with a breife exhortation to obedience* (London: John Day, 1559), 21-22.

<sup>70</sup> John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion, and other Various Occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1824), Vol. I, part 2, 406. The entire lecture is contained on pages 399-407.

<sup>71</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 1:455.

“strange, [and] hostile.”<sup>72</sup> The performativity of female power moved beyond just being an “expression of identity” that was “as always, though not exclusively, in language”, to being a performance that connected female power with kingship through theatricality, dialogue and language, and a series of actions.<sup>73</sup>

Queen Elizabeth was successful in using her female body to perform and display kingly or masculine characteristics to reinforce to the populace that she was capable of ruling. Elizabeth’s performance of female power employed the strategy of gender manipulation and invoking the dual bodies concept to combine the qualities of both a king and queen. The repeated use of this strategy enhances the concept of performativity as set forth by Butler in that the performativity of female power through the repetitious presentation of both kingly and queenly qualities as a means to normalise female power to her subjects. Simultaneously, Elizabeth also used her natural body to negotiate the bounds of female power. Elizabeth cultivated a persona that capitalised “on the expectations of her behaviour as a woman and used them to her advantage”, along with “calling herself king.”<sup>74</sup> In fact, in 1558, from the majestic hall of the Old Palace at Hatfield House, Queen Elizabeth spoke with conviction and authority stating:

I shall desyre yow all my Lordes (chieflye yow of the nobilyty every one in his degree and power) to bee asistant to me; that I w[i]th my Rulinge and yow w[i]th yo[ur] service...<sup>75</sup>

This statement is a striking image of the authority and power of the Queen, the roles to which she assigned her councillors, and the articulation of how she would exercise her agency, while acknowledging the expectation of having “good counsel.”<sup>76</sup> By articulating “with my Rulinge”, Elizabeth asserted her female power, which she did on royal progresses by determining what locations were visited. However, the nature of female power or queenship was complex and urges us to consider whether it was “shaped by her gender or other factors.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>73</sup> Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, 9.

<sup>74</sup> Carole Levin’s seminal work on the politics of sex and power presents Elizabeth as an individual who “believed she must have ‘the heart and stomach of a king.’” Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 1.

<sup>75</sup> TNA, SP 12/1, f. 7.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. Queen Elizabeth, “Sententiae, 1563”, in *Elizabeth I Translations, 1544-1589*, ed. Janel Mueller (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), 331-294.

<sup>77</sup> Natalie Mears’ research has specifically honed in on “Elizabethan political discourse” and “Elizabethan policy-making” as the central focus with which to answer the question. Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 7.

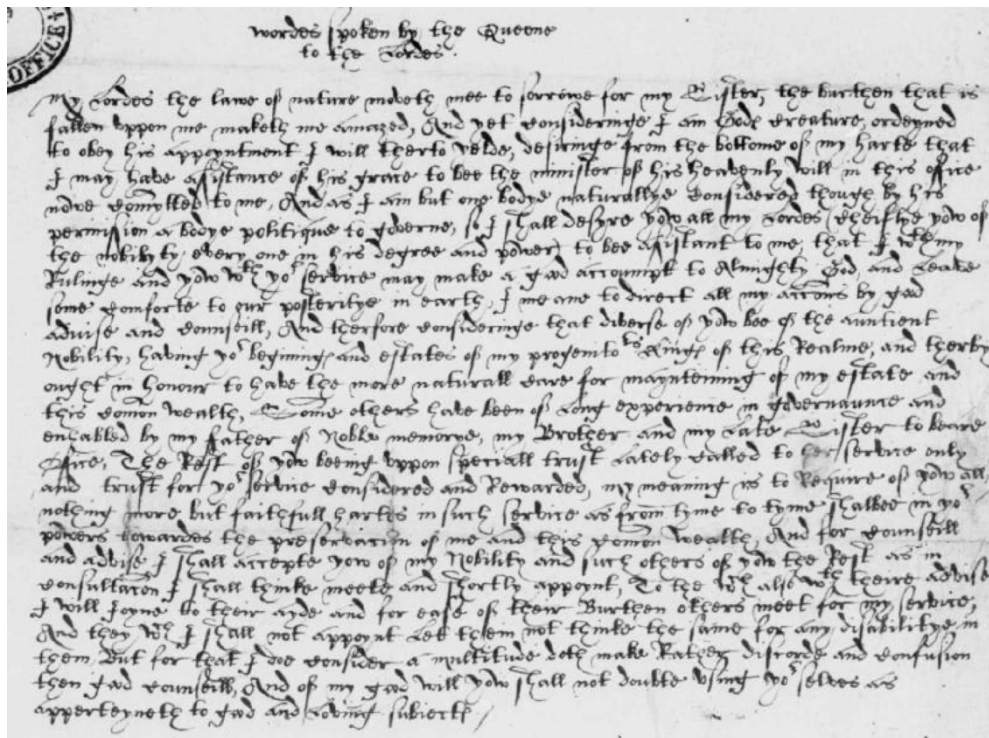


Fig. 7: 'Wordes spoken by the Queene to the Lordes', State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth I, SP 12/1, f. 12, *State Papers Online*.

Elizabeth's queenship and the exercising of female power varied throughout her reign and was shaped by contemporary ideas of gender, but also relationships with her councillors and court that formed a "mixed polity."<sup>78</sup> As an intelligent and savvy ruler, Elizabeth knew the world that surrounded her and set out to challenge, manipulate and subvert the control that her Privy Councillors, Parliament, ecclesiastical leaders and court would attempt to exert over her, so that she would exercise what she believed was her right to rule. This fluid construction of queenship and female power confirms and highlights that Elizabeth was "aware that a good prince ruled for the benefit of the common weal, but it was not the commonweal, who defined what that benefit was."<sup>79</sup> Therefore, Elizabeth manufactured her queenship and influence. Mears' concludes that it "was not the commonweal" who *defined* the benefit that was best for all Elizabethans. However, this collective benefit was *negotiated* by the commonweal or the public's participation, especially on royal progresses, through communicating, counselling, and displaying what the commonweal needed. This exchange on progress required the Queen's response and that determined whether the public accepted Elizabeth as 'a good prince'. This performance between the commonweal and Elizabeth contributed to the public's construction of the Queen's persona or reputation. I contend that without the sheer

<sup>78</sup> Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 96.

<sup>79</sup> Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 11 and 261.

number or nature of Elizabeth's progresses, this manufactured persona would not be as visible, influential or dynamic within the English historical narrative.

Female power had to be connected to the basic tenants of kingship—chivalry, honour, magnificence, justice and mercy; all foundations of effective rulership—these elements had to be not only articulated but had to be visible and displayed through performances. The ways in which each of these tenants were performed will be explored in the following sections, but the key point here is that rulership, particularly in the Tudor period, was not about the monarch having undisputed, absolute power. Rulership was about demonstrating the majesty and power of the sovereign to maintain obedience, conformity, and allegiance.

Strong observes that “through the eyes of those who created the fabric of these visions” in pageants and on progress, it was patrons and men of the court who contributed to the imagery, portraits and representations of Elizabeth.<sup>80</sup> The progresses certainly added to this fabric and the construction of the Queen's image. In one of the Norwich pageants presented to the Queen, there was the comparison to the figure Deborah, a biblical figure who was not only a judge in pre-monarchic Israel, but also a warrior and military leader who brought peace to a troubled land for forty years. The second pageant, according to the pamphlet, had Deborah speak as Elizabeth approached stating that God:

Appointed me Debora for the iudge of his elect...  
 So mightie prince, that puisaunt Lord, hath plaste thee here to be,  
 The rule of this triumphant Realme alone belongth to thee.  
 Continue as thou hast begon, weede out the wicked route,  
 Vpholde the simple, meeke and good, pull downe the proud & stoute.  
 Thus shalt thou liue and raigne in rest, and mightie God shalt please.  
 Thy state be sure, thy subiects safe, thy common welth at ease  
 Thy God shal graunt thee length of life, to glorify his name,  
 Thy deedes shall be recorded, in the booke of lasting fame.<sup>81</sup>

Though this is a wonderful glorification of the Queen, it is also a celebration of Elizabeth's anointed role as Queen by God; similarly, Deborah was the only female judge noted in the Bible. Additionally, and most importantly, the figure Deborah in the pageant was offering advice to the Queen on how to rule properly. Thus, the public was reminding Elizabeth of her role to protect, secure, defend and morally guide the realm. This representation and comparison with biblical figures and the divine nature of Elizabeth's queenship was repeated frequently, thus enhancing Butler's idea of performativity and emphasising the culturally sustained ideas of gender and female power, particularly through “theatrical and linguistic dimensions.”<sup>82</sup> As such, the repetition of representing Elizabeth's female body with a biblical female figure served to make female rule more natural or acceptable to the public. The principle of protection at its most basic was political, but it was also a clear acknowledgement of Elizabeth's power and ability. Another interesting point

<sup>80</sup> Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 16.

<sup>81</sup> From Garter's *Joyfull Receyuing of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich*, NRO, COL/7/1 (a), f. Cf. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:796-797.

<sup>82</sup> Butler, *Gender Trouble*, xxvii.

is that the religious comparison was to another female figure—a clearly acceptable female figure in the eyes of her subjects—instead of a male figure. The public’s representations demonstrated the acceptance of a female head of state as long as she exhibited a good, just, and pure nature: the hallmarks of a strong guardian. This public representation was meant to illicit a response from the sovereign. Elizabeth did not disappoint.

Military ability was one of the hallmarks of rulership and demonstrated effective leadership, along with the ability to fully execute the duties of sovereign. Female martial identity, particularly Elizabeth’s martial representation, has been the subject of debates and discussion among early modern historians such as Carole Levin, Susan Frye, Charles Beem, and Anthony Fletcher.<sup>83</sup> The most referenced military event of Elizabeth’s reign that was associated with martial leadership was the Spanish Armada, notably her presence at Tilbury.<sup>84</sup> Elizabeth’s presence at Tilbury was a contrast to the contemporary views of women in such violent, public spaces. The notions and attitudes about women were inextricably bound to the concept of masculinity. With a few exceptions, women generally did not participate in or “have a formal political role in early modern society.”<sup>85</sup> This included women being engaged in the violent and masculine aspect of war and military practice.

Henry VIII certainly considered the monarch’s presence in battle to play a critical role in sovereignty and legitimacy.<sup>86</sup> Fletcher asserts that “violence was accepted as a necessary means of maintaining order” within society and of reinforcing the social hierarchy and gender roles.<sup>87</sup> Women were seen as the “weaker vessel” and not in possession of the temperament, “moral sense”, will or stamina for battle.<sup>88</sup> As violence was central to masculinity, it goes without question that men were the arbiters and directors of violence because they had not only the authority to do so but were physically built and designed for it.<sup>89</sup> Accordingly, this raises the question: how did Elizabeth work around the social expectations regarding women in public roles, like martial leadership, and still be viewed as an effective monarch?

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<sup>83</sup> This list is not comprehensive; it serves more as a highlight of relevant scholarship. Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*; Charles Beem, *The Lioness Roared: The Problems of Female Rule in English History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Anthony Fletcher and Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Tudor Rebellions* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2004).

<sup>84</sup> The Spanish Armada was name of the battle between Spain and England whereby Spain was attempting to invade England. The battled occurred between May and August 1588. The name of the Spanish fleet was also known as the Spanish Armada, of which the whole event has been named. Tilbury was a fortress at the mouth of the Thames in England where the Spanish aimed to reach.

<sup>85</sup> Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 276.

<sup>86</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 139.

<sup>87</sup> Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 192.

<sup>88</sup> Fletcher, *Gender, Sex and Subordination*, 60-65.

<sup>89</sup> Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination*, 60-65. Fletcher’s discussion of “humours” illustrates how early modern contemporaries viewed the ways that male and female bodies functioned and were designed for specific roles.

What was the public's response to this discrepancy? The answer is complex but resides with the ways in which gender roles were constructed and how both Elizabeth and her subjects cultivated the public displays, representations and imagery of masculinity. Though "Elizabeth did not want war because of the expense", she knew the importance of martial leadership, especially as it "gave others a chance at glory at her expense."<sup>90</sup> Therefore, Elizabeth had to perform her martial leadership, while also allowing the public to comment on the efficacy of her martial leadership.



Fig. 8: Queen Elizabeth I's Tilbury procession, c. 17<sup>th</sup> century, St. Faith's Church, Gaywood, Norfolk, UK. Image by Evely Simak, licenced for sharing under the Creative Commons Licence.

The construction of gender roles and public presentations of Elizabeth's martial identity by her subjects were most prominently featured and displayed in pageants composed for the Queen's progresses. Elizabeth's own construction of gender roles on progresses highlighted the ways in which she effectively "expressed the ambiguity of being both female and male...in public presentations."<sup>91</sup> The articulation of a dual gender persona was evident in the details of the Queen's presence at Tilbury visit in 1588, in which Elizabeth was recounted to have proclaimed:

I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal harts and goodwill of my subjects and wherfor I am com amongst you all, att this time butt for [not] recreation and disport being resolved in the midst and heate of the

<sup>90</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 139.

<sup>91</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 140.



battle to live and dye amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my kyngdom and my people myn honour and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body butt of a weake and feble woman, butt I have the harte and stomach of a kinge, and of a kynge of England too...<sup>92</sup>

This example highlights how the performance of the Queen at Tilbury surrounded by her subjects inspired a written record of the account to be produced.<sup>93</sup> In proclaiming that she “com amongst you all...[not] for the recreation and disport” but to “live and dye amongst you all” show the actions through which Elizabeth performed the chivalry and honour that was associated with the martial kingship. This episode contains both dialogue and performance that encapsulates so much more than just the power and authority of the Queen. This performance included the symbolism of chivalry, and the honourable persona and charisma of the Queen, which was important for Elizabeth’s legitimacy.

Legitimacy was crucial to diplomatic relations and the public’s support of foreign relations. For example, Elizabeth I’s progress to Bristol in 1574 was organised so that the Queen would be present for the signing of the Treaty of Bristol to bolster diplomatic relations with Spain and ensure the loyalty of the city. However, Elizabeth was not presented with a petition in Bristol, as was usually the case with civic visits; instead the city chose to “display gratitude and loyalty.”<sup>94</sup> The significance of this public participation is twofold. First, the dialogue between the Queen and civic leaders served to strengthen ties with the sovereign and demonstrated their loyalty. Second, the festivities in the celebration of the city’s loyalty and the presentation of a mock battle in which the Queen played “the role of adjudicator and presid[ed] over negotiations for a peaceful treaty” would have acknowledged her authority, as well as being seen by the Spanish delegation. It would have served to display Elizabeth’s royal power and martial leadership.<sup>95</sup>

This particular incident highlights that Elizabeth was not removed from the role of a martial leader but associated with it. We do not have to rely solely on this source for evidence of Elizabeth’s association with military prowess or her martial

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<sup>92</sup> A draft of Elizabeth’s speech is preserved at the British Library. BL, Harley 6798, f. 87. The account of the Queen’s visit and interaction with her subjects at Tilbury is given in Camden’s *A 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* (1688), 416.

<sup>93</sup> While there is debate about whether these were the exact words spoken at Tilbury, it is generally accepted that Elizabeth I gave some semblance of a speech. Historians such as Carole Levin, John Neale, Francis Teague and Susan Frye do agree that Elizabeth I did visit Tilbury. Therefore, Camden’s account that Elizabeth I did “encouraged the Hearts of her Captains and Souldiers by her Presence and Speech to them” (Camden, 416), serves as a response to her performance. Though Camden started working on the history of the reign of Elizabeth I in 1607, he was alive during the Spanish Armada in 1588 and therefore, this delayed response is still necessary as it is a response regarding Elizabeth’s queenship based on her performance. John Kenyon, *The History Men: The Historical Profession in England since the Renaissance* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), 24.

<sup>94</sup> Francis Wardell, “Queen Elizabeth I’s Progress to Bristol in 1574: An Examination of Expenses”, *Early Theatre*, 14.1 (2011), 101-102.

<sup>95</sup> Wardell, “Queen Elizabeth I’s Progress to Bristol in 1574”, 102.

identity. Portraits, pageants and contemporary literature also highlight this connection.<sup>96</sup> Alternatively, Elizabeth's depiction of having addressed the troops at Tilbury and to boost morale served to promote the Queen as a capable ruler, an effective, patriotic adversary to the Spanish, and to cultivate fidelity from the public. However, Elizabeth's martial skills were not only performed through spectacles but performed through practical activities organised for the Queen's progresses — namely the hunt.

#### *Performing Martial Leadership through Hunting*

Chivalry and martial associations of male monarchs were not just achieved on the military campaigns but performed through practical activities. Elizabeth demonstrated her martial abilities through active participation in the sport of hunting. The pursuit of hunting has long been synonymous with the development of military skills, for it provided training for war, practical field experience and “an alternative to active rebellion.”<sup>97</sup> The act of hunting cultivated the monarch's martial identity throughout the medieval and early modern period, evolving from a physical means of preparation for war to a symbolic means of preparation for war. Hunting was most fundamentally masculine, and demonstrated such qualities as “strength, skill, endurance, patience, courage and conquest...to signify heroic masculinity.”<sup>98</sup> Hunting was a necessary skill and common pursuit throughout the early modern period in England and within Europe. Elizabeth's association with the hunt was widely known and commented upon. Members of the Queen's court, as well as foreign monarchs and dignitaries, like Francis II of France (1544 - 1560) and Bernardino de Mendoza (1540 - 1604), the Spanish Ambassador for Phillip II of Spain (1527 - 1598), chronicled the Queen's involvement in the hunt through their correspondence.

Elizabeth's hunting recreations were core activities organised during her royal progresses, either by the Queen's own hunting staff or by the host. Elizabeth's active engagement in hunting was both recreational and, I argue political. Hunting provided a means of diplomatic relations to be performed. In February 1560, Francis II asked Elizabeth's ambassador Nicholas Throckmorton (1515/16 - 1571)<sup>99</sup> “whether you [Elizabeth] loue hawking or hunting, I [Throckmorton] told him...that you [Elizabeth] liked the pastimes of both well.” However, the conversation did not end there. Later in 1560, Francis II asked again about Elizabeth's interest in hunting, and asked if “the Queen in her progress did not go hunting,” to

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<sup>96</sup> Elizabeth's Armada portrait depicts a strong monarch that “vanquishes the forces of evil.” Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 43. Additionally, the pageants in Bristol and Deptford depicted Elizabeth as a military commander. Taken from civic accounts recorded in *The Black Book of Warwick*, edited by Gabriel Heaton in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:34. Cf. Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 156.

<sup>97</sup> Richard Almond, *Daughters of Artemis: The Huntress in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2009), 2.

<sup>98</sup> Catherine Bates, *The Masculinity and the Hunt: Wyatt to Spenser* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 4.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Stanford Lehmborg, “Throckmorton, Sir Nicholas (1515/16-1571)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

which Throckmorton replied, “yes...do so more at her pleasure.”<sup>100</sup> The subject of hunting facilitated the development of foreign relations. Therefore, the hunt was not just a political instrument for the Queen to demonstrate power and authority, but it was also a political tool to engage in diplomacy. In 1590 when the Queen gave “a letter written from her Majesty to the French Ambassador [Beauvoir]”<sup>101</sup>, the instructions were given “...by her Majesty at Oatlands upon Wednesday night after her coming from hunting.”<sup>102</sup> This instance suggests that the Queen’s hunting activities provided opportunities for Elizabeth to consider and contemplate political matters. Furthermore, the explicit remark of “instructions were given” to a diplomat after the hunt could also indicate that a response to counsel was conceived during the hunt.



Fig. 9: ‘Death of the Deer’, woodcut from George Gascoigne, *The Noble Arte of Venerie*, c. 1575.

Diplomatic dialogue was performed through Elizabeth’s act of denying access to Mendoza, while the Queen was hunting on progress in 1581. Mendoza wrote to his master that he was unable to meet with the Queen because she was hunting at

<sup>100</sup> Simon Adams, “‘The Queens Majestie...is now become a great huntress’: Elizabeth I and the Chase”, *The Court Historian: Royal Hunts Issue*, 18:2 (2013), 144. *CSP—Foreign*, 3:246-260, 22 August 1560, Throckmorton to the Queen.

<sup>101</sup> The French Ambassador was Jean de la Fin, Lord (Seigneur) of Beauvoir.

<sup>102</sup> TNA, SP 78/21, f. 322.

Nonsuch and hoped to meet with her when she moved to Richmond. Furthermore, Mendoza stated, “it was difficult for me to attend to your Majesty’s interests here under such circumstances as these.”<sup>103</sup> Mendoza’s comments on “such circumstances” clearly indicated his frustration with not having access to the Queen. His reference to the Queen hunting was significant enough to mention and was identified as the cause of his failure. Moreover, the fact that Elizabeth was hunting and not meeting with Mendoza was a form of diplomatic performance used to articulate the Queen’s prerogative to avoid meeting with Mendoza. By hunting, the Queen was able to keep the politics at bay. Furthermore, the reference that Elizabeth engaged in the sport of hunting projected the image of a martially skilled queen. Elizabeth’s martial identity is reinforced by the account of the Queen hunting on progress in August 1591 when she was described as having:

took horse, with all her Traine, and rode into the Parke: where was a delicate Bowre prepared, vnder the which were her Highnesse Musicians placed, and a Crossebowe by a Nimph, with a sweet song, deliuered to her hands, to shoote at the Deere.<sup>104</sup>

The representation of Elizabeth using the crossbow, mounting a horse, and “to shoote”, depicted a strong, gallant, and chivalrous Queen. However, these written representations also articulated the actions that Elizabeth performed to give the reader an understanding of the Queen’s proficiencies. All of these examples offer evidence to the fact that Elizabeth’s hunting abilities were not just passive auxiliary activities, but a part of her queenship, political culture and martial identity that was publicly performed to display Elizabeth’s effectiveness as ruler and ability to exercise female power.

#### *Performing Majesty and Religious Rituals*

Godly kingship was very much a “distinctly Tudor style of magnificence”, whereby magnificence was fundamental to the effectiveness of rulership and emphasised through ritual and spectacles.<sup>105</sup> However, the divine nature of the monarchy was rooted in medieval concepts of “Christ-like kingship” and it was an anonymous eleventh-century Norman clergyman who articulated that:

We thus have to recognize [in the king] a *twin person*, one descended from nature, the other from grace...One through which, by the condition of nature, he conformed with other men: another through which, by the eminence of [his] deification and by the power of the sacrament [of consecration], he

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<sup>103</sup> CSP—Spain (*Simancas*), 3:175-185, 1 October 1581, Bernardino de Mendoza to the King.

<sup>104</sup> This extract comes from the account of the Queen’s visit to Cowdray. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:548-561. Quote can be found on 2:553.

<sup>105</sup> Gordon Kipling refers to the unique style of magnificence during the Tudor period. Gordon Kipling, *Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 1977), 4. The understanding that magnificence was part of effective kingship and the ritual of magnificence is convincingly argued by Sydney Anglo in Sydney Anglo, *Images of Tudor Kingship* (London: B.A. Seaby Ltd., 1992), 8.

excelled all others. Concerning one personality, he was, by nature, an individual man: concerning his other personality, he was, by grace, a *Christus*, that is, a God-man.<sup>106</sup>

Based on this concept of monarchy, the sovereign was invested with divinity and thus was to serve as God's representative on Earth. However, the Tudor period transformed the idea of divine monarchy from being a symbolic representative to being the godly authority on Earth through illuminating and performing their godlike qualities. The emphasis and display of godlike characteristics and persona was the way in which the Tudor monarchs, especially Elizabeth, elevated their supremacy over earthly authority (i.e. the Holy Roman Church). The royal and public propaganda of Elizabeth's reign cultivated an image that presented the Queen as "God's anointed, the guardian of the Gospel, the virtues personified, [and] the biblical ruler returned."<sup>107</sup> This image became a defining characteristic of Elizabeth's queenship and evoked within pageants and entertainments of the Queen's progresses.

Tudor royal supremacy sought to ensure that "faith was defined in a manner compatible with the official policy" to secure order and peace and was "unified behind obedience to its prince."<sup>108</sup> In the 1534 Act of Supremacy, royal supremacy stipulated that the sovereign was the supreme head of the Church of England and had "full power and authority...to visit, repress, redress, record, order, correct, restrain, and amend all such errors, heresies, abuses, offenses, contempts, and enormities...to the pleasure of Almighty God, the increase of virtue in Christ's religion, and for conservation of peace, unity and tranquility."<sup>109</sup> The explicit notation of "to visit, repress, redress, record, order, correct, restrain, and amend" implies that royal power was not only articulated but was performed. The same language and explicit notations existed within the 1559 Act of Supremacy, with Elizabeth being supreme governor not supreme head. The performance of Elizabeth's royal power and magnificence ensured "the conservation of the peace and unity of this realm."<sup>110</sup> Therefore, the performance of godly rulership on royal progresses was instrumental in displaying the monarch's effectiveness and cultivating popular support. However, Elizabeth's gender posed a problem in that women could not be the head of the Church of England. Almost as a response, Elizabeth carefully constructed and manipulated gender roles to rule as a woman who was king. Elizabeth's reign cultivated this unique aspect of her queenship, which was rooted in the precept of "sacred monarchy"<sup>111</sup> and emerged as a result of the symbolic and

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<sup>106</sup> Kantorowicz has identified the author of the text as Norman Anonymus. The source is quoted and analysed in Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 46.

<sup>107</sup> Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, 116.

<sup>108</sup> Daniel Eppley, *Defending Royal Supremacy and God's Will in Tudor England* (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.

<sup>109</sup> Parliamentary Archives, HL/PO/PU/1/1534/26H8nl.

<sup>110</sup> "1559 Act of Supremacy", in Claire Cross' *The Royal Supremacy in the Elizabethan Church* (London: George Allen and Unwin, LTD, 1969), 128.

<sup>111</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 16.

religious “change in the conception of monarchy and the practices that went into that change” in the sixteenth century.<sup>112</sup>

Performativity was an important part of those practices that enabled the changes in the nature of monarchy and fostered the moving display of the Queen’s magnificence, religious inclinations and royal supremacy during her royal progresses. This was certainly the godly nature of the performance that was given by Elizabeth when she visited the University of Cambridge in August 1564. The Queen’s performance began as she “entred in to the church/ and kneled downe/ at the place opoynted/ betwene the twoe dores northe/ and Sowthe”, where the Queen met the provost of the cathedral and “knelying hard at her stoole kyssed his hand...And vnderstandyng that she would pryvatlye praye/ he lykewyse pryvatlye sayed the sayed psalme.”



Fig. 10: Frontispiece from Queen Elizabeth I’s prayer book, *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, London: 1569, Lambeth Palace Library, 1569.6, f. 2v. Available in the public domain at [lambethpalacelibrary.org](http://lambethpalacelibrary.org).

<sup>112</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 12.

At this point, Elizabeth went to her traverse to join singing “in Englishe a songe of glasnes”, and while “vnder the Canopie meruelouslye reioisynge at the beawtie of the Chapell greatlye prayseed it above all other with in this her Realme.”<sup>113</sup> This scene during the Cambridge visit displayed Elizabeth’s sacred status, virtues, piety, and royal supremacy. The act of kneeling down showed Elizabeth’s Godly obedience and piety, while the act of the provost kissing the Queen’s hand emphasises her royal supremacy as the Godly authority on Earth. Finally, Elizabeth’s performance of singing and dialogue about the beauty of the chapel engaged with her subjects and gave praise to reinforce not only her virtues but maintain her popular support.

Contemporaries such as Aylmer, Cecil, and others argued that the Queen could rule because she was ordained and selected by God; therefore, making her female body or natural body function as a vessel from which to fulfill her royal and divine responsibilities. The responsibilities, Elizabeth believed were: protection of the realm, exercise just and honourable rule, keep good counsel, governor of the Church of England, performance of religious rituals and services, safeguarding the souls of the Queen’s subjects, and obedience and devotion to God.<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth’s progresses were crucial to gaining the public’s loyalty and conformity to the Queen’s religious policies, while emphasising Elizabeth’s sacredness. The performance of these royal and divine responsibilities elevated “the nature of kingship [which] emerges in the sixteenth century as an office so awe inspiring and powerful that it could even encompass a female rule, thus making it possible for her to perform religious acts—priestly acts.”<sup>115</sup> While Elizabeth’s birth positioned her as God’s chosen one, it was not until she was anointed during the coronation ceremony that Elizabeth was “consecrated” and “made holy.”<sup>116</sup> Thus enabling the Queen to perform religious acts as a “sacral” monarch, regardless of Elizabeth’s gender.<sup>117</sup> There were two specific religious acts that were performed by Tudor monarchs: the Royal Touch or “Touching for the King’s Evil” and the Maundy service or “Maundy Thursday,” which became an “established part of English ritual.”<sup>118</sup> These religious acts were “key aspect[s] of sacral monarchy” and the ceremonies of the Royal Touch and Maundy Thursday affirmed the “God-given authority” of the sovereign.<sup>119</sup> On royal progresses, the performance of these religious ceremonies was visible and a “means to secure the people’s allegiance.”<sup>120</sup>

The Maundy Thursday ritual was a significant religious act that Elizabeth performed. The ritual consisted of washing of the feet of the poor. The ceremony

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<sup>113</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, I:401-402.

<sup>114</sup> Elizabeth’s *Sententiae* is a list of responsibilities and qualities that a ruler most follow including being a “worshiper of God”. Cf. Elizabeth, “*Sententiae*, 1563”, 348.

<sup>115</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 12.

<sup>116</sup> Stephen Brogan, *The Royal Touch in Early Modern England: Politics, Medicine and Sin* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015), 24.

<sup>117</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 24-25.

<sup>118</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 25 and 57.

<sup>119</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 23-25.

<sup>120</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 24.

developed throughout the medieval and early modern periods to include the provision of meals and gifts, including clothing, food and money.<sup>121</sup> The Maundy ceremony was reformed during Elizabeth's reign where the ritual no longer included the "references to saints and the Virgin Mary." Additionally the Queen "washed the feet of the poor annually on Maundy Thursday, by contrast no special day was set aside for the royal touch because she practiced this regularly", which would suggest that the Maundy Thursday became the important annual ritual.<sup>122</sup> However, the most vital point of Elizabeth carrying out the Maundy ceremony was to act as a performance of her royal and divine power through imitating the act of Christ who washed the feet of the poor. This remarkable performance showcased a woman in the office of sovereign imitating Christ and thereby emphasising Elizabeth as a "quasi-divine" and "provided a communal display of humility and benevolence."<sup>123</sup>



Fig. 11: 'An Elizabethan Maundy', Levina Teerlinc, c. 1560. Available in the public domain through Wiki Commons.

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<sup>121</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 22-23.

<sup>122</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 64-65.

<sup>123</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 32 and 24.



In March 1573, Elizabeth was in Greenwich as part of her royal progress through the southern counties of England. To commemorate “Christ’s washing his disciples feet”, the Queen performed the Maundy ceremony in the hall of Greenwich Palace. The ceremony was attended by several people, mostly those as part of the service, and others to assist Elizabeth. These people included “the chappelan and poor folks...the almoner...thirty-nine ladies and gentlewomen...[and] the treasurer of the chamber (Mr. Henneage)...”<sup>124</sup> The ceremony began as “her majesty came into the hall, and after some singing and prayers made” Elizabeth “kneeling down upon the cushions...under the feet of the poor women, first washed the feet of everyone of them..then wiped, crossed, and kissed them.” The washing was followed up with the Queen giving “broad-cloth”, “a pair of shoes”, food, “two cheat loafes of bread”, “claret wine”, and “white purses” containing “thirty-nine pence.”<sup>125</sup> The very description of Elizabeth performing the Maundy ceremony had a double outcome. First, with the Queen performing the act of the Maundy emphasises her piety, divinity, and magnificence while reinforcing royal power. Secondly, as Bloemendal points out, with “theatrical performances” like the Maundy ceremony, it is the elements surrounding the performance (the hall, the gifts, the objects used for the washing, the people, and the Queen’s presence), along with the ceremonial performance, that aimed to “influence the audience’s perception.”<sup>126</sup> This influence most likely “encouraged the devotion of her subjects”,<sup>127</sup> while also impacting the audience, primarily the poor women and other people present as a means to “cultivate popular support.”<sup>128</sup>

Emerging in thirteenth-century England, the ceremony of royal touch consisted of the monarch placing their hand on a person who was sick or ill, and through the healings powers of the monarch was cured of their illness. This sacral monarchy “affirmed the God-given authority” of the sovereign, thereby the sovereign was to “act as an intermediary for God’s healing powers by being “enjoined by God.”<sup>129</sup> Elizabeth “faithfully presented the traditional ceremony” of the royal touch and even transformed the ceremony by reforming the liturgy surrounding the performed touch.<sup>130</sup> At Kenilworth in 1575, the Queen “by her accustomed mercy and charitee” proceeded to perform the Royal Maundy on nine individuals and thus they were “cured of the peynfull and daungerous diseaz, called the kings euell, for the Kings and Queenz of this Ream, without oother medsin (saue only

<sup>124</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:48-49. The reference to “Mr. Henneage” was Sir Thomas Heneage, the Treasurer of the Queen’s Privy Chamber. Cf. Michael Hicks, “Heneage, Sir Thomas (b. in or before 1532, d. 1595)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>125</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:48. Based on William Lambarde’s (1536—1601) description of the ceremony. Original manuscript located at the British Library, Add. MS 32097.

<sup>126</sup> Jan Bloemendal, “Receptions and Impact: Early Modern Latin Drama, its Effect on the Audience and its Role in Forming Public Opinion”, in *Neo-Latin Drama: Forms, Functions, Receptions*, eds. Jan Bloemendal and Philip Ford (New York: Georg Olms, 2008), 15.

<sup>127</sup> Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 36.

<sup>128</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 172.

<sup>129</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 39.

<sup>130</sup> Brogan, *The Royal Touch*, 64.

handling and prayerz) only doo cure it.”<sup>131</sup> This clearly demonstrates that on this particular occasion the two forms of royal, sacral ceremonies were performed together. Given that the royal touch was not designated as a special ritual and the Maundy Thursday was, this indicates that the two were performed together throughout Elizabeth’s reign. The fact that each ceremony (royal touch and Maundy service) were conducted together does not invalidate their individual significance, but rather indicates each allowed Elizabeth to perform the sacred ritual and emphasise the Queen’s royal authority, royal supremacy and queenship.

Alternatively, royal progresses provided Elizabeth with a platform to cultivate religious conformity and foster religious stability. Religious worship and spiritual belief were the foundations of early modern life and they were embedded in the consciousness of every individual throughout the social hierarchy in sixteenth-century England. The tense, and at times volatile, conflict between Catholics and Protestants were rooted in the power of ceremony that was the bedrock of everyday life for people in early modern England. Royal progresses enabled Elizabeth to witness, and, more importantly respond to, the non-conformity of religious practices, religious debates, and push for further reform within the national church.

Returning to Elizabeth’s visit to Cambridge in 1564, the Queen’s arrival was preceded by instructions from Cecil to the staff of Cambridge in which all members were to have “uniformity in apparell and religion.”<sup>132</sup> The Queen’s visit to the university was to “encourage learning”, as she was intelligent and well learned. However, the visit was also to “promote religious conformity.”<sup>133</sup> The visit and call for “uniformity” among the Cambridge scholars was met with widespread frustration, and their disputations added to the vestments controversy.<sup>134</sup> In the 1560s, Elizabeth favoured a more formal attire for the clergy. Since her proclamations in 1559, there was a steady stream of dissent, or controversy, against the forcing of clerics to wear what was considered “popish trumpery.”<sup>135</sup> The push for religious conformity was due to the religious tensions between Catholic and Protestant zealots at the universities, “long been identified as the most fertile ground for reform”, where learned men discussed and debated reform or otherwise contained members who remained loyal to the Catholic Church.<sup>136</sup> In 1566, mirroring the Cambridge visit,

<sup>131</sup> From Laneham’s “Letter”, edited by Elizabeth Goldring in Nichols, *The Progresses and Procession*, 2:263.

<sup>132</sup> Peter Linehan, *St. John’s College, Cambridge: A History*, (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 71.

<sup>133</sup> Elisabeth Leedham-Green and Faith Eales provide a context and discussion of the Queen’s desire for conformity in their annotation of visit to Cambridge in 1564. They also discuss how the visit was a form of counsel. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 1:377.

<sup>134</sup> Linehan, *St. John’s College*, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Linehan discusses how William Fulke, a fellow of St. John’s College, Cambridge, advanced the cause of further reform.” Linehan, *St. John’s College*, 71; Cf. Leo F. Solt, *Church and State in Early Modern England, 1509-1640* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 85.

<sup>136</sup> From Stokys’s university records (CUL, University Archives, Collect. Admin. 5, f. 156[a]), edited by Leedham-Green and Eales (see footnote 133) and reproduced in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 1:381; Linehan, *St. John’s College*, 71.

the University of Oxford and its scholars were also subjected to Elizabeth's assessments of their "compliance with the royal injunctions on vestments."<sup>137</sup>

By the late sixteenth century, throughout Elizabeth's reign, the precarious balance of power and relationship with the localities were, for the most part, restored and strengthened. Nevertheless, it was important that this should remain the case. The Cambridge visit highlight the ways in which Elizabeth and her government aimed to address heresy. While the late sixteenth century saw a significant decline in incidences of rebellion and revolts, "the fear of the popular insurrection did not."<sup>138</sup> Therefore, the visits on Elizabeth's royal progresses sought to further "stabilize the relationship between the centre and the localities",<sup>139</sup> by fostering the Queen's popularity in certain localities, thus contributing to official forms of "Elizabethan statecraft."<sup>140</sup> However, certain regions throughout England, like East Anglia and the county of Norfolk, were hotbeds of unrest with the potential to become rebellions, especially as Elizabeth was informed of civic grievances. Ultimately, the city of Norwich continued to have increased unrest and civic fights that eventually resulted in Elizabeth visiting the city to directly rebuke the civic authorities and county subjects.

### Performance of Politics and Negotiations of Power: Public Unrest and the Case of Norwich

Tudor government, particularly Elizabethan government, maintained order and strived "to mould local society by providing it with an instrument of authority that served local social needs...[this] was arguably crucial to the keeping of the public peace at every social level."<sup>141</sup> Royal progresses were a key element in maintaining order and ensuring stability by providing opportunities for the exchange of communication between with the Queen, her subjects, local elites, and civic authorities. The public's participation in the political, religious, and social discourse was at the heart of Elizabethan political culture. While much of Elizabeth's persona and queenship were constructed through the representations crafted by her councillors, royal court, and diplomatic ambassadors, the public had a role in the shaping of the Queen's representations and influenced the Queen's approach to dealing with political and religious issues. However, public participation also prompted the performativity of female power and elicited responses from the Queen related to the grievances aired and actions committed by the public, namely ordinary citizens. These performances and responses negotiated the exercise and boundaries of power, and reflected the effectiveness of Elizabeth rulership. This was never more visible than on the 1578 progress to Norwich. The progress, through the counties of Norfolk and Suffolk, highlighted the fragmentation between national and local

<sup>137</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 138.

<sup>138</sup> J.P.D. Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State: Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 238.

<sup>139</sup> Cooper, "Centre and Localities", 144.

<sup>140</sup> Cooper, "Centre and Localities", 144.

<sup>141</sup> Steve Hindle, *The State and Social Change, 1550-1640* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 115.

government. More importantly, the Norwich progress also demonstrates how this fragmentation between the city and the crown was negotiated and repaired through the dialogues that were performed during the visit. The placement of “of-office-holding aristocratic elite” within the counties where they had ties and connections served to extend the sovereign’s authority. There was no substitute for the physical presence of the monarch. This presence displayed the full authority and power of the Queen, thus demanding obedience and allegiance from her subjects, and strengthening public fealty.<sup>142</sup> This was reflected in the events leading up to Elizabeth’s visit to Norwich, whereby the public was admonished for the lack of fealty and obedience. However, Norwich was known for its active public participation and rebellious nature demonstrated by Kett’s Rebellion in 1549.

#### *Norwich and the Public Memory of Kett’s Rebellion*

The performance of power and exercising of authority between national and local government was most evident through the interactions with Norwich. Historically, the county was known for its rebellious nature that stemmed from the religious and political concerns of local citizens and the gentry. This public discontent was pushed further due to concerns about the “nature of county government”, emanating from the sovereign and national government’s need to bring about a “unified stable sovereign state” through “pacif[ing] their over mighty subjects...and to transform them...into servants of the regime in the localities.”<sup>143</sup> Rebellions and riots were a result of the public’s response to the overreach of the national government that impacted citizen’s way of life, not only within Norfolk, but throughout England. For example, Kett’s Rebellion in 1549 was an agrarian uprising in response to the enclosure of common land that furthered the disparity between the elites and ordinary subjects, and had a disastrous impact on the city of Norwich and county of Norfolk. However, the “grievances” drafted during the rebellion pointed to a list of issues, including rents on land, the conduct of religious services and the accumulation of land by religious leaders, the participation and regulations of local politics and office holding, and accessibility of spaces for commercial needs, such as fishing.<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately, these grievances from the rebels were never acknowledged or addressed by the central government and led to rioting and the destruction of the enclosures between April and June, only to culminate in a full scale rebellion by citizens of communities within East Anglia, led by Robert Kett (1492 - 1549).<sup>145</sup> Ending in late August 1549, the memory of Kett’s Rebellion would certainly haunt Elizabeth’s reign.

The public contributed to the contemporary writings of the rebellion and Elizabethan propaganda revealed that the 1549 rebellion was a part of the national

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<sup>142</sup> Steve Hindle, “County Government in England”, in *A Companion to Tudor Britain*, eds. Robert Tittler and Norman Jones (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 98.

<sup>143</sup> Hindle, “Country Government in England”, 98.

<sup>144</sup> British Library, Harleian MS 304, f. 75.

<sup>145</sup> Andy Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions and the Marking of Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50-54. For info on Robert Kett, cf. John Walter, “Kett, Robert (c. 1492-1549)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

consciousness. Additionally, these writings reflect the partial solution in which the Queen and her government aimed to deal with the problems of rebellions. Contemporary historian, John Stow's (1524/5 – 1605)<sup>146</sup> 1566 *Summarie* briefly detailed the "comotion in Norfolk" and referenced the execution of Robert Kett.<sup>147</sup> In 1569, after a thwarted uprising, one Suffolk lawyer referred to the "last rising", alluding to the 1549 rebellion, as a source of motivation for the failed rising.<sup>148</sup> The Archbishop of Canterbury, Matthew Parker (1504 – 1575)<sup>149</sup>, had "witnessed the [1549] rebellion first hand."<sup>150</sup> Prior to his appointment as Archbishop, Parker delivered a sermon, in 1549, among "the rebel camp" on Mousehold Heath in Norfolk about the sin of rebellion.<sup>151</sup> His experience with the 1549 rebellion most likely contributed to his efforts to provide poor relief and to avoid another rebellion.

Rebellion was featured in several of Parker's sermons and homilies.<sup>152</sup> Another example of the unrest and rebellions contributing to the discourse between national governance and the wider public and the crown's response to these disturbances was the "campaign for obedience" through the significant "investment in homilies" to control the localities.<sup>153</sup> These homilies were "set sermons" that were read aloud before the congregation in parishes throughout England, including Norwich.<sup>154</sup> Homilies "relied on Scripture and history to make its case for the evils of rebellion" since Elizabethan homilies evoked the memory of past rebellions as examples.<sup>155</sup> The various homilies on the topic of rebellion signified the ways in which Elizabeth and her government sought to admonish rebellion that not only developed out of the 1549 rebellion in Norfolk but also fuelled by the 1569 Northern Rebellion. The increased number of homilies printed and circulated throughout the realm during the 1570s highlighted this.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Cf. Barrett L. Beer, "Stow [Stowe], John (1524/5-1605)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>147</sup> John Stow, *A Summarie of English Chronicles* (London, 1566), 168-169; Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions*, 230.

<sup>148</sup> Krista Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569: Faith, Politics and Protest in Elizabethan England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 13.

<sup>149</sup> Cf. David J. Crankshaw and Alexandra Gillespie, "Parker, Matthew (1504-1575)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>150</sup> Wood, *The 1549 Rebellions*, 199.

<sup>151</sup> Barrett L. Beer, *Rebellion and Riot: Popular Disorder in England During the Reign of Edward VI* (Kent State University Press, 2005), 96 and 115.

<sup>152</sup> Homilies were a series of printed sermons, approved by the monarch, and circulated throughout England.

<sup>153</sup> Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, 229.

<sup>154</sup> Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, 220.

<sup>155</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellions of 1569*, 152.

<sup>156</sup> Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, 230.

*The Ridolfi Plot and the Queen's Response on Progress*

The emergence of public unrest was certainly a concern and evident in Elizabeth's reign. Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk's (1538 – 1572)<sup>157</sup> influence and popularity in the county created a distinct region that was far removed, both physically and politically, from central government. Therefore, Elizabeth and her councillors positioned the Duke within her court and government to manage his influence while encouraging his loyalty to the Queen. This move to watch the Duke at the Queen's court, helped to bring out about the 'unified state', but it also brought stability in assuring the Duke did not stir up trouble.<sup>158</sup> Despite being a servant of the crown, the Duke's actions in the Ridolfi plot resulted in his downfall and the stability and unity in Norfolk was threatened by the public support of the Duke. The Ridolfi plot was a conspiracy to assassinate Elizabeth, and put Mary Stuart (1542 – 1587)<sup>159</sup> on the throne. To ensure no opposition to Mary as queen, the proposed marriage between Mary and Thomas Howard would have legitimised her position as both Mary and Thomas were of royal blood. This proposed marriage was treason for two reasons: 1) members of Elizabeth's royal court could not marry without permission; 2) the marriage was tied up in the conspiracy to assassinate the Queen and replace her with Mary.

The Ridolfi plot intensified in the summer of 1569, when Elizabeth appointed Norfolk and several other noblemen to investigate the charges against Mary in York. Mary Stuart was Queen of Scotland and of royal blood, thus making her a threat to Elizabeth's throne. It was during the Duke's time in York that he met with William Maitland of Lethington<sup>160</sup>, a close courtier of Mary Stuart, to discuss the proposed marriage arrangement between the Duke and Mary. By 4 September 1569, the Queen confronted the Duke about his involvement in the marriage proposal and conspiracy. After the confrontation, the Duke was "shunned" from court and left the Queen's progress and court without Elizabeth's permission (a criminal offence) on 15 September 1569.<sup>161</sup> Just ten days later he was ordered, by the Queen, to return to court, at which point he knew he was going to be arrested. Before leaving, he sent an "urgent dispatch" to the northern earls to "call off the proposed" rebellion for if they persisted "it should cost him his head."<sup>162</sup> Unfortunately, his words fell on deaf ears and, while imprisoned in the Tower, the Northern rebellion broke out in November 1569.

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<sup>157</sup> Michael A.R. Graves, "Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538-1572)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>158</sup> Hindle, "Country Government in England", 98.

<sup>159</sup> Last name also spelled Stewart. The charges that Mary was being investigated for was her involvement in the death of husband. For more information, see Julian Goodacre, "Mary [Mary Stewart] (1542-1587)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2007).

<sup>160</sup> For more information on Maitland, cf. Mark Loughlin, "Maitland, William, of Lethington (1525x30-1573)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>161</sup> Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>162</sup> Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*; Cf. Neville Williams, *Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk* (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1964), 165-169.

Yet, despite, or in light of, the Duke's localised popularity and due to what has been characterised as his naivety and lack of ruthless intellect, he was implicated in a treasonous plot to marry Mary, Queen of Scots.<sup>163</sup> After a lengthy trial, he was sentenced and the execution warrant was issued on 9 February 1572. However, knowing the influence and popularity of the Duke, in the weeks leading up to the Duke's execution, the Queen considered the public consequences of his execution. A letter of revocation was sent to Cecil on the night before the execution was to take place on 11 February 1572, in which Elizabeth stated that the execution warrant was a "rashe determination vpon a very vnfit day" and determined to stop it before an "irrevocable dede be in mene while com[m]ited."<sup>164</sup> Two more execution warrants were issued and each time Elizabeth revoked them. The final execution warrant was signed on 10 April 1572. Elizabeth's agency asserted here demonstrates her ability to go against the established patriarchal norms (by ignoring or rejecting the decisions of the Parliamentary courts and her councillors) and consider the public consequences. Furthermore, this highlights how Elizabeth enforced her rule and demonstrated her capability to understand the implications and precarious balance of power that existed in sixteenth-century England. Elizabeth was able to methodically place herself in such a way that her court and councillors were never sure what her true intentions were. In fact, one antiquarian historian, Thomas Carte, alludes to Elizabeth's intent behind revoking the warrant as being a pretence.<sup>165</sup> Elizabeth understood her role as a woman in a patriarchal society and the expectation that she was to heed the advice of her councillors. Yet, she positioned herself to where her councillors neither knew what she was going to do or did not know her stance regarding certain policies or people. She could not afford to come across as ruthless, irrational or dominant, as this would have led to public criticism regarding her ability to rule and undermined her authority. Accordingly, Elizabeth created ways to manipulate the patriarchy and maintain public loyalty to strengthen her rule. The incident with the Duke of Norfolk is one example of this manipulation and the performativity of politics and power.

The Queen could not just ignore the fact that executing the Duke outright might provoke an uprising given his influence. However, Elizabeth could also not ignore the threat that the Duke posed to her own throne and his involvement in the Ridolfi Plot. Therefore, Elizabeth manipulated both sides of the situation: she appeared to show the Duke mercy by writing a letter to revoke the warrant for his execution, which delayed his execution until June, but at the same time she condemned his actions and sided with her councillors by keeping him in prison. This is Elizabethan political culture at its finest. Eventually, Elizabeth's revocation was removed following the advice of her councillors, primarily Cecil (who may have

<sup>163</sup> Graves, 'Howard, Thomas, fourth duke of Norfolk (1538-1572)'.

<sup>164</sup> Bodleian Library, MS Ashmole 1729, fo. 7.

<sup>165</sup> Thomas Carte is an antiquarian historian who wrote about the Duke of Norfolk's execution based on the correspondence of the French ambassador, Bertrand de Salignac de La Mothe Fénelon, in his *History of England*. Carte's work and conclusions were utilised in Charles C. Jones, *Recollections of Royalty, from the Death of William Rufus, in 1100, to that of the Cardinal York, the last lineal descendant of the Stuarts, in 1807* (London: Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street, 1828), 107.

disliked the Duke of Norfolk and found ways to make sure he was implicated), who stressed that in the eyes of the law the Duke of Norfolk was guilty and must be executed in accordance with the law.<sup>166</sup> In this case, Elizabeth's agency was effective because she was able to prevent widespread rebellion, as the Queen presented the public appearance of hesitation with regards to the Duke's execution, but also followed through with her councillor's advice to execute the Duke, all while removing the threat to her own rule. The fourth Duke of Norfolk was beheaded at Tower Hill on the morning of 2 June 1572.<sup>167</sup>

The execution of the Duke of Norfolk had a domino effect on the political stability of Norwich. As Smith argued, it heralded an end to a period in "Norfolk's administrative, social and political affairs."<sup>168</sup> While the Northern Rebellion happened in the north away from Norfolk, it is important to note that the 1569 rebellion and the Ridolfi Plot were closely linked and directly related to the county of Norfolk for two specific reasons: the participation of local Norfolk citizens in the rebellion and the Duke of Norfolk's role surrounding the rebellion. The aftermath of the Northern Rebellion contributed to the list of reasons why Elizabeth visited Norwich in 1578.

#### *Norwich and the Aftermath of the Northern Rebellion*

The summer and autumn of 1569 was full of political intrigue and conspiracy. This tumultuous period was a result of the "growing and widespread aristocratic hostility and resistance to Cecil...and disgruntled courtiers...[who] sought not only personal advancement but national security."<sup>169</sup> The two definitive events, the Ridolfi Plot and the Northern Rebellion (though separate events), were closely linked due to the Duke of Norfolk's involvement, particularly as he was a central character in the narrative. Norfolk was actively involved through encouraging his tenants and the citizens in Norfolk to assist in the rebellion and through the rebel "conspirators [who] engaged Norfolk's support."<sup>170</sup>

The Northern Rebellion of 1569 was a prime example of how the public engaged in the political sphere and worked together with the local gentry to underscore the grievances to Elizabeth and her councillors. These grievances, initially, centred on religious oppression from Elizabeth and her government in forcing northern parishes to destroy Catholic imagery, while exacting public punishment and humiliation. However, Krista Kesselring has convincingly argued that the grievances "shifted to a secular, political explanation" that were based on "the actions of the Queen" to curb the power of the northern magnates.<sup>171</sup> This shift highlights the use of religious rhetoric to incite the public to act, which is a common

<sup>166</sup> John Martin Robinson, *The Dukes of Norfolk* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), 60-66.

<sup>167</sup> Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>168</sup> A. Hassel Smith, *County and Court* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), 47.

<sup>169</sup> Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>170</sup> Williams, *Thomas Howard*, 165-169; Cf. Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

<sup>171</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellions of 1569*, 21-22, 46, and 181.



practice used by Western societies across time. Led by the Earls of Northumberland and Westmorland<sup>172</sup>, the earls and local citizens stormed Durham Cathedral and ripped “apart all Protestant books, overturned the communion table and celebrated Catholic mass.”<sup>173</sup> During the event, the earls declared that they sought to remove “disordered and evil disposed persons” within the Queen’s inner circle that worked to subvert “the true Catholic faith, ancient nobility, and the rightful succession.”<sup>174</sup> This rebellion echoed the 1549 rebellion in Cornwall, in which local citizens opposed to the changes of having the liturgy conducted in English. However, these grievances were ignored.<sup>175</sup> In the autumn of 1569 the news of the rebellion in the north quickly spread throughout the country, especially to county of Norfolk. The news aroused intense vocal and organised support for the rebellion among the citizens of Norfolk. These citizens began to gather to “combine action against foreign artificers [refugees] with aid for the Northern rebels.” John Welles, a Norfolk sawyer, pressed his fellow citizens to help the cause of the “two earls amongst others in the North.” He also urged that the local public help “their duke”. This urging was rumored to include “Norfolk tenants ...exclaim[ing] ...the whole county would live and die with him.”<sup>176</sup> Thomas Shuckforth, a local Norfolk husbandman spoke “approvingly of the stir” and linked it to the arrest of the Duke of Norfolk. John Barnard, a Norfolk linen weaver, discussed plans for obtaining equipment from the Duke of Norfolk’s Kenninghall estate, to aid in the rising.<sup>177</sup> These men were sentenced “to imprisonment to await Her Majesty’s pleasure.”<sup>178</sup>

Throughout the period after the Northern rebellion, particularly in October 1571, there continued to be rumblings of “dissatisfaction among the people” with regards to the Duke of Norfolk’s situation and continued imprisonment.<sup>179</sup> Yet this dissatisfaction was not just rumblings. In January 1572, Edmund Mather and Kenelm Barney plotted to kill members of the Privy Council and rescue the Duke of Norfolk. Both Mather and Barney were Norfolk natives and close followers of the Duke of Norfolk.<sup>180</sup> This vigorous loyalty towards the Duke struck at the very

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<sup>172</sup> The earl of Northumberland was Thomas Percy, a Catholic loyalist. Cf. Julian Lock, “Percy, Thomas, seventh earl of Northumberland (1528-1572)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2015). The earl of Westmorland was Charles Neville, also a Catholic loyalist but also brother-in-law to Thomas Howard, fourth duke of Norfolk. Cf. Roger N. McDermott, “Neville, Charles, sixth earl of Westmorland (1542/3-1601)”, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>173</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569*, 1.

<sup>174</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569*, 1.

<sup>175</sup> Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, 61-65.

<sup>176</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569*, 15 and 146; Williams, *Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk*, 169.

<sup>177</sup> Kesselring, *The Northern Rebellion of 1569*, 147.

<sup>178</sup> Williams, *Thomas Howard*, 178-179.

<sup>179</sup> TNA, 12/81, f. 129.

<sup>180</sup> TNA, 70/107, f. 52; TNA, 70/111, f. 14. Hatfield House Archives, *Calendar of Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury, preserved at Hatfield House* (London: HM Stationary Office, 1888), 2:1 and 2:8; *Collection of State Papers Relating to the Affairs in the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward I, Queen Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. William Murdin (London: William Bowyer, 1759), 203 and 208; Brian Harrison, *Tower of London Prisoner Book* (Leeds: Royal Armouries, 2004), 217, 219-220.

heart of Elizabeth's fears, regarding insurrection—that the Queen's popularity would diminish and her throne in danger. Even at the Duke of Norfolk's execution in June 1572, "the concourse of people was large and shouts so general that a way little more aid and he would have been liberated."<sup>181</sup> Additionally, many of the citizens and gentry of Norwich and Norfolk were "astonished at his death, he being so great a man", which contributed to the public's fervour.<sup>182</sup> The situation involving the Duke's execution provides a context in which the Norwich progress can be understood. Loyalty towards the Duke continued even after his death, which was an important concern for the Elizabeth and her government. The Queen's concerns were valid because in 1574 there were rumours of a rising that resulted in "twenty gentlemen and a great lady...brought [as] prisoners from Norfolk on suspicion of an intention of a rising."<sup>183</sup>

Elizabeth and her regime addressed the fears of instability, riots, and rebellions through "printed propaganda", as previously indicated with the Elizabethan homilies.<sup>184</sup> However, I would add that these fears were also addressed through displaying the Queen's physical presence and through the performance of royal power on progresses, especially in her public statements. The decline of trade and industry, the increased number of poor individuals, the political vacuum created by the Duke's execution, and the conflict between religious refugees that settled in Norwich and local citizens, along with growing religious extremism and threats of foreign invasion, all contributed to Elizabeth's decision to visit Norwich.<sup>185</sup> The rebellion also illustrates that the "presence or absence of a dominant magnate family...influence[d] the exercise and experience of authority in the localities" as well as the response of local citizens to this authority.<sup>186</sup> The Norwich visit of the Queen's 1578 progress reinforced royal authority.

### *The Norwich Visit*

With the lack of local crown authority in Norwich, between 1572—1578, as well as dealing with civic discontent and conflict due to the religious dissension, Elizabeth's visit was to ensure that Norwich/Norfolk conformed to the crown. Therefore, the Queen's progress to Norwich had one aim: to demand the public's obedience and rebuke religious non-conformists. This demand and articulation of displeasure was performed through declaring her royal authority and engaging in the civic ritual of having loyalty and allegiance bestowed on her through spectacle and display. This ritual was an important interaction between the monarch and her subjects. John Cooper asserts that Elizabeth's accession to the throne occurred when "the principle of absolute monarchy had been questioned...it was no longer enough to preach the gospel of obedience; the crown would have to engage with

<sup>181</sup> From the *CSP-Spain (Simancas)*, 2:335, 9 September 1571, cited in Graves, "Howard, Thomas", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>182</sup> TNA, SP 15/23, f. 48.

<sup>183</sup> BL, Add. MS 26,056, f. 121.

<sup>184</sup> Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State*, 238.

<sup>185</sup> Hindle, "County Government in England", 98-99.

<sup>186</sup> Hindle, "County Government in England", 98.

those who saw power of any earthly monarchy as limited by God."<sup>187</sup> Therefore, the Queen's civic visits and progress to Norwich was not a form of preaching and demanding obedience from the safety of London. Through demanding obedience face to face, Elizabeth displayed her authority and performed her female power in person.

The Norwich progress and the pageants and entertainments presented to the Queen demonstrate that this was not a normal civic visit, but one that consisted of unscripted dialogue from Elizabeth. On 12 August 1578, the Queen and her traveling court proceeded into the county of Norfolk, first stopping at Kenninghall estate.<sup>188</sup> On the 16 August 1578, Elizabeth continued on to Bracon Ash estate, after which the Queen headed to the city of Norwich.<sup>189</sup> One particular chronicle noted that, "after so long an introduction of serious matters in [around the county of] Norfolk", the Queen had finally gone to meet her "well affected subjects" in Norwich.<sup>190</sup>

After dinner on the 16 August, the Queen rode north towards Norwich. Just before entering the city, Elizabeth was first greeted by the "Dutch congregation" who had "waited upon her" to welcome her. One of the Dutch "stranger" ministers "made a Latin speech to her, in grateful knowledgement of the favours shewed them, and the freedom of their religion...[they] presented her with a representation of Joseph...he [the minister] aptly applied Joseph's history to Queen Elizabeth's sufferings and advancement."<sup>191</sup> This was an important moment of public participation. The "strangers" were a group of religious refugees that had fled Europe. In 1561, a congregation of Flemish and French refugees landed along the English coast in Deal. They travelled to Sandwich, which happened to be a "decayed town."<sup>192</sup> Upon hearing this, the Queen, in letters patent, chose to "give and graunte lycence to all and every persons strangers...to inhabite within our said towne and porte of Sandwich."<sup>193</sup> The town of Sandwich began to prosper with the influx of refugees and this prosperity was noted by other cities throughout England. The catalyst for the 1561 wave of refugees, specifically French refugees, was the religious unrest in areas throughout France, especially in Dauphiné and Pro-

<sup>187</sup> John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2011), 38.

<sup>188</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 191.

<sup>189</sup> Cf. Garter, *Ioyfull Receyving of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich*, NRO, COL/7/1 (a), f. 3 or see the copy text in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:786.

<sup>190</sup> From Holinshed's *Chronicles*, copy text in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:715.

<sup>191</sup> Strype, *Annals of the Reformation*, 2:2:204-205.

<sup>192</sup> The term "decayed" refers to the town not being in a good state physically or financially. William Boys, *Collections for a History of Sandwich in Kent* (Canterbury: Simmons, Kirkby and Jones, 1792), 740.

<sup>193</sup> Boys, *Collections for a History of Sandwich*, 740. Strangers were considered alien people, or non-English immigrants seeking refuge from their native lands in England. Cf. Laura Hunt Yungblut, *Strangers Settled Here Amongst Us: Policies, perceptions and the presence of aliens in Elizabethan England* (London: Routledge, 1996), 21.

vence, which had escalated at alarming rates. The interaction with the Dutch congregation in Norwich highlights the performativity of female power, particularly Elizabeth's mercy, and further cultivating loyalty through effective rulership.

After Elizabeth enters the city of Norwich, the dialogue and interactions quickly changed from the celebratory reception of the Queen, to Elizabeth addressing the city directly, which has, up until recently, not received adequate treatment.<sup>194</sup> The exchange began after the mayor talked about the issues within the city, referring only to religious issues, and that "the people therein....first most studious of God's glory and true religion," thus confirming their conformity to the Protestant religion. At this point, as previously introduced, the Queen responds with a damning statement:

We hartily thanke you, Maister Maior, and all the reste, for these tokens of goodwill, neuertheless Princes haue no neede of money: God hathe endowed vs abundantly, we come not therefore, but for that whiche in right is our owne, the hartes and true allegeaunce of our Subiects.<sup>195</sup>

The statement illustrates how Elizabeth performed her royal power by emphasising the divinity of her authority through God's endowment, along with declaring the Queen's right to demand conformity and the exhortation of allegiance.

Another piece of evidence that highlights the dual (political and religious) purpose of the progress and contributes to the state of the relationship between the Queen and the citizens of Norwich, was the letter to the Spanish king from his ambassador, Mendoza. In the letter, Mendoza, wrote:

When she entered Norwich large crowds of people came out to receive her, and one company of children knelt as she passed and said, as usual, 'God save the Queen.' She turned to them and said, 'Speak up; I know you do not love me here.'<sup>196</sup>

This part of the letter alone signified the contentious nature of the visit. The Queen was proclaiming that the city was disloyal. The reason for this becomes clear through the subsequent lines in the letter, where Mendoza recounts:

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<sup>194</sup> Elizabeth's statement to the city of Norwich only appears Bernard Garter's eye-witness account; it is not mentioned in the account of Thomas Churchyard, who was the sole creator of most of the Norwich pageants. Comparatively, by positioning Churchyard's account alongside Garter's account, which was more observational, we are able to highlight and extract instances where the accounts differ and establish more contextual details surrounding the Queen's visit, the performativity of female power, and the interactions with the local public. This also demonstrates the significance of Garter's account. Sidney Lee, 'Garter, Bernard (fl. 1565–1579)', rev. Matthew Steggle, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); Raphael Lyne, 'Churchyard, Thomas (1523?–1604)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:720; Matthew Woodcock, *Thomas Churchyard: Pen, Sword & Ego* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 194.

<sup>195</sup> From Garter's *Joyfull Receyving of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich*, NRO, COL/7/1 (a), f. 5. Cf. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:790.

<sup>196</sup> *CSP—Spain (Simancas)*, 2:609-618, 8 September 1578, Bernardino de Mendoza to the King.

A very curious thing happened here lately. A countryman was found, buried in a stable, three wax figures, two spans high and proportionately broad; the centre figure had the word Elizabeth written on the forehead and the side figures were dressed like her councillors, and were covered over with a variety of different signs, the left side of the images being transfixed with a large quantity of pig's bristles as if it were some sort of witchcraft. When it reached the Queen's ears she was disturbed, as it was looked upon as a augury, and great enquiries have been set about it, although hitherto nothing has been discovered.<sup>197</sup>

The body and figures found in Lincoln's Inn Fields in London were sent to the Queen and her councillors in Norwich.<sup>198</sup> The arrival of these figures only reminded Elizabeth of her subject's disloyalty and this offence against her, reinforced her anger toward the citizens of Norwich and results in Elizabeth scolding them for their lack of 'love'. The fact that these figures were sent to Norwich, where the Queen and her councillors could examine the evidence, reinforces that importance of progresses serving as an extension of government and the exercising of royal authority. The affairs of state continued on royal progress. More importantly, by dealing with the transgressions in front of the citizens of Norwich, Elizabeth was performing her royal power and negotiating the boundaries of which the citizens were warned to conform to.

Elizabeth's response cannot be considered out of place or the ranting of a "foolish, mad" woman.<sup>199</sup> If we place the incident within the context of the visit then we can understand why the Queen verbalised her displeasure to the public. The exchange between the Queen and her subjects in Norwich was a deliberate expression or response by Elizabeth to address the challenges to her royal authority and persona. Despite the concerns that Elizabeth and her councillors had regarding the county of Norfolk and city of Norwich, the visit was very much a performance of dialogue and ceremony that exemplified the real relationship between not only the Queen and her subjects but also the relationship between the central government and the localities. The ritual of allowing the Queen and her government to enter demonstrates the city's ceremonial acknowledgement her authority. The fact that the account does not reveal any negative responses to the Queen's declarations was an acceptance of her demand and their willingness to pledge their loyalty, allegiance and obedience to the Queen. This exchange reinforces the long-established ritual of exalting the monarch (as a pseudo-king passed on his royal rank) and submitting to the authority of the sovereign (seen through the founder acknowledging the supremacy of the visiting monarch).

<sup>197</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:609-618.

<sup>198</sup> A few Society of Antiquaries fellows have discovered a map dated from 1583 that identifies the location of these bodies and wax figures. The map was displayed during the Society of Antiquaries "Blood Royal" exhibit. A discussion of the map can be found on the Society of Antiquaries website under the section titled "Loyalty and Dissent": <http://www.blood-royal-exhibition.com>.

<sup>199</sup> The reference to "foolish, mad" is taken from John Knox's condemnation of women's right to rule, stating that it would "repugna[n]t to nature" that "the foolish, madde a[n]d phrenetike shall govern", further implying that women "that be no speakers nor aduocates for others." *Monstrous Regiment of Women*, 10 and 12.

The ritual and dialogue continued with the city's demonstration of allegiance to the Queen, both verbally and physically with decoration.

Then hir Maiestie, drewe neare the Gates of the Citie called Sainct Stephens gates...The Queenes Armes were moste richely and beautifully set forth in the chiefe front of the gate, on the oneside thereof...on the other side, the armes of the Cittie: and directye vnder the Queenes Maiesties armes was placed ye Falcon, hir hyghnesse Badge in due forme, & vnder the same were written these words, *God and the Queen we serue*.<sup>200</sup>

This highlights how devotion and loyalty were clearly expressed both physically and verbally by the public but also highlights the performance of the public fealty to the Queen.

The pageants and entertainments at Norwich were designed not only to flatter but also to pay homage to the Queen. This was an important component of political culture and public participation: the mixture of advice and praise. The public, including both civic leaders and the wider community, could not run the risk of insulting the monarch or overstepping, for fear of losing the sovereign's favour or patronage. Therefore, these spectacles and rituals publicised the performed dialogues between the monarch and their people, while cultivating Elizabeth's queenship and established bonds between the public and the monarch.

#### *Civic Visits and Public Discourse*

Elizabeth's 1572 summer progress included a visit to the city of Warwick. The Queen was greeted with traditional "rituals of inclusion that made Elizabeth part of the civic community."<sup>201</sup> This was evident when the city professed with "ioyfull hartes" the "humble good willes of vs your true harted subiectes."<sup>202</sup> These civic visits were unique and important because they were rare moments of interaction the populace had with their sovereign. These rituals of including the sovereign was celebratory and flattering. However, the rituals were not always without public criticism or opinions, and, more importantly, rituals also negotiated the boundaries of the sovereign's power. The pageants and entertainments were organised by the civic authorities with the community's involvement and input, which resulted in concerns being conveyed during the royal visit. In fact, early modern communities were close knit and were central to the "formation of public opinion" which were often conveyed to individuals in power.

Public opinion, as Bloemendal has asserted, developed through "collective projects to which many individuals contributed and which operated through an informal web of individual conversations [and] private correspondence."<sup>203</sup> This

<sup>200</sup> From Garter's *Loyfull Receyuing of the Queenes most excellent Maiestie into hir Highnesse Citie of Norwich*, NRO, COL/7/1 (a), f. 7. Cf. Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:792.

<sup>201</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 126

<sup>202</sup> Taken from civic accounts recorded in *The Black Book of Warwick*, edited by Gabriel Heaton in Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:34. The original is located in the Warwickshire County Record office, CR 1618/WA19/6.

<sup>203</sup> Jan Bloemendal and Arjan van Dixhoorn, eds., *Literary Cultures and Public Opinion in the Early Modern Low Countries* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 26.

was certainly the case with civic visits, especially with the city of Warwick. There were two issues that were highlighted by the Warwick festivities: revolt and the Queen's non-married state. During the "publik oracions", the town recorder, Edward Aglionby (1520 – 1591)<sup>204</sup>, hastily remarked on the "Rude blast of one insurrection except", referring to the 1569 Revolt of the Northern Earls.<sup>205</sup> What was unique about this reference was the fact that it was quite out of place within the context of the civic ritual that was focused on Elizabeth's lineage, virtues, and achievements. The incident would have only reminded Elizabeth of her fears surrounding insurrection. Furthermore, Aglionby's reference was perilously close to treason as mere mentions of royal death, sedition, or aiding an enemy of the crown, resulted in punishment. Despite the usual, and almost insulting, statement, Elizabeth graciously and diplomatically thanked Aglionby for his "good willes."<sup>206</sup> Town recorders did not act on their own free will or volition, the public orations were composed by a number of people within the town. Warwick's public opinion appeared to counsel the Queen to be vigilant of rebels. Nonetheless, there was a larger concern within this public statement regarding the attack on civic entities by rebel forces. Warwick was already in a state of economic difficulty, characterised by the town citizens as "old fatall de kaye and poverty" indicated by the "very great" number of poor citizens, and advanced through an attack on their town would be catastrophic.<sup>207</sup> Therefore, the reference to revolt in the town's oration to Elizabeth was not meant to be insulting but an expression of concern and soliciting the Queen's aid in defence.

The issue of revolt was coupled with public concerns of Elizabeth's unmarried state. During the proceedings, a preacher approached the Queen and presented her with paper, to which Elizabeth replied she would "give you aunswer at my Lord Warwikes house."<sup>208</sup> The paper contained verses where the first letter formed a phrase that indicated the subject matter: "you, Elizabeth, when you marry a man will be a mother."<sup>209</sup> The Queen's unmarried state was a serious social and political issue that was often the subjects of her councillors', Parliament's, and the public's criticisms. The fundamental concern was the need for an heir to avoid a succession crisis. In 1572, Elizabeth and her councillors were negotiating the marriage suit of Francis, Duke of Alençon, later Duke of Anjou (1555–1584).<sup>210</sup> The matrimonial negotiations were less about transactional and practical points of the marriage (i.e.

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<sup>204</sup> Aglionby was a member of Parliament along with being elected the town recorder for Warwick in 1572. Cf. Stephen Wright, "Aglionby, Edward (1520-1591?)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

<sup>205</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:31.

<sup>206</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:35.

<sup>207</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:33; W.B. Stephens, "The borough of Warwick: Economic and Social History, 1534-1825", in *A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 8, the City of Coventry and Borough of Warwick* (London, 1969), 504-514.

<sup>208</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:35.

<sup>209</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:36. The translation is provided by the editors in the footnotes.

<sup>210</sup> Cf. Mack P. Holt, *The Duke of Anjou and the Politique Struggle during the Wars of Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

dowries, estates, etc.), and more about succession concerns and cultivating diplomatic relations after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre in France.<sup>211</sup> Between August 1572 and November 1578, opposition to the French match, especially in the wake of the violent massacre, emerged from within Elizabeth's court and from her councillors, as well as the increasingly concerned public. A number of pageants and entertainments were staged to convey "outsoken and explicit criticism" by the public and "acted as a coded assertion of opposition to Elizabeth's marriage negotiations", with the Duke of Alençon to be specific.<sup>212</sup> The Warwick verses certainly echoed the public's perspective.

The Queen's 1575 progress also included critical responses to the marriage negotiations, as well as criticism of and prayers for Elizabeth's unmarried state. At Kenilworth, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester (1532/3–1588),<sup>213</sup> hosted the Queen, during which the pageants served as "one extended marriage proposal."<sup>214</sup> The content of the pageants positioned Leicester as an alternative to the Alençon match. While Leicester's elevated status and the fact that the performances were not open to the wider public (i.e. local citizens, with the exception of those who assisted with the festivities) did not substitute the wider public's criticism, his opposition to the marriage negotiations with France superficially mirrored that of his fellow countrymen because he was "of that country."<sup>215</sup> Leicester's festivities presented several ideas, that were at times conflicting with one another: 1) Leicester was cast as "a prince consort or king"; 2) the festivities championed marriage over chastity; and 3) the criticism highlighted the fact that the public and intended audience "share[d] Leicester's impatience with Elizabeth's unwillingness to commit...her physical body to marriage."<sup>216</sup>

During the same progress in Woodstock, a public prayer was performed before the Queen by Laurence Humphrey (1525–1589)<sup>217</sup>, a professor from the University of Oxford. The prayer proclaimed "Now a prudent Prince reigns, but a woman reigns. There is hope since she by no means lacks strength, but fear because she lacks a man."<sup>218</sup> The prayer focuses on the request of protection for Elizabeth

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<sup>211</sup> Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996), 130. The St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre as an attack on Huguenots in France by Catholic groups after the wedding of Henry III of Navarre and Margaret de Valois, of which many prominent Huguenots had attended.

<sup>212</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, 150; see also Susan Doran, "Juno versus Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I's Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581", *Historical Journal* 38 (1995), 257-274.

<sup>213</sup> Dudley was a favoured courtier of Elizabeth, along with being a member of the Privy Council, Master of the Horse, and various other official positions. See Simon Adams, "Dudley, Robert, earl of Leicester (1532/3-1588)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2008).

<sup>214</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 133.

<sup>215</sup> Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), 318.

<sup>216</sup> Frye, *Elizabeth I*, 70.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. Thomas S. Freeman, "Humphrey, Laurence (1525x7-1589)", *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2010).

<sup>218</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:457.



as she rules, but Humphreys also calls for divine guidance to “support her woman’s hand, with your [God’s] strong hand.” The prayer repeated the espoused notion of the female gender as a liability that was a culturally sustained construction embedded in the social discourse, thus reflecting Butler’s notion of performativity. This discourse focused on the common social, religious, and political expectations about women within sixteenth-century society. The public depictions and speeches featured a ritual of rhetoric employed to ensure the Queen adhered to societal conventions of gender and women’s roles. There are three particular points that should be highlighted with regards to Humphrey’s performance. First, Elizabeth, though anointed and “endowed with divine gift” was still a woman. The poems and prayers that Humphrey’s delivered at Woodstock served to counsel the Queen to avoid the evils that surrounded her and encouraged her to “Defend the good and help the wretch who petitions you.” Second, Humphrey articulated the exceptionalism of Elizabeth’s situation: a Queen with prince-like abilities that made her exceptional where she “didn’t lack strength.” However, Elizabeth still needed to have “her woman’s mind” guided as she susceptible to evil influences as women were “intellectually inferior...[and] morally weak creatures.”<sup>219</sup> Third, Elizabeth’s masculine body politic provided “hope” but the fear of the nation was based on the fact that the Queen “lacks a man.”<sup>220</sup> This particular point was a common feature of the public’s participation on progresses in the 1570s. These gendered expectations were reinforced and publicly conveyed messages that sought to negotiate the Queen’s power and shaped her royal image.

Finally, as the marriage negotiations with the Duke of Alençon (now Anjou) were intensely renewed by 1578, the Queen’s summer progress into East Anglia (previously detailed) also featured the public’s opposition to the match. The beginning pageants of Elizabeth’s visit to Norwich exhorted “no Fraude, nor Force, nor foraine Foe may stand Againste the strength of thy moste puyssuant hand.”<sup>221</sup> Throughout the visit, despite Elizabeth’s public admonishment of the Norwich community during the visit, most unusually, the local public urged the Queen to remain unmarried because “who ever found a body and minde so full from staine, so perfect to be seene.”<sup>222</sup> By the end of the 1570s, Elizabeth’s subjects were more willing to embrace her virgin state than for her to be married, especially to Anjou. This public acceptance and popular imagery of Elizabeth as the virgin queen, is reinforced by Susan Doran’s assertion that the Queen’s identity as an unmarried, chaste queen did not emerge and grow until the late 1570s, of which the 1578 progress certainly contributed to.<sup>223</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 168.

<sup>220</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:455-457.

<sup>221</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:798.

<sup>222</sup> Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions*, 2:798.

<sup>223</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, 10.



Fig. 12: 'Queen Elizabeth I receiving two Dutch ambassadors', unknown artist, c. 1575, Neue Galerie, Kassel, Germany.

Through these examples and many others on progresses, the public's participation was evident. They provided opportunities for the Queen to perform her royal power, whereby she acted independently and deliberately articulated her royal authority, asserted her prerogative, and fostered her persona. However, the public performance of these speeches fostered a national dialogue that influenced policies and shaped diplomacy. They also reminded the Queen of her duty to provide an heir, to prevent a succession crisis, and ensure the safety of her people. Therefore, we can conclude that Elizabeth's ability to successfully reign for as long she did, rested on the Queen's ability to perform female power effectively to the public. Elizabeth's performance in using the patriarchal and social constructions of gender to her advantage aided in obtaining agency, cultivating popular support, navigating the demands and expectations by the national and international public, and asserting her authority.

### **Conclusion: The Continuity of Public Spectacles**

The public spectacles and visual displays cultivated by both the Queen and her subjects developed a dialogue that enabled royal progresses to serve not only as a means of access to Elizabeth, but also acted as a medium through which propaganda and royal supremacy were projected to both her court and her subjects. Elizabeth understood the power of engaging with her public as it impacted the Queen's ability to wield power that was essential for effective rulership and sovereignty. Alternatively, progresses provided the stage from which public concerns

about national issues were performed and communicated. The theatre of progresses joined together the Queen, the aristocracy, civic officials, and the populace which facilitated “opportunit[ies] to speak across the divides of status without challenging the hierarchy.”<sup>224</sup> Thereby illustrating the significance of Elizabethan, and, more broadly Tudor, royal progresses, emphasised the theatricality of monarchy and precipitated the intersections of Elizabethan politics and culture. Fundamentally, royal progresses prompted the performativity of female power as a way of crafting a public image that included both “indictment and rebuttal” to public criticism, and cultivated bonds between the Queen and her subjects.

The Tudor monarchy understood their role as sovereign to present a model and ideal to strive towards, and embodying piety and divinity, nobility and honour, learnedness and magnificence. By Elizabeth’s reign, the monarchy became more answerable to the public. Through an exchange of messages embedded in the rituals, ceremonies, speeches, and public spectacles, the relationship between the Queen and her subjects became more defined, their roles were negotiated, and their identities within society were moulded. The exchange of messages or dialogue highlights the rhetorical nature that was employed to construct Elizabeth’s queenship by her subjects, and communicated the Queen’s responses to those constructions. All this contributes to our understanding of the way in which Elizabethan political culture functioned, fluctuated and can be defined. More importantly, this unique political culture that developed was not reliant on just the imagery and representations of rulership, but that this culture emerged from the performances between individuals (i.e. the Queen and her Principal Secretary), and the interactions between individuals and groups of people (i.e. Queen and the Privy Council, ecclesiastical leaders and the laity, and the crown and urban and rural subjects). These interactions shifted depending on the issues and discourse within society (religious beliefs, wars, economy, art and spectacles), thus influencing policy and shaping the identity of England.

The public spectacles, visual culture, and propaganda that were utilised formed the basis through which popular politics and power were shaped. Ultimately, spectacles and performativity became the hallmarks of Elizabeth’s queenship and defined the Tudor monarchy. The use of public spectacles, propaganda, and dialogue through the use of rhetoric, as well as the Protestant nature of the Elizabethan period established a model of “patriotism and civic duty” that remained a permanent fixture within British history.<sup>225</sup> By the mid-eighteenth century, the model of popular politics facilitated the emergence of republican ideals as it rested on the “the will of the people” and fostered nationalism.<sup>226</sup>

The foundations of popular sovereignty, the fusion of political counsel and resistance theory, stimulated the political consciousness that ultimately “shaped the Atlantic and colonialist traditions, notably in North America.”<sup>227</sup> The stimulation

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<sup>224</sup> Cole, *The Portable Queen*, 133.

<sup>225</sup> Guy, “Monarchy and Counsel”, 126-127.

<sup>226</sup> Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11-16.

<sup>227</sup> Guy, “Monarchy and Counsel”, 113 and 129-131.

of political consciousness emerged from the public performances of power, counsel, rhetoric, and conflict. These public spectacles encouraged social discourse and political participation that has come to define the democratic nature of American politics. Today, the public spectacles and the rhetoric espoused by politicians have transformed the political landscape, in which power and protest are performed. The verbalisation of protest, the contestation or negotiation of power, and public engagement, rooted in Tudor political culture, has prevailed and continues to be one of the vital components that fuels modern political exchanges and defines the current cultural legacy.

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