



Queenship and Cross-Confessional Identity

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Abstract: This cluster focuses on the cross-confessional nature of European queenship, particularly the role that different confessional identities play in the education, marriage, childbirth, patronage, expressions of agency, legal context, and posthumous legacy of queens, both regnant and consort. Ranging from the education of Isabella I’s daughters to Catholic consorts in the Stuart realms to posthumous understandings of Anne Boleyn, this cluster features the work of both emerging and established scholars, all of whom seek to contribute to the field of royal studies’ engagement with queens’ religion across confessional lines, including intra-Christian relations and the interplay between the Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faiths. After a brief introduction to the conceptual framework of the cluster, eight discrete short-form articles examine different aspects of European queenship and their cross-confessional identities.

Key Words: Confessionalism, Confessional Identity, Catholicism, Protestantism, Queenship, Education, Patronage, Legacy

Introductory Notes

Amy Saunders and Johanna C.E. Strong

INDEPENDENT SCHOLARS

This cluster explores queenship and cross-confessional identities, bringing together works on a variety of European queens including Mary I, Anne Boleyn, Catherine of Braganza, and Mary of Modena.¹ Ranging from education to marriage to memory, these present discussions all centre on an understanding of confessionalism as being “the ‘outward’ expression of religious faith and

¹ The editors also extend their thanks to Ellie Woodacre for her ongoing encouragement, and support, to the contributors for their hard work and fascinating scholarship, and to the peer reviewers for their valuable insights.

the belief that politics and society should be bound by certain aspects of this faith."² Consequently, when queens held a religious belief distinct from that of their realm they existed in a cross-confessional environment, "where their own religious identity was in direct conflict to the official religious identity of their husbands and subjects."³ This cluster uses this definition of confessionalism and cross-confessionalism to better understand the religious environments of the various queens regnant and consort examined here and to extend traditional understandings of this aspect of the royal studies field.

Discussions of cross-confessional monarchical identity tend to be confined to examinations of the medieval and early modern periods and examinations particularly of Protestant-Catholic marriage and identity before the eighteenth century.⁴ This cluster, however, addresses these oversights by situating these wider discussions within the traditional framework of understandings of cross-confessional identity in early modern Europe. This cluster moves beyond the traditional Protestant-Catholic boundary through Melania Soler Moratón's discussion of the education of Isabella I of Castile's daughters and the influence of Castile's multi-faith context. This cluster also extends its examination beyond the traditional chronological ending point of the seventeenth century, particularly through Sarah Betts's work. Betts bases her examination of the cross-confessional elements of the Act of Settlement and the changes it wrought to British monarchy on understandings of early modern Protestant-Catholic cross-confessionalisation but broadens this conversation to include a shifting political atmosphere in the eighteenth century.

This collection of articles brings together a unique range of queens regnant and consort to explore how these women navigated their individual cross-confessional environments. It demonstrates the various ways in which they pursued their own confessional interests and how these activities crossed international borders. This cluster therefore contributes to the growing field of queenship studies, with themes of agency,

² Amy Saunders, "Construction, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction: Stuart Kings and Queens in Heritage Sites" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Winchester, 2024), 15.

³ Saunders, "Construction, Deconstruction, and Reconstruction," 15.

⁴ For cross-confessional identities, see, for example: Adam Morton and Nadine Lewycky, ed., *Getting Along? Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2012); and Marc R. Forster and Benjamin J. Kaplan, ed., *Piety and Family in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honour of Steven Ozment* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2005). For royal cross-confessional identities, see, for example: Valentina Caldari and Sara J. Wolfson, ed., *Stuart Marriage Diplomacy: Dynastic Politics in their European Context, 1604–1630* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2018); Johanna C. E. Strong, "The Making of a Queen: The Effect of Religion, National Identity, and Gender on Mary I's Legacy in the English Historical Narrative" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Winchester, 2022).

patronage, self-fashioning, and networking at its core. By moving beyond traditional chronological and confessional boundaries it also suggests future avenues of research that many of the authors included intend to pursue further.

"None of them were more loved by their peoples": The Daughters of Isabella I of Castile and the Construction of the Perfect Christian Consort through the Arts⁵

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Being Educated in a Multi-Confessional Territory: The Peculiarities of the Instruction of the *Infantas*

In 1554, King Philip II received a letter from Francis of Borgia, the confessor of his grandmother, Juana I of Castile. The object of the letter was to report on an extremely important issue: the religiosity, or rather the lack thereof, of the Queen. The priest questioned the devout practices carried out by the mother of Carlos I of Spain as follows:

She responded after having listened to me very carefully, that in the past she used to confess and take communion and she heard her masses and she had images and she prayed in some approved prayers that a friar confessor of the Catholic kings had given her ... and ... the images that she had ... were a Saint Dominic and a Saint Francis and Saint Peter and Saint Paul.⁶

With these words Juana was referring to her childhood, specifically to her period as *infanta* of Castile and Aragon. Raised along with her sisters in one of the most important courts of the period, the Castilian, their mother, Queen Isabella, oversaw the girls' religious education. The court of Castile had a peculiar characteristic in that three cultures coexisted. This significant co-existence of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim populations influenced the education of the *infantas* in their way of both understanding religion and expressing it.⁷

⁵ This work has been carried out thanks to a Margarita Salas postdoctoral contract from the University of Murcia and the Ministry of Universities, funded by the European Union-NextGenerationEU and within the framework of the project "Portrait Medals and Female Power in Renaissance Europe (I): The Women of the Hispanic Monarchy (MEFER)," funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (PID2020- 114333GBI00).

⁶ "Ella respondió después de haberme escuchado con mucha atención, que antiguamente se confesaba y comulgaba y oía sus misas y tenía imágenes y rezaba con unas oraciones aprobadas que le había dado un fraile confesor de los Reyes Católicos. y ... las imágenes que ella tenía ... eran un Santo Domingo y un San Francisco y San Pedro y San Pablo." Miguel Ángel Zalama Rodríguez, *Vida cotidiana y arte en el palacio de la reina Juana I en Tordesillas* (Valladolid: Secretariado de Publicaciones e Intercambio Editorial, Universidad de Valladolid, 2003), 261.

⁷ Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile: The Virgin, Christ, Devotions, and Images in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries* (University Park PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2013), 25.

In 1487, Pope Innocent VIII allowed the *Reyes Católicos* to choose the preceptors who would serve at their court.⁸ This meant that Isabella was able to build her own pedagogical system based on spirituality, intellect, and courtly models.⁹ Five university-educated churchmen were chosen as tutors for the *infantas*: Antonio Giralдино and Fray Pedro Ampudia for Isabella, Fray Andrés de Miranda for Juana and María, and Alejandro Giralдино for Katherine and María.¹⁰

These tutors, with the approval of Queen Isabella, chose the religious readings which educated the *infantas*. These were readings of Castilian origin and not devotional readings of the *Devotio Moderna*. The spiritual movement known as *Devotio Moderna* supported a return to a pious life based on the imitation of the life of Christ. Thus, the human character of Christ was highlighted using his love, suffering, and death as elements of connection with the faithful. However, these events in the life of Christ could be taken by Jews and Muslims as a sign of Christianity’s weakness. For this reason, and although these events from the life of Christ are included in Castilian representations, Isabella preferred to emphasise Christ’s divine character. This led to the texts produced in Europe and in Castile having different objectives; while the former were intended to support meditation in Castile, they had an evangelising purpose. These texts fought for the evangelization of the territory above the private devotion that the central European manuscripts promulgated. This meant approaching religion and the images produced by it from a pedagogical perspective; its purpose was not only to save the soul but to train in the correct religion. The coexistence of the three cultures in the Castilian territory explains why the human qualities of Christ—symbols of Christianity’s weakness—are ignored in favour of the divine character of his person. This gave rise to images of the Passion that are less inclined to the bloodthirsty and that highlighted this divinity.¹¹ This also explained why the role of mediator that Christ acquired in other parts of Europe was supplanted here by the Virgin Mary. Her human qualities—piety, suffering, or faith—were points of union with the faithful, in addition to serving as a feminine model of behaviour.¹²

⁸ Antonio de la Torre, “Maestros de los hijos de los Reyes Católicos,” *Hispania* 62 (1956): 265–266.

⁹ Isabel Val de Valdivieso, “Isabel la católica y la educación,” *Aragón en la Edad Media* 19 (2006): 559.

¹⁰ Antonio de la Torre and Eugenia Alsina de la Torre, ed., *Cuentas de Gonzalo de Baeza, tesorero de Isabel la Católica, Volume I and II* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1955), 45, 132, 182, 231, 364, 412 and 43, 126, 205, 263, 340, 377, 431.

¹¹ Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile*, 70–75.

¹² Melania Soler Moratón, “Arte y devoción: la experiencia de las imágenes religiosas de las últimas Trastámara” (PhD Thesis, University of Murcia, 2020), 289.

This explains why, until the end of the fifteenth century when all Hispanic territories were Christianised, translations into Spanish of works as important as Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Chisti* (1502) were not carried out. This led to a preference for texts already produced in the Hispanic territory and support for new texts under the auspices of the Catholic Monarchs. Works such as Fray Martín de Córdoba's *El Jardín de las nobles doncellas*, created for Queen Isabella in 1469, were recovered and republished in 1499. Fray Martín de Córdoba's work was a pro-Isabella manifesto created after the death of her younger brother, Alfonso, and the proclamation of Isabella as crown princess. The author compares the figure of Isabella with that of the Virgin Mary herself, ensuring that, "just as the Virgin gave birth to Christ, Isabella must give birth to the word of God."¹³ This quasi-divine character granted to the queen may explain the later re-impression of the book: this virginal comparison grants Isabella the power to reconquer the territory in the name of Christianity. The reconquest of new territories gave rise to the need to produce new texts that supported evangelisation.

Thus, the *Reyes Católicos* supported new texts. It is interesting to note how some of these works were created by Judaeo-Converso authors such as Fray Hernando de Talavera, a Hieronymite monk and Queen Isabella's confessor. His origin, perhaps, can explain his opposition to the Inquisition and the harsh punishments against converts. He advocated a more pacifist evangelising vision with conversion through persuasion and progressive enculturation. Thus, for example, "He searched everywhere for clerics and religious who had knowledge of the Arabic language, so that they could preach and teach them in it" and he allowed Moorish dances and instruments to be used during mass.¹⁴ These characteristics are reflected in works such as "*Tratado sobre la demasía en vestir y calzar, comer y beber*" ["A treatise on excess in clothing and footwear, eating and drinking."].¹⁵

Jewish converts and Moorish writers from the court environment introduced new facets to Castilian religiosity. For example, Sufi mysticism influenced the introspection of Hispanic mendicant currents. This fact was reflected both in the vocabulary used in these writings, tending towards metaphors related to the love and divinity of the deity, and in new iconography such as the tree of life.¹⁶ Public-devotional actions such as processions, masses,

¹³ Vanesa Regalado del Valle, "El tratado *Jardín de nobles doncellas* y su influencia en la personalidad de Isabel la Católica," *Digilec* 6 (2019): 5.

¹⁴ María Julieta Vega García Ferrer, *Fray Hernando de Talavera y Granada* (Granada: Editorial Universidad de Granada, 2008), 39.

¹⁵ Teresa de Castro Martínez, "El tratado sobre el vestir, calzar y comer del arzobispo Hernando de Talavera," *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma. Historia Medieval* 14 (2001): 11–92.

¹⁶ Cynthia Robinson, *Imagining the Passion in a Multiconfessional Castile*, 150.

or alms were added to the evangelising nature of these devotional texts. Aware of the public relevance of her virtue, Isabella and her daughters were protagonists of these devotional activities. The girls' participation in these devotional activities had different objectives. Not only did it have a salvific purpose, but it also publicly showed the virtue of the princesses and the piety of the entire dynasty. Furthermore, their example served as an example for others in the desire to evangelise the territory.¹⁷ As this article will further examine, this was reflected in these women's reigns.

Christian Queens of Europe: María and Katherine of Aragon and Castile

Thanks to their vast progeny, the Catholic Monarchs created a marriage network that linked the Trastámara court with the main European ones. In this way, they were not only able to create new political-economic allies, but also to isolate their main enemy, France. The heiress Isabella married twice within the Portuguese royal family: first to Prince Alfonso and, after his death, to Manuel I of Portugal. Isabella's early death forced a final marriage with Portugal, this time between the *infanta* María and her sister's widower. For their part, Juan and Juana would be the protagonists of the Trastámara-Habsburg double alliance, marrying Margaret of Austria and Philip the Fair respectively. Finally, Katherine was married twice: first to Arthur Tudor and, after his death, to Henry VIII. After the deaths of Juan and Isabella, Juana was proclaimed queen of Castile in 1504. Thus, the princesses became queens and consorts of four of the main courts in Europe. It was in Portugal and England, where they served as queen consorts, that we best see examples of cross-confessionalism. These women's relationships with God were a topic of interest because they functioned as a model of virtue. However, despite the manifest importance that this part of the personal lives of Isabella, Juana, María, or Katherine had for their contemporaries and for future generations, the Castilian aspect of their religious training has gone largely unnoticed in the research carried out regarding these four women thus far. This article delves into this aspect, focusing our efforts on highlighting the Castilian aspects of the devotion of these women and the construction of the perfect Christian consort. Wedding processions, masses and artistic promotion are the pillars on which the devout public figure of these queens is here sustained.

Wedding Processions

On 12 November 1501, Katherine of Aragon, Princess of Wales, entered the city of London for her wedding to Prince Arthur. The chronicles highlighted the bride's exoticism:

¹⁷ Bethany Aram, *La reina Juana: gobierno, piedad y dinastía* (Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2001), 52.

On a large mule, with a rich saddle in the style of Spain; [...] Her body was richly dressed, in the style of her country, and on her head a small cap, in the manner of that of cardinals, beautifully embroidered, with a gold ribbon on this hat to be hidden; her hair loose on her shoulders, which is a light red colour, a kind of cap between her head and her carnation-coloured cap and this was tied from the middle of her head up and so the men could see all her hair from the half down.¹⁸

It is clear from this paragraph the impression that Katherine's aesthetics produced on the English viewer. Before them stood not a future Tudor bride, but an *infanta* of Castile and Aragon. This impression lasted in Katherine's subsequent appearances, such as, for example, on her wedding day.

On 23 June 1509, on her second marriage with a Tudor heir, Katherine's entry into the city and appearance presented marked differences with respect to previous chronicles:

Borne by two White Palfreis, the Litter couered, and richely appareled, and the Palfreis Trapped in White clothe of gold, her persone appareled in white Satin Embrodered, her heire hangyng donne to her backe, of a very great length, bewtefull and goodly to behold, and on her hedde a Coronall, set with many riche orient stones.¹⁹

Between both scenes a transformation took place in the figure of Katherine. The *infanta* who had arrived at the port of Plymouth was left behind to become the new queen of England. The responsibilities of the Castilian *infanta* were left behind, too; now she had to provide an heir to certify the rights of the Tudor dynasty to the throne.²⁰ Katherine's case perfectly exemplifies the transition that both she and her sisters undertook to become part of a new dynasty. The arrival of a new family and, with it, a new socio-cultural space, made Isabella's daughters foreigners in their new homes. Their beliefs and devotions were an element of unity and disagreement in their new courts.

Mass as an Element of Feminine Acceptance

At the end of December 1500, Ochoa Isasága, royal treasurer of the *Reyes Católicos*, wrote to his lords about the Christmas festivities of that year at the Portuguese court. The treasurer

¹⁸ Francis Grose, Thomas Astle, and E. Jeffery, ed., *Here begynneth the note and trewth of the moost goodly behavior in the receyt of the Ladie Kateryn* (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1808), 278.

¹⁹ Edward Hall, *The lives of the Kings, Henry VIII with an introduction by Charles Whibley*, Volume 1 (London: T.C. & E.C. Jack, 1904), 12.

²⁰ Soler Moratón, "Arte y devoción," 278.

began by explaining the queen's private prayers. These were performed in Spanish, assisted by books of Hispanic origin, and accompanied by her Spanish confessor, Fray García de Padilla. This Hispanic character contrasted with the mass she attended with her husband. This took place in the palace chapel along with the rest of the court, officiated in Portuguese and using texts in this language.²¹ This shows how, even though María adapted to Portuguese devotional customs and converted these religious activities into public displays of virtue and dynastic religiosity, her intimate devotion had a Hispanic character. This explains why throughout her life María acquired Hispanic devotional works, such as a copy of the "*Revelaciones de Santa Brígida*."²²

María and the Lisbon Massacre of 1506

In 1497, as part of the marriage agreements between Manuel I of Portugal and the *Reyes Católicos*, the Portuguese king agreed to expel Jews from his territories. As they were an important part of the economy, in September of that year the king decreed that all Jews had to become Christians and prohibited them from leaving the territory. However, the Christian population was not satisfied, and, on 19 April 1506, a revolt began that ended the lives of 4,000 Jews in the city of Lisbon. It was Queen María who advised and asked the king to ask for public forgiveness for the events that occurred and to execute all those who participated in it.²³

Devotional Art Promotion: Learning and Development from María and Katherine

It is interesting to highlight how these queens of England and Portugal used their new positions to sponsor artistic works that served to project and consolidate their new positions. For example, Katherine, one of the great patrons of her period, used devotional art to learn about her new homeland and position. Thus, in her collection we can find what is known as the Hours of Katherine of Aragon, today in the Royal Library of Belgium. These Hours were produced in the Bruges workshop of Willem Vrelant around 1460, suggesting that this volume served as a didactic-linguistic element for the young Princess of Wales. Through this book she would learn English, a language in which she was not taught during her Castilian childhood. Her own signature in the volume confirms her use of it.²⁴

²¹ General Archive of Simancas (AGS), Estado, leg. 367, fol. 17.

²² Biblioteca Archivo Provincial Histórico de la Comunidad de Padres Franciscanos de Zarauz, *Obras curiosas*, núm. 1803, fol. 73.

²³ Isabel Dos Guimarães Sà, *Duas irmãs para um rei* (Lisbon: Circulo de Leitores, 2012), 141.

²⁴ Eamon Duffy, "A Very Personal Possession," *History Today* (November 2006), 14.

For her part, in 1513, Queen María founded a Hieronymite convent on the island of Berlengas to give comfort and sacrament to sailors. To decorate and nourish this new foundation, the queen sent ornamental elements from her own oratory that included silver, pieces of costume, and a sculpture of Our Lady the Virgin. By express wish of the queen in her will, the foundation received a total of fifty thousand *reales*, with the express ordinance of carrying out said action before any other. The Virgin taken from the rooms of the deceased queen would go to Berlengas along with pieces for the dressing room, a chasuble, dalmatic cape, and frontals that would decorate the small monastery.²⁵

Conclusions

As has been explored, the Christianity developed in Castile had outstanding particularities. The *infantas* of Castile and Aragon were raised under the prism of multiculturalism that supported territorial evangelisation over private devotion. Added to this was the use of Jewish and Moorish elements, with the aim of making Christianity more accessible. This influenced the devotional mechanisms which María and Katherine used to be accepted and validated as queens in their new courts, even influencing the politics of these territories.

They developed a public religious figure adapted to local traditions in their prayers, writings, and even clothing. This coexisted with a private devotional figure rooted in the Hispanic traditions that the queens cultivated throughout their lives supported by the purchase and promotion of works of art.

²⁵ Melania Soler Moratón, "Reyna de Portugal e de los Algarbes, de aqueude y de allende la mar en África, señora de Guinea e de la conquista e navegación: María Trastámara, segunda esposa de Manuel I de Portugal, y las artes," in *Isabel la Católica y sus hijas: El patronazgo artístico de las últimas Trastámara* (Murcia: Editum, 2020), 140–141.

Henrietta Maria’s French Mediation as English Queen²⁶

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In undertaking research on Catherine of Bragança, queen consort to Charles II, I discovered that a portrait of her father hung in Henrietta Maria’s chapel at Somerset House. This paper focuses on Henrietta Maria, consort of Charles I, and takes as its starting point the history of diplomacy, female agency, and political negotiation of this Catholic queen of the Stuart court. As some scholars of the queen, such as Erin Griffey, point out, in her portraits and the artwork in her palaces and chapels Henrietta Maria placed herself within a discourse, between the expectations of her husband Charles I, her family in France, her religious entourages, the papacy, her own personal devotions, and the public in a predominantly Protestant country.²⁷ Part of this discourse was Henrietta Maria’s mediation as queen of England, particularly the role of her understanding of piety, as displayed in her Somerset House chapel through its decorative programme and the art she exhibited there.

This article also analyses the different forms of political and cultural mediation which Henrietta Maria put into practice as princess of France and Queen of England. Finally, it will explore how Henrietta Maria used the portrait of João IV of Portugal in her chapel, both as an instrument of agency and as “mute mediation,” as Anthony Calantuano has defined some works of art used during diplomatic negotiations intended to send a specific message, based on shared codes of visual communication, in this case from the court of London.²⁸

Opening up new formulas for cross-cultural studies, it will be seen that investigating the material culture of agency implies the need to study a complex web of relationships between material objects, human beings, and interior and exterior spaces in order to uncover the political, social, and legal significance of the ways in which political actors brought

²⁶ María Zambrano Postdoctoral contract MAZ/2022/2024 (UP2021-021) financed by the European Union – NextGenerationEU. This article is part of my research on Henrietta Maria’s daughter-in-law, Catherine Braganza, which I was able to carry out thanks to a grant awarded to me by the Warburg Institute (2020).

²⁷ Erin Griffey, *On Display: Henrietta Maria and the Materials of Magnificence at the Stuart Court* (London and New Haven: The Paul Mellon Centre for Studies on British Art & Yale University, 2015).

²⁸ Anthony Colantuano, “The Mute Diplomat: Theorizing the Role of Images in Seventeenth-Century Political Negotiations,” in *The Diplomacy of Art: Artistic Creation and Politics in Seicento Italy*, ed. Elizabeth Cropper (Milan: Electa, 2000), 54; Nancy Um and Leah R. Clark, “Introduction. The Art of Embassy: Situating Objects and Images in the Early Modern diplomatic Encounter,” *Journal of Early Modern History* 20 (2016): 1.

artefacts into play during negotiation, as Harriet Rudolph has pointed out in the article “Entangled Objects.”²⁹

The Historical Background of Henrietta Maria

Henrietta Maria, princess of France, was born on 25 November 1609, St. Catherine’s Day. She was the youngest daughter of Henri IV of France and Marie de Medici and was named after both her parents. The education of the princess was under the supervision of her mother and the letters of Queen Marie de Medici show us how she instructed her daughter to be an agent for the interests of her French family. These letters from Queen Marie to her daughter Henrietta Maria depart from the rhetoric that defines virtuous women as docile, silent, and under male supervision and care, revealing a constant negotiation between domesticity and the effective power that Marie demanded of her. As a daughter of France, Henrietta Maria had specific duties to fulfil. Within marriage, a woman was supposed to ensure that her husband was favourably disposed towards her relatives, which—in her role as queen of England—meant working for French interests, too.³⁰

After the marriage contract was signed, Charles I became king following the death of his father James VI & I (d. 27 March 1625) and married Henrietta Maria of France by proxy in May in Paris; in this manner it was publicly demonstrated that a new alliance had been forged between the Stuart and Bourbon dynasties. Henrietta Maria set off with her French household to new territories and began her tenure as a Stuart queen consort. Many, including the English Parliament itself, greeted her marriage with outright hostility, opposing a French Catholic princess because of fears that Charles would lift restrictions on Catholics and undermine Protestantism. Indeed, Henrietta Maria exercised influence over the affections and judgement of the king, as was expected in her role as wife and queen consort, which Protestants interpreted as a confirmation of their fears.

Although Charles I was tolerant towards Catholics, Parliament’s policies attempted to have control over them—especially over those who met in the various embassy chapels. Catholic embassies with chapels, such as those of Venice, Spain, France, and Portugal,

²⁹ Harriet Rudolph, “Entangled Objects and Hybrid Practices? Material Culture as a New Approach to the History of Diplomacy,” in *Material Culture in Modern Diplomacy from the 15th to the 20th Century*, ed. Harriet Rudolph and Gregor M. Metzger (Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2016), 13.

³⁰ Anne J. Cruz and Nieves Baranda Leturio, ed., *Routledge Research Companion to Early Modern Spanish Women Writers* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Erin Griffey, “Picturing Confessional Politics at the Stuart Court: Henrietta Maria and Catherine of Braganza,” *Journal of Religious History* 44 (November 2020): 465–493.

continued to hold masses and welcome English Catholics, but Parliament opposed them. It is in this context that the queen must be placed.

Henrietta Maria was involved in English politics and effectively played an important role as a Catholic queen. As the country headed hopelessly towards open conflict in the 1630s, in the middle of that same decade the queen had positioned herself at the centre of confessional politics; the opening of her chapel at Somerset House, the introduction of papal envoys, and the conversion of many at court to Catholicism made her unpopular. Later, Parliament accused the queen of high treason, and she was exiled to France in 1644 and later to Holland. After the execution of her husband, Charles I, in 1649, the dowager queen worked to help their son return to the throne and supported his marriage to the *Infanta* Catherine of Bragança (1638–1705), daughter of the new Portuguese King João IV (1604–1656). As queen mother, Henrietta Maria returned to London after her son was crowned in 1660 and lived there until 1664, when, for medical reasons, she had to return to Paris, where she died in 1669.

A Catholic Queen's Piety in a Protestant Court

When Henrietta Maria and her French entourage arrived at the English court in 1625, she was given rooms in the King's principal palaces, St James's, Whitehall, and Hampton Court, but as queen consort she had her own household and received six palaces as part of her marriage treaty and she was permitted the free exercise of Roman Catholic religion in the palaces or royal houses in which she lived, where she could have a chapel or another place to pray.³¹ The queen spent more time in her palaces and focused on decorating them in her own style. She moved from one palace to another to celebrate feasts or to attend masses and other religious services in her various chapels. Capuchin and Franciscan priests and monks attended these Catholic chapels in her palaces, which had been established for Henrietta Maria's own devotions and those of her ladies, the rest of the Catholic courtiers, and, at certain times of the year, the public more broadly.

Henrietta Maria's most important place of power and influence was Somerset House, where she held court. Major renovations to the private and public rooms of this palace began

³¹ Joan-Luis Palos and Magdalena S. Sanchez, ed., *Early Modern Dynastic Marriages and Cultural Transfer* (London: Routledge, 2016); Erin Griffey, "The Materials of Marital Diplomacy: Henrietta Maria's Trousseau," in *The Age of Rubens: Diplomacy, Dynastic Politics and the Visual Arts in Early Seventeenth-century Europe*, ed. Robert Malcolm Smuts and Luc Duerloo (Turnhout: Brepol, 2016), 197.

in 1628, and it was here that she spent most of her time. Henrietta Maria designed the space culturally and politically to be a centre of Catholic and French style and religiosity.

Henrietta Maria also commissioned the construction of a new, separate chapel at Somerset House designed by Inigo Jones. The chapel is dedicated to the Virgin Mary, to whom she felt a close affinity due to their shared name and the expectations of motherhood placed upon her.³² Building continued from 1630 (when she gave birth to Charles, Prince of Wales on 29 May) until 1636 (after having Mary in 1631, James in 1633, and Elizabeth in 1635) and the chapel was formally opened on 1 July, although the first mass took place on 10 December. Reconstruction of the chapel’s architecture is complicated by the few surviving designs by Jones. However, historian Simon Thurley provides a useful overview, showing how the Superior of the Capuchins and the queen herself played an active role in the design, and how the Counter-Reformation and Jesuit churches influenced them.³³ Strategic gifts of pictures, relics, and holy books also demonstrated the influence and the presence of papal agents.³⁴

The queen’s accounts provide information about the use of rich materials in the interior of the chapel. An example is the expenditure on textiles such as embroidery, lace, damasks, and velvets for the vestments and liturgical cloths of different colours to accommodate the religious calendar, as shown in the chapel inventories.³⁵ This article will focus more on the pictorial decoration of Somerset Chapel. In 1649–1651 a list of the “Somerset House Chapel paintings” was drawn up as part of the Commonwealth sales, which included forty-one paintings, the majority of which—twenty-seven—were religious.³⁶

The ceiling was decorated with a painting by William Goodricke and Thomas de Critz depicting the *Assumption of the Virgin*. On the altar was the painting of the *Crucifixion* by Peter Paul Rubens which had been a gift from the King to his wife. Both were destroyed in the iconoclastic attacks on the chapel on 30 and 31 March 1643. The chapel was the centre where Catholics were attended and listened to, and also the centre of accusations of papism.

The most popular subject in the Somerset House chapel was the Virgin Mary with Child, appearing in six of the thirteen paintings with this theme; in others she was portrayed

³² Griffey, *On Display*; Oliver Millar, ed., *The Forty-Third Volume of The Walpole Society 1970–1972: The Inventories and Valuations of The King’s Goods 1649–1651* (Glasgow: University Press Glasgow, 1972), 413–414.

³³ Simon Thurley, *Whitehall Palace: An Architectural of the Royal Apartments, 1240–1698* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press in association with Historic Royal Palaces 1999), 116.

³⁴ Panzani in 1634 and George Conn in 1636, among others.

³⁵ Millar, *The Forty-Third Volume*, 407–413.

³⁶ Millar, *The Forty-Third Volume*, 413–416.

with significant figures such as St. Joseph (*Holy Family*), St. John the Baptist, and the Wise Men among others, or alone as in the *Salutation*. Of all the possible themes of the Virgin Mary, Henrietta Maria chose images of the Virgin Mary as the mother of Jesus, perhaps to reflect her own motherhood, having recently given birth to four children, the first of whom was the heir to the throne, Charles. It was the queen, as Erica Veevers has shown, who introduced the Cult of the Virgin to the court in the 1630s.³⁷ Many chapels of queens and women dedicated to the Virgin Mary were closely related to Mary's maternity and their own maternity, an important and fearful moment for women at a time when many of them died in childbirth.³⁸ What is known is that Henrietta Maria gave birth to her first five children in the rooms of the king's palace at St James's; this chapel therefore might be closely related not to the rituals of birth but to Mary as mother. The Virgin Mary was the most important model of virtue for women in general, even more so for a Catholic queen, for whom there could be no more powerful intercessor. And, as mentioned before, the chapel was dedicated to the Virgin Mary which was the name of the queen as well.

It should be pointed out that Mary has an important place in post-Reformation England because of what she reveals about Christ, her son. But the Reformers could not accept that Mary had an intercessory role in any way. In addition, the Church of England viewed images as a key component of their fight against Catholicism because images symbolised all the external and ceremonial aspects that had to be reformed. Although, as discussed above, the queen was allowed the free exercise of the Roman Catholic religion in the palaces or royal houses in which she lived, in so doing she distanced herself from her subjects.

The Commonwealth inventory shows other records, too, such as five images of Mary Magdalene. Many elite women felt a great affinity with this saint, because of her virtues, her links to luxury, the ascetic piety she represents, and because of her active role in religious life. Mary Magdalene was chosen to find Christ at his Resurrection and it was she who told the Apostles. As such, Mary Magdalene was a model for women who also wanted to have an active role in religious life, be recognised for their faith, and be figures in public life. Marie

³⁷ Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989).

³⁸ It is unknown whether these paintings of the Virgin with her son are associated with motherhood and related religious rituals and ceremonies during pregnancy, labour, and during recovery after childbirth, as for example, in the chapel of the Alcázar in Madrid with queen Isabel of Bourbon (1602–1644), Henrietta Maria's sister. See: María Cruz de Carlos Varona, *Nacer en palacio: El ritual del nacimiento en la corte de los Austrias* (Madrid: CEEH, 2018).

de Medici and Anne of Austria followed this cult in France, which confirms that the queen brought a certain French feminine spirituality to the court in London, a set of beliefs which had the support of Urban VIII, who also venerated Saint Mary Magdalene and expressly requested that her remains, buried in Provence, sanctify his splendid family chapel.³⁹ Other images made reference to power, such as *The Mockery of Christ*, with connotations for a royal audience. The queen's loyalty to the papacy is also highlighted in a portrait of Pope Urban VIII, her godfather, and another painting of St. Peter with his keys.

Finally, three portraits are cited in the Commonwealth sale inventories: Henrietta Maria's sister Christine, her brother Gaston, and João IV, King of Portugal, (father of the future Queen Catherine of Bragança, wife of Charles II).⁴⁰ In 1640, the Portuguese proclaimed the Duke of Bragança king, as João IV (1604–1656), and the separation of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies materialised, thus starting a long war (from 1640 to 1668). It was in 1641 when the Bragança dynasty sent its first embassies carrying portraits to various European monarchies and republics to pursue its political objectives and gain their favour.⁴¹

Portraits were exchanged as gifts between the representatives of the different monarchies and were, in fact, important in specific historical situations, as was the case of the Bragança dynasty during the last decades of the seventeenth century. The new Bragança dynasty was attempting to gain recognition from other monarchies and one of its fundamental objectives was the recognition of Rome. To this end, the new king deployed mediation with Rome, but this was not achieved until Pedro II (1648–1706) came to the throne and his sister Catherine of Bragança became the wife of Charles II (1661). The portrait plays an essential role in the process of institutionalisation of the Portuguese dynasty and in its future relations with the rest of Europe. The court of the Stuarts received the Portuguese embassy of 1641 and with it came the portraits of the Braganças. Thanks to the inventories of the sale, it is possible at least to know where the portrait of the Portuguese king was placed and how it was used. It is not known, however, which of the portraits of the king was sent to

³⁹ Peter Rietbergen, *Power and Religion in Baroque Rome: Barberini Cultural Policies* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2006), 385.

⁴⁰ Millar, *The Forty-Third Volume*, 415; Anne J Cruz, *Symbolic and Material Circulation between Spain and England, 1554–1604* (Aldershot, UK & Burlington, Vermont: Ashgate Press, 2008).

⁴¹ Pedro Cardim, "Embaixadores e representantes diplomáticos da coroa portuguesa no século XVII," *Cultura* 15 (2002); Pedro Cardim, "A prática diplomática na Europa do Antigo Regime," in *Histia e Relações Internacionais: Temas e Debates*, ed. Luis Nino Rodrigues and Fernando Martins (Evora: Publicações do Cidehus, 2004); Pedro Cardim, "'Nem tudo se pode escrever:' Correspondencia diplomática e información 'política' en Portugal durante el siglo XVII," *Cuadernos de Historia Moderna, Anejos IV* (2005): 95–128.

the court of Charles I; nor do we know the name of the Portuguese painter or the date it was painted (before 1641), as the inventory only says Portuguese king.⁴²

The queen’s intention to support the Bragança dynasty was quite obvious, but the question remains: why was the portrait of King João IV displayed next to the French prince and princess? It is important to remember here that France and Portugal signed a first agreement on 1 June 1641, obliging each other to maintain war against Spain in order to weaken the Habsburgs. Later, the marriage negotiations between Portugal and France were organised. From very early on, the first children of the new dynasty—Theodosius (1634–1653), Joanna (1635–1653), and Catherine—played strategic roles in political alliances in the European context (mainly with Savoy and France). The marriages of the prince Theodosius Bragança to the eldest daughter of Gaston of Orléans (Queen Henrietta Maria’s brother), and of the Infanta Joanna Bragança to Christine’s son (Queen Henrietta Maria’s sister) were under discussion. These portraits of the siblings of the queen and the Portuguese king are therefore better understood in this context of negotiation.

The presentation of the three portraits staged Henrietta Maria’s support for the Portuguese, at a time when the Bragança monarchy had not yet been recognised by the Pope, which was not achieved until the reign of Pedro II (1648–1706), João’s second successor as king of Portugal. Therefore, the fact that the chapel at Somerset House contained these three portraits of the Portuguese king, and Henrietta Maria’s brother and sister, with one of the Pope not far from them, sent a clear message from the queen to all the Catholics who congregated there. They were also essential to show the political importance of the queen and her positioning as a liaison between the French, Stuart, and Portuguese courts in a Catholic chapel. Using them as a mute instrument in this context of war showed Henrietta Maria as a mediator of her French family as well, as Anthony Calantuano has defined for some works of art used during diplomatic negotiations intended to send a specific message, based on shared codes of visual communication.⁴³ The rhetorical conceptions deployed recognised Portugal as a monarchy and demonstrated the support of both the English and French monarchies for the Portuguese, showing a new political alliance on display in her chapel.

⁴² Pedro Cardim, “*Portugal unido y separado. Propaganda y discurso identitario entre Austrias y Braganzas*,” *Espacio, Tiempo y Forma* 37, Serie IV, Historia Moderna, t. 25 (2012): 37–55; Pedro Flor, “*A arte do retrato em Portugal nos séculos xv e xvi, problemas, metodologia, linhas de investigação*,” *Revista de historia da arte* 5 (2008): 115–131; José Texeira, *A Iconografia da época da Restauração* (Évora: Museo de Évora, 1990); Victo Serrao, *A pintura Protobarroca em Portugal 1612–1657: O triunfo do naturalismo e do tenebrismo* (Lisbon: Edições Colibri, 2000); Luis de Moura Sobral, *Pintura Portuguesa do Século XVII, historias lendas narrativas* (Lisbon: Livraria Sá da Costa, Museo Nacional Arte Antiga, 2004).

⁴³ Calantuano, “The Mute Diplomat: Theorizing,” 54.

Images are complex inter-communicators that function both positively and negatively because of the different meanings they can suggest to their donors and their recipients, as in this case of the portrait of King João IV. These images bring other meanings to the negotiations and mediations between courts, with the patronage of women, particularly the queen, Henrietta Maria, across cultural and religious boundaries.

Henrietta Maria showed her political and religious position as Catholic queen consort of the Stuarts, but also as princess of France and ally of Portugal. In the middle of the negotiations, she defended Franco-Portuguese relations from the London court against the Catholic Monarchy in the most important Catholic chapel in London.



Figure 1. Unknown, *Portrait of King João IV*, C. 1641, no inv. PT/TT/ (Portugal).

Purity and Provocation: Catherine of Braganza, Mary Beatrice of Modena, and Visualising “British” Sainthood

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When Catherine of Braganza died in Lisbon in 1705, she left in her residence, Bemposta Palace, “a gold box enamelled in black with three leaves, and in them three paintings of the history of Queen Mary Stuart [Mary, Queen of Scots, 1542–1587] weighing fourteen *oitavas* and sixty *graos* ... valued at fourteen thousand *reis*.”⁴⁴ The now lost “box”—or more aptly triptych—that depicted Mary stands out amongst jewels, ceramics, statues, and portraits as a distinctly “British” relic, a testament to the twenty-three years Catherine spent married to Charles II, Mary’s great-grandson, as queen consort of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales.⁴⁵ Catherine’s sister-in-law, Mary Beatrice of Modena, who was exiled to France with her husband James VII & II in 1688, also owned a portrait (that still survives) dated approximately 1692 by Nicolas de Largillière. This depicted St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland.⁴⁶ Both are testament to the British and Catholic affinities of these queens consort.

It is well established that Stuart queens—from Henrietta Maria, who married Charles I in 1625; to Catherine, who married Charles II; to Mary Beatrice, who married the Catholic duke of York (later James VII & II) in 1673—were perceived to pose a threat to English Protestantism as Catholic “whores” affecting conversions from the king’s bed.⁴⁷ Similarly, Catherine’s and Mary Beatrice’s promotion of Catholicism through opening their London chapels to all ranks, cultivating Catholic networks, and patronising Catholic books and art highlights their conscious commitment to spreading Catholicism.⁴⁸ This article offers insight

⁴⁴ Virginia Rau, ed., *Inventário dos bens da rainha da Grã-Bretanha D. Catarina de Bragança* (Coimbra: Biblioteca da Universidad, 1947), 37. Author’s translation: “caixa de ouro esmaltada de preto com tres folhas, e nellas tres pinturas de historia da Rainha Dona Maria Estuarda peza quatorze oitavas e sessenta graos assim como esta avallada em quatorze mil reis.”

⁴⁵ “British” here encompasses the queens’ roles across the three kingdoms and Wales.

⁴⁶ See also her portrait as St. Helen: Susannah Lyon-Whaley, “Contesting Catholic Motherhood: Mary Beatrice of Modena, the ‘Glorious Revolution,’ and Queenly Agency,” in *Later Stuart Queens, 1660–1735: Religion, Political Culture, and Patronage*, ed. Eilish Gregory and Michael Questier (Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 145–147.

⁴⁷ Frances E. Dolan, *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender, and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1999), 95–156.

⁴⁸ See esp. Eilish Gregory, “Catherine of Braganza’s Relationship with her Catholic Household,” in *Forgotten Queens in Medieval and Early Modern Europe: Political Agency, Myth-Making and Patronage*, ed. Valerie Schutte and

into how the two aforementioned artworks articulate the roles that the queens saw themselves undertaking as "British" Catholic queens.

A Controversial Queen

From 1678 to 1681, Catherine endured the political tensions of the Popish Plot, in which Catholics, including the queen, were accused of plotting to kill the king. Catherine moved her chapel from Somerset House to the more private chapel at St. James's and expressed keen distress at the dismissal of Catholics in her household.⁴⁹ Erin Griffey has astutely suggested that her penchant for depictions of martyrs such as St. Catherine of Alexandria, with whose royal birth, piety, and name she identified, indicated her affinity with religious suffering in a country hostile to her faith.⁵⁰ Catherine's possession of a triptych depicting the history of Mary, Queen of Scots, presents a similar yet even more dynastically relevant model of devotion and persecution. Notably, Eilish Gregory suggests that the attempts to expel Catherine from the royal family by those who accused her of treason during the Popish Plot recalled the anti-Catholic political machinations against Mary the century before.⁵¹

The triptych was small, weighing 14 *oitavas* and 60 *graos* (about 50 grams), made of gold and "enameled black."⁵² The three pictures of the history of Mary, Queen of Scots, were contained on the box's "leaves," indicating the triptych had two wings that folded in.⁵³ Mary was never canonised, yet her blood claim to the English throne proffered the "spectre" of a feminine, Catholic successor to Elizabeth I.⁵⁴ Whilst her execution on the orders of the latter in 1587 nullified this possibility, scenes of her death circulated widely in Europe and

Estelle Paranque (New York: Routledge, 2019), 129–148; Chelsea Reutcke, "Royal Patronage of Illicit Print: Catherine of Braganza and Catholic Books in Late Seventeenth-Century London," in *Print and Power in Early Modern Europe (1500–1800)*, ed. Nina Lamal, Jamie Cumby, and Helmer J. Helmers (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 239–256; Erin Griffey, "Picturing Confessional Politics at the Stuart Court: Henrietta Maria and Catherine of Braganza," *Journal of Religious History* 44, no. 4 (2020): 465–493; Lyon-Whaley, "Contesting Catholic Motherhood," esp. 124–128, 139–148.

⁴⁹ Gregory, "Popish Plot," 208, 212.

⁵⁰ Griffey, "Picturing Confessional Politics," 478, 480, 488.

⁵¹ Gregory, "Popish Plot," 212.

⁵² Its weight is inferred as closely as possible from translations. Rafael Bluteau and António de Morais Silva, *Dicionario da Lingua Portuguesa Composto Pelo Padre Rafael Bluteau, Reformado, e Accrescentado por Antonio de Morais Silva ...* vol. 2 (Lisbon, 1789), 130, 133. Thanks to Ben James for his assistance.

⁵³ See a larger construction here: "Antique 17th Century Flemish Netherlandish Religious Baroque Gilt Wood Triptych Painting," Bloomsbury Fine Art and Antiques (accessed 30 January 2024), <https://bloomsburypdx.com/products/antique-triptych>.

⁵⁴ Anne McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 740–741.

propagated her cult as a Catholic martyr who stayed true to her faith despite suffering. A well-known portrait commissioned by one of Mary's ladies, Elizabeth Curle, depicts the queen full-length with the scenes of her execution behind her, a composition that Marguerite A. Tassi argues presents Mary's triumph over her death, "immortalize[s] her martyrdom," and creates "a collective Catholic memory that was still of vital relevance to exiled Scots in the early seventeenth century."⁵⁵ A similar depiction in Jesuit father Pierre le Moyne's *La Galerie des Femmes fortes* (Paris, 1647), dedicated to Anne of Austria, queen of France and Charles II's great aunt (Figure 2), indicates images of Mary, which may have resembled Catherine's triptych.

Significantly, diarist Samuel Pepys, who was given a tour of Catherine's new friary and chapel at St. James's Palace in January 1667, commented on her association with Mary during her early years in England. Pepys saw "a crucifix given by a Pope to Mary[,] Queen of Scots, where a piece of the Cross is," along with "prints of holy pictures" that may well have included ones of Mary.⁵⁶ There was also a portrait of Mary by Daniel Mytens hanging in the royal residence of Whitehall in the 1660s.⁵⁷ Scottish Catholic priests were reputed to preach in Catherine's chapel and it is likely these masses were regularly attended by Scots, providing multiple pathways by which she could have become familiar with the Queen of Scots's cult.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Marguerite A. Tassi, "Martyrdom and Memory: Elizabeth Curle's Portrait of Mary, Queen of Scots," in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 106.

⁵⁶ 23 January 1667, in Robert Latham and William Matthews, ed., *The Diary of Samuel Pepys* (11 vols, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), viii, 26.

⁵⁷ Daniel Mytens, *Mary, Queen of Scots*, c. 1627. Royal Collection Trust, RCIN 401182.

⁵⁸ Gregory, "Relationship," 138.



Figure 2. Gilles Rousselet, Mary, Queen of Scots, with the scene of her execution (from "La Gallerie des Femmes Fortes," page 350), 1647. Gift of Susan Dwight Bliss, 1958, 58.549.42. Metropolitan Museum of Art.

Catherine’s painting was a triptych, and Mary’s execution was often depicted as a series of events: in eyewitness Sir Robert Beale’s factual pen-and-ink drawing, Mary is led to the chamber containing the scaffold, then appears being undressed, then at the block.⁵⁹ This feature, taken up in Curle’s portrait, indicates the triptych’s likely narrative arch, the value of which was devotional. Its weight suggests it was small enough to be carried on the body, held in the hand, or placed at close quarters for contemplation, perhaps while praying, the opening leaves conveying privacy or intimacy. Catherine, unlike Mary, had no claim to the throne in her own right nor any surviving children to convert, yet Gregory and Chelsea Reutcke have convincingly argued for her influence promoting Catholicism in court and commons.⁶⁰ Catherine’s ownership of the triptych, most likely in her possession before her return to Portugal, could be read as a targeted comparison between herself and a Catholic queen, against whom anti-Catholicism became a national ideology.⁶¹ For Catherine, Mary’s Stuart ancestry supplemented her religious appeal to make her a powerful model that being a Stuart and a Catholic was mutually compatible. Catherine’s piety—a virtue to Catholics—became fodder for Protestant satirists to cast her as “In nature mild and gentle as a dove, / Yet for religion doth a serpent prove.”⁶² The attacks’ vehemence articulated Catherine’s perceived threat to England as a representative of or participant in an alternate Catholic future, highlighting the knife’s edge on which the reception of her confessional identity teetered, a predicament she would be all too aware that Mary and she shared.

A Virtuous Heroine

For Catherine’s sister-in-law Mary Beatrice, historic Catholic women also provided models of piety and religious struggle. The portrait of St. Margaret, Queen of Scotland (Figure 3), painted for her in 1692 during her exile in France, has a fuller face and lighter hair than Nicolas de Largillière’s known portrayals of Mary Beatrice, although they share a similar nose.⁶³ Whilst it is unlikely that Mary Beatrice is the model for the painting, it is likely that viewers looking at the portrait would be reminded of the living queen.⁶⁴ An English exile in

⁵⁹ Tassi, “Martyrdom,” 104.

⁶⁰ See Gregory, “Popish Plot,” 195–212; Reutcke, “Royal Patronage,” 239–256.

⁶¹ McLaren, “Gender,” 741.

⁶² Elias F. Mengel, ed., *Poems on Affairs of State: Augustan Satirical Verse, 1660–1714*, volume 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 8.

⁶³ Surviving engravings of Mary Beatrice by Largillière include National Portrait Gallery (London), NPG D11917; NPG D11524; NPG D30806.

⁶⁴ Sandra Jean Sullivan suggests that St. Margaret may be modelled after Mary Beatrice: “Representations of Mary of Modena, Duchess Queen Consort and Exile” (PhD thesis, University College London, 2008), 319.

France and then Scotland during the eleventh century, St. Margaret (c. 1045–1093) was a model of pious, charitable, capable, and politically influential queenship.⁶⁵ The daughter of the English prince Edward the Exile and sister of the uncrowned king Edgar Ætheling, Margaret married Malcolm III of Scotland. *The Life of St. Margaret*, commissioned by her daughter Matilda of Scotland, praised her queenliness, piety, humility, and reform of the Scottish church.⁶⁶ Mary Beatrice, who was charged by Clement X with aiding England’s return to the Church of Rome, and invested in the religious education of her children, no doubt found in Margaret a consort with whom she could identify.⁶⁷



Figure 3. Nicolas de Largillière, Queen St Margaret, Queen of Scotland (1045/6–1093), 1692(?), NT 998409, Sizergh © National Trust

⁶⁵ Lois Huneycutt, “The Idea of the Perfect Princess: The *Life of St Margaret* in the Reign of Matilda II (1100–1118),” in *Anglo-Norman Studies XII: Proceedings of the Battle Conference 1989*, ed. Marjorie Chibnall (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1990), 87–93, 97.

⁶⁶ Lois Huneycutt, *Matilda of Scotland: A Study in Medieval Queenship* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2003), 162, 169.

⁶⁷ Martin Haile, *Queen Mary of Modena: Her Life and Letters* (London: J. M. Dent & Co. 1905), 17; Lyon-Whaley, “Contesting Catholic Motherhood,” 143–145.

Mary Beatrice’s commission of the work is recorded in the inscription of an engraving dedicated to the queen by the Scots College at Douai, whilst the original painting became part of the collection of Winifred, Lady Strickland (1645–1725), a lady of the queen’s bedchamber.⁶⁸ Mary Beatrice was the first consort since Anna of Denmark (1574–1619) to spend time in Scotland. In a no-longer extant portrait of her young son, he wears tartan.⁶⁹ This affinity for Stuart Scottish identity was a savvy political choice post-exile, as James VII & II continued to rally support in Scotland and Ireland and, in 1703, the former nation passed a Security Bill that declared its right to choose its own successor.⁷⁰ Portraits (such as these) were potent reminders to all Scottish Catholics that “the real English court” was at St. Germain.⁷¹ At the request of Scottish clergy in Rome, Clement X ratified the extension of St. Margaret’s feast to the universal church in December 1673, the very month Mary Beatrice arrived in London as a bride. Scots Jesuit William Aloysius Leslie published Margaret’s life in Italian a couple of years later.⁷² In 1676, Margaret became the patron of the Scots colleges, whilst the Scots College at Douai—the same that had dedicated Gantrel’s engraving of Margaret to Mary Beatrice—held certified relics of the saint’s head and hair from 1645 and were assiduous in promoting her cult.⁷³

Mary Beatrice’s commission therefore added to a pre-existing Scottish exile identity, visibly uniting the Catholic and the royalist cause, heretofore unmentioned in studies of the portrait.⁷⁴ James VII & II had signalled his support for exiled Catholics from 1685, granting funds to the Scots abbey in Wurzburg at the time of his coronation.⁷⁵ Yet St. Margaret united the exiled royal family with Scottish and English Catholics through genealogy as well as ideology. She represented Stuart Scottish royal lineage and was a dynastic link to the ancient

⁶⁸ “Queen St Margaret,” National Trust Collections, accessed 28 April, <https://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk/object/998409>; Edward Corp, *A Court in Exile: The Stuarts in France, 1689–1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 199, fn 95; Edward Corp, “The Strickland Family,” in *Sizergh Castle* (London: National Trust, 2001), 49–50.

⁶⁹ Edward Corp, *The King Over the Water: Portraits of the Stuarts in Exile after 1689* (Edinburgh: Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 2001), 35.

⁷⁰ Corp, *King Over the Water*, 45.

⁷¹ Corp, *Court in Exile*, 200.

⁷² Mark Dilworth, “Jesuits and Jacobites: The Cultus of St. Margaret,” *Innes Review* 47, no. 2 (1996), 175.

⁷³ Dilworth, “Jesuits and Jacobites,” 177; Mary Elizabeth Horan, “Queen St Margaret, Jesuit Devotion, and Seventeenth-Century Scottish Catholicism,” *Journal of Jesuit Studies* 7 (2020): 92.

⁷⁴ See Sullivan, “Representations,” 319–320; Corp, *Court in Exile*, 199; Tessa Murdoch, “Traitors or Troublemakers? Recusant Country Houses: Part II,” *National Trust Arts/Buildings/Collections Bulletin* (2017–18): 20; Christopher Rowell, “Women Artists, Collectors and Patrons,” *National Trust Historic Houses & Collections Annuals* (2018): 8.

⁷⁵ Mark Dilworth, *The Scots in Franconia: A Century of Monastic Life* (Rowman and Littlefield, 1974), 127.

Anglo-Saxon claim to the throne. She was publicly commemorated in published histories and genealogies during the reigns of James VI & I and Charles II as their ancestress.⁷⁶ Largillière's portrait goes further, asserting the rights of the Stuarts as Margaret's heirs by blood, but also by religion. His Margaret wears red and blue, the Virgin Mary's colours as well as the colours of coronation robes, affirming devotion and secular power. While the golden crown and sceptre rest on the table to Margaret's left, she raises her eyes to the symbol of the Trinity above. The clouded background resembles devotional portraits of the Virgin and Holy Family painted for the royal couple's chapels in London.⁷⁷ Mary Beatrice's commission baldly signalled that the true royal line in the three kingdoms was Catholic.

In 1693, Innocent XII granted James's and Mary Beatrice's petition to restore St. Margaret's feast day from 8 July to its previous date of 10 June; they had stated that this was the Prince of Wales's birthday.⁷⁸ Though Mary Beatrice does not appear to have used St. Margaret's "sark" (shirt) during labour in the tradition of Scottish queens including Margaret Tudor, her interest in the saint was rooted in her maternal role.⁷⁹ The petition and the portrait commissioned at the same time frame her son, a descendant of the saint by birth, as St. Margaret's religious successor. They also positioned Mary Beatrice and her family as real-life saintly martyrs, anticipating the compendium of the saints' lives produced by the Bollandists (Belgian Jesuits) in 1698, in which they praised "the descendants of Margaret who have shared her sorrows and emulated her holiness in life ... [including] her great-grandson James VII & II, recently driven into exile for his religion."⁸⁰ Highlighting the success of this strategy, in 1717, the Pope celebrated St. Margaret's feast day mass at the Scots College in Rome with James VIII & III in attendance.⁸¹

⁷⁶ Joseph B.R. Massey, "The Saxon Connection: St Margaret of Scotland, Morgan Colman's Genealogies, and James VI & I's Anglo-Scottish Union Project," *Royal Studies Journal* 8 (2021): 82–86; Horan, "Queen St. Margaret," 84, 95.

⁷⁷ *Benedetto Gennari, Annunciation, 1686, The Ringling, Florida, SN131; Sainte Famille, 1685, Palais Fesch-musée des Beaux-Arts, MFA 852.1.75.*

⁷⁸ Dilworth, "Jesuits and Jacobites," 179; *Acta Sanctorum* ..., vol. 22, new edition, intro. Nicolas Rayaei (Paris; Rome: 1867), 316.

⁷⁹ Thanks to Alexandra Forsyth for this reference: Sangdong Lee, "The Miracles and Cult of St Margaret," *The Scottish Historical Review* XCVII, 1 no. 244 (2018): 2–3. Accounts of the 1688 birth, admittedly aimed at Protestant audiences, do not mention Mary Beatrice using any relics: England and Wales, Privy Council, *At the Council-Chamber in Whitehall, Monday the 22th. Of October, 1688 this Day an Extraordinary Council Met ...* (London, 1688).

⁸⁰ *Acta Sanctorum* vol. 2, translation cited in Dilworth, "Jesuits and Jacobites," 180.

⁸¹ Dilworth, "Jesuits and Jacobites," 180.

Saintly Geopolitics

The efforts of Catherine and Mary Beatrice—foreign Catholics in a Protestant country—to integrate their confessional identities with the outlawed traditions of their marital countries were highly contentious, at once pure and provocative. Mary, Queen of Scots, and St. Margaret were usually identified as Scottish but both appealed to English Catholics, Mary as an alternative to Elizabeth I and St. Margaret (English by birth) through a cult that spread to England before the Reformation.⁸² The triptych and portrait demonstrate Catherine’s and Mary Beatrice’s awareness of their cross-confessional identities and the geopolitical advantages of associating themselves with Catholic queens with claims to Scottish and English thrones.

These were not isolated engagements with regional saints. Gregory has drawn attention to gifts presented to Catherine by her footmen on Irish and Welsh saints’ feast days, arguing that these showed her special devotion to local traditions.⁸³ A processional cross in her chapel holding a piece of St. Thomas Becket’s pastoral staff connected her “to a specifically English pious lineage” and a saint martyred for adherence to the Church of Rome above the English monarchy.⁸⁴ Mary Beatrice contacted the Scottish community in Wurzburg in 1688 when she requested the relics of their founder St Macarius to cure her infant son of an illness, and publicised the cure’s success.⁸⁵ Popular media also cast the queens as protectors of local Catholicism. Needlework, created by young girls as part of their education, often depicted Catherine as the young Jewish queen Esther greeting her husband Ahasuerus.⁸⁶ The obvious parallels between Catherine and Esther, who used her influence to advocate for her people’s beliefs in a country hostile to their religion, suggests a plausible reading of these pieces as part of a grassroots hope that the queen might affect meaningful change.

⁸² Lee, “Miracles,” 5.

⁸³ Lincolnshire Archives, 1-Worsley/8, cited by Eilish Gregory in her seminar “Catherine of Braganza: Political Pawn or Political Player?” University of Kent, 1 December 2022.

⁸⁴ Griffey, “Picturing Confessional Politics,” 32.

⁸⁵ Dilworth, *Scots in Franconia*, 132.

⁸⁶ Thanks to Isabella Rosner for drawing these depictions to my attention, which differ from Catherine’s representation as the Queen of Sheba through the positioning of the king’s sceptre: “Raised Work Embroidery Picture,” Sainsbury Centre, 1245, <https://www.sainsburycentre.ac.uk/art-and-objects/1245-raised-work-embroidered-picture/>; “Esther and Ahasuerus,” Sainsbury Centre, 1246, <https://www.sainsburycentre.ac.uk/art-and-objects/1246-raised-work-embroidered-picture-esther-and-ahasuerus/>

The same sentiment was articulated in Catholic literature circulated in England from the early 1660s that gave Catholics over to Catherine's "Patronage and Protection."⁸⁷ Whilst poems written by Protestants compared queens with saints as models of passive virtue, poems written by Catholics tended to frame them as saints in clearly active terms.⁸⁸ Aphra Behn presented Mary Beatrice as the queen of heaven and saints as "the Second Bless'd of Woman-kind."⁸⁹ Nathaniel Thompson, who reputedly sold Catholic goods within Somerset House and printed Catherine's sermons, published a poem stating that on Catherine's death "we are sure to find our *Saint*," indicating the expectation of her ongoing Catholic legacy.⁹⁰

Conclusion

This article has discussed two paintings in which earthly and heavenly agendas collide. The religious format of the triptych is here adopted to promote the narrative of a Scottish queen "martyred" for her claims to the English throne. A portrait of another Scottish queen juxtaposes secular power next to religious symbolism. The owners of these works, Catherine of Braganza and Mary Beatrice of Modena, trod a fine line between casting themselves as "pure" models of religious virtue and alienating the kings' Protestant subjects, and there is no doubt they understood the political import of their use of saintly imagery. Similarly, Henrietta Maria caused controversy when it was believed that she had walked barefoot to Tyburn and prayed for the Catholic martyrs executed there.⁹¹ Yet the Anglo-Scottish connections of Mary, Queen of Scots, and St. Margaret in particular helped Catherine and Mary Beatrice forge ties, loyalties, and identities across the British Isles. Whilst their religion and gender caused unease amongst Protestants, these were the very factors that allowed them to appeal to pre-existing models of saintly queens across England and Scotland. Their invocations of previous Catholic queens remained significant in signalling their search for models with relevance to their particular situations and challenges, and also articulated their intentions to side with Catholics disadvantaged by the state's laws. Their tendency to

⁸⁷ Arthur Crowther and Thomas Vincent, *Jesus, Maria, Joseph: or, The Devout Pilgrim of the Ever Blessed Virgin Mary* (Amsterdam, 1663) cited in Reutcke, "Royal Patronage," 242.

⁸⁸ For Protestant examples, see "On the Birth-Day of Queen Katherine," in Anne Killigrew, *Poems* (1686) ... (Florida: Scholars Facsimiles & Reprints, 1967), 48; "Sung by Mrs Knight ..." in Edmund Waller, *Poems, &c. written upon several occasions* (London, 1686), 238.

⁸⁹ Aphra Behn, *A Congratulatory Poem to Her Most Sacred Majesty, on the Universal Hopes of All Loyal Persons for a Prince of Wales* (London, 1688), l.3.

⁹⁰ Nathaniel Thompson, *A Collection of 86 Loyal Poems ... Collected by N.T* (London, 1685), 369. On Thompson, see Reutcke, "Royal Patronage," 283–284.

⁹¹ Dolan, *Whores of Babylon*, 100.

provoke may have been as consciously conceived as their demonstration of purity. It also perhaps marked their awareness that they, like their predecessors, could function as models for future Catholic queens consort in England, Scotland, "Britain," or other Protestant lands. As well as becoming the focus of the queens' personal devotion, the images of "British" Catholic saints acknowledged Catherine's and Mary Beatrice's identification as "British" Catholic queens for a new generation of Catholics.

Icons and Idols: Queenly Bodies, Dress, and Behaviour as Vehicles for Catechesis and Monarchical Authority

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The rivalry between the Protestant Queen Elizabeth I and her cousin, the Catholic Mary, Queen of Scots, was on full display during the 1564 visit of Mary's ambassador to the English court. After talking about women's fashions, the ambassador later recounted that Elizabeth asked him "which of the two [queens] were fairest?"⁹² Although he tried to avoid answering, Elizabeth kept pressing him, asking him which queen was taller. When he answered that Mary was, Elizabeth responded that "she is too high and that herself was neither too high nor too low."⁹³ This conversation was not playful banter but an incredibly politicised exchange. Ideas about feminine beauty, in both dress and body image, were foundational in constructing, maintaining, and perpetuating queenly authority.⁹⁴ Moreover, beauty, as a critical component of successful queenship, played a major role on the battlefield of cross-confessional religious identity formation, upon which these two women created their political personas and vied for the English throne.

Strikingly, this royal beauty contest between the queens even presented itself in two accounts recording Mary's execution for treason against Elizabeth. Both Robert Wingfield, an English Protestant who personally witnessed the execution, and the Scottish Catholic Adam Blackwood, who interviewed witnesses and read others' accounts, noted Mary's clothing, religious accessories, body, and comportment. Each author's religious perspective shaped the purpose of their sartorial commentaries. Wingfield used them to undermine Mary's queenly majesty and Catholicism, whereas Blackwood negatively described the English treatment of Mary's body, dress, and religious accessories to attack Elizabeth's

⁹² James Melville, *The Memoirs of Sir James Melville of Halhill*, ed. Gordon Donaldson (London: The Folio Society, 1969), 38.

⁹³ Melville, 38.

⁹⁴ Anna Riehl Bertolet, "Doppelganger Queens: Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart," in *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies*, ed. Anya Riehl Bertolet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 231; Bertolet, *The Face of Queenship: Early Modern Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 27–63; esp. 28–35; Jo Eldridge Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens: Representations of Early Modern Queenship* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 87–117, 117–145; Dennis Kay, "'She was a Queen, and Therefore Beautiful': Sidney, His Mother, and Queen Elizabeth," *The Review of English Studies* 43, no. 169 (1992): 20, 27.

authority while simultaneously defending Mary’s royal majesty. Blackwood also used Mary’s dress, actions, and speech as vehicles to promote and explain Catholic beliefs and practices.

Too Many Queens

Despite being royal cousins and queens regnant, their shared blood line in conjunction with their opposing religious convictions pitted Elizabeth and Mary against each other. They were both descended from Henry VII and by 1558 Mary had a strong claim to inherit the throne should Elizabeth die without a legitimate child. When Mary arrived in England in 1568 looking for help to regain her Scottish throne, which she had been forced to abdicate, many English and Continental European Catholics believed Mary had a better claim to the English throne than Elizabeth. Mary was born from an undisputed royal marriage; Elizabeth was a product of Henry VIII’s controversial marriage to Anne Boleyn, which most Catholics considered invalid. Henry further damaged Elizabeth’s royal status by annulling his marriage to Anne in 1536. Although Henry’s will and Parliament’s 1544 Act of Succession placed Elizabeth in the line of succession, she was never declared legitimate.⁹⁵ The Papacy also attacked Elizabeth’s right to the throne by excommunicating her in 1570.⁹⁶ Even before Mary arrived in England, she had played on the Elizabethan regime’s anxieties by incorporating the English royal coat of arms into her own, thereby staking a claim to the English throne.⁹⁷ While under house arrest in England, her presence inspired plots to replace Elizabeth with Mary as queen. By 1586, Elizabeth’s government believed it had proof of Mary’s active involvement in the Babington Plot and tried her for treason. Found guilty, she was executed on 8 February 1587. Elizabeth won the battle over the English throne, a battle defined by the intersection of gender and competing religious identities.

Flesh, Faith, and Superstitious Trumpery

William Cecil, one of Elizabeth’s key officials, sent his relative Robert Wingfield to record the execution. Cecil wanted to ensure he knew everything that happened. A staunch Protestant,

⁹⁵ Steven Thiry, “‘In Open Shew to the World’: Mary Stuart’s Armorial Claim to the English Throne and Anglo-French Relations (1559–1561),” *English Historical Review* 132, no. 559 (2018): 1418.

⁹⁶ Aislinn Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics and Resistance in Post Reformation England* (Boston: Brill, 2000), 115.

⁹⁷ Bertolet, “Doppelganger Queens,” 227 and Thiry, “‘In Open Shew’,” 1410, 1417–1420, 1425. Thiry, “‘In Open Shew’,” 1439, notes that one of the treason charges against Mary was her use of English royal heraldry twenty-seven years earlier.

Cecil had long seen Mary as a threat to Elizabeth’s throne and to Protestantism.⁹⁸ Cecil probably used Wingfield’s account as the basis for the official, published English version of events that was disseminated across Europe.⁹⁹

Wingfield began by describing Mary’s body and clothes as she entered the execution chamber. He noted that Mary was “of stature tall, of body corpulent, rounded shouldered, her face fatt and broade double chinned ...”¹⁰⁰ Such language demeaned Mary’s looks. Although the adjective “fatt” could be used as a positive descriptor of the female form in the sixteenth century, Wingfield used it in the same sentence as “corpulent,” which had no positive association.¹⁰¹ Similarly, Mary’s “rounded shoulders” and multiple chins failed to meet the early modern beauty standard of a long, thin neck.¹⁰² Wingfield also noted her height—a characteristic that Elizabeth had already labelled an imperfection. Describing the Scottish Queen so negatively stood in marked contrast to the compliments about her beauty and charm she had received since infancy.¹⁰³ Portraying Mary’s body as fat and ugly was not just a personal attack, but a political one; queens were expected to be beautiful.

While highlighting the Scottish queen’s pedestrian looks, Wingfield did acknowledge her majestic clothes. He described her dress from her head covered in lawn to her toes enclosed in shoes of Spanish leather.¹⁰⁴ Mary’s garments and accessories were all exceedingly rich, in terms of costly materials and in symbolic meaning. Colours, in this period, relayed numerous symbolic messages.¹⁰⁵ For example, her purple sleeves denoted royal status and her petticoat’s bodice and skirts were of crimson satin which symbolised martyrdom. Mary, Queen of Scots, had deliberately presented herself sartorially as a royal, Catholic martyr.¹⁰⁶

It is interesting that Wingfield chose to record Mary’s outfit. His detailed account of Mary’s dress and physical body may have served the purpose of countering a common

⁹⁸ James Emerson Phillips, *Images of a Queen: Mary Stuart in Sixteenth-Century Literature* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), 130.

⁹⁹ Phillips, *Images of a Queen*, 131–132; Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots: Romance and Nation* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 54.

¹⁰⁰ Richard Wingfield, “Narration of the last days of the Queen of Scots,” in *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots*, ed. A. Francis Steuart (London, 1951), 195.

¹⁰¹ According to the OED both terms denoted excessive body weight in the early modern period. Carney cites Henry IV of France disparaging his wife, Marie de Medici, by calling “her his ‘fat banker.’” See Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens*, 100.

¹⁰² Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens*, 91.

¹⁰³ Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens*, 112–113 and Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 17.

¹⁰⁴ Wingfield, “Narration,” 195.

¹⁰⁵ Eleri Lynn, *Tudor Fashion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 90.

¹⁰⁶ Jenny Wormald, *Mary Queen of Scots* (Edinburgh: Birlinn Ltd., 2017), 197; Lynn, *Tudor Fashion*, 19, 105–106.

complaint made by Mary and her allies—that the Elizabethan regime had not treated the Queen of Scots with the respect due a royal.¹⁰⁷ Wingfield’s account absolves Elizabeth’s government from the accusation of debasing a queen. Clothing played an important role in constructing monarchical identity, including the legitimacy of each queen’s religion. Mary used clothing to reinforce her embattled royal and religious identity, whereas the Elizabethan government needed to be seen as properly supplying a fellow royal with clothes appropriate to her status, otherwise Elizabeth and her government’s religious and political authority would have been compromised.

The detailed account of the queen’s dress included her religious accessories: an *agnus dei* (a lamb which represented Christ) necklace, a rosary, and a crucifix in her hands. All were Catholic objects. Although he first listed them without commentary, Wingfield later referenced them again with contempt, offering Protestant catechetical insights. For example, he later mentioned Mary’s “lattine booke of vaine prayers,” which was one more item in her collection of “superstitious trumpery.”¹⁰⁸ Such derogatory language fuelled the battle between Catholicism and Protestantism that was playing out between Mary and the Elizabethan regime.¹⁰⁹

Wingfield focused on Mary’s religiosity after recounting how Elizabeth had sent Dr. Fletcher, Dean of Peterborough, to preach at her execution and convert her to Protestantism. Fletcher’s entire sermon appears recorded. Fletcher propounded one of Protestantism’s main tenets that “the special means to attaine this forgiveness of sinnes is ... but by faith.”¹¹⁰ His words are contrasted against Mary’s dress and behaviour. Mary interrupted Fletcher multiple times, insisting that she would die a Catholic.¹¹¹

Despite Mary’s objections, Elizabeth’s officials pushed Fletcher to continue exhorting Mary to confess her sins and accept Protestantism. At first, she ignored Fletcher, but then,

furnished with her superstitious trumpery without anie regard ... to that which Mr. Dean said Began very fastlie with teares & a loude voice to praye in lattine, & in the

¹⁰⁷ Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I*, 134.

¹⁰⁸ Wingfield, “Narration,” 203; Alexandra Walsham “‘Domme Preachers’? Post Reformation English Catholicism and the Culture of Print” *Past & Present* 168 (2000): 72–123, 74, 87.

¹⁰⁹ Both accounts fit the analytical framework of Peter Lake and Michael Questier in “Agency, Appropriation and Rhetoric under the Gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the State in Early Modern England,” *Past & Present* 150 (1996): 64–107.

¹¹⁰ Wingfield, “Narration,” 200.

¹¹¹ Wingfield, “Narration,” 201.

middest ... of overmuch weeping & mourning ... seemed to slide of her stoole ... When Mr. Deane had done she prayed in English ...¹¹²

In this encounter, true religion battled to separate itself from superstition through a contest between the sexes.¹¹³ Whereas the Protestant Dr. Fletcher's gestures and dress were not noted, Wingfield presented Mary's theatrical religious behaviour, dress, and props as foolish vanity through Henry Grey, Sixth Earl of Kent's reprimand; "Maddam I beseech you settle Jesus Christ in your hart as you did before & leave the adiction of those popish trumperies to themselves."¹¹⁴ Despite the attempted masculine Protestant counter to the queen's feminine, disruptive, and affected Catholicism, Mary continued to loudly repudiate the Protestant tenet of faith alone, instead praying in English for "all the saints to make intercession for her to ... Jesus Christ."¹¹⁵ Intercessory prayer, a concept rejected by Protestants, was another facet of her "adiction" to false religion.

The account continued with Mary's partial disrobing in preparation for her beheading. No longer was she portrayed as hysterical, but rather in surprisingly good humour. Mary undressed herself with the aid of her female servants, along with the unwanted help of the executioners, whom Wingfield admitted acted "rudely." The queen then coquettishly smiled, saying "she never had such groomes before to make her unready, nor ever did put of her clothes before such a company."¹¹⁶ Although Mary's comment was possibly an attempt to salvage her modesty, Wingfield might have been demonstrating her dangerous sexual allure. A pervading concern surrounding Mary was how eroticized pity for the captured Scottish queen could turn into treason against the Elizabethan state.¹¹⁷ The ambiguous presentation of Mary's attempt to deflect the public spectacle of her partially undressed body instead drew attention to it.

Any erotic charisma that Mary and her Catholicism might attract, however, was extinguished with her execution. After laying her head on the block, Mary prayed aloud in Latin until she was beheaded. Death silenced Mary and deprived her of control over her body

¹¹² Wingfield, "Narration," 203.

¹¹³ Anne MacLaren, "Gender, Religion and Early Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism," *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (2002): 739–767, explores the connections between gender, religion and the politics of royal succession.

¹¹⁴ Wingfield, "Narration," 203. I wish to acknowledge here that I assign these two accounts in class, and two students in particular, Emma Fultz and Jess Wilson, helped me think through the connections between performance, gender, religion, and queenship.

¹¹⁵ Wingfield, "Narration," 204.

¹¹⁶ Wingfield, "Narration," 204.

¹¹⁷ Lewis, *Mary Queen of Scots*, 3, 39.

and clothes. As the executioner held up her head, her headcloth slipped off and "her head appeared as gray as if she had bin threescore & tenn years old, polled very short, her face being ... so much altered ..." ¹¹⁸ Additionally, Mary's lips continued to move silently for fifteen minutes. Stripped of her wig, her costume, and her "false idols," Mary was exposed as an old, ugly fraud. Ultimately, the Protestant male word triumphed over the feminine embodiment of heresy and treason. Mary's theatrical attempts to block Fletcher and Kent's efforts to make her recognise her political crimes and religious errors failed; the men made the final pronouncements. While the Dean merely said, "so perish all the Queenes enemies," Kent stood over the corpse and, "wth a loude voice said likewise, such an end happen to all the Queenes and the gosselles enemies." ¹¹⁹ The dead queen could no longer rebut the charges of treason and heresy.

Blackwood's Catholic Counter-Catechesis

While Robert Wingfield wrote at the behest of the Protestant Elizabethan regime, Adam Blackwood was a Scottish Catholic and a staunch advocate of Mary. His account of the queen's execution was part of his larger work, *The History of Mary, Queen of Scots*. ¹²⁰ Unsurprisingly, Blackwood presented Mary as a Catholic martyr under the brutal reign of the Protestant Elizabeth, and he, too, used Mary's words, dress, and bodily comportment as catechetical opportunities. However, Blackwood did so to defend and explain Catholic beliefs and practices.

Although Blackwood did not recount Mary's garments and accessories in detail, he did focus on the religious objects she carried. Blackwood also depicted Kent as the Protestant castigator of Catholicism. When Mary asked for her almoner and the Eucharist, Kent refused, adding "that he was sorry for her to see her so much given to the superstitions of the times past, and that it were better for her to carry the cross of Christ in her heart, not in her hand." ¹²¹ Blackwood, like Wingfield, presented the Protestant identification of Catholic devotional objects as false idols. Yet Blackwood's Mary effectively disputed with Kent. Mary explained that holding the crucifix was not efficacious in itself. Rather, "it was to little

¹¹⁸ Wingfield, "Narration," 204.

¹¹⁹ Wingfield, "Narration," 205.

¹²⁰ Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 120–121. Since Blackwood spent most of his adult life in France, his book was originally published in French in 1587.

¹²¹ I am using the excerpt from Adam Blackwood, *The History of Mary Queen of Scots, 1587*, in Jayne Elizabeth Lewis, *The Trial of Mary Queen of Scots: A Brief History with Documents* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 1999), 121.

purpose to carry such an object in her hand, if her heart was not touched inwardly with ... remembrance of his bitter death ..."¹²² Mary articulated the underlying purpose behind the Catholic practice of devotional objects; they were meaningless unless one's inward disposition was rightly ordered.

While Blackwood and Wingfield generally agreed over the details of the queen's demise, their sequence of events differ. Wingfield set Fletcher's sermon before Mary's disrobing on the scaffold, but Blackwood placed it after. In the Protestant account, she undressed herself, perhaps even a bit coyly, with the help of her maids and with minimal interference from the male executioners. In the Catholic version, "the shameless executioner" blocked Mary's women from completing the task. Instead,

no entreaty her Majesty could make ... to withhold his helping hands ... For after her Majesty's gown was stripped down the middle, he snatched her rudely by the arms and pulled off her doublet ... so that her neck, being all naked, appeared ... as more white than snow ...¹²³

The queen's clothes and body highlighted her saintly purity and the evil brutishness of the Protestant Elizabethan government. Mary's clothes were violently removed in language that evoked rape. Yet this attempt to demean the queen backfired, as Mary's nakedness revealed her purity denoted by her snow-white skin—a mark of beauty.¹²⁴

Blackwood's change in sequencing also positively recast Mary's religiosity on the scaffold. Whereas Wingfield depicted Mary's religiosity as reactive and disruptive, Blackwood reversed this. It was Fletcher who repeatedly ignored the Scottish queen's pleas and interrupted her prayers.¹²⁵ Blackwood also portrayed Mary and Fletcher locked in a prayer battle but, unlike Wingfield's account in which the Protestants have the last word, in Blackwood "she proceeded likewise forward, praying in Latin, lifting up her voice above his so loud that all being present did clearly hear her."¹²⁶ Mary's prayers were not failed, hysterical attempts to drown out the truth, but rather were the means by which the truth triumphantly drowned out heresy.

Although Mary out-prays the Dean, she is stymied by the executioner as she tries to give her crucifix necklace to one of her serving women. Again, he "snatches" at the crucifix

¹²² Blackwood, *The History*, 121.

¹²³ Blackwood, *The History*, 122.

¹²⁴ Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens*, 96–97.

¹²⁵ Blackwood, *The History*, 123.

¹²⁶ Blackwood, *The History*, 123.

as he had her royal body. The appalling treatment of Mary's body, clothes, and religiosity continued even after her execution. After Mary's beheading, it was the executioner who said "God save Queen Elizabeth, and so befall all the enemies of the gospel."¹²⁷ Killing the queen was not enough for the executioner, though, and, by extension, Elizabeth and her officials. The executioner mocked Mary by "pulling off her coif and shewed her white hairs, with contemptuous words ..."¹²⁸ In Wingfield, the shaven head of the queen was exposed accidentally, and the executioner made no remarks about it. Blackwood turned Wingfield's commentary into dialogue. For Blackwood, the figure of the executioner exemplified the brutality of the Protestant Elizabethan regime. The executioner did not know how to properly treat sacred objects, whether it was the body of an anointed queen or a crucifix. To emphasise the Protestant regime's inability to identify the truly sacred, Blackwood ended by noting that her stripped royal body was left to rot.

Blackwood also used clothing to disparage Elizabeth. After the executioner proclaimed the execution just, Blackwood accused Elizabeth of hypocrisy. The English officials acted as though "there were no other that favoured the gospel ... but Elizabeth. But ... she made a cloak of her wicked life in the sacred gospel, which thereby she profaned."¹²⁹ Here, Blackwood attacked Elizabeth and the Protestant tenet of *sola scriptura*, that Christians only needed to follow the Bible. Elizabeth, as the head of the "heretical" English Church, perverted the gospel's teachings. Without the careful guidance of the Catholic Church, biblical texts could be misunderstood or, worse, deliberately corrupted. Blackwood's parallel between dress and the Bible was important. Just as sacred scripture was supposed to aid Christians in their journey to salvation, clothing in the early modern period was supposed to keep order by visually reinforcing the divinely ordained social hierarchy. Dress should identify people's social status, gender, occupation, and religion.¹³⁰ Yet fears existed that clothing could deceive, whether people were dressing above their social stations or that women of ill-repute, as some saw Elizabeth I, were dressing as virtuous maidens.¹³¹

Squaring Accounts

¹²⁷ Blackwood, *The History*, 124.

¹²⁸ Blackwood, *The History*, 124.

¹²⁹ Blackwood, *The History*, 124.

¹³⁰ Carney, *Fairy Tale Queens*, 118; Jane Ashelford, *Dress in the Age of Elizabeth* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1988), 90, 98, 108–121.

¹³¹ Catherine Howey, "The Vain, Exotic, and Erotic Feather: Dress, Gender and Power in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England," in *Religion, Gender, and Culture in the Pre-Modern World*, ed. Alexandra Cuffel and Brian Britt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 229.

Elizabeth's abuse of clothing and sacred texts was exposed when compared to Mary's life and death. Blackwood claimed that if Elizabeth's "life were weighed in just and even balance, it should be found ... she should become behind ... this holy martyr ..." ¹³² Although both authors used clothing to bolster or attack a queen's religiosity and majesty, they did so differently. Wingfield used detailed descriptions of Mary's dress, body, and behaviour to present her unfitness to rule, in part caused by her adherence to a false religion. Mary used idols such as crucifixes and lamb necklaces to set herself up as the false queen of England. Moreover, Mary used her body inappropriately, falling off of stools and shouting over male religious and government officials, which undermined her claims to majesty and martyrdom. Her dress further deceived people into believing she died a martyr, not a traitor. Ultimately, Mary's clothes betrayed her when her coif slipped from her head revealing the self-proclaimed icon to be a false idol. Blackwood, meanwhile, employed dress to promote the validity of Catholicism, the sanctity of Mary, and the corruption of the Protestant Elizabethan regime, but he did not dwell on the minutiae of Mary's dress. For him the devil was not in the details, but in the general treatment of Mary's body and clothes. Blackwood presented Elizabeth and her government's handling of Mary's body, clothes, and religiosity as evidence of the fallaciousness of their political policies and religious convictions. Although Blackwood and Wingfield had opposing purposes, both communicated their message through Mary's dress, religious accessories, and physical behaviour.

Finally, both men used the Scottish queen's body, behaviour, and dress to impart specific catechetical lessons. It was not a battle between Protestantism and Catholicism writ large, but rather surgical strikes to either justify or dismantle specific confessional beliefs and practices. The gendered portrayal of clothes, bodies, and accessories provided the arsenal for those strikes on the battlefield of early modern cross-confessionalisation. Wingfield juxtaposed Mary's religious "trumpery" against Protestant preaching and the tenet of faith alone. Blackwood, however, highlighted Mary's religious objects to explain their proper usage. Protestant ignorance regarding religious instruments was both a sign and a cause of their spiritual blindness. Elizabeth and her government's misuse of sacred scripture was explained in sartorial terms. Whether a saint or sinner, an early modern queen's religious identity required the proper costume and conduct.

¹³² Blackwood, *The History*, 124.

The Confessional Integrity of the British Crown after the Act of Settlement

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The 1701 Act of Settlement represented the final legislative establishment of the Church of England as a national church to which the monarchy was inextricably bound as Head of both State and Church. A longer-term consequence of the 1688 deposition of Britain’s last Catholic monarch, it excluded Catholics from the line of succession, making the monarchy’s confessional identity key, infrastructurally, to wider conceptualisations and representations of the British monarchy ever since. This Protestant identity has prevailed despite broader social acceptance of other faiths, sects, and non-conformists, even cultural secularisation, socially and in public life. There have been studies of post-1701 national religion and individual royals’ personal faith and institutional patronage, but general scholarly trends represent a tapering off of interest in royal confessional identity after the early modern period.¹³³ Presented here is a long durée view of the topic through the lens of queenship, asking where confessional identity sits in the (regnant or consort) queen’s role as a national figure within legal, royal, and public understandings of monarchy and nation, through examining discourse about queens and use of exemplary and/or notorious historical figures at key dynastic and/or national royal moments. This article provides a brief chronological and thematic overview for future work.

¹³³ See for examples, Claire Gheeraert-Graffeuille and Geraldine Vaughan, ed., *Anti-Catholicism in Britain and Ireland, 1600–2000: Practices, Representations and Ideas* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Linda Woodhead and Rebecca Catto, ed., *Religion and Change in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 2012); R.M. Morris, ed., *Church and State in 21st Century Britain: The Future of Church Establishment* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009); Jennifer Farooq, “Preaching for the Queen: Queen Anne and English Sermon Culture, 1702–1714,” *Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies* 37, no. 2 (2014): 159–169; Jennifer Farooq, “‘The Crown Can Never Have too Many Liveings’: Queen Anne’s Patronage of the Clergy, 1702–1714,” in *Later Stuart Queens, 1660–1735: Religion, Political Culture, and Patronage*, ed. Eilish Gregory and Michael C. Questier (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 237–256; Ralph Stevens, “‘King George’s Religion’: Lutheranism and the Religious Politics of the Hanoverian Succession,” in *Religion, Loyalty and Sedition: The Hanoverian Succession of 1714*, ed. William Gibson, Elaine Chalus, and Roberta Anderson (Cardiff, University of Wales Press, 2017), 84–104; Walter L. Arnstein, “Queen Victoria and the Challenge of Roman Catholicism,” *The Historian* 58, no. 2 (1996): 295–314; Michael Ledger-Lomas, *Queen Victoria: This Thorny Crown* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021).

Creating an Anglican Parliamentary Monarchy

While the Restoration settlements and later replacement of an openly Catholic king with Protestant alternatives had created legal and cultural frameworks to promote the established Anglican Church as an exclusive State religion, the "Glorious Revolution" of 1688 was still rhetorically underpinned by James VII & II's "abdication" rather than simply his religion as the basis of his disqualification from the throne, while the rights of his Catholic son were undermined, as was traditional in intra-dynastic regime change, via aspersions on his legitimacy.¹³⁴ The escalation of Parliamentary innovation in the progress of succession, first in inviting Charles II back from exile and then in establishing William and Mary's co-monarchy in conjunction with the Bill of Rights (1689), reached new heights following the death, in 1700, of William of Gloucester, sole generational heir of the Protestant Stuart line. With William III widowed after 1694 and Anne decreasingly likely to produce a surviving child, the 1701 Act of Settlement made provision for the future of the succession. Bypassing dozens with stronger primogeniture claims, the throne was to be settled upon Sophia, Electress of Hanover, youngest daughter of James VI & I's daughter, Elizabeth.¹³⁵ Protestant, and already a grandmother, Sophia was a pragmatic long-term choice for excluding Catholics from the throne. Legislation nominating her as heiress established, in statutory law, the primacy of confessional integrity over heredity as qualification for the British throne. To an extent, conceptions of the State as being under the "crown-in-parliament" rather than the Crown alone, and the governorship of the Established Church likewise, modified the monarch's personal freedom to dictate national religion, inherent in the Royal Supremacy.¹³⁶ Thus, attempts to recreate Sophia and her descendants as natural heirs to the throne were promoted from both Royal nomination and Parliamentary legislation. In 1705, the Sophia Naturalisation Act ensured Sophia and her descendants would, in perpetuity, be considered British-born by virtue of their inheritance qualifications under the Act of Settlement, provided they neither became, nor married, Catholics.¹³⁷ William and Anne granted British honours and titles to their Hanoverian heirs, and Anne actively demonstrated her

¹³⁴ On the promotion of the Established Church over non-conformist sects in late-Stuart England, see for example: Matthew Neufeld, *The Civil Wars After 1660: Public Remembering in Late Stuart England* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013). On legal justifications of the 1688 revolution, see particularly Richard S. Kay, *The Glorious Revolution and the Continuity of Law* (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2014), 76, 108–109.

¹³⁵ Act of Settlement, 1701, 12&13 Will. 3, c. 2.

¹³⁶ Jacqueline Rose, "By Law Established: The Church of England and the Royal Supremacy," in *The Later Stuart Church, 1660–1714*, ed. Grant Tapsell (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2012), 22–23, 35–36, 39.

¹³⁷ Sophia Naturalisation Act, 1705, 4&5 Ann. c.16.

commitment to the Protestant succession through public cultural and diplomatic gestures.¹³⁸ This symbolic nationalisation of a Protestant crown, combined with increased Parliamentary control of, and legislation about, the succession, was driven by deeply ingrained cultural anxieties about cross-confessional rule, which had accumulated over the political and dynastic turmoil of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a threat finally negated by the implementation of the Act of Settlement.

Significantly, the Act definitively nullified hereditary succession rights not only of individual Catholics, but also of any dynast who married a Catholic, even if they themselves remained Protestant. Post-Reformation England had seen conceptions of the queen's role break down from what has been described as the "typifying" exercise and demonstration of Catholicism of "a homogenous Europe-wide understanding of Christian queen consortship" into something less certain and more controversial, ever shifting with the personal convictions and political machinations of successive regimes.¹³⁹ Foreign consorts brought in by those regimes' power-brokers found themselves precariously suspended, Adam Morton has argued, between "competing strands of curiosity and condemnation" towards alien cultures and "competing impulses towards [religious] tolerance and intolerance," "oscillating" tensions in evolving national identity struggling to reconcile theoretical conformity of "official [legal and/or political] mandates" with "confessional diversity" in practice.¹⁴⁰ Tensions intensified through the reigns of the Stuart kings and their Catholic consorts culminating in the literal and symbolic "fecund body" of Mary Beatrice of Modena, Catholic queen of the Catholic king of an increasingly (but not exclusively) anti-Catholic realm becoming, in Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones's words, "a kind of religious incendiary device."¹⁴¹

Following the institution of constitutional monarchy, the British Royal Family became ever more ceremonial and symbolic. Central to this apparent "domestication" and "feminisation" of its public image was the sovereign couple, a reigning partnership between

¹³⁸ Julie Farguson, *Visualising Protestant Monarchy: Ceremony, Art and Politics After the Glorious Revolution (1689–1714)* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2021), 285, 297–302, 307–309, 312.

¹³⁹ Aidan Norrie and Joseph Massey, "The Tudor Consorts: Power, Influence, Dynasty," in *Tudor and Stuart Consorts: Power, Influence, Dynasty*, ed. Aidan Norrie, Carolyn Harris, J.L. Laynesmith, Danna R. Messer, and Elena Woodacre (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022), 4–5.

¹⁴⁰ Adam Morton, "Sanctity and Suspicion: Catholicism, Conspiracy and the Representation of Henrietta Maria of France and Catherine of Braganza, Queens of Britain," in *Queens Consort, Cultural Transfer and European Politics, c.1500–1800*, ed. Helen Watanabe-O'Kelly and Adam Morton (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 172–173.

¹⁴¹ Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, "Mary Beatrice of Modena: A Queen Observed," 293–294, 304.

monarch and consort.¹⁴² Thus, whether regnant or consort, the British queen’s person has been a significant symbol of both monarchy and nation throughout the modern era. Ceremonially this has been consecrated within the Church of England through coronation. In 1625, Henrietta Maria had eschewed her husband’s coronation on the grounds of her incompatible faith, and James VII & II and Mary Beatrice of Modena may even have had a private religious (Catholic) ceremony before the “truncated” (Anglican) ceremony of their 1685 coronation, which they seem to have treated more as a ‘national’ political state occasion. But post-1701 queens consort have all participated in, and been crowned within, their husbands’ Anglican coronation service, the standard form of which includes specific commitments to maintain a Protestant, national, Church.¹⁴³ However, threatening reputations of the “danger” of Britain’s Catholic queens’ entwined cultural and confessional “alienism” (particularly in the case of Mary I’s counter-reformation and Henrietta Maria’s role in fomenting civil war) were deeply-embedded in national historicism, shaping the development of hopes, aspirations, and representations of future queens, long after Catholic dynasts and dynasticism were legally erased from the succession.¹⁴⁴

Cross-Confessional Queenly Legacies and Future British Queenship

Beyond the exclusion of Catholics, both monarchs and consorts were expected to embrace and defend the specific form of episcopal Protestantism “established by law,” essentially that of the Church of England.¹⁴⁵ Naturally William III and the Hanoverians had non-Anglican confessional backgrounds, and personal and familial histories of service of a pan-European

¹⁴² Sarah Betts, “The Windsor Consorts: Matriarchy and Modernisation,” in Norrie et al., *Hanoverian to Windsor Consorts*, 255–257.

¹⁴³ Matthias Range, *Music and Ceremonial at British Coronations: From James I to Elizabeth II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 12, 29, 38, 61–93; Robert Hazell and Bob Morris, *Swearing in the New King: The Accession Declarations and Coronation Oaths* (London: The Constitution Unit, UCL, 2018), 10.

¹⁴⁴ Susan Dunn-Hensley, “Henrietta Maria: Dangerous Consort,” 250; Carolyn Harris, *Queenship and Revolution in Early Modern Europe: Henrietta Maria and Marie Antoinette* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 196–198; Sarah Betts, “Henrietta Maria, ‘Queen of Tears’?: Picturing and Performing the Cavalier Queen,” in *Remembering Queens and Kings of Early Modern England and France: Reputation, Reinterpretation, and Reincarnation*, ed. Estelle Paranque (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 157–160; Thomas S. Freeman, “Inventing Bloody Mary: Perceptions of Mary Tudor,” in *Mary Tudor: Old and New Perspectives*, ed. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 78–102; Stephanie Russo, “The Great English Queen-Off: Lady Jane Grey and Mary I in Historical Fiction,” in *Mid-Tudor Queenship and Memory: The Making and Re-making of Lady Jane Grey and Mary I*, ed. Valerie Schutte and Jessica S. Hower (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023), 264; Strong, “The Making of a Queen.”

¹⁴⁵ Karin Schrader, “Charlotte of Mecklenberg-Strelitz: The Enlightened Nurturer,” in Norrie et al., *Hanoverian to Windsor Consorts*, 51; Rose, “By Law Established,” 34–39; Hazell and Morris, *Swearing in the New King*.

militant "Protestant interest." This wider concept of Protestantism and a common foe represented by the Catholic Habsburg and Bourbon powers helped justify action in European wars and unite British and Hanoverian political cultures. This definition of intracontinental military and diplomatic policies also increasingly helped mould confessional identities into emerging national ones. Individual royal personalities were harnessed as figureheads to bridge differences between furtherance of a wider Protestant cause (also appealing to non-conformist subjects) and patriotic adherence to legally prescribed/promoted confessional practices.¹⁴⁶ In her commitment to the Protestant succession, even in the absence of heirs of her own body, personal reputation for piety, and balance between acknowledging Parliamentary law and performance of "sacral" elements of monarchy, Queen Anne acquired a reputation as a generator of the Church of England, a tie to national identity enhanced through emphasis on her own Englishness and comparisons with her illustrious predecessor Elizabeth I.¹⁴⁷

In Hanover, Sophia also crafted her image as heiress with reference to deep-rooted English genealogy. Although Lutheran, the Electoral family emphasised their credentials as defenders of Protestantism and Sophia communed in Anglican services with British envoys. Both she and her granddaughter-in-law Caroline, consort of the future George II, employed Anglican ministers. Caroline's reputation, anglicised with imagery of the rose, was enhanced, particularly in opposition to her Catholic Jacobite counterpart, by her youthful refusal of an Imperial marriage on confessional grounds, and, in the absence of another queenlike figure following the accession of her father-in-law in 1714, became key iconography in promoting the Hanoverian succession. Both her likenesses to historic heroines of Anglo-Protestant queenship, Elizabeth I, Jane (Grey), and Mary II, and her superiority of figure compared to the Catholic Henrietta Maria were praised.¹⁴⁸ Protestant dynasticism shaped decisions about

¹⁴⁶ Andrew C. Thompson, *Britain, Hanover and the Protestant Interest, 1688-1756* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006); Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), xxii, 4, 11-54, 206; Stevens, "'King George's Religion'"; Farguson, *Visualising the Protestant Monarchy*, 110-113, 117-118, 224-269, 307-308; Julie Farguson, "George of Denmark: The Quiet Protestant Hero," in ed. Norrie et al., *Tudor and Stuart Consorts*, 314-318, 321-323, 327-329, 332, 333.

¹⁴⁷ Farguson, *Visualising the Protestant Monarchy*, 186-194, 287-297; Hannah Smith, "'Last of All the Heavenly Birth': Queen Anne and Sacral Queenship," *Parliamentary History* 28 no. 1 (2009): 137-149.

¹⁴⁸ Charlotte Backerra, "Legitimacy Through Family Traditions? The Hanoverians Represented as Successors to the Throne of Great Britain," in *Dynastic Change: Legitimacy Gender in Medieval and Early Modern Monarchy*, ed. Ana Maria S.A. Rodrigues, Manuela Santos Silva, and Jonathan Spangler (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020), 127-131; Hannah Smith, *Georgian Monarchy: Politics and Culture, 1714-1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 40-45; Emma Jay, "Caroline of Ansbach: Life and Literature," in ed. Norrie et al., *Hanoverian to Windsor*

royal marriages for Hanoverian daughters as well as sons, influenced partly by their own inheritance through a British princess, but also the opportunities for popular patriotism inspired by unions with traditional Protestant allies. For future queens, solid Protestant reputations were essential, and the marriage of Frederick, Prince of Wales, with a descendant of one of the chief patrons of the Reformation was especially lauded. Once in Britain, German Lutheran consorts’ public performance of piety and dedication to the Church of England became a key component of both their personal images and general perceptions of the Georgian monarchy as exemplary and reflective of the nation as a whole.¹⁴⁹ Calls for their future emulation as models of Protestant queenship demonstrate the strength, long- and short-term, of these reputations. In an 1805 treatise written for Princess Charlotte, Britain’s heiress presumptive, Hannah More encouraged the future queen to follow the examples of her recent ancestresses and those of Elizabeth I and Mary II. Elizabeth’s example was carefully contrasted with the warning lesson of her sister, whose ill-judged “cruelty” in attempting to reverse the legally “compelled” national reformation instilled such “a thorough detestation of popery ... through the whole community” that the nation’s soul became truly and irreversibly Protestant.¹⁵⁰

By the time brides for Queen Victoria’s descendants were sought, a foreign (likely German), Protestant princess was invariably expected. There was periodic speculation over the possibility of Orthodox, or even Roman Catholic, brides, if of suitable rank and connections, but the bride would be expected to convert. The only time this was seriously considered, when Victoria’s senior grandson formed a personal attachment to a daughter of the exiled French monarchy, the engagement was ended before formalisation because the princess was not prepared to abjure her faith. After this disappointment the prince became engaged to a minor princess, Victoria Mary (“May”) of Teck, daughter of George III’s granddaughter, Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, and her husband, a morganatic scion

Consorts, 23–24, 28, 31–32, 36–37, 40–41; Karin Schrader, “Shaping Her Image: Caroline of Ansbach Versus Maria Clementina Sobieska,” in *The Routledge History Handbook of Queens-in-Waiting: Ambitions and Expectations from the Twelfth to the Twenty-first Centuries*, ed. Sarah Betts and Chloë R. McKenzie (London and New York: Routledge, forthcoming 2025).

¹⁴⁹ Smith, *Georgian Monarchy*, 45–48; Schrader, “Charlotte of Mecklenberg-Strelitz,” 47–48; Paige Emerick, “The Hanoverian Consorts: Progresses, Pageants, and Performance,” in ed. Norrie et al., *Hanoverian to Windsor Consorts*, 146.

¹⁵⁰ Sarah Betts, “‘Our Future Queen’: Speculation, Anticipation, and Expectation from Princess Charlotte of Wales (1796–1817) to Princess Charlotte of Cambridge (2015–),” in *The Routledge History Handbook of Queens-in-Waiting*, ed. Sarah Betts and Chloë R. McKenzie (Routledge, forthcoming); Hannah More, *Hints Towards Forming the Character of a Young Princess* (London: T. Cadell and W. Davies, 1805), Vol. II: 342–348.

of Wurttemberg, Francis, Duke of Teck. Despite her modest royal background, the choice was popular because the princess was essentially “English” and, following the sudden death of her fiancé shortly after their engagement, May’s ultimate marriage to the new heir, later George V, was popularly received.¹⁵¹

The “Englishness” that made May such a desirable bride was a combination of lifelong Anglicanism and her familiarity as a figure around London, both natural products of her predominantly England-based upbringing, but also her dynastic credentials. In her triumphal years following May’s marriage and the arrival of grandchildren in direct line to the throne, the Duchess of Teck publicly referenced these significant connections in her costume-choice for the famous Devonshire House costume ball in 1897 (Figure 4). Historical queens, including recent European Catholic ones, were a popular choice for the ball. May and her sisters-in-law dutifully attended as attendants of Marguerite de Valois, personified by her glamorous mother-in-law Alexandra, Princess of Wales. There were also representations of Protestant English-born queens Elizabeth I and Elizabeth of Bohemia, but significantly Mary Adelaide went as her ancestress, Sophia of Hanover, like herself a Protestant dynastic lynchpin and matriarch of the British monarchy, granddaughter of one king and grandmother of another. Though not a particularly noted student of British royal history, she was conscious of her dynastic status and would doubtless have been familiar with iconography of Sophia from her own childhood in Hanover where her father had been Viceroy before 1837.

¹⁵¹ Betts, “Our Future Queen.”



Figure 4: Mary Adelaide, Duchess of Teck, dressed as Sophia, Electress of Hanover and matriarch of the Protestant succession, at the Devonshire House fancy-dress ball, 1897. Photogravure reproduction by Walker & Boutall from a photograph by Lafayette Ltd. © National Portrait Gallery, London.

Searches for royal brides, hampered by confessional restrictions but also by the changing international diplomatic landscape and the shift in socio-cultural patriotism following the World Wars, increasingly turned towards native (and commoner) brides. Consideration of foreign princesses as being of uniquely appropriate status and culturally anglophile, even anglicised, was not enough to overcome legal obstacles and sectarian tensions inherent in a prospective Catholic bride for the heir to the throne. Indeed, in the 1970s, under such media and parliamentary pressure over rumours the Prince of Wales would marry the Catholic Princess Marie-Astrid of Luxembourg, Buckingham Palace felt

unprecedentedly compelled to deny the rumour.¹⁵² Even by the early-twenty-first century, as Prince Charles prepared to marry Camilla Parker-Bowles, amidst more high-profile deliberations about the future king marrying a divorcée, the Palace took time to publicly confirm Camilla’s Anglicanism.¹⁵³

Ending Archaic Discrimination? The Succession to the Crown Act (2013)

By the early-twentieth century, British dominion over a vast multi-faith empire, and increasing toleration of diverse Christian sects, including Catholics, meant legislative reform, at least of the performance of the strident declarations of Anglicanism against Catholic enemies, was mooted. The most achieved, however, was legislation in 1910 to modify anti-Catholic language in the Accession Oath.¹⁵⁴ Indeed, twentieth-century standardising Regency legislation required widowed consorts, like regnant sovereigns, to remain UK-domiciled and refrain from either becoming or marrying Roman Catholics to maintain eligibility for their position, thus consolidating identifications of the monarchy with long-standing anti-Catholic conceptualisations of the ruling family as a national institution.¹⁵⁵ Debate over Prince Charles’s potential Luxembourg marriage highlighted the three-fold complexity of the issue, even provoking attempts to reform the law. Some welcomed a mixed-faith marriage as more democratically reflective of the monarchy’s secular role leading multiple diverse nations of equals where the confessional practice and identity of any individual, even the sovereign, was a matter of personal freedom of conscience. Others pointed out the specifically “repressive” and discriminatory nature of the legislative ban on marrying Roman Catholics, outdated in modern times. But others still felt strongly that abandoning the confessional integrity of the sovereign-couple would fatally undermine the monarchy as the “cornerstone of British Democracy” because the very existence of the nation as a constitutional realm “rests on the Protestant succession,” resistance of Roman Catholicism, and royal defence of the Established Church.¹⁵⁶ Scholars have noted reticence from modern British governments to legislate about the monarchy, but when the 2010–2015 Government did finally actively pursue legislative Succession reform,

¹⁵² Betts, “Our Future Queen.”

¹⁵³ Neil Parpworth, “The Succession to the Crown Act 2013: Modernising the Monarchy,” *The Modern Law Review* 76, no. 6 (2013): 1079.

¹⁵⁴ Hazell and Morris, *Swearing in the New King*, 8–10.

¹⁵⁵ Betts, “Windsor Consorts,” 272–273.

¹⁵⁶ *Belfast Telegraph*, 9 July 1980, 12. William Graham, “Paisley Question on Royal Marriage,” *Belfast Telegraph*, 7 July 1980, 1. *The Liverpool Echo*, 14 December 1978, 11.

this same tension between preservation of the Established Church and the sovereign's role as its Head, and the "anomalous and discriminatory" nature of the prohibitions on Catholics, was the focus of debate. This time though, on the coattails of debates on gender-equality in the succession, reforms were accepted as necessary in modern society. The Succession to the Crown Act passed in 2013, removing the exclusion of those marrying Catholics. Further indicating that this was a culturally appropriate "modernisation" of the constitutional State, the "offensive" anti-Catholic language of both the Bill of Rights and the Act of Settlement, which had been specifically highlighted to emphasise the need for reform, was also officially amended.¹⁵⁷ Significantly, unlike the Act's removal of the male-preference in the Crown's succession via primogeniture applicable only to new generations, the clauses concerning dynasts who married Catholics were enforced retrospectively. As no legislation has ever existed removing someone from the line of succession if their spouse later converted to Catholicism *after* marriage, the 2013 Act decisively opened-up the consort position to Catholics for the future.¹⁵⁸ Defining and persistent cultural "fear of the 'recusant wife' in the most powerful family in the kingdom" stretching back to the Stuart consorts had, at last, abated.¹⁵⁹

Nevertheless, and despite the throne's recent incumbents' apparent desire to respect, and to an extent reflect, the diverse faiths of their subjects, the exclusion of heirs who are Catholic themselves remains in place, as do requirements for communion with, and oaths to preserve, the Church of England. Disestablishmentarianism, even, Neil Parpworth observes, more moderate "separat[ion of] the role of the Supreme Governor of the Church of England from the role of the monarch," seems still too "radical" to secure solid cross-party support, or a widespread public campaign.¹⁶⁰ Even in the earliest days of constitutional monarchy, Tony Claydon argues, "Protestant Anglicanism was only a highly problematic foundation" for nationalism in a society where "faith and nationality inhabited rather different mental spaces."¹⁶¹ The current populace is certainly not uniformly confessionally Anglican, or even religious at all. It seems, therefore, the monarchy itself is the key cultural binding agent between Established Church, legal/political State, and concepts of national identity and patriotic feeling. Using innovative gestures of cultural inclusion within the traditions laid down by law, custom, and confessional dogma, the coronations of both Elizabeth II and

¹⁵⁷ Parpworth, "Succession to the Crown," 1070, 1078–1081.

¹⁵⁸ Succession to the Crown Act, 2013, c.20 (UK).

¹⁵⁹ Harris, *Queenship and Revolution*, 198.

¹⁶⁰ Parpworth, "Succession to the Crown," 1080–1081, 1091–1093.

¹⁶¹ Tony Claydon, "The Church of England and the Churches of Europe, 1660–1714," 192.

Charles III exemplified this, performing an institutional persona which was at once representative and sacral, capable of contemporarily palatable social attitudes, but dutiful in maintaining royal confessional integrity within the rule of a specifically national law. That this specificity originated in opposition to a Catholic king, and most specifically in reaction to the role and image of a Catholic *queen*, at the culmination of more than a century of controversy over Catholic queens, was significant in the subsequent development of both monarchical and national identities in Britain. As the role of queenship (regnant and/or consort) in these identities also grew in significance, modern queens' confessional identity and the longer-term reputations of their predecessors in national historicist cultures is surely worthy of further study.

Mary I’s Heretical Friends

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Mary I’s religious policy centred on the reinstatement of Catholicism and the suppression of religious dissent, which led historian Geoffrey Elton to summarise her as “bigoted.”¹⁶² Elton’s view is still widely held by non-specialists, despite sterling revisionist work in the intervening half-century. Yet research into Mary’s reign presents us with the paradox that she had numerous courtiers and servants known to be not just evangelicals but Protestants. This article uses network analysis to consider the disparate experience of three Protestant women, two of whom graced Mary’s court whilst the third went into exile.

In January 1547, Eustace Chapuys, formerly Imperial ambassador to England, told Mary of Hungary, regent of the Netherlands, that Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, the Earl of Hertford’s wife, Anne Stanhope, and the Lord Admiral’s wife, Jane Guildford, Lady Lisle, had “infected” Queen Katherine Parr with heresy.¹⁶³ With such widespread knowledge of these women’s religious views, Mary cannot have been unaware of them, yet they seem all to have been her friends.

Anne Stanhope, Duchess of Somerset

After the death of Anne’s father, her mother married Richard Page, a member of Henry VIII’s privy chamber, a connection which gave Anne her entrée to court as maid to Mary’s mother, Katharine of Aragon.¹⁶⁴ Anne married Edward Seymour in the early 1530s and by the time of Mary’s reconciliation with Henry in 1536 was a constant figure at court as sister-in-law to Queen Jane Seymour. Evidence of interaction between Mary and Anne begins from early 1537 with gifts from Mary at the christening of one of Anne’s daughters.¹⁶⁵ Other indications that Mary and Anne (later countess of Hertford as Seymour was promoted) were on good terms include Mary dining with the Hertfords, tipping their minstrels, exchanging New Year gifts, and Anne bringing her daughters to visit Mary.

¹⁶² George Elton, *Reform and Reformation: England 1509–1558*, “The New History of England” series, vol. 2 (London, Melbourne, and Auckland: E. Arnold, 1993), 376.

¹⁶³ Martin A.S. Hume, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Spain*, vol. 8, 1545–1546, (London, 1904), 555.

¹⁶⁴ TNA SP 10/1 f. 122.

¹⁶⁵ Frederic Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary, Daughter of King Henry the Eighth, Afterwards Queen Mary: With a Memoir of the Princess, and Notes* (London, 1831), 16.

By 1543, when Henry VIII married Katherine Parr, Hertford was a senior councillor. Anne was appointed to serve the queen and the women were on good terms, with Parr and Mary once writing a joint letter to Anne.¹⁶⁶ It was during Parr’s queenship that it became apparent that Anne was flirting with Reformed religion.¹⁶⁷

With the accession of Edward VI, Anne’s husband became Protector and duke of Somerset and Anne herself had considerable influence. In April 1547 Mary wrote to her requesting help for former servants of Katharine of Aragon, addressing Anne as “[m]y good gossip (God-sibling)” and signing herself as “your good friend during my life, Mary.”¹⁶⁸ She also gave Anne New Year gifts in 1548 and 1549.¹⁶⁹ Anne now expanded her patronage of reformers at home and abroad. Her daughter, Jane, was likewise associated with Reformed religion, corresponding with John Calvin and Martin Bucer.

After Somerset’s execution in January 1552, Anne was incarcerated in the Tower of London, only being released when Mary entered London as queen. Mary’s first parliament reversed the attainder against Somerset and Mary recreated the earldom of Hertford for Anne’s son, while Jane Seymour joined the queen’s household and became a frequent recipient of jewellery from Mary. In 1554, Anne was with Mary as the queen prepared for her marriage; they exchanged New Year gifts in 1557 and in March 1558 Anne received a life interest in the royal property of Hanworth.¹⁷⁰ Soon after, Anne remarried. It seems likely that her husband, Francis Newdigate, would have shared Anne’s Reformist views, but he was also connected to conservative Catholic circles. His uncle, Sebastian, had been executed in 1535 for denying the Royal Supremacy, while his cousin, Jane Dormer, was one of Mary’s most favoured maids. Mary’s opinion of this marriage is unknown. The only indication of a fracture in their relationship is the absence of Anne from Mary’s funeral ceremonies, which might be otherwise explained by the prevalent influenza epidemic.

Jane Guildford, Duchess of Northumberland

Daughter of Edward Guildford, master of the Armouries to Henry VIII, Jane married her father’s ward, John Dudley, in 1524. Dudley was well-connected, heir to the barony of Lisle

¹⁶⁶ Hatfield House, Cecil Papers 147/6. Quoted in *Katherine Parr: Complete Works and Correspondence*, ed. Janel Mueller (London: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 78.

¹⁶⁷ James Gairdner and R. H. Brodie, ed., *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, Henry VIII*, vol. 21 Part 1, January-August 1546, July 1–5 (London, 1908), 589.

¹⁶⁸ TNA SP 10/1 f. 122.

¹⁶⁹ Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 200.

¹⁷⁰ *Calendar of the Patent Rolls*, preserved in the Public Record Office, Philip and Mary v.4 1557–1558, 298.

and stepson to Henry VIII's illegitimate uncle. The first evidence of connection between Jane and Mary dates from early 1537 when Mary was godmother at the bishopping (the confirmation ceremony immediately after baptism) of two of Jane's children. Presents to Jane's nurses, midwives, and servants continued over the following years. In return, Mary received frequent gifts, not just expensive New Year items (from Jane alone and jointly with her husband), but domestic presents of fruit and wine.¹⁷¹ In 1545, Mary stood alongside Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, as godmother to Jane's last child.

In the early days of the Protestant Edward VI's reign, Jane's husband, now earl of Warwick, was the duke of Somerset's right-hand man. Jane and Mary's friendship continued, with a further exchange of New Year gifts in 1548 and 1549.¹⁷² Their relationship is likely to have deteriorated thereafter as Mary suffered under the Protestant regime of Jane's husband, now duke of Northumberland and effective ruler. However, the bond was strong enough for Mary to ask Jane to petition Northumberland on behalf of one of Mary's imprisoned officers. Jane handed the letter to her husband, who responded with a refusal.¹⁷³ After Edward VI's death in July 1553, Jane's husband led an attempted coup against Mary although this swiftly collapsed. Jane raced to intercept the triumphant queen en route to London but was refused admission. Frantic, she turned to her network for help, begging Anne Preston, Lady Paget, to convey her pleas for forgiveness for her husband to Susan Clarencieux, one of Mary's attendants, and Gertrude Blount, Marchioness of Exeter.¹⁷⁴ Jane bequeathed both Lady Paget and Susan Clarencieux items in her will, suggesting they treated her pleas favourably.¹⁷⁵

Jane's husband and five sons were found guilty of treason, but Jane was neither tried nor imprisoned and Mary permitted her to keep many of her personal belongings, despite Northumberland's execution. Jane was pardoned on 2 May 1554 and confirmed in lands that she and her husband had been granted during the reign of Edward VI. She set to work to develop as many contacts as she could at Mary's court to plead for her sons' release from the Tower, which happened in late 1554.

Jane died in early 1555, having left a will with bequests to those who might continue to plead for the rehabilitation of her children. As her eldest son, Ambrose, had been granted

¹⁷¹ Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 116, 121, 160.

¹⁷² Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, 200.

¹⁷³ Leonard Howard, *A Collection of Letters, from the Original Manuscripts of Many Princes, Great Personages and Statesmen...* (London, 1753), 160–161.

¹⁷⁴ S. J. Gunn, "A Letter of Jane, Duchess of Northumberland, in 1553," *The English Historical Review* 114, no. 459 (1999): 1267–1271.

¹⁷⁵ TNA PROB 11/37/195, transcribed in Arthur Collins, ed., *Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, Part of the Reign of King Charles the Second ...v. 1* (1746), 35.

his life but remained attainted, Jane technically died without an heir but "in view of the duchess's pious and maternal labour in bringing up and aiding her children and from the crown's desire that her said will be fulfilled ..." he was permitted to inherit.¹⁷⁶

Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk

Katherine's mother, Maria de Salinas, came from Spain with Katharine of Aragon. She married William, Baron Willoughby de Eresby, and Katherine was their only surviving child. In 1533, Katherine married Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, Henry VIII's widowed brother-in-law. Katherine did not regularly attend Henry's queens but was one of the Great Ladies of the household to Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard, and Katherine Parr. The earliest evidence of her relationship with Mary dates from New Year 1537, when Katherine sent a gift. Lavish New Year gifts and the loan of her grooms to Mary's attendants on one occasion demonstrate an ongoing relationship. It is harder to find any evidence of gifts from Mary to Katherine, but there are several tips paid to Lady Suffolk's servants and the two played cards in May 1538.

By 1546, the now-widowed Katherine was at the forefront of the evangelicals. Perhaps feeling protected by her rank, Katherine was willing to be more controversial than Anne or Jane. After Henry VIII's death, she encouraged the publication of Katherine Parr's evangelical *Lamentations of a Sinner*. This was followed by an invitation to the radical Hugh Latimer to preach to her household on Reformist themes. As state religion under Edward VI became increasingly influenced by Swiss doctrine, Katherine whole-heartedly embraced Reformed religion.

Katherine does not appear to have had any direct involvement with the events of July 1553, in which Jane Grey Dudley briefly took possession of the throne before it was retaken by Mary I, although as Jane was Katherine's step-granddaughter and the two were aligned theologically, it seems safe to assume that Katherine would have favoured Jane's enthronement. She also kept a low profile after Mary's accession, remaining in the country with her second husband, Richard Bertie. In January 1554, Bertie received a general pardon and, in May 1554, Mary, showing no sign of enmity towards Katherine, granted the duchess the use of Croydon Palace.¹⁷⁷ Nevertheless, Katherine and Bertie went into voluntary exile on New Year's Day, 1555. Despite John Foxe's highly-coloured account in his influential *Acts and Monuments*, Katherine's biographer, Melissa Franklin Harkrider, does not believe there was

¹⁷⁶ CPR Philip and Mary Vol. 2, 122.

¹⁷⁷ John Roche Dasent, ed., *Acts of the Privy Council of England* Volume 5, 1554–1556 (London, 1892), 19.

any immediate danger to Katherine so it is hard to know exactly why she left.¹⁷⁸ She and Bertie had been planning to leave for many months and their plans were well-known to the government, but no efforts were made to prevent them leaving. One possible explanation is that they went into exile, not from fear, but as a declaration of their faith and their solidarity with the other radical Protestants who had left England because they would not publicly conform to Catholic worship.

Religion at Mary's court

Mary knew in 1553 that Anne, Jane, and Katherine were all Protestants. So why were their fates different? The most important differential is Anne and Jane's willingness to conform to restored Catholicism. Harkrider defines two different groups of Protestants: the first being moderates who considered that duty to the sovereign had a meaningful role to play in the religious life of the individual and that outward conformity would not endanger their souls, and the second, the godly, who believed that attending a Catholic Mass was an unforgivable sin. If Anne and Jane were moderates, then obedience to Mary's laws was permissible. Additionally, Jane may have believed that her husband's last-minute re-embrace of Catholicism had been done to protect his family and that she should respect that by following his example. It is also possible that the Northumberlands may both have believed that Mary's accession was God's will and consequently reconsidered their religion. Katherine took the godly position, avoiding public conformity. She may also have had concerns about her poor relationship with Bishop Gardiner, Mary's Lord Chancellor.

Beyond different perceptions of their religious duty, the women's interpretation of that other duty, the enhancement of their families' power and wealth through engaging with influential people, had a part to play in their decisions. Social network analysis (which uses graph theory to investigate power in social groups) allows for exploration of this perspective.¹⁷⁹ The value of this technique in historiography has been amply demonstrated by Ruth Ahnert and Sebastian Ahnert.¹⁸⁰ Within a network, the power or influence of different individuals (represented by nodes) depends on how closely they are connected to

¹⁷⁸ Melissa Franklin Harkrider, *Women, Reform and Community in Early Modern England: Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire's Godly Aristocracy, 1519–1580* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008), 95.

¹⁷⁹ Social network analysis, like any other historical analysis, can only be based on known sources. I have used the State Papers Online, Mary's privy purse expenses, her new year gift roll of 1557, and the Calendars of Patent Rolls to identify interactions between Mary and the other women. If we had these records for longer periods, a different result might emerge.

¹⁸⁰ Ruth Ahnert and Sebastian E. Ahnert, "Metadata, Surveillance and the Tudor State," *History Workshop Journal* 87 (Spring 2019): 27.

others, measured by the number of links (edges) they have, and, crucially, the quality of those edges; links to powerful nodes are more valuable than links to less powerful nodes. Generally, in network analysis, edges represent letters, but there are only four known extant letters from Mary to any of these women (all to Anne) and one reference to a letter to Jane, so this analysis uses gifts and grants of land or office.

The most important measures of influence are degree and centrality. Degree is the number of links a node has, while weighted degree records the frequency of interaction between nodes—a single gift exchange having a weight of one.

The importance of the women in Mary’s network from 1536 to 1558 has been analysed in diagrams and tables. As the figures cannot be reproduced in sufficient detail within the text, they are available online via the links.¹⁸¹ The importance of family in the Tudor period for establishing influence cannot be overlooked, but it can be overemphasised – people did not always have the same political or religious viewpoint as spouses, children, siblings, or parents. For this reason, analysis below shows statistics including and excluding family links. [Figure 1](#) shows Mary’s network from 1536 to 1558, including family ties, while [Figure 2](#) excludes family links.

Within a network, nodes can be organised into communities, based on their level of interconnectedness, a measure known as modularity. A higher modularity implies a lower number of interactions are required to be in the same community. In [Figure 3](#), using a modularity of 1 all the women are in the same community (dark blue nodes), which centres on Mary. It is not until the modularity is reduced to 0.25 (the number of interactions required is increased by a factor of 4) that the women break out into different communities, as in [Figure 4](#). Community, however, is strongly influenced by family, as can be seen in [Figure 5](#) and [Figure 6](#), which repeat the community analysis excluding family ties. With modularity at 1, the picture is the same, but with modularity at 0.25, Anne and Jane remain in the same community.

The next statistics look at the women’s connectedness within the network, considering both degree and centrality. Anne has the highest level both of degree and weighted degree, Jane comes second in absolute degree, and Katherine second in weighted degree. Centrality measures how embedded a node is within the social group. It has three

¹⁸¹ Zoom to see names. Arrows denote the direction of an interaction, with the thickness denoting the frequency. In Figures 1 and 2, each woman has an individual node colour: Mary is red; Anne is yellow; Jane is turquoise; Katherine is orange. Other women are green and men are blue. In Figures 2, 3, and 4, nodes are grouped into communities by colour. In Figures 1, 3, and 4, grey edges (lines) represent awards, while green edges signify family ties.

sub-types—closeness, betweenness, and eigenvector. Closeness calculates the average distance between any two nodes in the network. For example, if Mary sent a gift to Anne, who has an edge to Edward, there is a distance of two between Mary and Edward. In this analysis, Jane has the highest closeness rank if family is included, but Katherine’s position is higher if family is excluded, reflecting Jane’s prolific family connections while suggesting that Katherine had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, who might all use her to gain access to other nodes. Jane’s low closeness excluding family indicates that she had fewer connections outside her family than Anne or Katherine.

Betweenness measures how frequently a node is passed on the shortest route between any two nodes. Katherine has the highest rank of betweenness, meaning that she would be a good conduit for other nodes to reach nodes with whom they had no direct link.

High eigenvector score indicates that the node may not be powerful itself (that is, it has a low degree, and perhaps a low betweenness score) but it is close to a powerful node, which it may be able to influence. Anne is of higher eigenvector rank than Jane and significantly higher than Katherine, if family is included, reflecting stronger links to powerful nodes, such as her husband, Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset. If family is excluded, the women rank equally.

Tables 1 and 2 below summarise these relative positions (not actual scores) of the three women within the network.

	Degree rank	Weighted Degree rank	Closeness rank	Betweenness rank	Eigenvector rank
Anne	12	8	108	47	12
Jane	16	9	101	77	19
Katherine	13	14	115	10	52

Table 1: Rankings, including family

	Degree rank	Weighted Degree rank	Closeness rank	Betweenness rank	Eigenvector rank
Anne	15	8	36	21	51
Jane	29	11	58	23	51
Katherine	11	19	31	19	51

Table 2: Rankings, excluding family

As aforementioned, Jane urged Lady Paget to ask Lady Exeter and Mrs Clarencieux to intercede for her. We can suppose that Jane had her finger on the pulse of politics and would have chosen those people carefully. She must have believed that Lady Paget would be well-disposed towards herself, that Lady Paget would be able to contact Lady Exeter and Mrs Clarencieux, and that Mary would listen to petitions from the latter two.

As can be seen in Table 3 below, Jane was right to anticipate that Lady Paget’s influence would be beneficial. She ranked only two places below Jane herself in eigenvector rank. We can see, however, that Susan Clarencieux has a rather lower rank, even though there is testimony that she was close to Mary. This reflects that Mrs. Clarencieux was close primarily to her mistress, with only weak links to other influential nodes. On the tabulated rankings, Lady Exeter seems an unlikely candidate for Jane’s pleas but the rumour that Mary would marry Lady Exeter’s son circulated almost as soon as Mary had been proclaimed queen. In that case Lady Exeter’s eigenvector rank would have increased and Jane might have supposed Mary would immediately favour her potential mother-in-law’s requests.

Row No.		Eigenvector rank inc. family	Eigenvector rank exc. Family
1	Lady Paget	21	151
2	Susan Clarencieux	45	76
3	Lady Exeter	99	76
4	Nicholas Wotton	2	4
5	Dr. Wendye	3	3
6	William Honning	4	2
7	Jane Seymour	5	51
8	Anne Sapcote, Countess of Bedford	17	51

Table 3: Other individuals’ rankings

Rows 4–7 in Table 3 show the individuals with the highest eigenvector score, whom Jane might have considered approaching. The only woman in the group (it being more likely that Jane would approach another woman) is Jane Seymour, Anne’s daughter. Anne and Jane’s friendship had been damaged by the ousting of Anne’s husband from power by Jane’s, so an approach to Jane Seymour would most likely be fruitless. Reverting to Figure 1, and

searching for Wotton, Wendye, and Honing, we can see that none of them has any links directly to Jane, so she would have had no easy route to approaching them. The next woman who might feasibly have been approached was Anne Sapcote, Countess of Bedford. Further analysis would be needed to understand why this avenue was not attempted.

Conclusion

While network analysis cannot give any reason for Anne and Jane's incorporation into Mary's court greater than their willingness to conform to Catholicism, it does highlight a factor which may have made them open to adopting a more pragmatic approach than Katherine's family. When family links are incorporated, Anne and Jane had significantly higher eigenvector scores than Katherine and both had a duty to promote family interests. The analysis shows an enduring friendship between both Mary and Anne, and Mary and Anne's daughter, Jane. It also shows a deeper connection with Jane Guildford than has hitherto been noticed, Mary's sympathy with Jane's maternal feelings being obvious in the grant cited above. Jane's unceasing efforts on behalf of her children, including selection of King Philip as godfather to her grandson, suggest that family was more important to her than public affirmation of her faith.

Katherine's priorities were different. Her sons by Suffolk had died prior to Mary's accession and her daughter with Bertie was an infant. With no sibling network, a limited maternal network, and a poor relationship with her father's family, Katherine had no family to promote and her low eigenvector score reflects her limited influence in Mary's network. Had Katherine chosen to stay at Mary's court, conforming publicly, she may not have found it necessary to go into exile, but any lapses would have left her dangerously exposed.

Dynastic Agency and the Art of *Amicitia Civile*

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In her roles as duchess of York, queen consort, and exiled queen, Mary Beatrice of Modena exerted agency in political circles through her written correspondence, which established and maintained alliances and nurtured transnational communication networks. Letter writing was a common form of exerting influence as evidenced by the vast literature on the subject.¹⁸² Mary Beatrice employed this tool prolifically during her time as duchess of York and queen of England, Scotland, and Ireland to advance the dynastic goals of her natal and married families.¹⁸³ Through her correspondence, which incorporates the language of *amicitia civile*, or civil friendship, Mary Beatrice effectively persuaded men, including cardinals, noblemen, and the king of France, to influence Pope Innocent XI and help her obtain a cardinal's hat for her uncle, Prince Rinaldo d'Este, in 1686. These efforts present an attempt at cross-confessionalism as defined in the introduction of this cluster as they demonstrate a clear agenda to support the re-establishment of a Catholic monarchy in England under James VII & II and Mary Beatrice that would then pave the way for toleration for English Catholics despite the Protestant political majority.

Mary Beatrice's 1686 success in securing the cardinalate for Prince Rinaldo d'Este met dynastic goals for both her natal and married families. The House of Este had been without a direct familial link to the papal court for fourteen years and the newly appointed Cardinal d'Este allowed for a renewed family advocate at the centre of European Catholic power. Additionally, by advocating for her uncle's appointment, Mary Beatrice was able to assist her husband James in restoring a link to the papacy on behalf of English Catholics, which aspired to provide the confessional support necessary to re-establish a Catholic monarchy in England, Ireland, and Scotland when he acceded to the throne after his brother Charles II. This monarchy, supported by continental Catholic political powers, could then advocate for improved Catholic toleration for James and Mary Beatrice's subjects.

¹⁸² For example, James Daybell, *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1450-1700* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2001); Julie D. Campbell and Anne R. Larsen, ed., *Early Modern Women and Transnational Communities of Letters* (London: Routledge, 2016); Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb, ed., *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400-1700: Form and Persuasion* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005).

¹⁸³ Elisabeth Marieke Geevers and Mirella Marini, *Dynastic Identity in Early Modern Europe: Rulers, Aristocrats and the Formation of Identities* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015).

The research included in this article incorporates twenty letters penned by Mary Beatrice of Modena found in *State Papers Online* and Martin Haile’s *Mary of Modena: Her Life and Letters*, compiled in 1905.¹⁸⁴ The work presented here builds upon studies that consider women’s history through the analytical lens of agency.¹⁸⁵ Using this method, women are considered “instrumental agents of those forms of power that were potentially seen to determine them.”¹⁸⁶ This study incorporates the analytical concept of female agency in queenship to uncover the level of political engagement and influence wielded by queens consort through the writing of letters and the establishment of correspondence networks. It offers a view of royal power that sees queens and male political figures working together for the perceived benefits of the monarchy, royal dynastic traditions, and the realm itself in a cross-confessional context.

Letters and Female Agency

Amicitia Civile, or civil friendship, is a term that dates back to Aristotle and Cicero. These authors discuss a form of friendship that “comprises individuals who, for the sake of self-preservation and social, financial, or political advantage, form particular alliances with other individuals in their social unit.”¹⁸⁷ To Aristotle, utility in friendship was an essential component because “the true friend needs to demonstrate his usefulness in order to be happy.”¹⁸⁸ Cicero expanded upon this point by stating that *amici perfecti* (perfect friends) “must do everything in their power to benefit his associates—that is, to increase their virtue, wisdom, and fortune and to improve their status.”¹⁸⁹ According to these ancient philosophers, then, the language of friendship invokes a sense of duty among two or more individuals. By utilising this language, Mary Beatrice called upon friendship’s ideals as one of usefulness toward establishing a strong Catholic leadership in England and supporting her husband’s efforts toward Catholic toleration throughout their realms.

Penelope Anderson explains that, although there was “explicit and widespread exclusion of women from most theoretical articulations of friendship,” the concept of

¹⁸⁴ Martin Haile, *Queen Mary of Modena: Her Life and Letters* (London, New York: J.M. Dent & Co., 1905).

¹⁸⁵ Catherine Lee and Anne Logan, “Women’s Agency, Activism and Organisation,” *Women’s History Review* 28, no. 6 (2019), 831–834.

¹⁸⁶ Amanda Anderson, “The Temptations of Aggrandized Agency: Feminist Histories and the Horizon of Modernity,” *Victorian Studies* 43, no. 1 (2000): 43–65.

¹⁸⁷ Reginald Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship: The Idealization of Friendship in Medieval and Early Renaissance Literature* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 3–4.

¹⁸⁸ Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, 19.

¹⁸⁹ Hyatte, *The Arts of Friendship*, 31.

amicitia attracted early modern women writers because it provided a possible entry into the public sphere not tied to her physicality.¹⁹⁰ The language of friendship, Anderson explains, can "be engaged in forming political community, political both in its imagination of alternative forms of governance and in its effective construction of a coterie that provides material aid in a range of matters of political life."¹⁹¹ Mary Beatrice used her letters to establish a political network that served to create links to powerful individuals who could support her in efforts to make England more tolerant toward its Catholic monarchs and subjects.

Letter writing was a frequently used method to exert influence over others, including meeting dynastic goals. Women used letters to negotiate both public and private affairs as disparate as estate management, political negotiation, patronage, and theological discourse.¹⁹² According to Margaret Ezell, women writers used letters as tools to establish "correspondence networks."¹⁹³ Royals, too, could employ these networks in pursuit of dynastic goals. For example, Queen of France Catherine de Medici's (1519–1589) use of letters "contribute[d] to her strategy of invoking affective ties as part of an epistolary tradition that bound friends and enemies into a kinship of advisors who protected the collective interests of the realm of France" and "support[ed] the consolidation of dynastic prerogative both within the confines of the royal court and throughout the provinces."¹⁹⁴ Similarly, Mary Beatrice employed letter writing and correspondence networks to further her natal and marital dynastic goals, persuading a network of cardinals, ambassadors, the Pope, and King Louis XIV to champion her goal of securing a cardinal's hat for her uncle. Mary Beatrice's relationships with her male relatives strengthened the Estes' regional power. Her husband shared in her vision to increase the prominence of the Este at the Papal court because it helped his dynasty to gain a better relationship with the Pope as well, which in turn supported his efforts toward tolerance between Catholics and Protestants in England. Shortly after becoming king in 1685, James VII & II appointed Roger Palmer, Earl of Castlemaine, as papal envoy to Rome for this purpose. Palmer was assigned to advocate for

¹⁹⁰ Penelope Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows: Women's Friendship and the Politics of Betrayal in England, 1640–1705* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 12.

¹⁹¹ Anderson, *Friendship's Shadows*, 73.

¹⁹² Daybell, *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing*.

¹⁹³ Margaret Ezell, *The Patriarch's Wife: Literary Evidence and the History of the Family* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987).

¹⁹⁴ Elizabeth McCartney, "In the Queen's Words: Perceptions of Regency Government Gleaned from the Correspondence of Catherine de Medicis," in *Women's Letters Across Europe, 1400–1700: Form and Persuasion*, ed. Jane Couchman and Ann Crabb (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2005), 207–222, 208–209.

the cardinalate appointment of both Rinaldo d'Este and James' confessor, Father Edward Petre, a Jesuit priest. There is no record of Mary Beatrice lending the influence of her correspondence network to additionally advocate for Petre, which could be one reason why that appointment did not succeed. Castlemaine was "a man of great religious enthusiasm, little common sense, and no diplomatic experience," according to James VII & II's biographer John Miller, and as such offended the Pope rather than repaired broken ties between the new Catholic king and the Papal Court. This political faux pas required Mary Beatrice to rely even more strongly on her tireless correspondence campaign with influential Catholics in her network.¹⁹⁵

While some of Mary Beatrice's letters appear as personal expressions of friendship, they are public letters written to establish political correspondence networks and represent an avenue of political influence for women that fit within socially acceptable gender norms. Mary Beatrice frequently used friendship language in her letters to gain influence and frame requests, even when the recipient represented a differing confessional agenda. Catherine de Medici also employed this tactic. In Catherine's correspondence, Elizabeth McCartney explains, "the conventions of friendship are inseparable from the conventions of power." The use of the epistolary tradition of *amicitia civile*, employed by Catherine and, this article posits, Mary Beatrice, "support[ed] the public discourse of power" in their letters.¹⁹⁶ In her letters to her Protestant son-in-law Prince William of Orange, Mary Beatrice's tone of effusive friendship demonstrates a technique which women and queens often employed, creating correspondence networks regardless of potentially differing political agendas between author and recipient.¹⁹⁷ By placing herself at the network's centre through bonds of friendship or kinship, Mary Beatrice was better able to exert her cross-confessional agenda to strengthen the Estes' power in the papal court. A significant natal dynastic presence near the papacy would help to pave the way toward her marital dynastic goal of re-establishing a Catholic monarchy in England. Through Mary Beatrice, a new channel of communication between the English monarchy and the papacy opened, one that could advocate for the benefit of both the Este and Stuart dynasties.

¹⁹⁵ John Miller, *James II* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), 152–153.

¹⁹⁶ McCartney, "In the Queen's Words: Perceptions of Regency Government Gleaned from the Correspondence of Catherine de Medicis," 208–209.

¹⁹⁷ "The Queen to the Prince of Orange, 2 August 1687," Records Assembled by the State Paper Office, The National Archives. MS SP 8/4, fol. 90; "The Queen to the Prince of Orange, 21 August 1687," Records Assembled by the State Paper Office, TNA. MS SP 8/4, fol. 94; "The Queen to the Prince of Orange, 24 July 1688," Records Assembled by the State Paper Office, TNA. SP 8/4, fol. 148.

According to Martin Haile, Mary Beatrice began her quest to seek a cardinal's hat for her uncle Prince Rinaldo almost as soon as she married James, then duke of York. His research points to 1675 as the beginning of her letter-writing campaign, when she embarked on "a purpose she pursued for years with untiring assiduity."¹⁹⁸ A year later, in 1676, James met the requirements of his dispensation from Pope Clement X to marry his Catholic duchess by formal agreement that Mary Beatrice would be free to practise her Catholic faith in England and that James stop attending Anglican church services and make his Catholicism more overt.¹⁹⁹ Mary Beatrice's campaign for her uncle's appointment was again mentioned in 1679 when visiting Brussels due to the events of the Popish Plot taking place in England, which generated renewed anti-Catholic resentment throughout England, prompting Charles II to send his brother and sister-in-law away from court for their own protection. Establishing political and confessional ties to the papacy therefore became a pressing matter in the face of such political upheaval, as a dynastic link to the papal court could provide the endorsement needed to encourage continental European Catholic states to support James's and Mary Beatrice's future accession to the English throne. Mary Beatrice wrote to Pope Innocent XI that she was making "fresh instances" on behalf of her uncle's appointment to the College of Cardinals, while also reminding the Pope of her continuing efforts to raise Catholicism in England. "On every occasion that presents itself," she stressed, "I shall contribute as far as I can to the propagation of the holy Catholic faith in England."²⁰⁰ To Mary Beatrice, the appointment of her uncle and her efforts to support the Catholic faithful in her married realm were inextricably linked.

This letter displays the employment of persuasion techniques as well as explicitly stating Mary Beatrice's goal of providing an opportunity for Catholicism to thrive within Protestant England. Her plea recognised her natal family's dynastic goals with the passage, "as for many years past there has always been a member of the house of Este in the Sacred College, it would be the greatest satisfaction to me to have my uncle at the Court of Rome." The last cardinal d'Este had died in 1672, leaving a gap that needed to be filled as quickly as possible in the eyes of the House of Este in order to reestablish needed influence and status on the European political and ecclesiastical stage. Mary Beatrice also noted her dynastic aspirations for her marital family in the letter, making it clear that she, like her husband James, aimed to serve as an advocate for English Catholics in order to deliver them from their

¹⁹⁸ Haile, *Queen Mary of Modena: Her Life and Letters*, 53–54.

¹⁹⁹ Miller, *James II*, 73.

²⁰⁰ Haile, *Queen Mary of Modena: Her Life and Letters*, 82.

current oppression due to anti-Catholic policies, which included exclusion from holding officer appointments in the military and the inability to inherit property.

Mary Beatrice's continued use of correspondence networks to put more pressure on the Pope to grant her request to appoint her uncle is displayed in letters from 1686. On 5 February, she wrote to Cardinal Alderano Cibo (1613–1700), who was at that time Cardinal Secretary of State under Pope Innocent XI.²⁰¹ In this letter, Mary Beatrice again utilised *amicitia civile* with the cardinal to secure his support for her cause.²⁰² Though only related through an illegitimate line, she referred to him as a cousin to play upon a sense of connectedness that, as children of prominent Italian ducal families, they shared in terms of regionality and upbringing.²⁰³ Further, Mary Beatrice filled the first sentence of the letter with expressive friendship language for what the cardinal had done for her family and hoped he would continue to do for her, stating that "since in the individual worth and birth unite together so advantageously, I am persuaded that you have entered into the interests as much by reason as by affection." Mary Beatrice further explains that she has instructed the James-appointed English papal envoy the earl of Castlemaine "to rely on your assistance and your enlightenment in the handling of this affair," which is further evidence of *amicitia civile*, implying a level of friendly intimacy with the cardinal which could further encourage his willingness to ally with her and continue strengthening political and confessional ties between the Estes, Stuarts, and the Papacy.

A second letter also emphasises Mary Beatrice's use of *amicitia civile* in her letter-writing campaign, addressed to Paluzzo Paluzzi Altieri degli Albertoni (1623–1698), Camerlengo of the Holy Roman Church during Innocent XI's papacy in charge of administrating Papal property and revenues. Upon hearing of his favourable attitude toward her quest for her uncle's promotion, she wrote

²⁰¹ "Queen Mary of Modena to Cardinal Cibo, Whitehall, 5 February 1686," Stuart Papers, Royal Archives. MS RA SP/M/15, fol. 51–53.

²⁰² "Modena to Cibo, 5 February 1686."

²⁰³ Comune di Ferrara, "Chi è Marfisa D'Este?," Musei Civici di Arte Antica di Ferrara, accessed 16 March 2021, <http://www.artecultura.fe.it/index.phtml?id=383>. Cibo's grandmother, Marfisa d'Este (1554–1608), was an illegitimate daughter of Francesco d'Este (1516–1578), Mary's ancestor, made legitimate by Pope Gregory XIII in the late sixteenth century.

that is why I feel obliged, especially with regard to your rejoicing over the promotion of my Uncle Prince Rinaldo to the cardinalate, to testify to you the gratitude that I have on your part for the joy that this promotion gives me.²⁰⁴

As civil friendship as a principle is meant to be reciprocated as it strengthens relations between the two parties involved, she repays the promise of mutually beneficial friendship with one of her own, begging him

to believe that I will always reciprocate with great affection to all these marks of your friendship and I will take advantage with pleasure of the occasions when I will be able to make appear to the light the high esteem that I will keep inviolably of your merit.²⁰⁵

Mary Beatrice's decade-long campaign was rewarded when Pope Innocent IX named Rinaldo d'Este to the College of Cardinals on 2 September 1686. Her mission finally accomplished, she proceeded to write thank you notes to all the personages who lent their influence to help her cause. As in the letter to Cardinal Cibo, the language used in this letter is effusive and emphasises useful friendship. Mary Beatrice refers to "the marks of [the cardinal's] friendship" in using his power to help her, which allowed him to demonstrate his usefulness to her as a friend. This demonstration of usefulness is the very element that Aristotle argued was necessary for true happiness. Mary Beatrice's extensive display of gratitude was not only thanks for a job well done but also strengthened the relationship and cemented the cardinal's continued role in her political network. In so doing, Mary Beatrice laid the foundation for continued *amicitia civile* that each member may find useful in the future in meeting personal, dynastic, or political goals. Mary Beatrice did utilise this friendship again in 1694, requesting that he take her chaplain, Father Francis Fenwick, under his protection while in Rome.²⁰⁶ That this request came after Mary Beatrice and James' exile to France underscores her continued efforts to assist her fellow confessional exiles despite the loss of resources as official queen of England following the Revolution of 1688-1689.

Mary Beatrice wrote many letters of thanks in 1686 and 1687, which display the sheer breadth of correspondents in her network. Her letter to Louis XIV in May 1687 thanks him in particular for using his influence in securing the appointment. She wrote, "no matter how

²⁰⁴ "Queen Mary of Modena to Cardinal Altieri, Whitehall, 16 September 1686," Stuart Papers, RA. MS RA SP/M/15, fol. 69.

²⁰⁵ "Modena to Altieri, 16 September 1686."

²⁰⁶ "Queen Mary of Modena to Cardinal Altieri, St. Germaine en Laye, 25 August 1694," Stuart Papers, RA. MS RA SP/M/15, fol. 149.

great my joy over the Cardinalate conferred on my Uncle Prince Rinaldo d'Este, I must always confess that it is greatly increased by the part you have taken in my regard."²⁰⁷ There are at least twenty surviving letters from Mary Beatrice to various personages, including cardinals, nobles, and kings, many of which display similar sentiments of thanks and promises of future advantageous friendship.

This collection of letters represents Mary Beatrice's decade-long campaign to increase the prominence of the Este family in Rome and aid James VII & II's goals of establishing a new Catholic monarchy in England through dynastic connections. A queen consort's actions in building and nurturing a confessional correspondence network are significant because they demonstrate the important interplay between confessional and political agendas and the avenues that women could pursue to display agency in working toward both. Correspondence networks were an effective tool, one which Mary Beatrice used even more heavily during her exile. Understanding how queens consort exercised and manipulated agency and power is essential to uncovering their fundamental roles in early modern European society. Mary Beatrice's story contributes to this understanding, which allows for a view of royal power that encompasses both king and queen consort. Monarchy was a partnership that crossed gendered binaries and consorts worked diligently to support the political priorities of both their natal and married houses. Providing a glimpse of the methods that consorts utilised to achieve such goals, especially when they crossed confessional lines drawn by powerful political and religious figures, works toward a more complete image of how royal power was wielded, shaped, and exercised in early modern Europe.

²⁰⁷ "Queen Mary of Modena to Louis XIV, May 1687," Stuart Papers, RA. MS RA SP/M/15, fol. 95.

Reginae Utopiae: Anne Boleyn, Representation, and Cross-Confessional Identities

Lily Feinstein

INDEPENDENT SCHOLAR

Published two years after her execution, despite a campaign to suppress her memory, Étienne Dolet’s *Reginae Utopiae* honours Anne Boleyn (1501?–1536).²⁰⁸ Dolet, a printer and scholar, described the late queen as a woman falsely accused of adultery and executed by a tyrant.²⁰⁹ Despite having never met Anne Boleyn, Dolet was a contemporary of the French poet Nicholas Bourbon, who had fled France in 1534 after a stint in prison on the grounds of attacking the Church and remained at the English court under the protection of Anne Boleyn until 1536.²¹⁰ Bourbon later returned to France, settling in Lyon, where he would take part in the same reformist circles as Dolet.²¹¹ Rarely spoken about in the years following her execution, *Reginae Utopiae* perhaps best captured the nature of discussions that emerged in the wake of Anne Boleyn’s execution.

As a direct result of Henry VIII’s efforts, a code of silence emerged around her memory as the “[p]eople who had known her said nothing, while the king, who knew most, grew old, obese, and bad-tempered.”²¹² Despite Henry’s best efforts, Anne Boleyn seems to have never truly died. Instead, her body and life have become a battleground for varying ideologies—religious, political, and social. To Catholics writing in her lifetime and after she was the scandal of Christendom, Athaliah reincarnated.²¹³ To Protestant writers, she was a martyr of the early Reformation.²¹⁴ While this article will discuss Anne Boleyn and religion, it does not seek to settle the question of her faith as doing so would be impossible. Nor is this

²⁰⁸ Thank you to Johanna Strong and Amy Saunders for their continued help, support, and for this opportunity. This article is dedicated to Dara, Lee, and Henry Galtman, as well as Sophie, Molly, and Asher Feinstein.

²⁰⁹ Georges Adrien Crapelet, *Lettres de Henri VIII à Anne Boleyn*, (Paris: Impr. de Crapelet, 1835), xiv.

²¹⁰ Eric Ives, “A Frenchman at the Court of Anne Boleyn,” *History Today* 48, no. 8 (1998)

²¹¹ Ives, “A Frenchman at the Court of Anne Boleyn.”

²¹² Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2009), 365.

²¹³ In the Hebrew Bible, Athaliah was queen consort and later queen regnant of Judah. After her son’s death, she usurped the throne and killed all remaining members of the House of Judah with the exception of Joash, who would go on to overthrow her. The figure of Athaliah, much like Jezebel, was commonly invoked cross-confessionally when polemics sought to malign women, particularly queens.

²¹⁴ John Aylmer, *An Harborovve for Faithfull and Trevve Subiectes*. (Strasborowe/London: John Day, 1559); John Bridges, *The Supremacie of Christian Princes* (London: Henrie Bynneman, 1573); William Latymer, *Chronickille of Anne Bulleyne*, ed. Maria Dowling (London: Royal Historical Society, 1990).

article a comprehensive review of sixteenth-century Protestant and Catholic thought or historiographical literature. Instead, it will examine two polemical accounts written in the sixteenth century: Nicholas Sanders’ (1530–1581) *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani* or *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* and John Foxe’s (1516–1587) *Acts and Monuments*. The impact of these two works continues to reverberate cross-confessionally into the twenty-first century. Despite the modern world’s increasing secularity, the Protestant-Catholic dichotomy continues to haunt Anne Boleyn. Combining queenship, religious, and historical study, this article will examine how Anne Boleyn has come to personify many cross-confessional identities, both Catholic and Protestant.

In the twentieth century, historians such as E.W. Ives and Maria Dowling argued that Anne Boleyn was a reformist evangelical. Historian G.W. Bernard challenged this view, arguing that Anne was a typical sixteenth-century Catholic who dabbled in humanism. Work about Anne Boleyn in the twenty-first century can be found in academic and non-academic spaces, with many of these works combining interdisciplinary practices such as history, queenship, and media studies. Scholars such as Susan Bordo and Stephanie Russo are particularly pertinent to this article, as are the works of Owen Emmerson and Kate McCaffrey, whose exhibitions and scholarly works reflect twenty-first-century discourses about Anne Boleyn and Tudor queenship.

Anne Boleyn and her rise and fall have been the subject of numerous television and film adaptations. In the twentieth century, she was famously played by Merle Oberon in Alexander Korda’s *The Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933) and Genevieve Bujold in *Anne of the Thousand Days* (1969). In the twenty-first century, she has been played by Natalie Portman in *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008), Claire Foy in *Wolf Hall* (2015), Natalie Dormer in Showtime’s *The Tudors* (2007–2010), and Jodie Turner-Smith in *Anne Boleyn* (2021).

“She was always a Lutheran”

Written in response to Protestant histories of the English Reformation, Nicholas Sanders’ *De Origine ac Progressu Schismatis Anglicani* or *The Rise and Growth of the Anglican Schism* (hereafter *Schismatis Anglicani*) was first published in 1585. Having died in Ireland in 1581, the latter parts of *Schismatis Anglicani* were completed by Edward Rishton. Rishton, a priest and a fellow English Catholic, sought to complete, edit, and add to Sanders’ original manuscript. Rishton was particularly interested in correcting and adding to Sanders’ section on the reign of Elizabeth I. Sanders and Rishton were part of a larger movement among Catholic writers who sought to respond to popular Protestant histories of the Reformation. Although there were

earlier attempts at crafting a cohesive response to these histories, they remained few and far between. Simultaneously, as anti-Catholic sentiment and Protestant monarchs increasingly became the norm in England, Catholic writing was exiled to the Continent or done in secret. As such, Catholic responses to Protestant histories were relegated to more personal forms of dissemination, such as private letters or unpublished manuscripts. This fact rendered them reachable only to a small, primarily aristocratic, Catholic audience.²¹⁵ Sanders' work was distinct as it was the first to be accessible to a non-aristocratic audience. Using rhetoric from Catholic sources such as Reginald Pole (1500–1558) and Nicholas Harpsfield (1519–1575), *Schismatis Anglicani's* Anne reflects both the historical and polemical.

Having faded into the margins during the reigns of Edward VI (1537–1553) and Mary I (1516–1558), the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 brought Anne Boleyn's story back into the limelight. Following England's brief return to Catholicism during the reign of Mary I, the passage of the Act of Supremacy in 1558 and the Elizabethan religious settlement in 1559 made England a firmly Protestant country again. Although the idea of excommunicating Elizabeth had been threatened by the Pope since 1558, Rome had held off doing so for various political reasons.²¹⁶ It was not until February of 1570 that Pope Pius V officially excommunicated the queen, releasing Elizabeth's Catholic subjects "from any loyalty they owed to her, and ordered them not to obey her laws or commandments."²¹⁷ This Papal Bull, continued threats from Catholic powers abroad, and the problem presented by Mary, Queen of Scots, made the Elizabethan state significantly less tolerant of Catholics. Indeed, by Elizabeth's death in 1603, anti-Catholicism had gone from the "private obsession of religious extremists[...]" to being a central tenet of England's national ideology.²¹⁸ Anne and her memory played an important role in the creation of this ideology.

An already controversial figure, it is unsurprising that Sanders would use the memory of Anne Boleyn in his polemical account of the Reformation. As Elizabeth's mother, her memory was vital to Sanders' argument. He saw Anne as a way to attack the current queen's legitimacy and connect Elizabeth's heresy to her mother's. *Schismatis Anglicani* saw Elizabeth

²¹⁵ Nicholas Harpsfield and Nicholas Pocock, *A treatise on the pretended divorce between Henry VIII and Catharine of Aragon: Now first printed from a collation of four manuscripts* (Westminster: Caden society, 1878); Reginald Pole, *Pole's Defense of the Unity of the Church*, (Westminster, Maryland: Newman Press, 1965).

²¹⁶ Carol Levin, "Elizabeth I (1533–1603)," in *Tudor England: An Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 2001), 223–26; Gerald Bray, "Regnans in Excelsis," in *Tudor England: An Encyclopedia*, 595–596.

²¹⁷ Aislinn Muller, *The Excommunication of Elizabeth I: Faith, Politics, and Resistance in Post-Reformation England, 1570–1603* (Leiden: Brill, 2020), 1.

²¹⁸ Carol Z. Wiener, "The Beleaguered Isle. A Study of Elizabethan and Early Jacobean Anti-Catholicism." *Past & Present* 51 (1971): 27–62, doi.org/10.1093/past/51.1.27.

as the embodiment of heresy itself and sought to use Anne’s sexuality as the locus from which this heresy stemmed. The female body as a conduit for heresy was a notion shared across the confessional spectrum. Both early modern Catholics and Protestants saw women as inherently more susceptible to heretical ideas than men.²¹⁹ This spoke to more significant, cross-confessional fears surrounding women, religion, and sexuality. To Sanders, Anne Boleyn was the manifestation of this as it was “Henry’s violation of the sacrament of marriage and his subjection to his second wife that led to the disorderly spectacle of rebellious women marrying and ruling priests.”²²⁰

Elizabeth and her ministers understood the danger *Schismatis Anglicani* posed to Elizabeth’s reign. Consequently, they sought to mitigate the book’s impact by suppressing its dissemination in her realms and abroad.²²¹ Despite these efforts, Christopher Highley notes that *Schismatis Anglicani* would become “the basis of every [subsequent] Roman Catholic history.”²²² By 1628, it had been published in at least seven languages and its impact was felt from France to Poland. Its continued influence on representations of Anne Boleyn remains far-reaching into the twenty-first century, with examples ranging from Philippa Gregory’s *The Other Boleyn Girl* to Hilary Mantel’s *Wolf Hall*.²²³

“The Most Noble and Worthy Ladye”

One of the most important books of the English Reformation, John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* or *Book of Martyrs*, a Protestant martyrology focused on England and Scotland, was first published in 1563. It doubled both as a church history and a vehicle to tell of the martyrdom of countless figures under the Catholic Church. The 1563 publication was the first of four editions published during Foxe’s lifetime and reflected the religious zeal sweeping Elizabethan religion towards a return to Protestant doctrine and theology through the Elizabethan religious settlement.²²⁴ As a new Church looking to integrate into England’s

²¹⁹ Christopher Highley, “A Pestilent and Seditious Book’: Nicholas Sander’s *Schismatis Anglicani* and Catholic Histories of the Reformation,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, no. 1–2 (2005): 151–71, doi.org/10.1525/hlq.2005.68.1-2.151.

²²⁰ Highley, “A Pestilent and Seditious Book,” 165.

²²¹ Arnold Oskar Meyer, *England and the Catholic Church under Queen Elizabeth* (Kegan Paul & Co.: London, 1916), 367–368.

²²² Highley, “A Pestilent and Seditious Book,” 153.

²²³ See Stephanie Russo, *The Afterlife of Anne Boleyn: Representations of Anne Boleyn in Fiction and on the Screen* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2020); Susan Bordo, *The Creation of Anne Boleyn: A New Look at England’s Most Notorious Queen* (Boston, MA: Mariner Books, 2014).

²²⁴ John King, “Foxe, John (1517–1587),” in *Tudor England: An Encyclopedia* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 2001), 271–273.

national identity, Foxe saw history as an instrumental tool in this endeavour. He sought to use history as a way to “prove the identity of the Roman Catholic Church as false[...]” and affirm the legitimacy of Protestantism.²²⁵ Despite substantial criticism of the queen for not taking the reformation of the Church far enough, the government officially sanctioned the second edition of Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments* in 1570. With revolts in the north by Catholic nobility in 1569 and her excommunication by the pope, it is little surprise that the Elizabethan government supported the distribution of the *Acts and Monuments*. By 1571, the privy council ordered that *Acts and Monuments* be displayed in churches across England so that the queen’s subjects might be brought to “good opynion, understanding, and liking of the present government of thes realme.”²²⁶

Before *Acts and Monuments*, Foxe wrote *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum*. An extension of a previous martyrology that ended before the reign of Henry VIII, *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum* was the first time Foxe wrote about Anne Boleyn. In this account, Foxe noted Anne’s piety, charity, and good character, further praising her as a mother and harbinger of the Reformation.²²⁷ When Foxe published the first edition of *Acts and Monuments*, he significantly added to his previous description of Anne in *Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum*. While he omitted the paragraph praising Anne as a mother and agent of the Reformation, he expanded on details about her charity, alms to the poor, and patronage of evangelical scholars at Cambridge.²²⁸ He also included a now infamous story of Anne presenting Henry VIII with a copy of Simon Fish’s anti-clerical pamphlet, *Supplication for the Beggars*.²²⁹ Although the second, third, and fourth editions remained primarily unchanged, strikingly, the reason for Anne’s execution is never named.²³⁰ Other than Foxe noting that “she was caste into the Towre, together with her brother the lord Rochford, and others, which shortly after were executed the 19th day of Maye,” *Acts and Monuments* remained—perhaps purposefully—silent on the cause.²³¹ Anne Boleyn’s fall and execution presented a complex problem to Protestant polemics such as Foxe. Writing to advance the cause of Protestantism meant retaining favour with Elizabeth

²²⁵ Megan L. Hickerson, *Making Women Martyrs in Tudor England* (New York, NY: Springer, 2005), 18.

²²⁶ Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S Freeman, “Print, Profit and Propaganda: The Elizabethan Privy Council and the 1570 Edition of Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs,’” *The English Historical Review* 119, no. 484 (2004) 1288–1307, doi.org/10.1093/ehr/119.484.1288.

²²⁷ Thomas S. Freeman, “Research, Rumour and Propaganda: Anne Boleyn in Foxe’s ‘Book of Martyrs,’” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 4 (1995): 797–819, doi.org/10.1017/s0018246x0002046x, 799.

²²⁸ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 564–565.

²²⁹ Freeman, “Research, Rumour and Propaganda,” 805.

²³⁰ Freeman, “Research, Rumour and Propaganda,” 816.

²³¹ Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* (1563), 581.

I. To acknowledge the reasons for Anne Boleyn’s execution meant, by extension, wrestling with the question of her guilt or innocence. Answering this question entailed blaming or absolving the man who ordered her execution in the first place: Henry VIII. As he was the queen’s father, this placed Foxe in a precarious position. His solution seems to have been to ignore the problem her execution posed altogether.

As with Sanders’ work, the impact of Foxe’s representation of Anne Boleyn in *Acts and Monuments* should not be diminished. As John King notes, “[i]f a Protestant household of England were to contain no more than two books, they would have been the English Bible and some version of Foxe’s *Book of Martyrs*.”²³² Subsequent generations continued to read, re-write, and appropriate Foxe’s work.²³³ While the representation of Anne Boleyn as a Protestant martyr has become less prominent, Anne Boleyn the reformer, posited by *Acts and Monuments*, continues to echo into the twenty-first century. This is exemplified in the 2021 television mini-series *Anne Boleyn*. Featuring Jodie Turner-Smith as Anne, the series covers the events leading up to her execution in 1536. *Anne Boleyn* sought to approach Anne’s story with a feminist perspective, focusing on her emotions, relationships, and personal life during her final months.²³⁴ Thus it is unsurprising that *Anne Boleyn* would make a concerted effort to explore Anne the Reformer. In a scene that would make Foxe proud, Turner-Smith is presented with an English Bible by her brother George. She turns to him, smiles, and exclaims “[n]ow everyone can read the word of God in their own tongue.”²³⁵

Conclusion: “The Height of Royal Drama”

In 2022, *Turner Classic Movies* (TCM) dedicated Wednesdays in November to royals on film. One of the films chosen for this retrospective was *Anne of the Thousand Days*. Produced by Hal B. Wallis and released in 1969, the film starred Genevieve Bujold as Anne Boleyn and Richard Burton as Henry VIII. Before the film, TCM host Ben Mankiewicz recounted how, following a Royal Command Film Performance of *Anne of the Thousand Days* for Queen Elizabeth II, she shook Hal B. Wallis’s hand and said, “Mr. Wallis, we’re learning about English history from

²³² John King, *Tudor England: An Encyclopedia*, 272–273.

²³³ David Loades, “Review of *John Foxe and the English Reformation* by Carole Levin,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 30, no. 3 (1998): 483–484, doi.org/10.2307/4053302.

²³⁴ Radio Times Staff, “Anne Boleyn Release Date: Cast, Trailer for Channel 5 Drama Starring Jodie Turner-Smith,” *Radio Times*, July 21, 2022, <https://www.radiotimes.com/tv/drama/anne-boleyn-release-date/>

²³⁵ *Anne Boleyn*, season one, episode one, “Episode One,” directed by Lynsey Miller, written by Eve Hedderwick Turner, featuring Jodie Turner-Smith, Mark Stanley, and Paapa Essiedu, aired June 1st, 2021, on Channel 5.

your films.”²³⁶ Although uttered by a different Elizabeth nearly 400 years after the publication of both *Acts and Monuments* and *Schismatis Anglicani*, this phrase unintentionally summed up what John Foxe and Nicholas Sanders sought to achieve with their respective works. They employed history not necessarily to inform people of the past but as a tool for arguing the legitimacy or illegitimacy of the Catholic or Protestant church. As Felicity Heal notes, history “has frequently functioned as legitimation for the present.”²³⁷ Anne Boleyn’s life and memory played a valuable cross-confessional role in this battle. Although the world of the twenty-first century is more secular, the Annes of *Acts and Monuments* and *Schismatis Anglicani* continue to influence her representation on screen, in novels, and on the stage. Thanks to the unintentional—or perhaps intentional—efforts of John Foxe and Nicholas Sanders, Anne Boleyn is here to stay.

²³⁶ 24fpsfan, “TCM Comments on Anne of the Thousand Days (1969),” YouTube, November 3rd, 2022, 4:19, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=piidTbeeyw4&ab_channel=24fpsfan.

²³⁷ Felicity Heal, “Appropriating History: Catholic and Protestant Polemics and the National Past,” *Huntington Library Quarterly* 68, no. 1–2 (2005): 109–32, doi.org/10.1525/hlq.2005.68.1-2.109, 110.

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