“For the face I grant I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present”

The Education of Elizabeth I, in context

Lindsey Marie Wright

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the people who contributed to the education of Elizabeth I. This includes her parents, stepmothers, Catherine of Aragon, her tutors and governess as well as how Elizabeth reacted to her education. I also explore through particular events in Elizabeth’s life how Elizabeth’s education was not just academic and learnt through the classroom but how Elizabeth was also educated in the bed chamber and other non academic settings. By learning from the events which happened both to her and around her, Elizabeth was well prepared to rule successfully for forty five years despite Elizabeth not being *educated* to rule as it was never thought that Elizabeth would rule until her sister Mary was on her death bed. I therefore explore how a combination of Elizabeth’s academic and non academic education combined to make her the most intelligent Queen to sit on the English throne.

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Master of Arts by Research in Education (MA)

School of Education

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2013

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For my Granddad Ron who loved history and inspired my love for history

RIP

Conventions and notes on spelling

In an attempt to minimise confusion when referring to individuals with the same name I will refer to the main focus of this thesis as Elizabeth or Princess Elizabeth because the majority of this thesis focuses on Elizabeth’s life before her accession to the throne in 1558. If an aspect of Elizabeth’s life post 1558 is mentioned then I will refer to her as Queen Elizabeth. When referring to Elizabeth’s older sister Mary, the only surviving child of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon I will use her title of Princess Mary or just Mary. This is in order to avoid confusion with her aunt Mary Tudor, youngest sister of Henry VIII, she will be referred to as Mary, Queen of France in reference to her short marriage to King Louis XII in 1514 or as Mary, Duchess of Suffolk which she became in 1515 upon her marriage to Charles Brandon, first Duke of Suffolk. In addition Princess Mary and Elizabeth’s cousin Mary Stuart will be referred to as Mary, Queen of Scots to avoid confusion with Princess Mary. Henry VIII’s mother and Elizabeth’s namesake will be referred to as Elizabeth of York to avoid any confusion. In addition Henry VIII’s older sister Margaret Tudor will be referred to as Queen of Scotland in reference to her marriage to King James IV of Scotland in 1503. Also Henry VIII’s grandmother also called Margaret, will be referred to as Margaret Beaufort which is the name by which she is most commonly known rather than by her position as Countess of Richmond and Derby.

Elizabeth’s governess, Katherine Ashley will be referred to by her married name of Ashley, some also spell it Astley but I will use Ashley. Katherine’s maiden name is Champernowne and as will be discussed in the chapter on Katherine there is some dispute over her parentage. Katherine married John Ashley, Princess Elizabeth’s senior gentleman attendant, a cousin of Anne Boleyn in 1545. Katherine will also be referred to as Kat in this thesis as Elizabeth would affectionately call her governess Kat.

Like Susan E. James in her biography of Kateryn Parr, The Making of a Queen (1999) I will be spelling the name of Henry’s sixth and last wife as Kateryn. Kateryn’s name may occasionally be spelt as Catherine or Katherine if this is how it appears in a quote. If I change the way Kateryn is spelt in a quote I will point to this in brackets. This is because it was the spelling which she used, as letters from her show that she always signed her name Kateryn Parr, KP. This spelling also makes her easier to distinguish from the numerous other Katherine’s and Catherine’s which will be mentioned in this thesis.

Preface

The history of education is an area which has been strangely neglected and this is also the case regarding the education of royalty. Many standard historical texts pay little if any attention to the education of monarchs or their children (Gordon and Lawton, 1999, p.xi). Education itself is a subject which was widely neglected by academics until the nineteenth century when the first professors of education in Britain were appointed at St Andrews in 1876. It was not until 1895 when the first professor of education was appointed in England at Durham University. However, there was still no clear agreement about the role of education as a subject of study in universities (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 34). Since the fourth century at least, the conduct of education within society has been a central and speculative part of European thought (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 34). However, in Durham, education has always had a huge presence and not just with the creation of the university in 1832 but goes as far back as the seventh century with the work of the Venerable Bede who lies in his tomb in Durham Cathedral. However, despite the strong educational history of Britain the subject has gone out of fashion since its peak in the 1960s and 1970s when the majority of all initial teacher training courses involved some study of the history of education (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. xii).

Combining history and education to me seems like a logical step to take after reading both subjects at undergraduate level; however combining these two subjects has only been a recent step taken by historians and is one which has been avoided by educationalists. The historical profession remained a small and tight knit community into the 1950s and numbered approximately just 400 academics (Cannadine, 1987, p. 171). The main focus was on political and institutional history particularly the government and the church with a particular emphasis on continuity rather than changes in the institutions of society (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 29). Only slowly did historians begin to diversify and look at the history of other fields. In Britain the first field beyond ‘high’ politics to establish itself with a specialist journal was economic history in 1927. Others did not follow until two decades after the war: ecclesiastical history (1950), social history (1952), medical history (1957), business history (1958), labour history (1960) and the history of science in 1962 (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, pp. 29-30). Despite this the History of Education journal was not published until 1972, yet it is still a subject which is relatively neglected by historians and educationalists and there are considerably few academics who study the two subjects together.

At the end of the twentieth century new ideas emerged and policies were designed to encourage ‘lifelong learning’ and a ‘learning society’ and suggested that education can take place in a wide range of settings throughout life and for different social groups within different kinds of formal and informal environments (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 6). However, the idea of lifelong learning is not a new one and can be traced back through to the Tudor era and even earlier. The Tudor family were incredibly well educated and their education did not stop when they were children and there is evidence that the Tudor family continued their education in one form or another until their deaths. Mary I translated religious works up until her death in 1558 and Elizabeth translated Greek and Latin works throughout her life as a way of taking a break from her monarchical duties. Constant learning seemed to almost be a hobby for Elizabeth. Elizabeth’s famous command of languages was something which she took great pride in and continued to use throughout her life. Elizabeth proved in 1597 at the age of 64 that she still had an excellent command of Latin when the Polish ambassador chastised the Queen for interfering with Poland’s shipping trade with Spain. This infuriated the Queen and she replied at once in extemporaneous Latin and this stunning rhetorical display delighted her countrymen and renewed her popularity (Green, 2000, p. 987). By being able to trace the apparently new idea of lifelong learning back to the sixteenth century shows just how much more research needs to be done into the history of education to discover just why education is the way it is today and if we can learn from the past to improve education today.

My thesis will focus on the education of Elizabeth I which despite her reputation as an intelligent woman has not been researched in an in-depth manner. This is very surprising because Elizabeth has been the subject of many biographies by many different authors since her death in 1603 up to the present day. Little is known about the education of Elizabeth in comparison to the rest of her life which is well documented. What also stands out when reading these biographies is the small number of pages dedicated to Elizabeth’s education.

The biography about Elizabeth by J. E. Neale is perhaps the most famous and highly regarded biography of the monarch, but his book only dedicates six pages to Elizabeth’s education (Neale, 1960). Starkey’s Elizabeth is perhaps the most popular modern biography on Elizabeth’s early life yet it only dedicates one chapter to Elizabeth’s education and this is only seven pages long, the other chapter entitled *Further Education* in Starkey’s book only mentions the process of Elizabeth’s education specifically on three pages (Starkey, 2000, pp. 82-84). Yet the chapter on the *Seymour affair* is twelve pages long although in the chapter on Elizabeth I will link this experience to her education (Starkey, 2000, pp, 65-77). Other works on the Tudor dynasty such as *Tudor Ideals* by Lewis Einstein fails to discuss Elizabeth’s education at all, and dismisses Elizabeth’s education claiming that it has “too often been praised” (Einstein, 1921, p. 48). Einstein’s dismissal of Elizabeth’s education and the lack of pages dedicated to Elizabeth’s education is misleading, Elizabeth’s education is a fascinating topic and is worthy of study in its own right. The paucity on the education of Elizabeth and royalty in general shows how the history of education is a subject which has been largely abandoned; yet due to the circumstances in which Elizabeth was educated and the process it shows in women’s education in sixteenth century England makes this a subject worthy of study in its own right. For a woman who was never meant to be Queen, Elizabeth’s education is interesting as it can be seen as a *better* education than that received by a girl who was Queen from a few days after her birth, Mary, Queen of Scots. Yet Mary Stuart’s intellectual accomplishments are not on a par with any of Henry VIII’s children, his niece Lady Jane Grey or ladies from noble families such as Lady Mary Sidney who was also well educated (Dunn, 2003, pp. 81-125). The education of Elizabeth is also worthy of study because since Elizabeth’s reign the education of royal women declined. The Stuart princesses were not educated on the same par as the Tudor princesses, whose language and rhetorical skills were much more advanced than those of the Stuart princesses and the education of royal women can be seen to have declined in standard since the Tudors.

However, studying Elizabeth’s education does have its difficulties. For example, there are Elizabeth’s ‘missing years’ which is what the years between the ages of three and ten are often called due to the lack of primary evidence available about this part of her life. There is not a lot of evidence about this part of her life due to her status as a bastard and Edward being the heir to the throne, however, most of her education took place during this period of her life. But despite this there are a few pieces of primary evidence. One piece which does survive, however, is a book called *The Scholemaster* which was written by Roger Ascham Elizabeth’s tutor and it outlines Elizabeth’s education under his tutorship, which took place between 1548 and 1550. Whilst this book is useful when outlining Elizabeth’s curriculum and abilities, as with all primary sources care must be taken when using them as they are subject to bias. Given that Elizabeth was Queen when *The Scholemaster* was published after Ascham’s death in 1570, it may be suggested that the book was written to flatter Elizabeth .

However, other evidence does support Ascham’s claims regarding Elizabeth’s extraordinary abilities so there is no need to doubt this primary source too much. On the other hand when looking at what other primary sources are available it is important that the authorship is always taken into account, as the author may not have gained their information from a firsthand perspective so its accuracy could be doubted. Also, when studying the sixteenth century, ambassadors’ reports are regularly used as primary evidence. Yet these must be used with caution as due to the influence of foreign policy and religion some may be unfair towards Elizabeth who was in many ways the child of the Reformation. This made the Imperial ambassador very hostile towards her, as will be explained later in the thesis. Therefore, finding a primary source which has been written objectively and not subjectively is very difficult.

Whilst secondary sources are more widely available than primary sources, they too can have their own problems. Secondary sources on Elizabeth can be considered those books and works which have been written since her death in 1603. However, society has changed immensely since 1603 and authors over time will have based their writings on different sets of assumptions than would be the case today. However, they are still worth consulting because they represent a certain time in historiography. They can represent a particular kind of approach and philosophy which we can relate to our own work (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 83). These early works are also a good place to start when researching a topic which has been largely abandoned by historians. By starting with early secondary sources the relevant primary sources can be traced and a relevant starting point can be found for a new study. Yet in spite of what we know and what we can find out there is the added problem of distinguishing the myth from reality – history as was, from history as wished for – all we can try to do is piece together the history from the evidence we have available.

Elizabeth’s later life and reign is extremely well documented in comparison to her early life. Even at an early age Elizabeth felt an overwhelming desire to project the right image to the public and to please them. This was a skill which Elizabeth perfected and used successfully throughout her life and reign. Elizabeth maintained this public image by creating a myth, the myth of Good Queen Bess, Glorianna, The Faerie Queen, this myth still exists today. Elizabeth I is one of England’s most instantly recognisable monarchs other than her own father. Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I are recognised by people all over the world and her image is used on advertisements for English heritage and tourism to attract visitors to England. In addition there have been many novels written recently set in Tudor England featuring the Tudor monarchs, Henry’s wives and Thomas Cromwell as well as films and popular television shows based on Elizabeth I and Henry VIII. Even during Queen Elizabeth II’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations the boat on which she travelled during the procession was named the Glorianna again showing how Elizabeth I is still known by this mythical name. This could also be linked to the pageant chair being the present Marquess of Salisbury, Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, 7 Marquess of Salisbury who owes his family success and fortune to William Cecil, Elizabeth I’s chief minister and to Elizabeth I herself for increasing the family’s fortune.

“Historical research and the perspective it generates can both contribute to and benefit from an engagement with other research traditions, and that such engagement is becoming more common” (McCulloch and Richardson, 2000, p. 126). The historical research which I am conducting whilst it has its difficulties regarding primary and secondary documents is essential for expanding the knowledge and historiography which we already have regarding the history of education. Whilst there is plenty of historiography available on Victorian education due to the number of reforms which took place, there is not a great deal regarding the education of the Tudor dynasty. This gap in our knowledge remains to be filled since the Tudors do have a reputation for being well educated and can be considered the best-educated dynasty to sit on the English throne so far, which has been largely bypassed by historians who have focused on topics such as Tudor foreign policy and religion instead.

Traditionally, history has usually been explained from a male perspective, from which women have largely been excluded. The same is also true when defining education particularly before the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The definition of women’s education in early modern England would exclude women of all classes from education. Barbara Whitehead (1999, p.x) defines early modern education as “formal training in schools and universities with an emphasis on the learning of Latin”. This would be out of reach for nearly all early modern women due to the societal barriers in place which prevented women from gaining such an education. This is because “an eloquent woman was reputedly unchaste; a learned lady threatened male pride” (Labalme, 1984, p.4) this was a widely held belief as educating daughters with the basic skill of being able to read might “threaten a girls chastity, give her airs or render her less pliable in the hands of her parents or husband” (Mazzola, 2010, p.3). This led to books for women having to be approved by parents or tutors and romance novels were strictly regulated in case they gave women unchaste thoughts which would lead to unchaste actions.

If the definition of an educated woman is a woman who was educated like a man then there would be hardly any in early modern Europe. Any work on women’s education following this idea will be a history of very few, but very extraordinary women, these women in spite of all social prejudices attained an education similar to that of their brothers and other young men. However, what it is important to note is that these women would only belong to the upper gentry, the nobility or royalty. But as this thesis will show even some women of these statuses did not receive a very good education. These women are so rare that Hilda Smith (1982, p.40) estimates that only fifteen women in early modern England received a humanist education. Smith supports this by stating that these fifteen women “ranged from royal figures like Frances Brandon, Queen Elizabeth, and Queen Mary to daughters of aristocrats with a scholarly bent such as those of Sir Thomas More, Protector Somerset or Sir Anthony Cook,” (Smith, 1982, p.40).

Prior to the growth in interest in women’s history even these most educated of early modern women were ignored in works on the history of education as historians preferred to discuss the group that interested them, men (Roland-Martin, 1985, p. 2). However, even when historians finally began to take an interest in women’s education they focussed largely on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries due to the number of educational reforms during these years, despite the number of well educated women in England before this time and the changes in education which took place as a result of the Reformation. Even Elizabeth I’s education has largely been ignored despite her intellectual brilliance. Perhaps this is because of the lack of evidence but also perhaps due to the focus on major events during her reign such as the Spanish Armada, her refusal to marry and the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots. Those biographies which do look at Elizabeth’s early life tend to focus mostly on the execution of her mother and the other major event in her early life, the ‘Seymour episode’. In addition Queen Mary I’s education is dealt with by biographers but it is again overshadowed by her reputation as ‘bloody Mary’ despite the documents available on Mary’s education, of which there are considerably more than Elizabeth.

By assuming that to be considered an educated woman in early modern England one had to be formally schooled would be a narrow definition of education as it implies that throughout history for all the different societies that there has only been one standard of education. This is of course a misinterpretation of the history of education.

Over the last ten years historians of education have reassessed what education meant in early modern Europe and more specifically, early modern England. It has been recognised that the education of the various groups that make up a society were restricted by the social expectations of each class, as a result there is a much broader idea of what it means to be educated. Education, therefore, has been redefined as a “preparation for carrying on societal roles” (Roland-Martin, 1985, p5).

Messer-Davidow (1983, pp. 143-144) elaborates on this by describing the conventional roles for which young men and women would be educated. In early modern England “liberal education was meant to prepare English gentlemen for Parliament, the pulpit, and the bar; for the management of private estates and public works; for the professions and scholarship. English gentlewomen were destined for the vocation of domesticity-household management, wifely obedience, devoted motherhood, modest sociability–and for Christian piety” (Messer-Davidow, 1983, pp.143-144).

Education, therefore, was the means by which the body of knowledge which was required for each member to fulfil their social obligations was passed on. In a century when the roles of men and women were strictly set, the education necessary to fulfil these roles would of course differ as well. Education was not just adjusted to suit gender and social class but also to one’s position within the family. It would be incorrect to assume that within any period there was a single standard of education, instead there were a number of different standards which varied with differing factors.

The only exception to this particular style of education with an emphasis on ‘female accomplishments’ were Henry VIII’s daughters Mary and Elizabeth. As will be discussed later in the thesis, Elizabeth was taught ‘typical’ female accomplishments such as music, dancing and sewing in which she gained some proficiency. For Elizabeth this is evidenced by the cover which she sewed as a binding for her translation as a gift to Kateryn Parr and the cambric shirts which Elizabeth made as a gift for her young brother, the future Edward VI, every year. However, we do not have any evidence that Elizabeth learnt other ‘accomplishments’ such as household management or how to be a suitable wife but from what we do know about her education we know that it was based upon a humanist curriculum and was very academic for a woman considering the prejudice against women receiving an education which was too academic. In addition, it is important to remember that by the time Elizabeth began her formal education she was no longer the heir to the throne as her brother Edward was now heir. Therefore, Elizabeth would not have been looked upon as a future Queen so there would have been no need to educate her to prepare her to rule, yet she received an education similar to her brothers who was destined to rule. Elizabeth’s future at the time of her education would have been as a pawn in the international marriage market so Elizabeth would not have needed an academic education but rather one which featured lessons on household management. This would have included lessons on accounting to make sure that all household expenses were being met and there was no overspending and how to order supplies for a large household and how to manage all of the staff in the household. However, Elizabeth’s education was heavily based on intellectual achievement rather than the accomplishments of a typical early modern woman perhaps as a Princess who was destined to marry a foreign prince an academic education would have been seen as an important asset when combined with typical female accomplishments to a future husband.

When putting Elizabeth’s education into context it may be said that a comparison to her contemporaries most notably Mary I, Lady Jane Grey and Mary, Queen of Scots would be needed. However, I have decided not to do this but to reference these women and others where I think appropriate. This is due to word limit constraints but also due to wanting to highlight that Elizabeth’s education was not just academic like Mary’s, Lady Jane’s and Mary, Queen of Scots. But also that Elizabeth’s education was not just classroom based but was also based in real life events and a few examples of this such as the Seymour episode will be highlighted in the chapter on Elizabeth. These episodes played an important part in Elizabeth’s intellectual development as it taught her much more about the dangerous world of Tudor politics than a book could have and this is one of the major differences between Elizabeth’s education and the education of her contemporaries.

This thesis therefore, might be as much about historiography as education and in terms of ‘education’ this will be looked at in broad terms so that the thesis will not just focus on the classroom but also on wider lessons learnt. Given the constraints of time and the word limit, these will be limited to significant episodes in Elizabeth’s life including the Seymour affair. Furthermore, this thesis will seek to look at Elizabeth’s education in the light of wider influences such as Humanism. Additionally, Elizabeth’s education will be measured against those of her contemporaries such as her parents and other influential figures such as her tutors for only then can one look at Elizabeth in context.

This thesis will argue that not only was Elizabeth I’s education unique compared to her contemporaries, in this case her sister and cousins. It was also unusual in that she received an education which was of the same standard as a monarch, and a male one at that, even though she was never expected to become queen. In addition, I will argue that Elizabeth’s education was the direct result of the Reformation and the new direction which education was taking, which centred on Protestant ideas and the rise of Humanism supported by the University of Cambridge.

The Childhood and Education of Henry VIII

On 28th June 1491, Elizabeth of York, wife of King Henry VII, daughter of King Edward IV and eldest sister of the ‘Princes in the Tower’ gave birth to her third child and second son, Henry (Ridley, 1984, p. 17). He would later become Henry VIII and was destined to become the most famous Tudor of them all (Doran and Starkey, 2009, p. 13). His grandmother, Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, recorded the births of Henry’s elder brother Arthur and elder sister Margaret in her book of hours. Lady Margaret Beaufort’s book of hours contains a calendar of Church festivals and saints’ days. Lady Margaret turned hers into a chronicle of important political and dynastic events which took place during the reign of her son, Henry VII. But when Henry was born his grandmother only noted bare details of his birth in her book of hours (Starkey in Doran and Starkey, 2009, pp. 13 – 14). This shows Henry’s dynastic insignificance at the time as there was already a Prince of Wales, Henry was the spare.

Although he would become one of the most famous monarchs in English history, at the time of his birth he was the second son, the spare to his older brother, Prince Arthur. This would shape Henry’s early life and education. Prince Arthur who had been created Prince of Wales in 1489 (Starkey, 2008, pp. 56 – 57) was sent to Ludlow Castle in 1494 to begin his training and education for Kingship complete with his own household and council to administer his principality of Wales (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 15). Young Prince Henry meanwhile was brought up in the royal nursery which was mainly based at Eltham under the supervision of his mother Elizabeth of York and grandmother Lady Margaret Beaufort. Henry was brought up alongside his older sister Margaret, future Queen of Scotland, Elizabeth who died in early childhood, Mary, future Queen of France and Duchess of Suffolk and Edmund who also died in childhood. Despite the arrival of other children, including another son and in spite of his older sister, as the eldest male Henry was certainly the most important member of the household as shown by the household account book. This had the title of ‘My Lord Prince’s household’ for Henry was the most important member (Perry, 1998, p. 12).

Henry’s education seems to have started early as a book “for my lord of York” was bought for him by his father for £1 on 2nd November 1495 when Henry was four and a half. This is perhaps the book which was used to teach Henry to read (Starkey, 2008, p. 118). Like his daughter Mary, Henry’s education was initially overseen by his mother, Elizabeth of York. Starkey suggests that Elizabeth of York taught Henry to read and write. Henry’s handwriting had “nothing of the grace of the new italic script, as famously practiced by his daughter Elizabeth, or of the crisp, regular ‘secretary’ hands of Sir Thomas More or Wolsey” (Starkey in Doran and Starkey, 2009, p. 8). However, Henry’s handwriting is very similar to his sisters’ handwriting. Henry’s handwriting is loose and unpractised because they wrote on a less regular basis. “But the resemblance is still striking. It is weaker in the case of Margaret, Henry’s elder sister. But it is much closer in the case of the younger sister, Mary. Indeed, her hand at first sight would pass for Henry’s own – especially when he was scribbling rough notes or making corrections. The size, rhythm and letter forms are identical; only the pressure is different. Henry’s massive fist leans heavily on the page; Mary’s little hand flutters” (Starkey, 2009, p. 117). There could be two reasons for this similarity; one is that the girls would share Henry’s male tutors for their reading, writing and Latin lessons and possibly copy his work or be helped by him hence the similarity. The other reason for this similarity is possibly because they shared a common early teacher, their mother, Elizabeth of York.

An account of Elizabeth of York’s life, which takes the form of a ballad known as ‘The Song of Lady Bessy’ “claims that her father, Edward IV, had appointed a scrivener, ‘the very best in the City’, as tutor to Elizabeth and her sister Cecily, the next eldest. He had taught them ‘both to write and read full soon... / Both English and also French, / And also Spanish, if you had need’” (Starkey, 2008, p. 119). From this ballad we can see that Elizabeth of York was well placed to teach her children the basics such as reading and writing. The idea of a mother beginning her child’s education was important in the sixteenth century as this is how a child’s education began and was often the only education which a child would receive. This is how Mary I’s education began as she was taught by her mother Catherine of Aragon. However, Elizabeth, unlike her father and sister, could not begin her education in this traditional way as her mother was executed before her education began therefore the task fell to someone else. In Elizabeth’s case this was her governess Kat Ashley and her governess’s connections from Cambridge University.

Henry VIII’s education

Henry was brought up in relative obscurity, much like his second daughter, Elizabeth, and she inherited from Henry a remarkable intellect and he has been described by Helen Castor on a BBC4 programme on Renaissance education as the best educated King England had ever had (Castor, 2012). Henry was brought out of his relative obscurity at an earlier age than Elizabeth and he entered onto the public stage due to a situation which threatened the Tudor dynasty, much like Elizabeth’s entrance onto the public stage coincided with Henry including Elizabeth into the act of succession.

In around 1496 Henry VII appointed the poet John Skelton, a protégé of his mother’s, Lady Margaret Beaufort, as a tutor to Prince Henry. Nine years previously Skelton had been created Poet Laureate and was therefore, entitled to wear the Tudor livery of green and white. Skelton was appointed to teach Prince Henry, English grammar, spelling and possibly Latin which was the language of diplomacy, religion and scholarship (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 36).

Skelton himself boasts of “The honor of England I learnyd to spell’, and that Henry called him ‘master ... in hys lernyng primordiall” (Starkey, 2009, p. 121). Skelton wrote several pedagogical works for the young Prince Henry but only one Latin treatise, *Speculum Principis* – ‘The Mirror of a Prince’ – written in about 1501 has survived. In it Skelton urged his young pupil “never to relinquish power to his inferiors, and to ‘choose a wife for yourself, prize her always and uniquely’.” The young Prince probably had to learn these by rote and repeat them “ad nauseam until Skelton believed they had been committed fully to his heart and mind. How much influence they had in Henry’s later years is more doubtful, judging by his many lapses from Kingly probity” (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 38). In 1502, Skelton spent a short time in prison due to a minor misdemeanour which he had committed which ended his career as a royal tutor (Weir, 2001, p. 5).

From an early age Henry showed that he had a particular talent for languages, one which would later be inherited by all of his children but Elizabeth in particular would excel in the learning of languages and she would even surpass her father’s skills. “By the time he became King he was fluent in ‘French, English and Latin, and understands Italian well’; in 1515, Venetian envoys conversed with Henry VIII ‘in good Latin and French, which he speaks very well indeed’.” (Weir, 2001, p. 5). As was custom at the time Henry conversed in Latin with ambassadors, Italian did not start to replace Latin as the language of diplomacy until the reign of his daughter, Elizabeth I. Henry later learnt some Spanish from his first wife Catherine of Aragon who probably also taught their daughter, Mary, the language. In 1519, Henry began studying Greek with the humanist Richard Croke, as Greek was becoming a fashionable language to learn due to the increasing influence of humanism on education. This is seen in the education of Henry’s youngest two children, the future Elizabeth I and the future Edward VI who both learnt Greek. But Henry had to give up due, possibly to lack of time (Weir, 2001, p. 5). Weir states that Giles D’Ewes (or Duwes) was Prince Henry’s French tutor and he remained in royal service until his death in 1535, firstly in 1506 he became the librarian at Richmond in charge of a collection mainly made up of French books and later he became French tutor to Henry VIII’s eldest daughter, Princess Mary (Starkey, 2008, p. 180). Weir also states that it was Prince Arthur’s former tutor the poet Bernard André who also taught Prince Henry Latin (Weir, 2001, p. 5). Although, this could not have taken place until after 1502 when Prince Arthur died and Henry was Prince of Wales as it is unlikely that André would have been able to tutor Prince Arthur at Ludlow and then travel to Eltham to tutor Prince Henry. It is highly unlikely that Henry only started learning Latin after Prince Arthur’s death as Prince Henry was eleven years old at the time of Prince Arthur’s death and so would have been learning Latin before this. Therefore, it can be assumed that Skelton may have taught Prince Henry the basics of Latin and André built upon these basics after Prince Arthur’s death in 1502 and Skelton’s dismissal, therefore André’s services were transferred to Prince Henry’s household. This process was repeated many years later with the education of Henry VIII’s daughter Elizabeth, who was probably, taught the basics of at least Latin and French by her governess Katherine Ashley (or Astley) and then this was built upon by her first tutor, William Grindal.

In 1498 Henry VII bought a lute for young Prince Henry who appears to have inherited the family gift for music (Weir, 2001, p. 5). Although we do not know who first taught Henry the lute, both Starkey and Hutchinson state that Giles D’Ewes, Henry’s French tutor also taught him how to play the lute and perhaps helped to develop Henry’s extraordinary musical ability (Starkey, 2008, p. 180; Hutchinson, 2011, p. 38). This skill was inherited by all three of Henry’s children and was one of the only skills which was deemed appropriate for all children to learn regardless of gender. Henry was also instructed “in ‘all such convenient sports and exercises as behoveth his estate to have experience in’, and that included the gentlemanly skills of riding, jousting, tennis, archery and hunting” (Weir, 2001, p. 5).

When Henry became Prince of Wales upon Prince Arthur’s death he had to in some senses be re-educated as he had never been taught how to rule despite being given an education which was deemed suitable for a boy of Princely status. This task was at first undertaken by John Holt who was recommended by Thomas More whom he had studied with at Magdalen College, Oxford but his main patron was probably William Blount, Lord Mountjoy who was a friend of both men (Starkey, 2008, pp. 174 – 175). However, Holt died in 1504 and his successor was William Hone who had also attended Magdalen College, Oxford (Starkey, 2008, p. 178).

In 1499 the Dutch humanist scholar Desiderius Erasmus accompanied his former pupil, William Blount, fourth Baron Mountjoy, to England. Erasmus was one of the greatest scholars of the time and his writings and Humanist ideas would influence the education of Henry’s children. There is a chapter dedicated to Humanism later in this work due to important role it played in Elizabeth’s education and that role had its beginnings in the household of Prince Henry. Lord Mountjoy was Prince Henry’s *socius studiorum* (companion of studies) and had shared Prince Henry’s Latin and history lessons (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 38; Starkey, 2008, p. 175). Lord Mountjoy and Erasmus were staying at Sayes Court near Greenwich and Erasmus’s new friend, the twenty–one–year–old trainee lawyer Thomas More took Erasmus for a walk to the next village which happened to be Eltham where the King’s children (with the exception of Prince Arthur) were living. Many years later, Erasmus could still recall the scene which greeted him:

“When we came into the hall, the attendants not only of the palace but also of Mountjoy’s household were assembled.

In the midst stood Prince Henry, then nine years old [sic] and having something of royalty in his demeanour, in which there was a certain dignity combined with singular courtesy.

On his right was Margaret, about eleven years of age... and on his left played Mary, a child of four.

Edmund was an infant in arms” (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 39).

Thomas More presented Prince Henry with some of his writings and this was the beginning of a close friendship which would tragically end thirty–six years later with Thomas More’s execution. Erasmus had brought no writings with him to offer to Prince Henry and was rather embarrassed and this embarrassment deepened when the visitors were invited to stay for dinner. During dinner “Henry took the initiative again and sent Erasmus a note ‘to challenge something from my pen’” (Starkey, 2008, p. 130). This request could not be refused and three days later Erasmus presented a “little manuscript of ten leaves: illuminated, to make it a fitting gift” for Prince Henry (Starkey, 2008, p. 130). It was titled “*Prosopopeia Britanniæ* (in which Britannia heaps praises upon her princes as well as immodestly on herself)” and it shows that Erasmus was in a hurry as can be seen by the writing being made up of reused materials which Erasmus carried with him just in case a situation such as this should arrive (Starkey, 2008, p. 131; Hutchinson, 2011, p. 39). “His covering letter, headed ‘Erasmus to the most illustrious prince, Duke Henry’,” (Hutchinson, 2011, p. 39) places great significance on the importance of poetry and learning and hints at Henry’s impressive future:

“We have for the present dedicated these verses, like a gift of playthings, to your childhood and shall be ready with more abundant offerings, when your virtues, growing with your age, shall supply more abundant material for poetry.

I would add my exhortation to that end, were it not that you are of your own accord, as they say, underway with all sails set and have with you Skelton, that incomparable light and ornament of British letters, who can not only kindle your studies, but bring them to a happy conclusion.

Erasmus ends: ‘Farewell and may good letter be illustrated by your splendour, protected by your authority and fostered by your liberality’” (Hutchinson, 2011, pp. 39–40). As Starkey suggests, “Erasmus must have been well briefed” to write this because “he read no English” (Starkey, 2008, p. 131).

This resulted in Prince Henry corresponding in Latin with Erasmus who suspected that Henry’s tutors were helping him write the letters (Weir, 2001, p. 5). However, Lord Mountjoy reassured Erasmus that the letters were all Prince Henry’s own work but Erasmus still thought that they were so well–written and like Latin teachers through the ages, he suspected a crib had been used. “To settle the matter, Mountjoy showed him a bundle of drafts of Henry’s correspondence, written in his own hand and including the letter addressed to Erasmus. The draft was obviously the result of much labour, as it was corrected and re – corrected; but it was in one hand throughout, and was evidently the work of a single mind” (Starkey, 2008, p. 179).

Erasmus, a man who never gave compliments to people unless they fully deserved them, called Henry VIII “’a universal genius. He has never neglected his studies’” (Weir, 2001, p. 5). Even when he became King, Henry continued to study, much like his daughter Elizabeth would when she became Queen. On Cardinal Wolsey’s advice Henry VIII “read the works of Duns Scotus, Thomas Aquinas and the Church Fathers” (Weir, 2001, p. 5). Henry VIII did not just see himself as a warrior King, the next King Henry V, but also as a scholarly King and a humanist and he wanted to be recognised as such by the other learned men of Europe. Henry VIII’s interest in learning was not just a fleeting one but a genuine passion as is seen by the marginal annotations in his surviving books. “For Henry, learning was a great source of enjoyment, a journey of discovery for a mind avid for new information” (Weir, 2001, pp. 5 – 6) and this was a trait which he would pass onto all three of his children but particularly Elizabeth. Whilst Edward and Mary also inherited Henry’s intelligence it is not something which biographers focus upon due to their extreme religious views and policies, this is perhaps more the case more for Mary than Edward. Edward VI died at the age of 15 and most of the political decisions of his reign were left in the hands of others due to his age. Therefore, due to his short reign, age and status as a prince there is a lot of documentation available on his education.

Henry VIII was also a creative and inventive person who loved novelties; he also enjoyed experimenting with mechanics and technology. Henry VIII designed weapons and fortifications as well as taking an active interest in building plans, like his palace of Nonsuch which was perhaps, Henry’s grandest building project. “He also had ‘a remarkable docility for mathematics’ and was ‘learned in all sciences’; the cupboards in his privy lodgings contained various scientific instruments” (Weir, 2001, p. 6). Henry also had a passion for astronomy and Philip Melanchthon called Henry the “most learned, especially in the study of the movement of the heavens’. Henry’s astrolabe, bearing his crowned coat of arms and made by a Norman, Sébastien le Senay, is in the British Museum” (Weir, 2001, p. 6). When King, Henry and Thomas More would study diagrams in Euclid’s *Geometry* late into the night and Henry would often “burst unannounced into More’s room in the middle of the night, dragging him onto the roofs of royal palaces to gaze at the stars (Guy, 2008, p. 58). Henry VIII was also interested in maps and he owned many which were “rolled up in cupboards and drawers in his chambers and libraries”. Henry VIII’s in maps also “prepared the ground for the eventual mapping of England in the late sixteenth century” (Weir, 2001, p. 6).

Henry VIII was clearly a well educated man who had a proper regard for learning which he maintained throughout his life (Ives, 1960, p. 81). Henry’s intellectual abilities were the one thing which all of his children inherited although they all inherited different aspects of Henry’s intelligence. Mary was never as intelligent as her younger siblings although she was intelligent Mary did not inherit the linguistic skills of her father which Elizabeth did or Henry’s enthusiasm for theology which Edward inherited. Instead, Mary became fanatically obsessed with restoring Catholicism and revitalising her mother’s memory when she became Queen. Loades, Mary’s most prominent biographer, even describes Mary as “placid and rather slow” in comparison to her siblings Edward and Elizabeth (Loades, 1997, p. 7).

However, Einstein states that Elizabeth’s education is too often praised (Einstein, 1921, p. 48). By being dismissive Einstein is underestimating and under–appreciating Elizabeth’s intellectual brilliance and the high standard of education she received. But, Einstein’s statement is also in one sense a compliment to Elizabeth and her incredible intellectual achievements in a world dominated by men. However, these achievements are not given further thought or expanded in Einstein’s text which suggests that Elizabeth’s achievements were equal to or excelled the intellectual achievements of some men. The establishment of Humanism in England resulted in academic studies becoming more accessible to women and the most famous examples of this important educational development are Thomas More’s daughters’, especially Margaret More (later Roper), Mary Tudor, Lady Jane Grey and Elizabeth Tudor (Dowling, 1986, p. 221)). Dowling rightly states that even for Humanists such as Thomas More, who supported female education they believed that female education only had a limited purpose and whilst a good education was valuable it was not meant to prepare women for public office. A good education was meant to make women more desirable to future husbands and more competent at running households successfully in the absence of their husband it was not meant to make women into lawyers or hold any public office or debate in public. However, Dowling does state that there was one exception to this rule and that was Mary Tudor who was educated as Princess of Wales at Ludlow castle until Henry VIII became infatuated with Anne Boleyn, Mary was Henry’s sole heir and he had her educated in a suitable manner. However, Elizabeth, despite never being trained for public office was just as well as or better, in the case of Mary, educated as both Edward and Mary who were both trained for public office (Dowling, 1986, pp. 221 – 234).

It is reasonable to suggest that Mary’s education formed the basis for Elizabeth’s as Elizabeth’s education was similar to Mary’s as will be shown in a later chapter. As the daughter of a King, Elizabeth would be expected to receive a high standard of education and the obvious example to base Elizabeth’s education on was Mary. Juan Luis Vives, who wrote the educational treatise *The Education of a Christian Woman* to help in the instruction of Mary written at the request of her mother Catherine of Aragon, pointed out that girls should not go outside of the home for education but should be taught by their mother (Fantazzi and Vives, 2000, p. 33). “Although it contained its fair share of old – fashioned prejudices, Vive’s book broke moulds by urging that girls be educated in more than just domestic skills and dancing. ‘If the mother knows literature, she should teach her children when they are small,’ Vives advised. ‘As for her daughters, in addition to letters she will instruct them in the skills proper to their sex: how to work wool, and flax, to spin, to weave, to sew and the care and administration of domestic affairs.’ The aim, he said, should be to teach them the importance of ‘justice, piety, fortitude, temperance, learning, clemency, mercy and love of humankind’.” (Tremlett, 2010, p. 240). As will be seen in a later chapter on Elizabeth’s education, how far this description of how a woman should be educated did vary and the extent that Vives as a Spaniard had over the education of the King of England’s daughter is also explored as Henry would have wanted his daughter brought up as an English not a Spanish princess.

For Anne Boleyn, it was impossible for her to oversee her daughter’s education as Anne was executed when Elizabeth was not quite three years old and Elizabeth’s formal education would not begin for a number of years. Therefore, Anne Boleyn unlike Catherine of Aragon and Henry’s own mother Elizabeth of York, was unable to oversee her daughter’s education; and as seen in the chapter on Anne Boleyn, she was aware of this and entrusted Elizabeth’s education to her chaplain, Matthew Parker. Despite being declared a bastard in infancy, Elizabeth still received an education fit for an heir as can be seen in the similarities between Elizabeth and Edward’s education. This shows that Henry perhaps did regard women’s education important especially for his own daughters. But also, perhaps, that Elizabeth was surrounded by a governess and a household which made sure that she received the best education possible as will be seen in the later chapter on Katherine Ashley (or Astley, née Champernowne).

Henry’s education was started by his mother, but this was not possible for for Elizabeth due to her mother’s execution. However, what we can learn from Henry’s education is that he became proficient in many disciplines and had a particular interest in theology. This emphasis on a Humanist education was something which he passed on to his own children. Their education was a reflection of Henry’s yet it was also combined with the popular academic studies of the time in Elizabeth’s case the influence of the Reformation, Cambridge University and the learning of Greek.

Anne Boleyn

Anne Boleyn was the mother of Elizabeth I and perhaps one of the most famous Queen consorts in English history. The Venetian ambassador to the English court during the reign of Queen Mary I (1553 – 1558), Giovanni Michiel, “noted with barely concealed distaste that the Queen’s younger sister, Elizabeth, ‘is proud and haughty... although she knows that she was born of such a mother’.” (Borman, 2009, p. 1) this view was not just held by Michiel but many others at Mary’s court believed that Lady Elizabeth should be ashamed of being the child of the disgraced Anne Boleyn the infamous whore or ‘the concubine’ as Anne was sometimes called. Many at Mary’s court were supporters of Catherine of Aragon and believed that Anne had usurped the place of the rightful Queen. Anne was accused of adultery with five different men, one being her own brother, Anne and the men were all executed in 1536 (Jenkins, 1959, pp 12 – 13). Elizabeth was then declared a bastard. The Venetian ambassador “marvelled that this child should grow up apparently either oblivious to, or, worse, not caring about the scandal of her mother’s past. Surely she ought rather to hide herself away in perpetual shame at being the daughter of an infamous adulteress? Yet here she was, displaying all the traits with which Anne had so beguiled her male courtiers – not to mention King Henry himself. And her coal black eyes were an uncomfortable reminder that for all her Tudor traits (most notably her abundant red hair), she was very much her mother’s daughter” (Borman, 2009, p. 1).

Later in her life Elizabeth is recorded to have mentioned her mother twice as it was clear that Elizabeth wanted to be associated with her father in the public eye but she was not ashamed to be a Boleyn. Elizabeth singled out her Boleyn relations; particularly the Carey’s, who were her cousins as the children of Anne’s sister Mary, for advancement in her government. Elizabeth also wore a ring which contained miniature portraits of herself and her mother. In addition, Elizabeth sometimes chose as her badge the same symbol as her mother, the falcon, of which the female is the larger bird (Hibbert, 1991, p. 18). Elizabeth also adopted as her own motto *Semper Eadem* (Always the Same) this was also the same motto which Anne had used (Somerset, 1997, p. 9).

The Education of Anne Boleyn

According to Lord Herbert, Anne’s father Thomas noticed early in her life that Anne was a bright and ‘toward’ child (Weir, 2007, p. 147). This was a phrase which would later be used to describe Anne’s own daughter, Elizabeth as an infant. Anne’s education followed the pattern which was similar for ladies of her class (Weir, 2007, p. 147). Anne received the normal ‘virtuous instruction’ consisting usually of reading, writing, grammar, history and family genealogy. Anne was also taught the usual ‘accomplishments’ such as horse riding, hunting, games such as cards, chess and dice as well as good manners, singing, dancing, in addition, Anne would also have been taught how to play various musical instruments. Anne was also taught how to sew, most probably by her mother, there were various cloth making skills but needlework was considered the most important skill as this was seen as the most gentle and feminine skill and therefore, the most feminine of all feminine accomplishments (Kelso, 1956, p. 46). Anne’s education was similar to many girls of her class, although as will be seen in a later chapter not all of Henry’s wives who came from a similar, and some who came from a higher class, like Anne of Cleves, were as well educated as Anne was. The purpose of Anne’s education was to perfect the feminine accomplishments which were prized in both the marriage market and at court. With this education and her natural charm and vivacity her parents felt sure that she would attract the right kind of husband (Weir, 2007, p. 148).

Thomas Boleyn was sent as an ambassador to the court of Margaret of Austria, daughter of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor. Margaret was Regent of the Netherlands on behalf of her thirteen year old nephew, Charles of Burgundy and the court of Burgundy was based at Mechelen in Brabant (Ives, 2004, p. 18). Thomas quickly impressed his hostess and began praising the virtues and accomplishments of Anne, the brightest of his children, to Margaret. The Duchess responded by offering Anne a place in her household and in 1513 Anne was immediately dispatched to Margaret’s court (Weir, 2007, p. 148) with the Flemish nobleman, Claude Bouton, seigneur de Courbaron, who was Anne’s companion and escort on the trip to Flanders (Ives, 2004, p. 18). Anne made a good impression upon her new mistress with her impeccable manners and studious nature and Margaret reported how bright and pleasant Anne was for her young age (Borman, 2010, p. 3). The Regent shows her delight in a letter she wrote to thank Thomas Boleyn for sending Anne to her showing how good the Regent’s first impressions were of her new *filles d’honneur*:

“I have received your letter by the Esquire (Claude) Bouton who has presented your

daughter to me, who is very welcome, and I am confident of being able to deal with

her in a way which will give you satisfaction, so that on your return the two of us will

need no intermediary other than she. I find her so bright and pleasant for her young age

that I am more beholden to you for sending her to me than you are to me.” (Ives, 2004, p.19)

Once at the Burgundian court, Anne was given a tutor, Symonnet (Ives, 2004, p. 19) or as Weir says she was given a governess named Simonette to tutor her (Weir, 2002, p. 149). Regardless of whether Anne was given a male tutor or a female governess the aim would have been the same, to improve Anne’s written and spoken French. It was insisted that all of Anne’s letters to her father should be written in French as her father spoke French fluently and Anne wanted to impress him (Weir, 2002, p. 149). Anne was fully aware as to why she was there as a letter to her father shows:

“Sir, I understand from you letter that you desire me to be a woman of good reputation

(toufs onette fame) when I come to court, and you tell me that the queen will take the

trouble to converse with me, and it gives me great joy to think of talking with such a wise

and virtuous person. This will make me all the keener to persevere in speaking French well,

and also especially because you have told me to, and have advised me for my own part to

work at it as much as I can.” (Ives, 2004, p. 19)

Second to learning French there was the opportunity to master the manners and sophistication required to impress in polite and courtly society. As a *fille d’honneur*, Anne had no specific duties at court but she was under the supervision of *la dame d’honneur* in this case the Archduchess Margaret as head of the female establishment (Ives, 2004, p. 20). Anne was expected to play her part as an attendant on the duchess and to share in the intimate society of the court, to make herself useful and perform tasks on request, and to join in the serious business of court entertainment. “Without the woman, a court was reckoned a poor place indeed” (Ives, 2004, p. 20). Ives states that “Anne Boleyn’s later achievements owed a very great deal to what she was now beginning to learn with Margaret of Austria” (Ives, 2004, p. 20). The most essential courtly skill was dance as this formed an integral part of indoor pageants and formal entertainments which were gaining popularity in the European courts. It was at one of these pageants where Anne made her debut at the English court where she is supposed to have caught Henry’s eye for the first time. It was not surprising that Anne caught Henry’s eye during a pageant as Anne had learnt how to behave at such functions from the Archduchess Margaret. The very same Archduchess Margaret who in 1504 at the marriage of one Savoyard noble had appeared naked in her role as Queen of the Amazons with a “sword in hand, a silver cuirass studded with jewels, and a crimson head – dress topped by a great plume. Anne could have had no better mentor” (Ives, 2004, p. 21)

Anne stayed at the court of the Archduchess Margaret for eighteen months until her father was able to procure places for Anne and her eldest sister Mary as maids of honour to Mary Tudor, youngest sister of Henry VIII who was betrothed to the French King, Louis XII in August 1514 (Weir, 2002, p. 149). Only one ‘Mistress Boleyn’ was listed amongst the women who left for France in October 1514 and this was Mary because Anne travelled straight from Mechelen to the French court (Borman, 2009, p. 3). “Anne herself was delighted at the prospect of serving Mary Tudor, and wrote to her father:

Sir, I find by your letter that you wish me to appear at court in a manner becoming a

respectable female, and likewise that the Queen will condescend to enter into

conversation with me. At this I rejoice, as I do think that conversing with so sensible

and eloquent a princess will make me even more desirous of continuing to speak and to

write good French.” (Ives, 2002, p. 149)

Mary and Anne Boleyn’s service to Queen Mary Tudor of France was short as King Louis XII died only three months after his marriage and some said the exertion of satisfying his young bride led to his demise (Borman, 2009, p. 3). Mary Tudor, widowed Queen of the King of France considered one of the most beautiful and eligible princesses in Europe then caused a scandal by marrying her brother, Henry VIII’s best friend, Charles Brandon in secret before returning to England in a hurry (Borman, 2009, p. 3). Both Anne and Mary Boleyn transferred their services to the new Queen of France, Queen Claude, the long–suffering wife of the new French King, King Francis I (Weir, 2004, p. 150).

Amongst King Francis I many mistresses was Anne’s eldest sister Mary Boleyn whom King Francis nicknamed his ‘English mare’ (Borman, 2004, p. 4). Anne learnt from the example set by her sister who once the men had gained their satisfaction was cast aside. Elizabeth was also quick to learn from examples set by others and from her own mistakes. This quick witted nature may have been inherited from Anne. Anne benefited from the regime in Claude’s household and learnt how to be dignified and poised. “‘She became so graceful that you would never have taken her for an Englishwoman, but for a Frenchwoman born’, wrote the French poet, Lancelot de Carles. She adopted becoming French fashions, and the French courtier Brantôme tells us in his memoirs that she dressed with marvellous taste and devised new modes which were copied by all the fashionable ladies at court; Anne wore them all with a ‘gracefulness that rivalled Venus’” (Weir, 2004, pp. 150 – 151). Anne thrived in the lively and intellectually stimulating environment of the French court and developed a love of learning which continued throughout her life. This was something which her daughter Elizabeth was also to inherit as Elizabeth would continue to learn throughout her life (Borman, 2009, p. 4).

Although information about Anne’s time at the French court is conjecture, Ives in *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* conjectures that Anne may have made an acquaintance with King Francis I’s sister, Marguerite d’Angoulȇme who was a patron of humanists and reformers (Ives, 2004, p. 32). Marguerite d’Angoulȇme was also an author in her own right and her works included elements of Christian reform which was borderline heretical but as the King of France’s favourite sister she was protected from being accused of heresy. Marguerite or her circle may have encouraged Anne’s interest in reformist poetry and literature (Fraser, 1992, p. 121). Anne’s daughter, Elizabeth was later to translate Marguerite’s, *Mirror or Glass of the Sinful Soul* as a present for her step-mother Kateryn Parr. Anne’s time in France made her a devout Christian and a follower of the new tradition of Renaissance Humanism. Anne did not know much Latin but because she was trained at the French court she was influenced by an “evangelical variety of French humanism” which resulted in her supporting the translation of the Bible into English (Dowling, 1991, p. 39).

Anne has been described as “the perfect woman courtier, for she had learned her lessons in France well: her carriage was graceful and her French clothes were pleasing and stylish; she danced with ease, had a pleasant singing voice, played the lute and several other musical instruments well, and spoke French fluently... A remarkable, intelligent, quick – witted, young noblewoman... that first drew people into conversation with her and then amused and entertained them. In short her energy and vitality made her the centre of attention in any social gathering” (Warnicke, 1989, p. 59). Elizabeth, like her mother was able to use her intellectual and personal charms rather than her looks to gain the attention of the court and the people. This was evident in March 1522 when Anne made her first appearance at the English court at a masque where she enacted perseverance (Fraser, 1997, p. 122). This was an ironic part for Anne to play for both Anne and Henry had to persevere to get what they wanted but at this point neither of them were aware of this. Although, this masque was probably the first time that Henry noticed Anne Boleyn, this was to change English history forever.

“The charm of Anne Boleyn lay not in her looks” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 5) Anne had dark eyes which looked almost black and thick dark hair which was so long she could sit on it. “But her complexion was swarthy; her nose too long, her bosom, in the words of an Italian envoy, “not much raised”. Indeed he added, she had little to recommend her other than the “King’s great appetite.” Rather small and thin, she seems to have had a prominent mole on her long neck or on her chin, what appeared to be a tiny, nascent sixth finger growing out of the side of her hand, on another finger, a slightly deformed nail that she endeavoured to hide with the tip of the finger next to it” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 5). But, Anne would have been considerably more exciting than the aging Catherine of Aragon. Anne was “quick – witted and sophisticated, supple in her movements and graceful in her manner. She wore her smart French dresses with confident style; and, while regarded by some as a coquette, she was too acute, ambitious and calculating to be dismissed as the King of France dismissed her elder sister, Mary, as a whore, “the English mare”” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 5). This was the result of Anne’s education and experiences at the Burgundian and French courts where she became a sophisticated and cultured lady. This was part of the reason why Henry was attracted to her.

In late April 1536, a few days before her arrest Anne had discussions with her chaplain, Matthew Parker. According to Weir, Anne charged her chaplain with the care of Elizabeth if anything happened to her (Weir, 2007, p. 311). However, Elizabeth was surrounded by attendants who were completely loyal to her such as Katherine Ashley and Blanche Parry and were constantly with her unlike Parker who wouldn’t be. Therefore, it is more likely that Anne, as suggested by Borman and Parker himself that Anne entrusted Elizabeth’s spiritual care to him and also, according to Parker, Anne shared her hopes for Elizabeth’s education (Borman, 2009, p. 42). Parker honoured his responsibility to take care of Elizabeth’s spiritual welfare as often as the opportunity offered itself (Hunsdon, 1980, p. 132). This conversation between Anne and Parker was probably their last. “Parker was one of the most fervent reformers at court and Anne herself had shown sympathies in that direction suggests that she wished her daughter to follow the same path” (Borman, 2009, pp. 42 – 43). Queen Elizabeth later appointed Parker as her first Archbishop of Canterbury (Borman, 2009, p. 43). To what extent Parker supervised or was even involved with Elizabeth’s education it is difficult to be certain, but in 1547 Parker wrote an epigram praising Elizabeth’s proficiency in Greek, Italian and French (Dowling, 1986, p. 234). Parker told Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1559 “’My heart would right fain serve my sovereign lady the Queen’s majesty, in more respects than of mine allegiance, not forgetting what words her grace’s mother said to me of her, not six days before her apprehension’” (Dowling, 1986, p. 234). Elizabeth’s religious leanings “would prove her to be very much her mother’s daughter” (Borman, 2009, p. 43).

Due to Anne’s execution before Elizabeth’s formal education began she did not have a direct influence on Elizabeth’s education. However, what we can conclude is that Elizabeth inherited certain traits including intelligence which Elizabeth inherited from her mother and her father. In addition, Elizabeth was influenced by her mother in personal ways. Her ability to impress those around her, and her wit and intelligence, rather than her looks was something inherited from Anne along with her fiery temper. Perhaps the biggest and most important connection which Anne had to Elizabeth’s education is her support for reformers and the Reformation. Henry’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne saw the Reformation pick up pace in England and it began to have an impact on many aspects of life including education. Due to the dissolution of the monasteries they were no longer the main centres of education instead the universities became the sole centres of education. The two universities in England, Oxford and Cambridge both embraced the Reformation differently. Cambridge was more enthusiastic in embracing the Protestant Reformation thanks to scholars and clergymen such as Thomas Parker, Thomas Cranmer, John Cheke and Roger Ascham who all feature in Elizabeth’s education; whereas Oxford University maintained their Catholic connections and supported Catherine of Aragon during the divorce. Anne supported not only Cambridge University but also individuals such as Cranmer and Parker. This lasting legacy was not only the result of Anne’s love of learning but it also influenced Elizabeth’s education as her tutors hailed from Cambridge and taught Elizabeth in line with their beliefs.

Catherine of Aragon

The one fact which everyone knows about Henry VIII thanks to being the subject of various different books, TV programmes and films is that he had six wives which is an unusual state of personal affairs for any man and despite other English Kings perhaps most famously, Charles II, having scores of mistresses, marrying six times is unique to Henry VIII. But what is not more commonly known, remembered or highlighted in films, TV shows and fictional books on Henry’s wives is that Henry’s marriage to Catherine of Aragon lasted almost twenty years. His other five marriages all took place in the last fourteen years of his life, none lasted more than three years and his third marriage to Jane Seymour and his fourth marriage to Anne of Cleves lasted only months (Plowden, 1979; p. 28).

Whilst Catherine obviously had no direct say in Elizabeth’s education and she would not have wanted to if she had lived nor would Henry have allowed her, it is Catherine’s patronage of academics and the education of her daughter Mary which make Catherine an important part of Elizabeth’s education. Catherine of Aragon was a very intelligent woman who had married a fellow intellectual when she married Henry VIII on 11th June 1509 (Lehman, 2011, p. 287). Loades even states that “some contemporaries who were well placed to judge believed that the queen was the better scholar of the two, and she also seems to have been made consistently sympathetic to the humanists” (Loades, 1979, p. 7). Catherine of Aragon was certainly the best educated and most intellectual of Henry’s wives.

The story of Elizabeth’s education actually starts with the ‘Catholic Kings’ of Spain because their daughter Catherine was to marry Arthur then Henry Tudor and this marriage led to Mary’s birth and the need to educate a woman well sinceMary was destined to rule. The end of Catherine’s marriage to Henry is one of the most famous stories in English history and this resulted in the birth of Elizabeth and her education which is the focus of this thesis has its beginnings in Catherine’s education. Catherine used her education to educate her daughter Mary and Mary’s education in turn influenced Elizabeth’s. Catherine was the youngest daughter of King Ferdinand of Aragon and Queen Isabella of Castile and together history knows them as the Catholic *Kings* of Spain. They were both formidable and ambitious which can be seen in the international marriage alliances which they made through the marriages of their children to major European heirs. Their eldest child Isabella (1470–1498) married first Alfonso, Prince of Portugal and secondly Manuel I of Portugal, John Prince of Asturias (1478–1497), their only son married Archduchess Margaret of Austria, their second daughter Joanna, known to history as Joanna the mad (1479 – 1559) married Philip the Handsome and their son became Charles I, Holy Roman Emperor (1482 – 1517), their third daughter Maria married Manuel I of Portugal her sister Isabella’s widowed husband. Finally, their youngest child their daughter, Catherine (1485 – 1536) married first Prince Arthur of Wales and then Henry VIII. All five of Ferdinand and Isabella’s were given a brilliant education, both Ferdinand and Isabella do not seem to have occupied the same standard of education as their children but they wanted to give their children the best education possible to prepare them for their future roles as monarchs and consorts. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella were determined to make sure that their children received the type of education which they had not been provided with (Mattingly, 1990, p. 8). This was unusual at the time as in France, the other great European power; princesses were not educated to the same standard as princes. This was due to their future role as a wife and mother and not a monarch as the Salic law prevented women from ruling in their own right in France but, this did not exist in England or Spain. As a result women were educated differently, possibly to prepare them for an eventuality where they might have to reign in their own right like Isabella.

Queen Isabella only received a small amount of formal education which consisted of reading, writing, spelling, grammar, dancing, embroidery and music. When Isabella became Queen, in a typically determined fashion she learnt Latin (Tremlett, 2010, p. 47). Whilst Isabella never became fluent in Latin she was familiar enough with Latin to enable her to scan the texts of treaties and courtiers and to read for pleasure, the Vulgate and Caesar’s commentaries (Mattingly, 1990; p. 8). This resulted in Queen Isabella becoming more interested in learning and she became a patron of learning which led to a revival of classical study in Spain and other scholars such has Peter Martyr of Anghiers was brought in from Italy. “Martyr later boasted: “I was the literary father of almost all the princes and of all the princesses of Spain”.” (Fraser, 1993; p. 11) Interestingly women were not excluded from this revival and there were female lecturers in Alcala and Salamanca (Fraser, 1992; p. 11). This passion for learning and being a patron of education was inherited by Catherine who used this to provide a high standard of education for her daughter Mary and this in turn influenced Elizabeth’s education.

Queen Isabella was highly involved in the education of all of her children like Catherine of Aragon was when educating Mary. However, the opposite is the case with Elizabeth’s education, as Anne had been executed before Elizabeth’s education began and therefore was unable to directly influence her education. It seems as though Catherine started to learn to read and write at six years old when she received her first letter case (Tremlett, 2010, p. 47). This was a block with lower and upper case letters on and was used as an aid to help young children to read and write. Seven years old was the accepted age at which the basic, but crucial skills, of reading, writing and Latin started being taught, therefore, Catherine’s education may have started earlier than the usual accepted age. But in a household “where the education of daughters was taken with an unusual and remarkable degree of seriousness (Tremlett, 2010, p. 47) it is probably not surprising that in this environment, which valued good education highly that Catherine’s education may have started a year earlier than was usual.

Once the Infante John, Prince of Asturias was born in 1478 and the male succession was assured the birth of princesses who could act as an ambassadress for her parents through a powerful foreign marriage was a welcome idea to Ferdinand and Isabella. “’If your Highness gives us two or three more daughters’, wrote the Spanish chronicler Hernando de Pulgar to Isabella in 1478, ‘in twenty years time you will have the pleasure of seeing your children and grandchildren on all the thrones of Europe’. The birth of Catherine meant that Queen Isabella now had four of these potential envoys. She was determined that they should be well trained.” (Fraser, 1993; pp. 12 – 13) This also followed the rising popularity of better female education for women in high society, usually royal or noble ladies, which was spreading through the European courts and high society. This trend would reach England and thanks to Catherine’s enthusiasm for learning, education would flourish in England and her daughter Mary was to benefit but so was Elizabeth who became more remarkable than her sister. Catherine’s patronage of education for women in England would reach its pinnacle in the reign of Elizabeth I, the daughter of her greatest rival.

Catherine and her sister’s learnt Latin from a young age under the guidance of a talented female Latinist, Beatriz Galindo, ‘La Latina’ who had also helped Queen Isabella learn French. Catherine learnt Latin well enough to be able to competently converse in Latin and even after being in England for a long time Catherine still felt more comfortable conversing in Latin than English. Queen Isabella was enthusiastic in her support for the new humanist learning which was becoming popular in Spain since its arrival from Italy. Queen Isabella also hired Italian tutors for her children; Alessandro Geraldini oversaw Catherine’s education and accompanied her to England. Through their mother’s passion for education and her interest in the new learning and humanism arriving from Europe, Catherine and her sisters became four of the most learned women in Europe (Tremlett. 2010, p. 47).

Catherine and her elder sisters were all taught the standard female accomplishments of dancing, drawing, music, sewing and embroidery which were appropriate to their social standard as Infantas of Spain. They also studied heraldry and their family genealogy and they were taught horsemanship, how to hunt and falconry (Mattingly, 1990, p. 9). The Infantas were not educated to the same standard as their brother Prince Juan, but along with the standard accomplishments which ladies were usually taught the Infantas studied the Latin fathers Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory and Jerome, Christian poets such as Prudentius and Juvencus, and classical Latin poets and orators (Dowling, 1986, p. 16).

Catherine displayed her intellectual accomplishments and her interest in learning throughout her life, especially when it came to educating her own daughter, Mary. This began with Catherine learning Latin and she corresponded in Latin with Arthur whilst in Spain and with Henry VII when in England; her letters to Arthur have been said to be “in Ciceronian elegance, Catherine is not inferior to her literary rival’” (Dowling, 1986, p. 17). Catherine was to later correct her daughter, Mary’s, Latin exercises and whilst she reproached Cardinal’s Wolsey and Campeggio for addressing her in Latin in front of her household she would also proudly declare her knowledge of Latin. Catherine learnt French in Spain, probably with the help of her sister–in–law Margaret of Austria at the request of Margaret Beaufort and Elizabeth of York, since neither of them spoke Latin or Spanish. In 1529 Catherine showed her command of the French language when she interviewed the Cardinals at Bridewell in French (Dowling, 1986, p. 17). When Catherine came to England she soon began to learn the language and the linguistic skills she learnt as a young girl in Spain meant that Catherine was able to learn English with relative ease. Although it took Catherine some time to become proficient and confident enough to converse in English fluently in 1513, Catherine was able to harangue the English troops bound for Flodden in English (Dowling, 1986, p. 17).

Catherine’s education prepared her well for when the time came to educate her only surviving child, her daughter, Mary. Mary was the heir apparent to the throne of England and a new style of education had to be considered due to Mary’s gender. The influence of Humanism and the Renaissance had led to women becoming more learned but there was no generally accepted theory of education beyond obedience and needlework which had been developed (Mattingly, 1990, p. 187). Where Mary’s education was concerned an unusual set of circumstances needed to be taken into account with Mary as heir to the throne. The only other example of female rule in England were the brief few months that the Empress Matilda reigned for in 1141 but she was never crowned nor did Matilda consolidate her rule legally or politically and was usurped by her cousin Stephen instead Matilda spent her life campaigning for her eldest son Henry to ascend to the throne which Matilda lived to see happen in 1154. Catherine did not want history to repeat itself but the two main issues were to what extent could a woman be educated for the huge responsibilities which were part of being a reigning monarch and to what extent were women able to participate in the same kind of education normally reserved for men (Mattingly, 1990, p. 187). It is difficult to answer these questions due to the lack of books which were intended as guides for the education of women, and Catherine took this into her own hands and commissioned a book herself (Dowling, 1986, pp. 42-43). Catherine was an effective patron of learning and this along with her piety would leave a lasting impression upon Mary (Loades, 1979, p. 7). This action would not only inspire Catherine’s own daughter’s education but also improve the standard of education for other young girls. However, this would only inspire and improve the education of young girls of royal and noble status, the most important examples being Elizabeth Tudor and Lady Jane Grey.

Catherine consulted her fellow countrymen the Humanist scholar Juan Luis Vives on the best way to educate her daughter. This resulted in the publication of *The Education of a Christian Woman’* in 1524 at the request of Catherine of Aragon. This was to be used as a guide for not only Mary’s education but also for others at the court to use as a guide to their daughters education. John Neale who is considered Elizabeth’s greatest biographer praises Catherine of Aragon for commissioning Vives to write his book on the education of women. Neale states that; “it is some measure of the point reached in the education of highly – born women since the days of Lady Margaret’s French and smattering of Latin, that the Princess Mary, though not the intellectual type of woman, became proficient in Latin, French, and Spanish and moderately so in Italian” (Neale, 1960, pp, 17 – 23). However, Mary’s actual ‘academic’ achievements, especially her linguistic skills are still being debated amongst historians and her intellectual abilities pale when compared to Elizabeth’s.

In his book Vives’ made some statements which were deemed rather controversial in the sixteenth century. Vives (1524) stated that every tutor must “judge the aptitude of his pupils from his own observation of them, remembering that an intelligent girl may go farther in grammar and philosophy than a boy less intelligent” (Vives, 1524, in Mattingly (ed), 1990, p. 187). Vives recommends a model which he says was based on what he had learnt from Catherine of her own education. This programme included learning typical female accomplishments such as needlework and embroidery. But, in addition they should also pursue ‘with equal vigour, grammar and rhetoric, scripture and moral philosophy, up to the full extent of her ability, unobstructed by any perceived notion of an essential difference in the intellectual capacity of the sexes’ (Vives, 1524, in Mattingly (ed), 1990). This view of education was very advanced especially as an educational attitude towards women in the sixteenth century. This resulted in Mary and Elizabeth, especially Elizabeth receiving a good education which led to them developing intellectual abilities which, in Elizabeth’s case were as good as some men’s abilities (Hull, 1982, p. 130).

The education provided by Catherine of Aragon for her only beloved child, Mary resulted in Mary’s education providing the base for the education of Elizabeth the daughter of her rival and usurper, Anne Boleyn. But despite being declared a bastard after her mother’s execution, Elizabeth still received the same standard of education Mary received despite Elizabeth being only the King’s bastard daughter when her formal education began, unlike Mary who was the King’s heir when she started her education. This shows how important female education had become at Henry VIII’s court and also to Henry himself. Without Catherine of Aragon’s own comprehensive education and the influence and oversight she had over the education of her own daughter, Mary there would have been no model and no books on the education of young royal women upon which to base the education of Elizabeth. Without the foundations laid by Catherine when educating her daughter Mary “the age of Elizabeth would have been far less remarkable for its erudite women, and more importantly its remarkably intelligent Queen” (Dowling, 1986, p. 243).

Stepmothers

This chapter will focus on the early lives and education of Henry’s third, fourth and fifth wives; Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard. Firstly this presents us with a couple of problems; one is the lack of information available on their early lives. The second is that none of these women were married to Henry or alive for long enough to have a real impact on Elizabeth’s education. In addition, these three women do not seem to have been very well educated despite the increase in better education for women amongst royalty, the nobility and gentry even though they were all members of one of these classes. This shows that the improvements in women’s education did not necessarily affect all royal and noble women which serves to highlight the success of Elizabeth’s education. Also the education of men was still superior to that received by the majority of royal and aristocratic women (Borman, 2009, p. 63). Therefore by looking at the education of these three women we can see just how remarkable Elizabeth’s education was. Although there is no denying that there were other well educated women who were the contemporaries of Elizabeth such as Mildred Cooke, who in 1543 married William Cecil, later Lord Burghley. Mildred was one of the five exceptionally intelligent daughters of Sir Anthony Cooke who was an Essex gentleman and a humanist scholar, reformer and a companion to Edward VI during his studies (Johnson, 1974, p. 64).

Jane Seymour was born in c.1598 at Wulfhall in Wiltshire she was the fifth child born to Sir John Seymour and Margery Wentworth, but the eldest girl (Fraser, 1992, p. 235). Only the date of birth of two of Henry’s wives, Catherine of Aragon and Anne of Cleves are known for certain due to their status as a royal princess and an aristocratic lady from their births. The dates of birth of his other four wives Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour, Katherine Howard and Kateryn Parr are all subject to debate amongst historians. Jane’s date of birth is usually stated to be 1509 or 1510 but it has been stated that her funeral was attended by twenty – nine mourners and it was customary for a mourner to walk in the funeral procession to mark every year of the deceased person’s life (Weir, 1991, p. 371) therefore, this implies that Jane was only 29 when she died.

Unlike Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Kateryn Parr there is no evidence of Jane Seymour receiving anything other than a very basic education which was based around standard female accomplishments.

During Jane’s childhood there was a salaried priest, Father James at Wulfhall who may have given Jane and her brother’s some basic lessons possibly in reading, writing and biblical texts. Jane’s education was based on traditional female accomplishments and as an adult she could read and sign her name but she was not as learned, or as intellectual as Catherine of Aragon or Anne Boleyn (Weir, 1991, p. 289). The aim of female education was to produce the perfect wife who had been “schooled in godly and moral precepts, as well as in household management, sewing, embroidery, dancing, music and riding, rather than to promote independent thinking” (Borman, 2009, p. 63). Jane was also taught household management, needlework and cookery (Weir, 1991, p. 289) as long as a woman was able to be a charming hostess and manage the household efficiently then her husband would have no reason to complain. These social skills were easily passed on from one generation to the next and most girls were educated by their mothers or female guardians (Borman, 2009, p. 63). Jane’s main expertise seems to have been needlework which was reported to be beautiful and elaborate and examples of her work survived within the Seymour family for a century after her death which is a testimony to her embroidery skills. After Jane’s death it has even been noted that King Henry himself became an “enthusiastic embroiderer”:

“The King, who in some former years has been solitary and pensive, now gives himself up to amusement, going to play every night upon the Thames, with harps, chanters, and all kinds of music and pastime. He evidently delights now in painting and embroidery, (having sent men to France, Flanders, Italy, and elsewhere for masters of this art, and also for musicians and other ministers of pastime). All his people think this is a sign of his desire to marry if he should find an agreeable match...” (Marillac to Montmorency, June 1539, [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=75873](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=75873))

Elizabeth’s education was not purely based on academic pursuits and like Jane became proficient in needlework and was taught from an early age how to wield a needle and in 1539, aged six, Elizabeth completed a shirt of cambric as a New Years gift for Edward, then aged two (Weir, 1991, p. 379). Elizabeth also produced an embroidered cover for the translation which she presented to Kateryn Parr but this will be discussed in a later chapter. This skill for needlework was the only element of their education which Jane and Elizabeth shared.

Anne of Cleves was born on 22nd September 1515 and was the second child born to John III, Duke of Cleves and Maria, Duchess of Julich – Berg, Anne was three years younger than the eldest child, Sybilla; after Anne, William, later Duke of Julich–Cleves–Berg born in 1516 and the youngest child, born in 1517 was Amelia (Fraser, 1992, p. 296).

Unfortunately Anne’s mother Duchess Maria was the complete opposite of Queen Isabella of Castile and was not concerned with giving her daughters an education which reflected the Renaissance view that women of royal and noble status should receive a more academic education. Duchess Maria was a strict Catholic much like Queen Isabella but unlike Queen Isabella, Duchess Maria was not interested in the new educational ideas inspired by Humanism which were spreading from Italy throughout Europe. Duchess Maria had strict ideas regarding the upbringing of her daughters “... ‘one that looketh very strictly to her children’ who were never allowed ‘far from her elbow’” (Fraser, 1992, p. 298). Anne received a very basic education, she could read and write but only in her own language this dialect was called *deutsch* or *dietsch*, which was known to the English as Dutch and the English found the language “oddly grating on their ears” (Fraser, 1991, p. 298). However, Anne had no knowledge of Latin, French, English or any other language but despite this Nicholas Wotton believed that Anne was intelligent enough to learn English quite quickly (Weir, 1991, p. 389).

One of Henry’s chief passions and talents was for music and this was the one talent and passion shared by all three of his children which lasted throughout all of their lives. However, Anne of Cleves was brought up at a court which regarded music with contempt as it was seen as sinful, and the ambassador to the court of the Duchy of Cleves, who was arranging the marriage, Nicholas Wotton reported that in Germany, music “was ‘a rebuke and an occasion of lightness’ if a great lady was able to sing or play, let alone be ‘learned’” (Fraser, 1991, p. 298). This was in stark contrast with some ladies at Henry’s court and Henry’s own daughters’. Anne’s chief passions were cards and needlework in which she demonstrated an expertise (Weir, 1991, p. 389). The influence of Anne’s Catholic mother was possibly the reason why Anne, who was brought up in line with her father’s Protestant faith, was not educated in line with the new Protestant trend for educated women.

Anne of Cleves could neither dance nor play a musical instrument and her “ignorance and shyness rendered her an embarrassment in the sophisticated world of the Tudor court” (Borman, 2009, p. 68). Anne’s lack of academic education, her inability to sing or play a musical instrument and her lack of knowledge about fashion all played a part in contributing to Henry’s dislike of Anne as a wife. Henry “could only deplore her lack of education, wit and musical ability, three things he greatly esteemed in women” (Weir, 2000, p. 404). Henry’s first two wives certainly possessed all three traits and these traits were inherited by his daughters.

Katherine Howard’s life is a somewhat tragic tale from its beginning to its ending on the scaffold on 13th February 1542 aged between eighteen and twenty – four. Katherine was the youngest of nine brothers and sisters born to Lord Edmund Howard and his wife Joyce Culpeper, Lord Edmund Howard was a younger brother of the Duke of Norfolk and as such had to rely on more powerful family members to survive. Katherine’s mother Joyce died when Katherine was a small child (Plowden, 1979, p. 92).

As a result Katherine was raised by her father’s stepmother the Dowager Duchess of Norfolk who had no regard for “the new fashion of giving high–born young ladies a wide–ranging education, and instead ensured that her protégée would receive only the rudimentaries of reading, writing and music. However, even being taught how to read and write was far above what the vast majority would learn but far below the intellectual achievements of Henry’s other wives mainly Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Kateryn Parr. As will be seen later in the chapter even the basic task of writing was not taught well to her (Borman, 2009, p. 72). Katherine was to learn obedience, good manners, social graces and household management in her grandmother’s household in preparation for her marriage to a husband who would of course be chosen by her family, he would probably have been a rising man of the court who it might be useful to attach the Howard name and interests too, little did they or Katherine herself know that this man would turn out to be King Henry VIII.

Katherine cared little for academic pursuits and was barely literate and preferred dancing and gossiping with the other girls in the Duchess’s household. Katherine is best described as a “pretty child, but bird – brained and barely literate, she grew naturally into an empty – headed adolescent, one of a bevy of giggling, chattering girls who thought of precious little but clothes, young men and how to squeeze as much fun as possible out of life before they were inexorably claimed by marriage and the painful drudgery of child–bearing” (Plowden, 1979, p. 93). When Katherine became Queen in 1540 she enjoyed all of the distractions which the court offered especially dancing, showing off her figure in beautiful new gowns along with the priceless jewels which the King showered her with. However “these frivolous pursuits did little to improve her knowledge of court politics, however, and she seemed to think that she could fritter away her days as Queen with not a care in the world” (Borman, 2009, p. 74). This lack of political knowledge was dangerous in such a volatile court where knowledge of politics was essential in order to gain favour and survive. Elizabeth had an acute political awareness and this was in part due to her formal education and also her informal education whereby she learnt from the situations which were unfolding around her. Katherine did not and this lack of political education would benefit Elizabeth as she would be able to learn from Katherine’s downfall.

However, this was not to reach the extent of favour nor was Elizabeth to get as close to Katherine Howard as she did to her father’s sixth wife Kateryn Parr. But the favour which Katherine Howard showed Elizabeth would soon be replaced by a much larger event, the downfall of the Queen.

Katherine Howard’s downfall and execution also brought about the downfall of her family and the faction which followed the Howards. This was the result of a culmination of factors but the final event which brought down the Queen and her family was the Queen’s affair with Thomas Culpeper, a gentleman of King Henry’s household and a favoured attendant of his. Whilst it is not important to tell all of the details of this story there is one detail which cannot be overlooked for the purpose of this thesis which is education and in this case basic literacy.

When details of the affair came to light a letter from Katherine to Thomas Culpeper was discovered amongst his belongings. It is ironic but also “sadly appropriate” that this is the only letter of Katherine’s to survive (Fraser, 1992, p. 341). The letter was appallingly written, the spelling was appalling and the handwriting equally bad. Whilst most girls (and even men) at this time who could write had varied spelling, some was very bad and the same word in the same work by the same person was often spelt a few different ways and people often spelt their own names in a different way. Katherine’s was extremely bad and to some extent worse that Anne of Cleves’ spelling who only began to learn English after she had arrived in England in 1540 for her short–lived marriage to Henry. Katherine clearly had to labour over the letter and whilst the first eighteen words are written in someone else’s hand and seem innocent enough “’Master Culpeper, I heartily recommend me unto you, praying you to send me work how that you do’” (Fraser, 1992, p. 341). After this Katherine herself began to write and towards the end of the letter wrote “’I would you were with me now that you might see what pain I take in writing to you’” Katherine’s passion and enchantment with Culpeper is clear (Fraser, 1992, pp. 341 – 342). This letter was proof enough of the adultery being committed by Katherine and she now lies next to her cousin Anne Boleyn in the chapel of St Peter Ad Vincula in the Tower of London, although whilst Anne’s conviction of adultery was most likely derived from false information, Katherine’s was not. Katherine Howard shows that the new fashion for educated women did not impact on all noble households. Perhaps because the Howard’s had Catholic convictions they were not open to the new educational ideas which had been born from the Reformation. This meant that the lessons which Elizabeth learnt from Katherine Howard were life lessons and Robert Dudley often attests that he was told by an eight year old Elizabeth that she would never marry.

Whilst Elizabeth did not directly witness Jane Seymour’s death after childbirth, Henry’s cruel dismissal and brushing aside of Anne of Cleves, Katherine Howard’s brutal end on the block or the various statesmen who Henry rose to power and then brutally broke she would certainly been aware of the events. Although there is no record of Elizabeth ever having spoken about or written about any of these events which took place during her father’s reign. In the later years of Elizabeth’s own reign Shakespeare wrote Hamlet and spoke through the voice of Horatio:

“Of carnal, bloody and unnatural acts,

Of accidental judgments, casual slaughters,

Of deaths put on by cunning and forced cause...”

(Shakespeare; Hamlet, Act V)

These words were perhaps inspired by the tragic and terrible events which took place during Henry’s reign and, if they were, Elizabeth would have understood them.

This was Elizabeth’s background and childhood and during her reign this was reflected in Elizabeth’s “passionate concern for civil peace and the rule of law, in her contempt for fanatics of all shades, and in her abhorrence of capital punishment. At the time, she kept her head down, her nose in her books, and said nothing” (Johnson, 1974, p. 21). Robert Dudley would later say to the French ambassador that he had known Elizabeth since she was eight years old and he says that from that time Elizabeth had said she would never marry (Borman, 2009, p. 77). Elizabeth had begun to see marriage as something which only ended in death or being cast aside and although Elizabeth did not remember what happened to her mother by this time she would have been aware of the full story and this fact, added to the fate of Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard, could have been enough to prevent Elizabeth seeing marriage as an ideal life situation. Elizabeth was clearly paying rapt attention to what was going on at court and stored all of the important lessons away in her memory and learnt important lessons from the events which took place, this also formed a valuable part of Elizabeth’s education. Elizabeth may have even observed their fates in a detached, clinical way but this helped shape her future. Elizabeth’s education did not just provide her with a formal education in the academic sense through learning, for example, theology and languages but Elizabeth also gained an informal education. Elizabeth gained this by watching and learning from what was going on around her in the turbulent world of the Tudor court. These lessons in survival allowed Elizabeth to develop a keen political eye which she would retain throughout her life. Combining this informal education and formal education she was prepared well for the future and was an education which was not received by her contemporaries.

Kateryn Parr

Only one example of Kateryn’s signature from her childhood is spelt Katheryn and Kateryn Parr always signed her name as Kateryn Parr KP even when she married the King. I will use this spelling as Susan E. James did in her *Kateryn Parr. The Making of a Queen* this is because it is how Kateryn consistently spelt her name and consistent spelling in the sixteenth century is difficult to come by. In addition, it makes Kateryn easier to distinguish from the many other Catherine’s who played a role in Elizabeth’s life (James, 1999, p. 10).

Kateryn’s father was Sir Thomas Parr of Kendal is Westmorland. His own father Sir William Parr, had died when Thomas was young and his mother’s second marriage to Sir Nicholas Vaux meant that young Thomas now had more court connections which were sufficient enough for Thomas to be knighted at Henry VIII’s coronation (Loades, 2010, p. 32). In 1507, Thomas married Maud Green one of the daughters and co-heiresses of the Northamptonshire landowner, Sir Thomas Green (Starkey, 2003, pp. 690 – 691). Their marriage seems to have been happy and it was certainly fruitful, producing three children, their eldest was probably christened Kateryn because Catherine of Aragon stood as her godmother (Starkey, 2003, p. 693) although this is never mentioned by the family or in surviving correspondence which is most unusual considering the high status of Kateryn’s godmother it is certainly something which would normally be recorded by the family. Maud faithfully served Catherine as a lady in waiting until her (Maud’s) death in 1531. However, in 1517 disaster struck the Parr family as Sir Thomas Parr died, a victim of what the royal secretary Pace called the ‘great – plague’. Sir Thomas left Maud a widow at twenty–two to raise three young children, the eldest of which, Kateryn, was about five (Starkey, 2003, p. 694).

Kateryn Parr’s date of birth, like that of Henry’s other English wives Anne Boleyn, Jane Seymour and Katherine Howard is unknown and like her English predecessors can only be guessed. Her date of birth is generally stated as sometime in August 1512, a year later her brother William was born and two years later another girl, Anne was born (Porter, 2010, p. 21). Agnes Strickland states that the correspondence between Lord Dacre and Maud Parr about a potential marriage between Kateryn and Lord Dacre’s grandson the son of Lord Scrope which were written in the fifteenth year of Henry’s reign (1524) specifies her as being under twelve so she could not have been born until 1512 or 1513 (Strickland, 1844, p. 6).

Maud Parr undertook the task of raising her three children with commendable ability and devoted her life to their upbringing and education. Maud was a deeply religious woman and this in turn inspired her children to love God. One of Kateryn’s main interests throughout her life was theology and “‘godly matters’ fascinated her” (Weir, 2007, p. 496). Maud expected her daughters to learn the typical female accomplishments. There is a story, which is probably an apocryphal one that Kateryn did not appreciate her mother’s insistence to learn female accomplishments and “protested that her hands were destined to touch crowns and sceptres” (Weir, 2007, p. 487). Weir also states that Kateryn grew up with a great respect for learning which is shown by her continuous learning as Queen and her interest in the education of her young stepchildren, Margaret Neville, daughter of her second husband Lord Latimer and of course Elizabeth and Edward. However, Weir also states that Kateryn was “the most erudite and the most intellectual” of Henry’s wives (Weir, 2007, p. 487). Whilst there is no doubt that Kateryn was certainly more intelligent than Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves and Katherine Howard however, as will be discussed later on I do not think that Kateryn’s intellectual accomplishments were on a par with those of Catherine of Aragon and Anne Boleyn. Although “Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn and Catherine Parr possessed real intellectual ability, give or take their very different educational opportunities; indeed’ the fact that Catherine of Aragon was the cleverest, followed by Anne Boleyn and finally Kateryn Parr, directly reflects these opportunities. Neither Jane Seymour nor Anne of Cleves was stupid, according to those who observed and reported upon them. Poor Katherine Howard, whose single surviving handwritten document is an illicit love letter to Thomas Culpeper (‘I heard that you were sick and never longed for so much for anything as to see you’) is of course the odd one out in this respect; although one should remember that the ability to scrawl even her own words of love put Katherine ahead of many of her female contemporaries” (Fraser, 1992, p. 417).

Maud’s household gained a reputation as a finishing school for young men and women and in 1523 Lord Dacre advised his son–in–law Lord Scrope that his son should finish his education under the care of Maud Parr. “’For I assure you’, Dacre continued, ‘he might learn with her, as well as in any place that I know, as well as nurture, as French and other language, which me seems were a commodious thing for him’” (Starkey, 2003, p. 695). Kateryn was an able pupil and is reputed to have acquired a good knowledge of French but her skill in other languages which would possibly have been on offer due to the resurgence in classical education such as Latin has been widely debated (Starkey, 2003, p. 695) however, she may have had a basic grasp of the language and might have been able to read it. It is not known who Kateryn’s tutors were or exactly what she learnt but it is also possible that Kateryn learnt to read Italian as Elizabeth later wrote to her in the language. This suggests that Elizabeth assumed that her step-mother would not need the use of a translator to translate the letter which was a highly personal one (Starkey, 2003, p. 740). Both of Kateryn’s parents’ could speak French, as this was a desirable skill in court circles so it can be safely assumed that like her parents Kateryn, if not fluent in French, would be extremely competent in her skill in this language. Kateryn would also have been educated in scripture and this would have formed an essential part of Kateryn’s education (Porter, 2010, p. 36). This also suggests that Kateryn was familiar with reading Latin or at least enough to read the Bible, as the English Bible was not yet available. There is a possibility that Kateryn had quotes read to her or was given Biblical quotes in English to copy and memorize rather than reading the original Latin version. However, the competence with which Kateryn was later able to discuss religion and write prayers and other religious tracts suggests that Kateryn was probably able to read and understand the Latin Bible herself. The confidence which Kateryn had when discussing philosophy and religion and the independence of thought Kateryn shows suggests regular study (Porter, 2010, p. 36). Under the watchful eye of her mother, Kateryn grew into a “... witty and engaging woman who enjoyed lively conversation, and who thanks to her education, could speak knowledgably on a wide range of subjects. She was also well versed in the more courtly accomplishments of music and dancing, and loved fine clothes and jewellery... (Borman, 2009, p. 82). This would all serve her well during her third marriage to the fat, aged; bad tempered King and also endear her to all three of her stepchildren to the eldest Mary, as a friend and companion and to the youngest two, Elizabeth and Edward as a loving stepmother.

Maud Parr’s household can be said to have been inspired by the household of the young Princess Mary set up by King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, Where the King and Queen led the aristocracy and members of the court followed. Other parents, like Maud Parr, began to provide an education on a par with Princess Mary to their own children. The idea that women should be given an education which consisted of more than the female accomplishments of sewing and household management never spread beyond the court circle which included most of the intellectual elite and educating girls to a higher standard than had been commonplace previously, gained popularity amongst the nobility (Plowden, 1979, p. 36). The three monarchs that succeeded Henry VIII were, for one reason or another, all childless. Therefore, for the next 56 years, from 1547-1603, the institution of the Royal Nursery was suspended and was only revived in the reign of James I. If a female heir had been produced it would have been interesting to see how Mary and, or Elizabeth had educated their female heir. One thing that could be guaranteed is that any child of Mary’s would have been Catholic and Elizabeth’s Protestant. But would they have educated them to the same standard or even better than themselves? However, this question will always remain unanswered and the lack of a royal nursery resulted in the fashion for educated women becoming important. Princess Elizabeth the eldest and only surviving daughter of James I and VI and his wife Anne of Denmark learnt French and Italian as well as typical accomplishments such as horse riding, music and dancing (Asch, 2008, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8638) but she was not educated to the same academic standard as Queen Mary and certainly not educated to the standard of Queen Elizabeth I, her namesake. This shows how, because it had been impossible to keep the standard of female education at a high level it had inevitably declined and once again it was distasteful to educate young girls to a high standard.

In his biography of Kateryn Parr, Martienssen states that Catherine of Aragon entrusted control of the court school to Maud Parr which had been set up for Princess Mary and the daughter’s of her mother’s close companions such as Lady Maud Parr’s daughters, Kateryn and Anne (Martienssen, 1975, p. 17). However, this theory can surely not be true, there is no mention of Kateryn being a companion, let alone being educated alongside Princess Mary in the copious amount of evidence which we have detailing Princess Mary’s childhood and youth. Most notably the account of Princess Mary’s childhood and youth in Madden’s *‘The Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary’*. Kateryn was also three or four (depending on whether you take 1512 or 1513 as Kateryn’s year of birth) years older than Mary so it is unlikely that she would have been educated alongside Mary anyway, even if there was a ‘court school’ due to Kateryn being older.

Alongside Martienssen, Plowden also states that Kateryn was one of the hand–picked young girls chosen to share Princess Mary’s education. These lessons were directed by Luis Vives the Spanish humanist and scholar. Who recommended that the Princess Mary be educated in the company of girls of a similar status; in this case the daughters of the nobility (Plowden, 1979, p. 104). However, there is no evidence that the royal parents ever took Vives’ advice regarding companions for Princess Mary during her education unlike King Henry’s illegitimate son Henry Fitzroy, the Duke of Richmond who had boys to share his education with, one being William Parr, Kateryn’s brother (Martienssen, 1975, pp. 28 – 29). Tellingly, from the evidence we have, the Parr family nor Kateryn herself ever mentioned her having been educated alongside Princess Mary and this is something which the family would have been proud to mention like they were of young William Parr’s connection to the Duke of Richmond (Porter, 2010, p. 31).

Kateryn was not educated alongside Princess Mary, although the Princess may have met Kateryn’s mother Maud Parr as Maud was one of Catherine of Aragon’s ladies–in–waiting. In addition, despite Plowden and Martienssen’s claims that Vives educated Mary personally there is again no truth in this. Whilst Vives may have recommended a curriculum for Princess Mary which other noble families may have followed in their households there is no evidence that Vives did personally tutor Princess Mary or the daughters or even sons of any member of the nobility of England as we know that Princess Mary’s tutor was Richard Featherstone (Erickson, 1978, p. 62; Prescott, 1952, p. 34).

One of the most important moments in Mary and Elizabeth’s lives, their restoration to the line of succession. “...The act that was passed in parliament in February 1544 was a landmark in English history, the first time that the right of females to succeed to the throne was spelt out in statute law. It also made clear that Henry still hoped to have children with ‘the most virtuous and gracious lady Katherine, now queen of England, late wife of John Neville, Knight, Lord Latimer deceased, by whom as yet his majesty hath none issue, but may have full well when it shall please God’. The occasion of the act, its text went on to say, was that the King

Most prudently and widely considering and calling to his

remembrance how this realm standeth at this present time

in the case of the succession... recognizing and

acknowledging also that it is in the only pleasure and will of

Almighty God how long his highness or his entirely beloved

son, Prince Edward, shall live... his majesty therefore

thinketh convenient afore his departure beyond the seas, that

it be enacted... that in case it shall happen the King’s

majesty and the said excellent prince his yet only son Prince

Edward and heir apparent, to decease without heir of either

of their bodies lawfully begotten... then the said imperial

crown and other the premises shall be to the Lady Mary, the

King’s highness’ daughter, and to the heirs of the body of the

Same Lady Mary... and for default of such issue the said

Imperial crown and other the premises shall be to the Lady

Elizabeth, the King’s second daughter...” (Porter, 2010, p. 193).

There is a dispute over the date of when the act of succession was passed, 1543 is a date favoured by Levin (1994, p. 7), Fraser (1992, p. 367) and Somerset (1991/7, p. 17) and 1544 is favoured by Starkey (2001, p. 31) and Plowden (2002, p. 77). 1544 can be seen as a likely date because on “26June Henry ate with all three of his children in a grand dinner at Whitehall and the dinner was followed by a ‘void’. A void was a large reception in which wine and sweetmeats were served. Everyone stood which reduced the formalities of etiquette and made it a sociable occasion. This, in other words, was Henry introducing his children and successors to the court. The point was driven home by a notable absentee. The current childless Queen was not present” (Starkey, 2001, p. 31). The lack of Kateryn’s presence at this celebratory dinner leads to another historical debate about the true extent of Kateryn’s role in the lives of the royal children. Firstly, that as the organiser of the royal nursery which will be discussed later in this chapter and Kateryn’s supposed role as the person who reunited the royal family. The implication of being reinstated to the succession had huge implications on Elizabeth’s education perhaps it was this event which led Elizabeth’s governess and tutors to educate her as a future heir even if no one else saw Elizabeth as a future ruler after all there were two perfectly healthy heirs in front of her.

Kateryn is often credited with convincing King Henry to restore both Mary and Elizabeth to the succession and as Jordan states “extracting from Henry some measure of decency for the two princesses” and Jordan also states that Kateryn’s greatest contribution was restoring Mary and Elizabeth to the succession (Jordan, 1968, p. 33). Although it is doubtful that Mary and Elizabeth were living in conditions which were considered below ‘decent’ in the first place. Agnes Strickland, the Victorian biographer of English Queens also states that “one of the first fruits of Queen Katherine’s virtuous influence over the mind of the King, was the restoration of his daughters, the persecuted Mary and the young neglected Elizabeth, to their proper rank in the court, and recognition in the order of succession to the crown...” (Strickland, 1844, p. 36). Although what must not be forgotten is that if the Act was passed in 1544 then Kateryn would have been married for a matter of months or if the act dated from 1543 then Kateryn might not yet have been married to Henry but Kateryn is mentioned in the act so 1543 can perhaps be dismissed as a date for the act of succession. Therefore, whether it was created in 1543 or 1544 Kateryn would not have been married to Henry long enough to influence the act of succession and Henry was certainly not the type of King to allow his wife, especially, a childless one to have any influence over such an important policy as the succession. Reuniting the royal family took place because Henry wanted it (Starkey, 2003, p. 719). In addition, within the wording of the act there is an emphasis on Kateryn’s childless state this clearly reiterates what Kateryn’s role is, it is to provide Henry with more children, I am sure that Henry would have welcomed Kateryn’s friendship with his other children but he would not have expected nor wanted Kateryn to make them her priority and so the act of succession would not have been a result of Kateryn’s influence because in Henry’s eyes her priority should be producing children of her own.

This ‘rehabilitation’ is almost certainly commemorated in the painting at Hampton Court Palace known as *The Family of Henry VIII.* The painting is set in Whitehall and parts of the building and gardens are visible in the paintings background. Elizabeth and Mary both stand on either side of Henry in the portrait, King Henry is sat in the centre of the portrait and he probably did sit for this portrait rather than stand due, at this point in his life, to the pain in his legs. In the place of the absent Queen Kateryn, Queen Jane as the mother of his heir Edward who sits on his father’s right is portrayed whilst Queen Jane sits on the King’s left. Elizabeth on her father’s left has the most humble place in the portrait but this astute girl was probably inwardly feeling a sense of triumph. She has finally been recognised as a legal heir to her father without the aid of Kateryn as had been suggested by Jordan and Strickland but by her own father’s desire as suggested by Starkey and this probably pleased Elizabeth much more as Kateryn although loved by Elizabeth was “never more than a moon to Henry’s sun” (Starkey, 2001, p. 29). If Kateryn had played a role in the act of succession or perhaps been pregnant or just had a child, especially if that child had been a boy then she would surely have been included, in place of Jane in the portrait depicting Henry’s family therefore, suggesting that Kateryn had no role. Although Kateryn was not a mother she wanted to prove herself an effective stepmother.

On the second page of Strickland’s biography of Kateryn Parr, Kateryn is described as a “learned and virtuous matron who directed the studies of Lady Jane Grey, Edward VI and Queen Elizabeth, and who may, with truth, be called the nursing mother of the Reformation” (Strickland, 1844, p. 2). This role as the leader of a royal nursery has been disputed by historians ever since. It is logical to see why Kateryn may have been an inspiration to Elizabeth because she was the first of Henry’s wives whom Elizabeth had met who was a well educated woman (Somerset, 1991, pp, 16 – 17) other than Catherine of Aragon whom Elizabeth had never met and her own mother Anne Boleyn whom Elizabeth never mentioned.

Firstly, there is the dispute about how well educated and therefore how suitable Kateryn was to oversee the education of the King’s youngest two children, Mary’s formal education had finished a long time ago by the time that Kateryn married Henry. Kateryn desired to establish good relations with all three of Henry’s children this was probably not a difficult task with Mary as Kateryn’s mother Maud Parr was a loyal servant to Mary’s mother Catherine of Aragon and Mary always found it easy to become well acquainted with anyone who had served her mother with loyalty. However, their quick and easy acquaintance was, contrary to opinion, not the result of Kateryn and Mary’s shared education. When Kateryn became Queen intellectual pursuits became fashionable again and some of her ladies–in–waiting most notably, Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk were also well educated and had an interest in theological issues and Protestantism just like the new Queen and were patrons of the new learning (Plowden, 1979, p. 105).

Kateryn is supposed to have secured the appointment of Prince Edward’s first tutor who may have been recommended by Cranmer and arranged by Kateryn, this was Dr Richard Cox. Kateryn is also credited with arranging the appointment of Prince Edward’s second tutor, a Cambridge scholar of St Johns’ College by the name of John Cheke. Others from St Johns’ College who went to the Royal School which Kateryn was apparently founding were most notably William Grindal and Roger Ascham who were to tutor Elizabeth (Martienssen, 1975, pp. 176 – 177). Weir also states that Henry even asked Kateryn for her advice when it came to appointing a suitable tutor for Edward (Weir, 2007, p. 500) but later goes on to contradict this statement by saying that Henry himself was absorbed in the plans for Edward’s education (Weir, 2007, p. 501). This connection which Kateryn had with Cambridge has surely been exaggerated and the appointment of Cambridge tutors for the King’s two youngest children comes from a different source close to the King.

Anthony Denny was a member of the King’s Privy Chamber from around 1532 and became one of two chief gentlemen from 1538 and groom of the stool in 1546 (Dowling, 1981, pp. 192 – 3). Denny was a product of John Colet’s school at St Paul’s and of St John’s College which was founded in 1511 by Lady Margaret Beaufort, King Henry VIII’s grandmother and John Fisher whom Henry, had beheaded in 1535 for refusing to accept him as Supreme Head of the Church of England. As a result Anthony Denny was part of a growing circle of court men who had been educated at St John’s College, Cambridge. Denny was also married to Joan Champernowne who is reputed to be either the sister or cousin of Katherine Ashley née Champernowne governess to Elizabeth. Joan is most commonly said to be Catherine’s sister and their relationship will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on Katherine Ashley. Denny’s links with Cambridge lasted throughout his life and led to Elizabeth becoming a “Cambridge girl” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17) which will be discussed in the chapter on Elizabeth.

Edward’s first tutor Richard Cox had been educated at Eton and then King’s College, Cambridge and he had been a chaplain to both Archbishop Cranmer and King Henry VIII. Cox was also a close friend of William Butts, the King’s chief physician and Anthony Denny.

With friends such as Butts and Denny who were in day to day contact with the King when even Kateryn would not see her husband every day Cox did not need the Queen’s approval although her support probably did not secure the appointment, Cox would probably have appreciated it nonetheless (Porter, 2010, p. 178). The link which Cambridge had with Denny at court meant that educational ideas developed at Cambridge were able to have a dominant influence over the education of the King’s youngest children. This link to Denny probably also led to the appointment of Cheke to assist Cox in Edward’s tutoring; in turn Cheke’s favourite pupil Roger Ascham and Ascham’s favourite pupil in turn William Grindal came to court with a letter recommending him as a tutor for Elizabeth. As will be seen in the chapter on Elizabeth this was a position Grindal secured probably through Denny’s close relationship with Henry (Starkey, 2001, pp. 26 -27). In addition in 1548 on the death of Grindal when Kateryn tried to place her chaplain Francis Goldsmith as Elizabeth’s replacement tutor for Grindal Elizabeth dismissed Kateryn’s choice and chose Ascham instead showing that Kateryn did not have any influence in the appointment of her step-children’s tutors (Dowling, 1987, p. 64) after Henry’s death so it is highly unlikely that Kateryn did so before Henry’s death. It is unlikely that Henry appointed his children’s tutors because someone else recommended them, because the final decision in all matters regarding his children was Henry no matter who or what Denny or the Queen suggested.

Kateryn Parr was also “not fitted intellectually to supervise the studies of the royal children in the way that Katherine of Aragon had organised and participated in the instruction of Princess Mary in the earlier years of the reign” (Dowling, 1987, p. 61). Kateryn had received a good grounding in the basics as a child and when she married Henry, Kateryn can be seen as a beginner and Loades has described Kateryn “as a scholar, no more advanced than Elizabeth herself...”(Loades, 2003, p. 50). This is also evidenced in letters from Prince Edward to his step-mother and whilst some of these letters may seem a little priggish he was a very accomplished child and was probably paying Kateryn a genuine compliment. Edward’s letters to Kateryn and his sisters are the only pieces of evidence we have which show Edward’s genuine feelings as he did not express them very often. From one letter “we learn that Edward’s tutor was so impressed by the beauty of Katherine’s handwriting (“Romanis literis”) that he believed she employed a secretary until he saw her signature done in the same handsome script. In the same letter written in June 1546, Edward congratulates his stepmother on her progress in the Latin language and in literature (“in Latina lingua et bonis literis” a fairly sure indication that Maud Parr’s home tutoring had given Katherine’s little or no command of Latin (Fenno Hoffman Jr, 1960, p. 353). Edward wrote to Kateryn in Latin this is not necessarily because Kateryn could read Latin fluently. Edward wrote to all his correspondents in Latin as this was his main exercise in composition and the only reply of Kateryn’s which survives is not written in Kateryn’s hand and it is a corrected draft written on the cover of Edward’s letter (Dowling, 1986, p. 236). Latin was a basic part of the sixteenth century curriculum, Catherine of Aragon was fluent in Latin and therefore, able to successfully oversee Mary’s education as she has received a fine education herself under the supervision of her formidable mother, Isabella of Castile. Kateryn Parr however, was more like Catherine of Aragon’s mother Isabella of Castile who also learnt Latin as an adult instead of during her childhood like Catherine of Aragon who had been well instructed as a child (Fraser, 1992, p. 364). Mary is also said to have been happy to encourage Kateryn’s scholarly pursuits especially Kateryn’s study of Latin. Mary also aided Kateryn in her major literary project as Queen, the translation of Erasmus’s *Paraphrases of the New Testament* and Mary herself undertook the translation of the Gospel of St John although illness prevented Mary from completing the work (Whitelock, 2009, p. 110). Kateryn may have persuaded Mary to participate in the translation (Prescott, 1940/1952, p. 120, Travitsky, 1996, p. 238) but Kateryn was not the source of Mary’s interest in Erasmus it may as Dowling says have given “an impetus to theirs but Mary at least would have been familiar with the paraphrases and other works from childhood...” (Dowling, 1981, p. 250). Mary would probably have been introduced to Erasmus’s work by her mother or by her tutor’s on the recommendation of her mother and translating Erasmus could possibly have reminded Mary of her mother and anything or anyone linked to her mother and her memory in great esteem.

In addition to Kateryn not possessing the correct intellectual qualities to run a royal nursery it is highly unlikely that the youngest two royal children shared a schoolroom. “Two of them might reside together for a time (Edward and Elizabeth at Hatfield, for example, or Elizabeth and Mary at Havering), and one or two might be present at court, but there is no evidence of shared lessons” (Dowling, 1987, pp. 62–3). Kateryn probably did bring all three children together for the two definite occasions: Christmas 1541 and July 1544 and the youngest two may have studied together on these occasions but Elizabeth could have brought her own tutor with her. Therefore, for most of its ‘existence the royal school lacks one of its pupil’s and Edward and Elizabeth’s letters generally show that they are away from their step-mother (Dowling, 1987, p. 63).

Whilst Kateryn probably played a role in supporting Edward and Elizabeth in their interest in the reformed religion (Haugaard, 1969, p. 348) it is an exaggeration to say like Martienssen that it was “from Kateryn (my spelling) that Elizabeth acquired the learning and political skill which enabled her to dominate the power–game and to lead a high–spirited, almost ungovernable nation to fame and fortune” (Martienssen, 1975, pp. 243–4). Although as will be further explored in the chapter in Elizabeth’s education despite Elizabeth seeing Kateryn act as regent in 1544 when Henry VIII was at war in France Elizabeth did not copy Kateryn’s rule. Elizabeth was a queen in her own right not a regent like Kateryn. In addition, Elizabeth always emphasised her status as her father’s daughter and aspects of his kingly personality can be seen reflected in Elizabeth’s style of Queenship. As we will see some of the greatest lessons on how not to rule came not from Kateryn but from the extreme religious stances which Edward and Mary took in their reigns. Perhaps, most importantly, Elizabeth learnt from the dangerous circumstances which she found herself in but particularly the circumstances which she found herself in from her father’s death up until her own accession and it is these lessons which will in a later chapter be discussed in more detail, these taught Elizabeth some important lessons which she took heed of and leant from and therefore made her reign a success.

Governess

Katherine Ashley (née Champernowne) was a member of Elizabeth’s household from 1536 until her death in July 1565. Her death affected Elizabeth greatly, she lost the woman who knew her better than anyone else and was her loyalist friend and confidante. “She stepped into the void created by the death of Elizabeth’s mother and the neglect of her father, and had shown her more love, devotion and loyalty than any other person living. Only death had been able to break their otherwise impregnable emotional bond – a bond that had been as strong as that between mother and daughter” (Borman, 2009, p. 274). Elizabeth was inconsolable and stayed in her chamber for days and did not conduct any state business for days. It is remarkable then, that no comprehensive biography of Katherine has been written given her close twenty–nine year relationship with Elizabeth.

Katherine Champernowne was born in around 1502 in Devon, her parentage, however, is debated. It is most commonly stated that Katherine was the daughter of Sir Philip Champernowne and his wife Katherine who was the daughter of Sir Edmund Carew (Merton, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online Jan 2008 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68016>). The fact that her maiden name was Champernowne is made clear in the Privy Council Register, this supports the common claim that Catherine was the sister of Joan, daughter of Sir Philip Champernowne and the wife of Sit Anthony Denny.

The Champernowne was an ancient family stretching back hundreds of years and their parent’s union meant that Catherine and Joan were related to the leading gentry in the West Country. Sir Philip was very proud of this fact and engaged in discussions about his family history with the antiquarian John Leland (Borman, 2009, p. 62) who counted Paget, Thomas Wriothesley and Anthony Denny as his patrons (Carley, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online 2006 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16416>) therefore, this gave him valuable links to the court. Katherine was lucky enough to be raised in an enlightened household where a good education was thought beneficial this would serve her well during her time as Elizabeth’s governess, particularly in Elizabeth’s early years and particularly during Elizabeth’s early education. Private tutors were normally employed as tutors for the children of the household and their education usually started at the age of five and Sir Philip was committed to his daughters receiving a good education although it is a shame we do not know who the tutors were which Sir Philip may have employed for his children’s education. Katherine developed an interest in humanism and classical scholarship (Borman, 2009, pp. 62 – 63). As discussed in the chapter on Kateryn Parr whilst she may have taken an interest in Elizabeth’s education she did not direct it, whilst some do suggest that the humanist line which Elizabeth’s education followed was because the Queen favoured this line this is probably not the case (Hudson, 1980, p. 71). Elizabeth’s education took a humanist line because this is the line which Edward’s education followed and in addition Elizabeth’s very early education which she received from Katherine Ashley followed humanist lines so it was only natural that Elizabeth’s further educational programme ran along the foundations which Katherine Ashley had already laid not those dictated by the Queen.

John Ashley was probably introduced to court through his family connections as his mother’s sister was Lady Elizabeth Boleyn who was Anne Boleyn’s aunt. John Ashley’s first recorded office was as a gentleman waiter in Prince Edward’s household and by 1547 he had been given a position in the household of Princess Elizabeth probably as a result of his marriage in around 1545 to Katherine Champernowne now Katherine Ashley (Merton, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, online 2008; <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/818>).

Katherine or Kat as Elizabeth affectionately called her had a very different personality to Lady Bryan and Katherine’s education gave her a stronger sense of independence compared to most sixteenth century women. “No doubt it was less Kat’s sound moral purpose and piety that impressed the young Elizabeth than her lively humour and challenging intellect. For the first time since the death of her mother, she had found a woman who might just be a fitting replacement” (Borman, 2009, pp. 64–65). Katherine, I believe, is the woman who exercised an enormous amount of influence over Elizabeth’s early education, as a well educated woman herself she was probably well equipped for the job of teaching Elizabeth the basics. By the time Elizabeth started her education, probably, at the age of five, Elizabeth had been bastardized by her father and was, at this point, not eligible to inherit the throne so she did not need to be educated to the same standard as an heir. However, as we know Elizabeth was extraordinarily well educated and certainly educated as if she was an heir, this is probably due to Katherine giving Elizabeth a thorough grounding in what were considered ‘the basics’. Also luckily for Elizabeth, Henry had an appreciation for the growing trend of female education.

At the age of six Elizabeth was already “well schooled in the elaborate code of politeness and subservience to her elders that all properly brought–up children were expected to observe” (Plowden, 2002, p. 68). By this time Elizabeth’s formal education would have been progressing for a year at least, this would at least have included reading and writing which Katherine was presumably, as her chief lady, teaching her, perhaps with the help of a household chaplain. Katherine could also have taught Elizabeth the basics of Latin (Plowden, 2002, p. 68). Hibbert also states that “under the general supervision of her kindly governess Kat Ashley (his spelling), Elizabeth had lessons in mathematics, history and geography, sewing, dancing, deportment and riding; she was taught the principles of architecture and the fundamentals of astronomy; she learned French, Italian, Spanish and Flemish and acquired in addition, some Welsh, presumably from Blanche Parry...” (Hibbert, 1991, pp. 25–26). The idea that Elizabeth learnt Welsh is also reiterated by Borman in *Elizabeth’s Women* who suggests that Blanche “...sang her to sleep with Welsh lullabies and taught her the rudiments of that language as she grew older. Blanche’s love of Wales was well known and one contemporary praised her as a ‘singular well willer and furtherer of the weale publike’ of that whole country” (Borman, 2009, p. 60). This is the only example that Blanche may have had any influence over Elizabeth’s education and intellectual development. Weir also states that Katherine taught Elizabeth the basics of Flemish (Weir, 2008, p. 7). Although it has been suggested that Elizabeth learnt these languages there is no evidence to substantiate this.

Anne Boleyn, had set out an ambitious plan for her daughter’s education (Porter, 2010, p. 195) and Anne had apparently entrusted Elizabeth’s care to her chaplain Matthew Parker in 1536 just before her execution although it is debatable as to what extent Parker oversaw Elizabeth’s care or education, although he did become a chaplain to Henry VIII in 1537 so perhaps he made sure that the King did not forget his youngest daughter on behalf of Anne Boleyn. He may even have used his links along with those of Anthony Denny at Cambridge university to make sure that Elizabeth’s received an education of the highest standard and in 1547 he composed an epigram praising Elizabeth’s skill in Greek, Italian and French in 1547 therefore, he may have maintained some communication with Elizabeth’s household in memory of his former mistress Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth is also known to have owned a copy of the 1528 edition of Tyndale’s *Obedience of a Christian Man* which was first brought to King Henry’s attention by Anne Boleyn during the divorce and Elizabeth had inscribed it “’Elizabeth, Daughter of England and France’” (Dowling, 1981, p. 257 – 258).

The education which the six year old Elizabeth was receiving under the supervision of Katherine was already at such as high standard that when Sir Thomas Wriothesley paid a visit to Elizabeth’s household which she was sharing with her sister Mary. He was so impressed by Elizabeth that he said she spoke to him with as much assurance as a woman of forty and “’if she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour to womanhood than shall beseem her father’s daughter ‘” (Starkey, 2001, p. 26; Weir, 2008, p. 7). Katherine was very proud of this comment and she took great pride in her precocious young charge’s rapid progress (Weir, 2008, p. 7). When Elizabeth got her own tutor for the first time, William Grindal, in 1544 he wrote to Katherine to express his astonishment and gratitude for everything she had achieved with Elizabeth. “’Would God my wit wist (knew) what words would express the thanks you have deserved of all true English hearts, for that noble imp (Elizabeth) by your labour and wisdom now flourishing in all goodly godliness, the fruit whereof doth even now redound to her Grace’s high honour and profit. I wish her Grace to come to that end in perfectness with likelyhood of her wit, and painfulness in her study... which your diligent overseeing doth most constantly promise.’ This was more than just the flattery of a grateful beneficiary of Kat’s favour. Elizabeth’s exceptional intellectual ability was by now widely talked of. ‘She was learned (her sex and times considered) beyond all common belief’, another contemporary enthused” (Borman, 2009, p. 85). Katherine, therefore, was in charge of Elizabeth’s education for at least five or six years and she was clearly successful as shown by Grindal’s comments. Grindal’s own tutor, Roger Ascham, who became Elizabeth’s tutor upon Grindal’s premature death he did not want Katherine to push Elizabeth too far and exhorted her:

“If you pour much drink at once into a goblet, the most part will dash out and run over; if ye pour it softly, you may fill it even to the top, and so her Grace, I doubt not by little and little may be increased in learning, that at length greater cannot be required.” (Johnson, 1974, p. 16)

Ascham clearly underestimated Katherine’s precocious young charge because Elizabeth genuinely enjoyed her lessons and learning. Although he later came to appreciate her abilities which influenced the type of education he gave her as it was not just defined by the Humanist tradition but also by his appreciation of her abilities. Even during one of the most dangerous times of her life, the Seymour episode, which will be discussed in a later chapter, Elizabeth, and her brother’s council acknowledged Katherine’s role in Elizabeth’s education and how this played an important role in Elizabeth and Katherine’s close relationship. When the Lords of the Council wrote to Elizabeth in February 1548 they referred to Katherine as the woman who “... yeretofore hath had the special Charge to se to the good Education and Government of your Parson...” (Haynes, p. 107). Elizabeth later reiterated this when writing to the Council on 7 March 1548 to try and secure Katherine’s release back into her service after the Seymour affair. Elizabeth’s affection for Katherine is clear in the wording of the letter:

“...First because that she hath been with me a long time, and many years and hath taken great labour an pain in bringing of me up in learning and honesty; and therefore I ought of very duty (to) speak for her. For Saint Gregory sayeth that we are more bound to them that bringest us up well, than to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them, that is bringeth us into this world, but our bringers up are a cause to make us live well in it...” (Perry, 1990. Pp. 42 – 43).

The use of Saint Gregory in this letter also demonstrates Elizabeth’s learning and her ability to use very apt religious scripture or quotes when the opportunity presents itself.

Katherine, clearly recognised her young charge’s intelligence from an early age and used her own knowledge to give Elizabeth a basic education which could be developed. Katherine’s foundations paved the way for the remarkable learning which Elizabeth achieved and continued to build upon throughout her life. Elizabeth’s love of learning and subsequent intellectual achievements can be said to be the result of Katherine Ashley whose work resulted in not only Elizabeth becoming one of the finest minds of her age but also one of the most intelligent monarchs to ever sit on the English throne. With a legacy such as this it is remarkable that no comprehensive biography of Katherine has been written and one would certainly add to our knowledge of Elizabeth’s early life and reign through the eyes of a woman who was her constant companion from Elizabeth’s third year in 1536 until her unexpected death in 1565 which left Elizabeth devastated.

Tutors

Elizabeth’s formal tuition is said to have begun when she was nine years old in 1542 under the supervision of Dr Richard Cox the provost of Eton (Johnson, 1974, pp. 16–17) and Elizabeth apparently shared her younger brother, Edward’s tutors’ (Plowden, 2002, p. 73). Although, Elizabeth and Edward did share a household they did not do so permanently (Marples, 1965, p. 52) and when they did they would probably have shared tutors but not lessons due to the age gap. When they did share a household they would share tutors and Thomas Heywood who wrote *England’s Elizabeth: Her Life and Troubles, During Her Minoritie from the Cradle to the Crowne* printed by John Beale in London 1631 highlights this. Thomas Heywood’s patron seems to have been Lord Henry Carey, 1st Earl of Dover, Viscount Rochford and Lord Hunsdon who was the grandson of Henry, Lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain to Elizabeth I and also her cousin (‘her neere and deare kinsman’) (Heywood, 1631, p. 2) as he was the son of her mother’s sister Mary Boleyn. It is therefore, likely that most of Heywood’s information came from the Carey family or others closely associated with them. Henry, Lord Hunsdon and his wife Anne Morgan, Baroness Hunsdon was appointed keeper of Somerset House by Elizabeth I a post she kept for life, also served the Queen as a Lady of the Privy Chamber. The Queen was fond of the couple and certainly favoured them but then again Elizabeth did treat her Boleyn relatives well. Therefore, the information Heywood uses may have a certain degree of accuracy due to his links with those who had close access to Elizabeth throughout her life. Heywood outlines a picture of the routine which Elizabeth and Edward followed when they were together:

“So pregnant and ingenious were either, that they desired to look upon books as soone as the day began to breake, heir horae matutinae were so welcome, that they seemed to prevent the nights sleeping for the entertainment of the morrows schooling, besies, such were the hopefull inclinations of the Princely youth an pious Virgin, that their first hours were spent in Prayers & other Religious exercises, as either reading some history or other in the Old Testament or other in the New; the rest of the fore – no one (Breakfast time excepted) they were octinated and instructed either in language or some of the liberal Sciences, one morall learning or other collecte out of such Authors as did best conuce to the Instruction of Princes; And when hee was cal’d out to any youthfull exercise be comming a Child of his age (wearied with that) to practice her needle. This was the circular course of their employment, God was the Center of all their actions... they began with God and hee went along still with them, insomuch that in a short time they were as well entered into languages, as Arts, most of the frequent tongues of Christendom they now made theirs, Greeke, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch were no strangers, no forraigne idioms, but now made familiar withe their native English.” (Heywood, 1631, pp. 38–39)

This offers first hand evidence that what they were being taught followed similar lines probably because of their shared tutors.

In 1544, Edward’s schoolroom was reorganised under Sir John Cheke who was Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge and later became master of St John’s College, he was also “one of the key figures both in the English Reformation and the academic Renaissance” (Johnson, 1974, pp. 16 – 17). Cheke brought with him his pupil Roger Ascham, who taught Edward the italic handwriting style. Ascham later became Elizabeth’s tutor, but before Ascham there was his pupil, William Grindal who became Elizabeth’s tutor, “Elizabeth was a Cambridge girl” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17). Elizabeth’s tutors all hailed from Cambridge which was the centre of the revolution in teaching Greek and had been more influenced by the Reformation than Oxford. The tutors who hailed from Cambridge and taught both Elizabeth and Edward were supporters of the Protestant religion and in turn they influenced their young pupils, unlike Mary’s tutors who were from Oxford which remained opposed to the new Protestant religion.

Barely anything is known about William Grindal’s early life until he came into Elizabeth’s service as her tutor. Although there is speculation that he was from Cumbria like Elizabeth’s future Archbishop of Canterbury, Edmund Grindal, William Grindal seems to have “combined charm of manner with high standards of scholarship and in particular a fine command of Greek” (Marples, 1965, pp. 52–53). Grindal went to court with a letter of introduction from Ascham recommending him as a tutor for Elizabeth; he was clearly accepted and was appointed as Elizabeth’s tutor immediately (Starkey, 2001, p. 27).

Unfortunately, we know little of Elizabeth’s education under Grindal’s tutelage. Perry states that at the age of thirteen under Grindal’s tutelage Elizabeth “was beginning to make a clear distinction between the workings of the mind, the yearnings of the heart and the aspirations of the soul”. She also learnt to use the mental discipline of translation as a way of turning aside from emotional stress. These habits of analysis and separation were to stand her in good stead in Mary’s reign, but they were to make her more formidable as a woman (Perry, 1990, p. 24). This may have been developed under the combined tutelage of Grindal and Katherine Ashley. Elizabeth’s ardent love of learning developed further under Grindal and Elizabeth worked so hard at her books that Ashcam, who had maintained a friendly interest in Elizabeth’s progress under his favourite pupil felt the need to intervene. Ascham wrote to Katherine Ashley, who as head of Elizabeth’s household would have been in day to day contact with Grindal. Ascham’s letter to Ashley stated a regime of studies which he, Ascham, preferred as he thought Elizabeth would benefit more from this relaxed regime of studies.

“Blunt edges be dull and endure much pain to little profit but the free edge is soon turned if it be not handled thereafter. If you pour much drink at once into a goblet, the most part will dash out and run over. If ye pour if softly, you may fill it even to the top, and so Her Grace, I doubt not, by little and little may be increased in learning... I send My Lady her pen, and Italian book, a book of prayers. Send the silver pen which is broken, and it shall be mended quickly” (Marshall, 1991, pp. 19–20).

Ascham clearly underestimated Elizabeth’s brilliance as he later wrote (in 1548) that he did not know which to admire more, ‘the ability of the pupil or the diligence of the teacher’” (Neale, 1960, pp. 20–21). Although we may not know the exact lessons or routine which Elizabeth followed under Grindal it is logical to assume that Grindal’s methods and interests were similar to those of his tutor, Ascham (Mears, 2005, p. 75).

But Elizabeth’s time with Grindal was cut tragically short and in 1548 he died of the plague. But “in the four years at his disposal he had carried his pupil far and deep into the world of classical learning where he was so much at home himself. Elizabeth was already showing herself so devoted a scholar...” (Marples, 1965, p. 53) Elizabeth knew exactly who she wanted to replace Grindal, his own tutor, Ascham, who Elizabeth had met from his occasional visits to Grindal and he came to see her soon after he had sent his letter of condolence (Ryan, 1963, p. 102). “On 12 February, Roger Ascham wrote to his friend John Cheke, telling him that the princess ‘is thinking of having me in the place of Grindal... I was with the illustrious lady during these last days: she signified to me her pleasure and I did not try to make any bargain for my own advantage, but at once declared that I was ready to obey her orders’” (Plowden, 2002, p. 92). However, her step–mother Kateryn Parr had different ideas and Kateryn wanted Francis Goldsmith, a faithful supporter of hers to replace Grindal (Porter, 2010, p. 305). Elizabeth however did not want Goldsmith, despite her step–mother’s recommendation but Ashcam was uncomfortable at being the source of disagreement between Kateryn and Elizabeth and he wrote to Cheke that “’I advised her to comply with their recommendations... and entreated her to set aside all her favour towards me and to consider before all else, how she could bring to maturity that singular hope in her awakened by Grindal’s teaching’” (Porter, 2010, p. 306). In the end Elizabeth got the tutor she wanted, whether this was a result of her own determination or because of the growing influence of Ascham’s friend and tutor John Cheke with the privy council, as the tutor of the now young King, Edward VI, we will never know but Elizabeth got Ascham as her tutor in the end (Plowden, 2002, p. 92).

Roger Ascham, a Yorkshire man was in his early thirties when he entered Elizabeth’s service and he had already published a famous treatise on archery, *Toxophilus* (1545). He was also not a stranger to court circles and he had taught Edward penmanship on several occasions and had already played a part in forming Elizabeth’s exquisite Italianate handwriting (Plowden, 2002, p. 93). Traditionally, Ascham is seen as Elizabeth’s tutor *par excellence* due to “his book *The Scholemaster* and in his letters, published shortly after his death; he left posterity many delightful eulogies of his mistress and nearly all the information that we possess about her education” (Neale, 1960, pp. 21–22). Ascham’s tutor at Cambridge, John Cheke, “took the lead in an endeavour to turn the college into an all – round centre of learning in which each fellow followed a particular bent. He himself insisted on study of the true end of learning, the chief authors to be studied were besides Cicero, Plato, Aristotle, Xenophon, Isocrates and Demosthenes” (Simon, 1966, p. 204). Ascham followed this conventional, wide–ranging curriculum at Cambridge in the 1530s. His correspondence and *The Scholemaster* published posthumously in 1570 suggests that Elizabeth followed a curriculum similar to that endorsed by John Cheke consisting of “the study of the best classical authors to instil virtue, and the Bible and selected works of the church fathers to instil Christian piety.

Ascham was aided in his tutorship of Elizabeth by Jean Belmain who taught Elizabeth French and Battista Castiglione who taught Elizabeth French (Mears, 2005, p. 75). Elizabeth studied many classical texts in her teenage years and in her adult years, some of this may have been knowledge for knowledge’s sake however, when she became Queen she was able to use the lessons she learnt from these texts to their fullest. Ascham clearly taught Elizabeth new skills and she flourished under his tutelage he cannot take all the credit for Elizabeth’s excellent education. Katherine Ashley and William Grindal both laid the foundations of Elizabeth’s education and Ashcam took these skills and honed them to make Elizabeth the personification of the ideal Tudor Humanist educated Princess. Many years later when Elizabeth was Queen, Ascham “gave thanks to God for his good fortune in having had a share in the education of so able and learned a monarch” (Marples, 1965, p. 54).

We know more about Elizabeth’s routine of study under Ascham than we do of her educational routine under Kat Ashley in the very early days of her education and under William Grindal, her first official tutor. We also know a great deal thanks to Ascham’s surviving correspondence and *The Scholemaster*. During her two years under Ascham’s guidance Elizabeth’s day began with reading and translating sections of classical authors such as Isocrates, Sophocles, and Demosthenes. Elizabeth would translate these first into English and then back into the original language, this method of double translation was very popular with Ascham who was a keen advocate of the process as highlighted in *The Scholemaster* (Neale, 1960, p. 22). The method of study which Elizabeth was taught was ‘that of double translation – out of Latin into English, and out of English into Latin again’ – which Ashcam, following the teaching of Erasmus and Cheke, adapted from Quintilian and later championed in *The Scholemaster*. Ascham boasted that his pupil, after a mere six months of daily exercise of this sort, could render English into Latin so perfectly ‘that some in seven years in grammar schools, yea, and some in the university too, cannot do half so well’” (Ryan, 1963, pp. 104–105). Ascham believed that from these authors that Elizabeth “would ‘gain purity of style, and her mind derive instruction that would be of value to her to meet every contingency of life’” (Plowden, 2002, p. 93). Elizabeth’s afternoons were devoted to Latin and she read almost all of Cicero and a great part of Livy under Ascham’s supervision. “To these authors he added various works of St Cyprian and Melanchthon’s Commonplaces, (*Loci Communes* – “a celebrated commentary on Protestant theology and statecraft” (Neale, 1960, p. 22)), which he considered ‘best suited, after the Holy Scriptures, to teach her the foundations of religion, together with elegant language and the sound doctrine’. It sounds an indigestible diet for a fourteen–year–old girl, but Elizabeth apparently throve on it, eagerly absorbing a carefully balanced mixture of classical ethics and Christian piety” (Plowden, 2002, p. 93). This allowed Elizabeth to develop an acute religious awareness although she was not to become extreme in her religious views like her siblings. Part of this may have been down to Elizabeth’s formal education but also her acute sense of survival and her observation of the upheaval and turmoil caused in the country by her brother and sister’s insistence upon their subject’s following their extreme version of their own religions during their reigns, in Edward’s case Protestantism and in Mary’s case Catholicism. This will be explored in more detail in the chapter of Elizabeth. After dinner, Elizabeth’s studies continued and Elizabeth never failed to read part of Cicero and in less than two years she got through a large part of Livy. “Such diligent application to classical studies foreshadowed the enthusiasm for Greek and Latin that continued well into her adult life. When she became Queen and Ashcam returned to her service as her Latin secretary, they regularly set aside time from state affairs to read their favourite authors together” (Ryan, 1963, p. 105).

The main source of Ascham’s “delight and admiration in this amiable company was the princess herself” (Ryan, 1963, p. 105). Ascham and Elizabeth’s studies continued together intermittently for twenty years but Ascham never forgot “his surprise and pleasure upon first encountering her zeal and capacity for learning. Though she was barely fifteen, he found her already an accomplished linguist, fluent in Italian, French, and Latin, and with some knowledge of Greek. In his opinion, she already manifested those gifts for which she was to become famous throughout Europe” (Ryan, 1963, p. 105). Elizabeth was already more than adequate in her spoken Greek and “she readeth more Greek every day”, Ascham wrote, “that some Prebendaries of this Church do in a whole week”. He had come across other learned ladies in his time. The daughters of his Cambridge colleague, Anthony Cooke, who their father had taught, were said to be the two cleverest women in England. But among them all, the “brightest star” was his “illustrious Lady Elizabeth” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 27). Ascham’s praise might be construed as mere flattery if it were not for the fact that other reports, such has, ambassadors’ reports, support his view. They also listened to music together, this was something they both delighted in and like all her siblings Elizabeth had inherited her father’s musical talent. Hibbert also claims that Battista Castiglione instructed her in her elegant Italic handwriting, although some historians such as Ryan, who is Ascham’s most prominent biographer states that Ascham taught Elizabeth her beautiful Italic handwriting. Hibbert states that “her normal hand which acquired its own precision and characteristic beauty, except when she wrote in a great hurry and then it became almost indecipherable. She could talk intelligently on almost any intellectual topic and liked to spend three hours a day reading history” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 27). Until Ascham’s death in 1568 Elizabeth continued to read Greek with him daily and although Elizabeth neglected her spoken Greek she continued to study Greek texts until her death” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17).

Ascham found Elizabeth’s company interesting and was clearly honoured to tutor Elizabeth and yet his months as a royal tutor were not altogether happy ones. Whilst Ascham was teaching Elizabeth Aristotelian ethics and Christian morals, Thomas Seymour was scandalizing the court by his flirtations with the young, susceptible Elizabeth. Ascham makes no specific mention of what is known to history as the ‘Seymour episode’, (which will be discussed in the chapter on Elizabeth), in his letters he seems to have been shocked by the scandal (Ryan, 1963, pp. 107 – 108). Ascham does not specify what the problem or argument was which saw Ascham leave Elizabeth’s service and abruptly return to Cambridge. Ascham’s departure was not directly connected with the fall of Thomas Seymour, he merely states that “he had been ‘injured on all sides’ and that perverse fortune rather than any fault on his part had caused him to leave Hatfield House. He denies that Elizabeth had suddenly turned against him, yet he says enigmatically that trouble had burst upon him from a source “whence I ought to have drawn the reward for my service rather than the fear of offence.” The one concrete fact revealed in his letter to Cheke is that he had been maligned by Elizabeth’s cofferer, Parry. Possibly Ascham had rebuked this go – between for his activity on Seymour’s behalf, and Elizabeth may have felt that the affair was none of Ascham’s business. But this is only conjecture, since he gives no further clue to the identity of his adversary or the nature of the disturbance that led to his sudden departure” (Ryan, 1963, pp. 112–113). It seems strange that Elizabeth would let her tutor leave her service as she enjoyed his company and her lessons with him. If the source of the argument with Ascham which led to his departure was Parry then Elizabeth could easily have stopped the disagreement in her own household. However, Elizabeth may have been more fond of Parry than Ascham, as Parry had been in her service for a long time and despite his incompetence as her cofferer as will be explored in the chapter on Elizabeth, she was clearly fond of Parry and trusted him.

Despite this apparent falling out, the bad feelings between Elizabeth and Ascham did not last long and they were soon corresponding again. Even after Ascham’s departure Elizabeth’s education continued as it had when Ascham was her tutor. “She was growing from childhood now into an attractive young woman, polite, well – mannered and composed, “a very witty and gentyll young lady” in the description of William Thomas, Clerk of the Closet. On a visit to John Cheke at Ampthill, the antiquary John Leland was presented first to Prince Edward, then to the Lady Elizabeth who, besides impressing him with her excellent Latin, captivated him by her grave charm. Children of her own age, however, were inclined to regard her as rather withdrawn, sometimes even haughty. Jane Dormer, the grand–daughter of Prince Edward’s Chamberlain, Sir William Sidney, described her as “proud and disdainful.” So much so that these unpleasant traits in her character “much blemished the handsomeness and beauty of her person” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 28). Jane Dormer, was a close friend of Elizabeth’s sister Mary and became one of Mary’s closest attendants and like Mary married a Spaniard, the Duke of Feria. Jane’s staunch support of Catholicism meant that she was never going to be very complimentary towards Elizabeth, the daughter of Anne Boleyn whom the Catholics called ‘the whore’, with Elizabeth frequently being referred to as either ‘the Bastard’ or to distinguish her from Henry’s illegitimate son, Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, ‘the little Bastard’ (Perry, 1990, p. 15).

In Elizabeth, Ascham was attempting to achieve the perfect pupil by using the educational ideal which had been influenced by Cheke. “He sought to mould the mind and character of his apt pupil by combining the best learning contained in the classics with the saving doctrines of Christianity. This meant for him, as it did for Cheke in tutoring Edward VI, guiding her according to Aristotelian precepts of natural virtue, in order that she might achieve true arête (virtue or excellence), and the same time inculcating Christian piety by having her read the Bible and selected patristic writings” (Ryan, 1963, p. 106). The end result of education for Ascham was to produce an early version of what we would now call the ideal citizen. During the sixteenth century the ideal result of education was “the fashioning of a learned and pious adult suitably prepared to enact a destined role in the commonwealth” (Ryan, 1963, p. 106) and Ascham hoped to realise this in Elizabeth by blending classical and Christian studies in her education. Leading to her being what Ascham would possibly see as being the result of a ‘perfect education’. Loades even suggests that Elizabeth “was probably the nearest thing to a trained academic ever to occupy the English throne, and it was an occupation which won her universal praise, both at the time and afterwards” (Loades, 2001, p. 72). Although as will be discussed in the chapter on Elizabeth, she was intellectually brilliant but this was partly due to genes but also the gentle guidance of Kat Ashley and later William Grindal. Ascham built upon Elizabeth’s outstanding natural abilities and the foundations laid by Kat Ashley and Grindal.

Humanism

Humanism did not begin to play an important part in the intellectual life of England until the end of the fifteenth century and it took root firmly in the sixteenth century with the education of King Henry’s children (Caspari, 1954, p. 1). This new Humanism was an integral aspect of Renaissance thought and culture and influenced different aspects of life. For the purpose of this thesis Humanism can be defined as the re-evaluation of religious and secular thinking through the examination of the original Hebrew, Greek and Latin scriptures and acceptable pagan classics (Dowling, 1980, p. 1). By returning to the fundamental base of these texts this required students to study these classical languages in greater depth than before. Previously education for royalty and nobility focussed mainly on Latin as this was the language of international diplomacy. Therefore, it was vital for those involved in international diplomacy to become as fluent as possible in Latin. When Elizabeth began her education Latin was still the language of diplomacy and she became fluent in this language. In addition, Elizabeth was also being educated when the new fashion described above for learning Greek was becoming popular.

Greek was one of the cornerstones of a Humanist education because it was seen to benefit the oratory skills of those who learnt the language as they were able to read original Ancient Greek texts such as Isocrates orations and Sophocles tragedies. These were read and studied in their original so that the person studying could admire and imitate the oratory and literary style of these Ancient Greek authors. Elizabeth studied these texts closely and learnt her lessons on rhetoric as can be seen in her future speech making when Queen. Elizabeth’s speeches are still famous today particularly her speech to her troops at Tilbury before the Armada; she had taken on board the lessons from these great orators. Although as discussed in a 2012 programme on Margaret More and sixteenth century education; rhetoric was usually only taught to boys as they were the ones who were expected to use these skills in positions of power. Mary was not taught oratory whereas Elizabeth was; this shows how much influence Humanism had on Elizabeth’s education. Despite her gender, Elizabeth was educated both in oratory and in Greek which represents a unique achievement for a woman of the period.

Humanism was concerned with the legacy of antiquity and with its literary legacy. It involved “the rediscovery and study of ancient Greek and Roman texts, the restoration and interpretation of them and the assimilation of the ideas and values that they contain” (Mann, 1996, p. 2). The Humanists were looking at the real human experiences contained within these texts as the purpose of education was now to create good citizens to serve their country. The way in which Elizabeth was expected to ‘serve’ her country was by marriage possibly to a foreign prince or noble to form an alliance for England. However, the way in which Elizabeth did ‘serve’ her country was very different from what was originally expected. Even within her predicted role as a wife it would not have been necessary for Elizabeth to learn rhetoric, although learning languages would have been useful as it was likely that a foreign husband would have been found for Elizabeth. The addition of rhetoric to Elizabeth’s education shows that she was educated as a Humanist and also in the same manner as a boy.

This is a combination of her tutors and Kat Ashley’s recognition of Elizabeth’s ability and also their belief in the value of a Humanist education for women as well as men. Humanism had a very different impact in England as it did compared to the continent due to the continent remaining largely Catholic but England’s split with Rome changed the religious character of England. Humanism changed as a result hence the difference in Mary and Elizabeth’s education. Mary’s education was influenced by Catholic Humanists such as Vives and Elizabeth’s by supporters of the reformed religion Cheke and Ascham. Humanism had a very different impact in England as it did compared to the continent due to the continent remaining largely Catholic but England’s split with Rome changed the religious character of England. Humanism changed as a result hence the difference in Mary and Elizabeth’s education. Mary’s education was influenced by Catholic Humanists such as Vives and Elizabeth’s by supporters of the reformed religion, Cheke and Ascham. Originally Humanism was non-doctrinal and was not concerned with reforming religious beliefs. When Luther’s reformist ideas began to spread across the continent Humanists divided into two groups; those who were sympathetic to the views of the reformers and those who opposed them. At the beginning of the 1520s the official English position on Luther and his ideas was negative and Henry VIII led the literary based campaign against Luther. “However, Henry’s desire to annul his marriage with Catherine of Aragon and the influence over him of Anne Boleyn – a determined and consistent upholder of the gospel – meant that radical English reformers could be of use to the King and could hope for a hearing at court” (Dowling, 1986, p. 2) One of these men was Thomas Cranmer who was a Cambridge University graduate, a priest and a Humanist. Cambridge University began to follow Humanist ideas and combine these with Humanism. Anne Boleyn was a supporter of Cambridge and in turn its scholars tutored her daughter thus influencing Elizabeth’s reformist, Humanist beliefs meaning that both things were embedded in Elizabeth’s life from an early age and as a result had a profound influence.

Through the efforts of men like Erasmus, Thomas More and John Colet, Humanist educational theory was introduced into England at a time of economic, religious and social reorganization: the crown was seeking to tighten its control on the countryside, a break with the church of Rome was imminent, and new opportunities both in land and in trade were opening up through the gradual shift from a feudal to a market economy. Education became a prerequisite for advancement in the new society: the study of Latin language, history and law made professional civil servants out of landed gentry and those members of the old feudal aristocracy who kept pace with new trends. But the way to such advancement was jealously guarded by those who had passed through it” (Friedman, 1985, p. 58). The Humanist curriculum was very different to that during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. The medieval curriculum consisted of “the trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music) to a balanced programme of physical, intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development, although it may be anachronistic to think of such clearly defined areas of experience at this stage: literature and music were thought to have moral purposes, as were physical activities of the right kind. The physical included fencing, riding, hunting, hawking and dancing; the intellectual focused on Greek and Latin texts but also on contemporary poetry and prose. The other arts were also important, and it was regarded as desirable not only to appreciate music and painting but also to be a performer if possible. However, the most important difference between Renaissance education and the medieval trivium and quadrivium was that in all aspects of the curriculum pupils were encouraged to understand and to exercise their critical faculties rather than simply to memorise” (Gordon and Lawton, 1999, pp. 20-21). Elizabeth did not just simply memorise but she exercised what she had learnt during some of the most turbulent moments in her life and also throughout her reign. In addition, Elizabeth did not just perform in terms of music and dance but she also performed for her people; during her coronation procession, on state occasions, in parliament and perhaps, most famously of all at Tilbury. Humanism as a movement had a huge impact on the education of Elizabeth I, yet like most people and other educational theories it still did not present women on an equal footing to men. Humanists appreciated that learning could be a good thing for women but for negative reasons as since women had “fertile minds and were prone to idleness, boredom and mischief, it was useful to keep them occupied with study” (Dowling, 1981, pp. 83-84).

David Cressy’s study on reading and writing in Tudor England shows that the majority of men and women were unable to read and write during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that literacy and Humanism were extremely different things (Cressy, 1980). The education received was modified in accordance with the child’s social class, order in family range i.e. eldest, middle or youngest child and most crucially the child’s gender. Prior to the sixteenth century academic education was seen as useless but also harmful to women as women were ineligible for professional careers (Friedman, 1985, p. 60) although as fate had it two women ended up with what could be seen as a professional career. That is Queenship. Knowledge was seen to prompt imagination and curiosity which in a woman was seen as most unnatural and potentially sinful. It was thought that learning Latin and Greek may be harmful as women would be able to read ‘unwholesome’ literature such as romances. Men were also afraid that if women learnt the *tongues* they may become too familiar with priests.

For Humanist educators the purpose of women’s education was to cultivate their minds and souls, and to guard and enhance the twin jewels of piety and chastity (Dowling, 1986, pp. 219-221) Juan Luis Vives wrote *De Institutione Feminae Christianae,* *The Institution of a Christian Woman* in 1524, this was dedicated to Catherine of Aragon and was intended as a guide for the upbringing of the young Princess Mary. Despite Vives writing the book as an educational guide for a future Queen he was anxious to point out that women were naturally not suited for learning. Although at this point Mary was the only heir and expected to reign, she would have been expected to be guided by her future husband who in reality would have been expected to make the important decisions. Mary’s most important role would have been that of a mother, and this was still the consensus when it came to educate Elizabeth.

According to Vives lessons in reading and writing should be combined with such feminine accomplishments as needlework and cooking.

“Although he included a list of the standard examples of educated women from antiquity to serve as models. A telling remark nonetheless slipped in: ‘I perceive that learned women be suspected of many: as who sait, the subtlety of learning should be a nourishment for the maliciousness of their nature... Although he ascribed this opinion to others, it was clearly his own. In the text, Vives pointed to the daughters of Sir Thomas More as examples of women who benefitted from a sound classical education, but he betrayed his prejudice against such women on the following page. As he described the suggested course of study, he made it clear that the study of rhetoric was to be omitted from the program of study for girls because women should not be allowed to work outside the home: “As for eloquence, I have no great care, not a woman needeth it not, but she needeth goodness and wisdom’ He explained: ‘For it neither becometh a woman to rule a school, not to live amongst men, or speak abroad, and shake off her demureness and honesty, either all together, or else a great part; which is she be good, it were better to be at home within the unknown to other folks, and in company to hold her tongue demurely, and let few see her, and none at all hear her.” (Freidman, 1985, p. 63)

Clearly when Elizabeth’s education was underway either no one had told Grindal or Ascham that teaching a woman rhetoric was seen as ‘unfeminine’ or they did not care for Vive’s work or what others thought. Perhaps they saw the benefit of educating Elizabeth to such a high standard and as sympathisers to the ‘new religion’ they probably did not agree with Vive’s Catholic sympathies.

“In practice, only a few women of the upper classes received any training in Latin even in the mid-century heyday of Humanist reform. Literary men like Sir Thomas More and Sir Anthony Cooke, who educated their daughter’s according to the Christian Humanist program, were exceptional. Further, only in the unique case of the Queen herself did that education take a woman out of the private sphere; even in the often – cited case of Lady Jane Grey, education was not “liberating”, nor was it intended to be – in fact, Lady Jane’s devotion to study appears to have alienated her from her peers, and she withdrew from contact with men much more than her less-studious though educated sisters...” (Friedman, 1985, p. 64). Elizabeth’s education did not alienate her due to the circumstances in which she went on to display it.

During the fifteenth century sons and daughters were expected to follow in the footsteps of their parents. For men this involved hunting and skills in battle since they had little time for rhetoric or scholarly skills such as languages and philosophy. Young girls were expected to learn how to run a household, needlework and music. Boys and girls could learn to read and many did, some boys but very few girls were taught to write. However, more formal academic training was considered unnecessary as that was why priests, lawyers, clerks and stewards were employed to keep records and accounts (Freidman, 1985, p. 59). The reason for keeping boys and girls separate during their education was made clear by Christian Humanists including Sir Thomas Elyot in his *The Book Named The Governor* (1531). Elyot’s book advised that at seven years of age a boy should be taken from the company of women “saving that he may have one year or two at the most, an ancient and sad matron attending on him in his chamber” (Elyot, 1531, p. 25) but, from seven years onwards he would be in a male world made up of attendants and tutors. Association with young women was to be avoided as this might cause “sparks of voluptuosity” (Elyot, 1531, p. 25) which would increase “into so terrible a fire that therewith all virtue and reason is consumed” (Elyot, 1531, p. 26). Women were seen as distractions for young men and would not normally be educated alongside them. In addition, women were not seen to be as capable as men and therefore not able to receive a Humanist education. Elizabeth was not only educated in the Humanist tradition as was Edward but probably shared his tutors when they lived together, which was highly unusual. Elyot suggested an early form of a curriculum but this was exclusively for boys which followed the precedent set by Thomas More and the Humanist circle to which Elyot belonged.

A young boy was to begin with simple exercises and readings from Greek and Latin texts. The texts which were chosen were normally chosen not only for their style but also their moral lessons such as Aesop, *The Illiad*, *The Odyssey, Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*. At the age of fourteen the boys were expected to begin to learn logic and rhetoric by reading Cicero and Erasmus’s *De Copia Rerum* and *De Copia Verbarum* and also begin the study of history. At seventeen this study of philosophy was begun and the works of Aristotle, Plato, Cicero’s *De Officiis*, The Bible and Erasmus’s *Education of a Christian Prince* were focussed upon (Freidman, 1985, p. 61). Boys were educated for public office and this by default required a good, thorough academic education. This would include skills associated with a Humanist education which would include languages, essential for studying various documents including laws and ambassadorial documents along with rhetoric which was essential for public speaking such as in court or parliament. Knowledge of philosophy, classical and Biblical texts would also be useful when making speeches and from an essential part of a good piece of rhetoric. Elizabeth showed how useful the study of philosophy, classics and the Bible were when making various speeches including her famous Tilbury speech and the rhetoric she used to dictate to her parliaments. What is also unusual regarding the royal Tudor children and this Humanist curriculum is that they begun their philosophical education much earlier than seventeen. Edward did not even reach this age and was avid in his philosophical and religious education from an early age, as was Elizabeth.

Elyot recognised that the curriculum needed things adding and adjusting in order to meet the different social conditions of Tudor England. Elyot advises that once this classical Humanist education was complete then a young gentleman should devote himself to the study of law (Elyot, 1531, pp. 35-36). Vives also suggests on extension of the classical Humanist curriculum, he begins with the traditional elements of the trivium (grammar, logic and rhetoric) and adds to this mathematics and medicine (Skinner, 1996, pp. 22-23). Every Tudor Humanist would strive to follow the *studia* humanitatis which consisted of five parts; grammar, rhetoric, poetry, history and moral philosophy. This is also clearly outlined in books such as Ascham’s *The* Scholemaster who states that once a pupil has mastered Latin and read the best authors in every genre of the liberal arts needs to turn to studying poetry, history, philosophy and oratory (Skinner, 1996, pp. 22-23). Although Ascham and Vives agree on some aspects of a Humanist education there are aspects on which they disagree including mathematics. Ascham had strong, negative views on mathematics and said f them: “mark all mathematical heads, which be only and wholly bent to those sciences, how solitary they be themselves, how unfit to live with others and how unapt to serve in the world” (Ascham, 1570, pp. 14-15). From this we can gather that Ascham was not Elizabeth’s mathematics tutor and she must have been taught by someone else. This someone else could have been her cofferer Thomas Parry or one of the tutors who also taught her brother Edward.

Elizabeth did acquire some mathematical skills as she checked and signed all of her own accounts. Elizabeth is an example of someone who received a combination of the Humanist curriculums described above.

The above descriptions all discuss education by using gendered terminology such as ‘him’ and ‘he’ and describing academic curriculums for boys and not girls despite Ascham being Elizabeth’s tutor. Perhaps Ascham felt the need, to what some may have seen in the sixteenth century as over-educate, this young girl due to her position in the line of succession when he became her tutor. Or perhaps he was just building upon the foundations laid by Ashley and Grindal which were made possible by Elizabeth’s natural intellectual abilities. In addition, as discussed in the chapter on Elizabeth, despite Ascham not agreeing with the teaching of mathematics as part of a Humanist curriculum someone in Elizabeth’s household perhaps Kat Ashley, William Grindal or another member saw it as beneficial to Elizabeth and she should learn this and Elizabeth clearly learnt something of mathematics as she checked her own household accounts. But “we now live at so slow an intellectual pace that it is hard to grasp the rush of sixteenth-century life in that respect, or the carefree manner in which pupils embarked on courses of study, using the oral method for Greek and Latin, so that they spoke and understood both languages before they could read or write; this period usually covered the fourth to the seventh year” (Chapman, 1961, p. 50). It is unheard of now in twenty-first century British education for children to be pushed so far, in what now would be deemed difficult topics. Many schools now do not teach classical languages such as Latin and Greek and most pupils do not become fluent in any language, let alone five like Elizabeth. However, the end result of education today is extremely different from that of sixteenth century Tudor England. Although I am sure if Elizabeth was a pupil today she would excel despite that huge difference in curriculum between the sixteenth and twenty-first centuries.

“Mapping the Humanist curriculum on to Elizabeth’s political thought and action is a huge task, but it does seem clear that she absorbed both simple and more sophisticated lessons from it. For instance, in 1594, she debated James VI’s use of and gloss on Virgil’s lines from the *Aeneid*, ‘Flectere si nequeo superos, Acheronta movebo’ noble lesson were not forgotten, that wills the Emperor his sovereign to make his words of more account than other men their oaths, as meetest ensigns to show the truest badge of prince’s arms. In two parliamentary speeches – her reply to the Common’s petition for her marriage on 28 January 1563 and her second speech on Mary Stuart in the sixth session, on 24 November 1586 – Elizabeth justified her slowness in decision-making by referring to the story of Augutus Caesar who recited the alphabet before making a decision to prevent him making rash and ill-advised choices... (Mears, 2005, p. 77-78). It would be possible to explore how Elizabeth used her Humanist education during her reign and this would help historians look at just how much her youth and education affected, aided and perhaps even hindered her Queenship.

In England, where Humanism was imported, the normal centres of attraction were confined to the court and two universities. Much of its original force was gone before it had crossed the channel, and it had already become the shadow of a shadow. It was welcomed and protected, but in its original form it never shot out strong roots on British soil” (Einstein, 1921, pp. 316-317). But for Elizabeth this importation of Humanism came at exactly the right time for this precocious child and the part it played in Elizabeth’s education cannot be denied. The programme of studies which Elizabeth followed was based on Humanism and it allowed Elizabeth to flourish intellectually. Although Humanism, unfortunately did not change people’s perceptions of women’s education, despite the example of Elizabeth women were still not educated on a par with men. Despite Elizabeth’s success as Queen she did not inspire a surge in a better standard of education for women even James I’s only surviving daughter, Elizabeth (named in honour of the Queen) did not receive an in depth education, in fact despite his own brilliant education James only allowed for his daughter a very basic education. Perhaps it can be said that Henry VIII did at least provide his daughter with a thorough education although this was not necessarily his idea it may have been the circumstances at the time. The growing impact of Humanism at Henry’s court was especially evident as he was allowing his son to be educated by Humanists using a Humanist curriculum. In addition, Edward’s tutor, John Cheke, a prominent Humanist was tutor to Roger Ascham who was the tutor of William Grindal. The latter two taught Elizabeth and the first may have when she was sharing a household with Edward. What is clear is that Henry VIII clearly approved of Humanist education and allowed his son and his youngest daughter to be educated according to Humanist principles. Elizabeth was in some ways lucky to have open-minded tutors who were willing to bypass traditional gender restrictions to educate Elizabeth using the same Humanist principles and curriculum as her brother.

Elizabeth

The main subject of this thesis is the result of one of the most famous events in history, that of Henry VIII falling in love with another woman whilst married to Catherine of Aragon, that woman was Anne Boleyn. This led to the English Reformation which is the subject of many works but it also led to the birth of a little girl, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth was supposedly unwanted and a disappointment to her parents, purely based on the fact of her sex (Plowden, 1999, p. 39). Yet little did either parent know, but this little girl would become the greatest of all Tudors a girl who would still be celebrated in the 21st Century as the greatest Queen ever to sit on the English throne. However, Elizabeth cannot have been that unloved or unwanted. Anne adored her little daughter and showered her with gifts and as much love as a sixteenth century parent could. Henry loved all his children; despite being seen to neglect Elizabeth at times especially in favour of Edward, and Elizabeth certainly never spent as much time with her father as Mary did when she was younger. Despite this Henry did provide Elizabeth with a lifestyle and surroundings which enabled her to become an incredibly well educated young woman.

Firstly, before discussing Elizabeth’s education it must be discussed what ‘education’ means in the context of Elizabeth’s education. Education is normally taken as an academic concept, in the twenty –first century this is measured by the number of qualifications such as GCSE’s, A-Levels or the type of degree someone has. Education in the sixteenth century can also be seen in terms of people’s academic ability. For example how many languages a person could speak, their proficiency in written Latin even their mathematical ability and their proficiency in grammar and rhetoric. These abilities were often the measurement by which people’s educational ability was calculated and Elizabeth’s attainments can be considered in this more conventional sense. However, Elizabeth’s education must also be measured in terms of personal education; in Elizabeth’s case this includes religion, but also the art of survival. Elizabeth learnt this from an early age by not mentioning her mother publicly and always obeying her father. Elizabeth had to learn these difficult ways firstly at fourteen during the ‘Seymour episode’ and during her sister’s reign. Elizabeth also observed the fate of her step-mothers’ being unceremoniously cast aside in the case Anne of Cleves and executed in the case of Katherine Howard. Elizabeth observed these fates in a “detached, almost clinical way, amassing precedents that would help to shape her future behaviour” (Borman, 2010, p. 80). This part of her ‘education’ will also be explored in this chapter, Johnson (1974, p. 2) calls this “the interplay of many intellects”. The application of these intellects to problems throughout her life and her reign contributed to her success at surviving the turbulent reigns of her siblings and maintaining peace throughout her reign. Both forms of ‘education’ made her a formidable women yet an even more formidable Queen. However, what must not be forgotten is that Elizabeth’s education in both the academic and personal sense never ended she continued learning throughout her life.

When looking at Elizabeth’s education it is also important to look at what ability may have been inherited through her genes and what part may be attributed to her upbringing, to those involved in her education and to the philosophical determinants of the period. This nature vs. nurture debate is an on-going debate in education today and although it is not relevant to fully explore this topic in this thesis it is important to look at the debate within the context of Elizabeth’s education.

Whilst it is stated by Einstein (1921, p. 47) that “lack of education was never a Tudor failing, and no princes were more carefully prepared for the practice of authority” as will be discussed later in this chapter, Elizabeth was not specifically educated to rule however, there can be no doubt that when the time came she was fully prepared intellectually. In their work on the education of royalty from Henry VII to the present day Gordon and Lawton (1999, p. 38) stated that Elizabeth became “one of the best educated of the Tudors, in spite of many early handicaps”. This suggests that Elizabeth was at some disadvantage due to her father’s apparent harsh treatment of her, although Elizabeth was never unfortunate enough unlike Mary to actually be on the receiving end of her father’s temper, this will also be discussed later in this chapter. But, Henry clearly provided the best education possible for all of his children, including Elizabeth so perhaps the ‘early handicap’ Gordon and Lawton refer to is Elizabeth’s loss of her mother Anne Boleyn. Anne unlike Catherine of Aragon never had the opportunity to have influence or opinion regarding her daughter’s education. Whilst Henry, as King, would have always had the final say, as Elizabeth’s mother, Anne’s opinion or ideas would have at least been listened to like Catherine of Aragon’s were for Mary’s education, although whether either woman’s ideas would have been implemented or not would have been a different matter.

In order to fully understand Elizabeth it is therefore necessary to look at Anne Boleyn. Anne’s execution when Elizabeth was three meant that she could not personally influence her daughter in terms of her intellect or personality. Any traits of her intellect or personality which resembled Anne, therefore, must be genetic as it was impossible for Anne to have had an influence. Eric Ives who is Anne’s most prominent biographer seems to support the idea that Elizabeth’s intellect is not a product of anything inherited from her mother. “The ways in which temperament and personality as well as physique descend – or fail to descend – from generation to generation is a never ending cause of discussion. With Anne Boleyn and her daughter Elizabeth we can be sure of the facial resemblance, less sure that the daughter’s taste for things scholarly or for music was inherited and not, instead, the product of careful education and the atmosphere at the Tudor court” (Ives, 1988, p. 273). This opinion is also shared by Morris Marples in his study on royal education, *Princes in the Making*, Marples describes Elizabeth’s intellect as a “masculine intelligence” (Marples, 1965, p.) and what she was taught certainly backs this up as she learnt ‘masculine’ skills such as rhetoric. Marples also claims that along with her red-gold hair her intelligence was also something which she inherited from her father and that none of it came from her mother. Elizabeth had an insatiable appetite for hard work and an excellent memory both of which served her well before she became Queen and during her reign. The combination of these three things would have led to Elizabeth being a distinguished classical scholar however; she was barred both by her gender and position as third in line to the throne. Although these two things also mean that she should not have been educated in the way she was.

I do not agree with Ives or Marples in this particular assessment of Anne. Anne was certainly an intelligent woman, more so than her successor Jane Seymour and her cousin Katherine Howard. Elizabeth certainly shared more than a physical resemblance with her mother. Anne Boleyn is said to have brought down the political powerhouse and Henry’s chief minister, Cardinal Thomas Wolsey, this is an interesting subject matter in itself. Its only relation with Elizabeth’s education is that Elizabeth was naturally shrewd and this was something which Elizabeth would have to use to protect herself when her greatest source of protection, her father, died. Anne had an influence on her daughter despite Elizabeth spending very little time with her. Elizabeth resembled her in some ways especially her eyes and she also inherited some of her mother’s personality traits most notably in her appetite for learning, self-discipline and her charisma. When Elizabeth became Queen she would also show flashes of her mother’s cruelty and vindictiveness although when Anne was Queen this led to her downfall when Elizabeth was Queen this was not challenged. However, Elizabeth’s Queenship was very different from her mother’s in its nature. But above all it was from Anne’s downfall and death where Elizabeth was able to learn some extremely important lessons. “From this, her daughter learned not to trust expressions of love and devotion; she learned to guard her reputation fiercely, and she learned to be a self-reliant, political pragmatist (Borman, 2009, p. 43). From her studies of ancient text, history and rhetoric Elizabeth was able to read political situations well and learn vital lessons from them. This allowed Elizabeth to survive in the tumultuous world of the Tudor court and become the Queen which her mother was never able to become (Borman, 2009, p. 43).

Elizabeth certainly always knew what role to play in the right situation, during her brother Edward VI’s short reign Elizabeth was praised by John Aylmer for her plain style and wearing her hair loose and unadorned and for wearing no cosmetics. Unlike the ladies of the court who Aylmer describes as being “’dressed and painted like peacocks’. Instead she set an example for Protestant gentlewomen by wearing severely cut gowns in black and white, which made her look demure and meek” (Weir, 2008, p. 116). Unlike her sister Mary whose description by observers is very unflattering and she was described as having a “lack of dress sense” despite loving “jewellery and rich fabrics, spending lavishly on both, but her lack of stature, and total absence of theatricality detracted from the effect” (Loades, 1992, pp. 331 – 332). When Mary gave a lavish gift of a dress to Lady Jane Grey she was horrified by the ornate style of the dress as Lady Jane associated it with the “trappings of the Roman faith” (Weir, 2008, p. 132). This shows that Elizabeth was already, at a young age conscious of the need for a positive public image. This was something which she inherited from Anne who so successfully portrayed herself as a suitable Queen during her courtship with Henry VIII. Henry VIII also created an image of a powerful, warrior King but it was Elizabeth, who, with the lessons from her father and the natural showmanship inherited from her mother, perfected an image for the English people, an image which is still portrayed today through the use of Elizabeth’s image on advertisements for historical visits, as well as her portrayal wearing a ruff in the popular media such as film and television.

Elizabeth certainly made the best of the genetics she had inherited, unlike her sister Mary who did not make the most, or perhaps could not make the most of intellectual genes inherited from her mother Catherine of Aragon and Henry VIII. Elizabeth inherited her father’s and mother’s theological interest, her flirtatious nature and her showmanship. Elizabeth’s parents were both intelligent and Elizabeth surpassed them both in her intellectual ability this was aided by inheriting Anne and Henry’s intelligence but also nurtured Elizabeth’s insatiable lust for learning and those around her who supported her learning. Elizabeth inherited this lust partly from her father but unlike her father, Elizabeth’s passion for learning was not just in theology but in all the subjects she was taught especially the classics and languages. This combination of intellectual genetics and also the ability to put on a show and the shrewdness which Elizabeth inherited benefitted not just her intellectual education but also Elizabeth’s ‘personal’ education.

The idea of ‘nurture’ as the reason for Elizabeth’s education can be seen through those who taught her and what they taught her. “Extolled by her courtiers and revered by her people, Elizabeth was nonetheless an enigma to them, her tutor Ascham marvelled that “...her mind (had) no womanly weakness, her perseverance... (was) equal to that of a man...” (Taylor-Smither, 1984, p. 47). Historians have also described her within a curiously masculine framework. According to one, men saw Elizabeth as a “lion – hearted heroine, who flung back to the insolence of Spain and crushed the tyranny of Rome”...” (Taylor–Smither, 1984, p. 47). From the beginning of her life Elizabeth was fortunate in that the people who surrounded her took a keen interest in her education. None more so than Katherine Ashley, Elizabeth’s governess who had received a good education herself and therefore, was able to give Elizabeth a good grounding in the basics including reading, writing, mathematics, history, sewing, dancing and riding along with French, Italian and Spanish (Hibbert, 1991, pp. 25-26). Elizabeth’s first lessons were conducted by Richard Cox and then she was given her own tutor, William Grindal in 1542. Elizabeth had clearly exhausted Katherine’s knowledge quickly and when Grindal began to teach Elizabeth this began a lifelong association with St John’s College, where not only did Elizabeth’s tutors hail from, but also some of her ministers when Queen, the most important and prominent being William Cecil, later Lord Burghley.

Inextricably linked with this ‘Cambridge connection’ is Elizabeth’s religion. In the sixteenth century a woman’s religious life was inextricably linked with her education. “The early schools for girls were in religious houses; a family tutor might also be the household chaplain”, as was probably the case in Jane Seymour’s education.

“One of the reasons women were taught to read was so that they might understand the devotional material that was essential to their religious lives and to supervise the religious education of the children in the absence of the father. They were educated in a kind of practical piety, admonished in prayer books and sermons, as in the practical guidebooks, to be chaste and silent, obedient to their husbands or other superiors, and to conform to appropriate religious training” (Hull, 1982, p. 103).

Educated as she was by Grindal and Ascham, both held reformist views on religion and Elizabeth was clearly influenced by them although she never developed the extreme religious views of her brother, Edward or sister, Mary. Kateryn Parr probably also had an influence on Elizabeth’s religious education as can be seen in the gifts Elizabeth made for Kateryn, one of which will be explored in greater detail later in the chapter. But another work which Elizabeth translated in 1547 was the *Institution de la Vie Chréstienne* by John Calvin, the French Protestant scholar and reformer (Weir, 2008, p. 10) this was again a gift for Kateryn, showing their shared religious sympathies. If Elizabeth did follow “the example of her teachers and friends, she would have accepted as a minimum the results of the “new learning” and the importance of reforming the church in the light of a fuller understanding of the Scriptures and Christian antiquity” (Hudson, 1980, p. 134).

By looking at Elizabeth’s prayer book as Queen we get an insight into Elizabeth’s religious views. The prayers in the book reveal that Elizabeth was not “an isolated devotee seeking to express original spiritual insights and unique understandings of God and his world, but rather a regular participant in the liturgy if the English church through its changes from her birth; one who had studied the New Testament in its original tongue; one who had been thoroughly exposed to the whole Bible and to selections of Christian patristic in her education; one who, as a young girl, had translated into French, Italian, and Latin he stepmother’s extensive English devotions; and one who once remarked to a parliamentary delegation that she had “studied nothing else but divinity till (she) came to the crown” (Haugaard, 1981, pp. 81-82).

Even in her own words, her religion was based on her education. She was no religious extremist and disliked extremists at both the Protestant and Catholic ends of the religious spectrum. The key comparison regarding Elizabeth’s religion being the product of her education is by comparing her to Mary. Mary was a passionate Catholic, this was the result not only of her growing up in Catholic England, under the watchful eye of her pious, almost saintly Catholic mother and by Catholic tutors, one Richard Featherstone was to go to the block for his defence of Catholicism, criticism of Anne Boleyn and refusal to accept the Royal Supremacy and the reformed religion. Whereas, Elizabeth was educated by men who did not want to entirely destroy the old learning but rather “rejuvenate it by reintroducing into the curriculum those humane arts that the preoccupation with logic had virtually banished” (Ryan, 1963, p. 22).

This meant a resurgence in the learning of Latin and Greek which led to people being able to read the Bible in the original language and therefore be able to interpret it themselves and bring themselves closer to God. This is the complete opposite of what Mary was taught as Mary was taught the Catholic idea that the priest read and interpreted the Bible for the congregation, Mary would have been unable to translate the Greek New Testament unlike Elizabeth, as Mary was not taught Greek. Elizabeth’s tutors like Edward’s were to the left-of-centre in their religious convictions (Somerset, 1997, p. 13). Edward, like Elizabeth, was educated by those “evangelical courtiers and scholars who were all linked in some way with the radical humanist community at Cambridge. Thus, in this political and cultural area as in so many others, the field was left to reformers, and though they could do little towards making a ‘Protestant Imp’ out of Edward during his father’s lifetime, they were able to use their influence effectively in the coming reign” (Dowling, 1981, pp. 258 – 259). Edward may have been influenced by these extreme views, Elizabeth certainly was not. Elizabeth was later to tell her sister “’that she had never been taught the doctrine of the ancient religion’” (Somerset, 1997, p. 13) and in this she was spinning no tale but genuinely telling the truth.

Although Mary did offer to help Elizabeth ‘learn’ Catholicism and sent her books and a rosary, Elizabeth did not bother to learn and never wore or used the rosary, Elizabeth was perfectly happy to pretend to conform and was content with the centre-left Protestantism she had been taught. Elizabeth “was a regular reader of scripture, especially the Psalms. Theologically lukewarm and politique as it may have been, her Protestantism was genuine enough. After all, an option for some sort of Protestantism was almost genetically programmed (Rex, 2009, p. 48). As the daughter of Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth personified Henry’s break with Rome, as the first child of the Reformation this made her *the* child of the Reformation despite being declared illegitimate, this political and theological inheritance was bound to shape Elizabeth’s own religious views. “Anne herself had more than flirted with evangelical doctrines in her brief reign, and was enrolled among the Protestant martyrs by John Foxe in his account of the suffering of the English Church (his *Acts and Monuments*, or *‘Book of Martyrs’* as it came to be known, which he published with a dedication to Elizabeth in 1563). Yet Elizabeth could hardly have remembered her mother. It was the circumstances of her birth, rather than any sentimental attachment to her mother’s memory, that determined her religious stance. As the papacy had never recognised Henry’s divorce as valid, while the King claimed that his marriage to Catherine of Aragon was against scripture itself, it was on the authority of the Bible alone, of the Bible as opposed to the Catholic Church, that Elizabeth based her very right to the throne, and in a sense her very right to life (Rex, 2001, p. 40). Elizabeth’s Protestantism was also in some ways not just due to her being taught by Protestant tutors but was in some senses inevitable due to the circumstances surrounding her birth. Even during her reign Elizabeth would not bow to Puritan pressure to abolish bishops and introduce a ‘Presbyterian’ style of church government. Elizabeth was a social conservative and this would always make her oppose such a policy and her education confirmed this.

Under Ascham, Elizabeth’s theological readings included the writings of Cyprian of Carthage. As Rex notes he was “a bishop of the early church whose letters and treatises firmly upheld the doctrine of what is sometimes called ‘monarchical episcopacy’. No reader of Cyprian was likely to feel much sympathy for the alternative model of collegiate church followers: a model in which local churches were presided over by godly oligarchies which characterised the traditional ecclesiastical hierarchy to the more horizontal patterns of power which typified Calvinist church organization, and were often associated with republican governments” (Rex, 2009, p.60).

Although Elizabeth’s ‘middle way’ in religion caused problems later on what is important to remember is that she successfully upheld her ‘middle way’ throughout her reign despite opposition from some of her Puritan advisors especially Sir Francis Walsingham, she maintained her way. This was not only an example of her own strength and authority as Queen, but also of her belief in what she had been born into, but also what she learnt from the readings assigned to her by her tutors. Even if they wanted to mould her into a ‘protestant imp’ like Edward they never had the chance. Elizabeth was too independently minded to be moulded to believe anyone else’s religion other than her own.

Elizabeth’s tutors were most definitely Protestant but Protestant writings on girl’s education focused on two specific aims “the cultivation of virtue and the development of the skills of housewifery. The former was principally defined as the avoidance of the sin of pride and cultivation of the virtue of chastity, which are also specifically angled towards the girl’s one function in life: to become a wife and mother. The curriculum for girls reflects this in its emphasis on biblical and theological readings, alongside practical skills such as weaving, sewing, basic medical knowledge, singing and dancing, and in the frequent dire warnings against girls being allowed to read mediaeval romances or classical love poetry” (Aughterson, 1995, p. 167). With the benefit of hindsight we know that Elizabeth became neither a wife nor a mother, this could not have been predicted at the time and luckily for us Elizabeth’s tutors did not stick to this stereotypical female ‘curriculum’ when educating Elizabeth. As a King’s daughter a more thorough education was required.

Johnson argues that Elizabeth “was not, and never became a religious woman” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17). Elizabeth, like both of her siblings, was baptized in accordance with the full Roman Catholic rites but “her religious upbringing was Protestant, in the sense that it was based on a spirit of inquiry, a repudiation of ecclesiastical authority as the sole guide to truth, and the personal study of interpretation of the Bible” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17). Johnson also argues that Elizabeth did believe in a Divine Providence especially when faced with a crisis moment and she made a *bona mors* (The Art of Dying Happily in the Congregation of Jesus Christ). Johnson argues that Elizabeth

“saw Christianity more as an outward and secular instrument to preserve society from disorder, then as a set of immutable truths to be inwardly believed. In this, as in many other ways, she was the opposite of ‘her father’s daughter’. Throughout her life she loathed what she called ‘preciseness’ on matters of religious belief and practice. The speculations of theologians, she said, were ‘ropes of sand or sea-slime leading to the moon’ arguments about doctrine ‘a dream of fools or enthusiasts’. But she was thoroughly familiar with the subject-matter of religious debate. As she told the commons at the end of the 1584-5 parliament: ‘I am supposed to have many studies, but most philosophical. I must yield this to be time: that I suppose few, that be no professors, have read more... And yet, amidst many volumes, I hope God’s book hath not been my seldomest lectures’” (Johnson, 1974, p. 17).

Whilst Elizabeth was certainly no extremist she certainly took religion more seriously than Johnson seems to state. Elizabeth believed that she had come to the throne as a result of God’s divine intervention and is supposed to have quoted Psalm 118 in Latin (of course) “’*A Domine factum est illud et est mirabile in oculis nostris! –* This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!’” (Weir, 1996, p. 363). Even during her imprisonment at Woodstock during Mary’s reign the Privy Council allowed Elizabeth to have a small English Bible, Latin Psalter and Cicero’s *De Officiis*. “It is not surprising that the daughter of Henry VIII influenced as a young girl by reforming circles in her father’s and brother’s courts should give a significant place to the “Word of God”, centred on holy scriptures, in her devotional expressions” (Haugaard, 1981, p. 88). Elizabeth also worshipped daily and even composed a Book of Devotions with prayers in English, French, Italian, Latin and Greek, composed during the first half of her reign shows not only her prodigious intellect and linguistic talent but also her devotion to Protestantism and God.

One of the only testimonies we have to Elizabeth’s early educational attainments, is a hand-written translation of a poem, bound in a hand-stitched cover which was a 1545 New Year’s gift from Elizabeth to Kateryn Parr (Somerset, 1997, p. 16). The poem Elizabeth chose was *Le Miroir de l’âme pécheresse* or *The Mirror of the Sinful Soul* by King Francis I of France’s sister Marguerite of Navarre who along with Francis’s mistress Madame d’Esampes, headed the ‘English party’ at the French court, the choice therefore was well thought out as Cardinal du Bellay had made the suggestion during peace negotiations that Elizabeth should marry a French prince and return Boulogne to France as part of her dowry (Perry, 1990, p. 16).

The choice of text was perfect for a Protestant Princess to give as a gift to a Protestant Queen. Marguerite shared Kateryn Parr’s and Elizabeth’s religious sympathies and was a leading patron of reform on mainland Europe. Queen Marguerite was a good example “of a powerful female figure whose learning and intellect was influencing the lives of many, both at court and beyond” (Borman, 2010, p. 9). Sir John Neale has called *The Mirror* an “excessively dreary French poem” (Neale, 1952, pp. 20-21).

“More recently Anne Lake Prescott, in *The Pearl of the Valois and Elizabeth I,* marvelled at its unsuitability ‘as a means of displaying Elizabeth’s talents’, since the poem presents God ‘as a great king and judge who is kind to his daughters and does not execute adulterous wives’. In fact the metre is light and lilting and the poem lends itself easily to literal translation despite its high seriousness. Jean Belmain, the French tutor laconically mentioned in Edward’s journal, had recently joined the household, probably helped with the translation, so Elizabeth cannot have found the language too difficult. The labour lay in writing it out (Perry, 1990, p. 16).

Although the translation does pay great testament to Elizabeth’s formidable linguistic skills, the translation of such a poem would be testing today for students of both A-Level and undergraduate level French yet at the age of twelve, Elizabeth composed an extremely competent translation (Rex, 2009, p. 20). The most important lesson that Elizabeth probably took from the poem was that

“women were essentially weak, inferior beings and that only by emulating the characteristics of men could a queen succeed in this world. As Margaret wrote to her brother, King Francis I, ‘All my life I wanted to serve you not as a sister but as a brother’. Elizabeth took this so much to heart that after she had ascended the throne, she more often referred to herself not as Queen but as ‘Prince’ when addressing her subjects. Advocating her ‘male’ characteristics of courage, authority and shrewdness enabled her not just to survive, but to reign supreme over a society dominated by men” (Borman, 2010, p. 91).

Marguerite was a powerful female figure who may have influenced Elizabeth in her belief that women could rule successfully in a man’s world. This idea would have been horrifying to Henry VIII and the majority of people (Borman, 2010, p. 91). This theme of the poem was the inadequacy of the human soul and that people could only be saved by the justification of faith alone. Starkey, (2001, p. 49) states that Elizabeth’s understanding of this idea gives us a “vivid insight into the moment. It shows, reassuringly, that this infant phenomenon, who was capable of summarizing the sort of idea (justification by faith) which leaves today’s undergraduates blank, was equally an eleven-year-old child, who had left everything to the last minute”. Despite this Kateryn would have been pleased with the choice as it would have shown that Elizabeth was as dedicated to the Protestant religion as she was.

Elizabeth writes using the beautiful italic script which she perfected under Ascham’s guidance and as a result Elizabeth raised this to an art form, her signature is the best reflection of this with its spectacular loops and flourishes (Weir, 2008, p. 11). Perry’s analysis of Elizabeth’s work states that “the first twenty-seven pages suggest the writer was having a terrible battle to get the tails of her ‘g’s aligned and that she was undecided about how to form the letter ‘k’. The pages of the ‘book’ are much smaller than the large single sheet she used to write her letter to Kateryn during the summer. The book must have been finished in a hurry since the dedication is dated on the last day of the old year. Elizabeth had obviously transcribed her first draft from ‘rough’ to ‘best’. On f.34 she wrote, ‘for my mind was in other places’. Clearly it was; she copied the phrase out twice, firmly scoring through the repetition. She had grasped the poem’s main theme, the complete dependence of the soul upon God, which she set out in the introduction, but chiefly she was concerned to get the thing down in English, and at eleven she was painfully aware of her grammatical shortcomings (Perry, 1990, p. 16-17). Elizabeth even lamented in the letter to Kateryn “there is nothing done as it should be” (Starkey, 2001, p. 49). “Professor Prescott has studied Elizabeth’s mistakes carefully, citing her occasional omissions and gender confusions as the signs of subconscious anger against her father...” (Perry, 1990, p. 17) but like Perry, I believe that the mistakes in grammar and calligraphy were just the normal errors of a young girl who was battling against time and stretching her comprehension and concentration to the limit. The letter attached to the poem shows how Elizabeth’s mind was working on this occasion. She begins the letter with the flattering metaphors expected of such a letter to the Queen but half way through the letter this turns into a desperate plea to the Queen not to show the work around as it contains mistakes:

“...Not only knowing the affectuous will and fervent zeal, the which your Highness hath towards all godly learning, as also my duty towards you (most Gracious and Sovereign Princess) but knowing also, that pusillanimity and idleness are most repugnant unto a reasonable creature, and that (as the philosopher sayeth) even as an instrument of iron or other metal waxeth soon rusty, unless it be continually occupied: even so shall the wit of a man or a woman wax dull and unapt to do or understand anything perfectly, unless it be always occupied upon some manner of study. Which things considered hath moved so small a portion as God hath lent me, to prove what I could do. And therefore have I (as for essay or beginning, following the right notable saying of the proverb aforesaid) translated this little book out of French rhyme unto English prose, joining the sentences together as well as the capacity of my simple wit and small learning could extend themselves... And although I know that as for my part which I have wrought in it (as well spiritual as manual) there is nothing done as it should be, nor else worthy to come in your Grace’s hands, but rather all unperfect and uncorrect; yet do I trust also that, howbeit it is like a work which is but now begun and shapen, that the file of your excellent wit and godly learning, in the reading of it (if so it vouchsafe your Highness to do) shall rub out, polish and mend (or else cause to mend) the words (or rather the order of my writing) the which I know in many places to be rude and nothing done as it should be. But I hope that, after to have been in your Grace’s hands, there shall be nothing in it worthy of reprehension, and that in the meanwhile no other (but your Highness only) shall read it or see it, lest my faults be known of many. Then shall they be better excused (as my confidence is in you Grace’s accustomed benevolence) than if I should bestow a whole year in writing or inventing ways to excuse them” (Tudor in Perry, 1990, pp. 17-18).

Elizabeth’s ‘simple wit and small learning’ is certainly an understatement of her intellectual abilities which were certainly better developed than those of the woman she was writing to. The theme of personal presents continued and for a New Year’s gift to her father in 1545 she also made a translation. But, this time no mistakes could be made, despite Elizabeth’s tender age because the gift was for her father. Elizabeth translated *Prayers and Meditations* by Kateryn Parr from the original English into Latin, French and Italian bound as one volume with a preface in Latin dedicating the work to Henry. One important fact about this is that it is the only letter we have from Elizabeth to her father, but he did not like writing letters, those to Anne Boleyn being the exception, but perhaps Henry did reply via a verbal message delivered by one of the men of his privy chamber or perhaps even personally. But we do not know that he disapproved of the gift as such a negative reaction would surely have been reported, despite its trivial nature, by the Emperor’s ambassador as anything negative regarding the ‘whore’ Anne Boleyn’s daughter was always gleefully reported. By the time Elizabeth composed this translation she had a tutor, William Grindal and

“the startling elegance of her Latin in the letter to Henry suggests that it may have been a joint compilation, or that the young man had lost no time in stimulating Elizabeth to remarkable new heights of attainment. The letter to Henry shows the exciting standards set for Elizabeth and Edward at an early age. It also demonstrates the rapid advancement of Elizabeth’s mind in adolescence, and it sets out ideas that were to shape her thought and personality for the rest of her life. Despite conventional protestations of ignorance and humility, it is full of feeling, and I believe it demonstrates irrefutably the sincerity of Elizabeth’s attitude to her father” (Perry, 1990, p. 20).

Elizabeth was clearly confident that this gift would please her father and the letter indicates that Elizabeth was full of a sense of self-awareness and that she was

“the Lady Elizabeth, heiress to the intellectual traditions of the Tudor family and with a growing understanding of what it meant to be the daughter of a king – one ‘whom philosophers regard as a God upon earth’. Maybe Grindal had invented the phrase to flatter his royal patron, but it was Elizabeth who wrote it out, and unconsciously she was laying the foundations for her own deeply rooted belief in the divine origins of sovereignty. As she weathered the traumas of the following decades, it was to become a belief which no one was in a position to shake” (Perry, 1990, p. 20):

“...And in this I fear any lest my green and unordered learning and the unripe childishness of my intellect may detract from the praise and commendation of a matter which intellects long steeped in arguments of theology labour upon. For nothing should be more acceptable to a King whom philosophers regard as a god on earth than the study which lifts us to heaven and renders us heavenly while on earth, and divine while yet in the flesh, and which, though we were in the toils of endless and infinite troubles, even then restores us to our happiness and felicity... and it seemed fitting to me that this task should be undertaken by myself, your daughter and one who should be not only the imitator of your virtues but also heir to them...” (Tudor in Perry, 1990, p. 21).

This shows that Elizabeth was clearly aware of her own intellectual capabilities, intellectual heritage, and how to use it, she saw it as a way to impress her father and show that she truly was his child and not that of any of the men Anne Boleyn was supposed to have been having an affair with. Although, Elizabeth didn’t need to prove that she was Henry’s child through her intellect as her red hair certainly proved that she was.

Elizabeth always saw herself as Henry’s daughter and liked to portray herself as such, she was very much her mother’s daughter in some of her personality traits, but she is only known to have mentioned her in public twice and never during her father’s reign. Elizabeth did not make the mistake of nailing herself to the memory of her mother’s cross like Mary did (Starkey, 2001, p. 30). A woman was only ever identifiable as being the object of firstly, their father’s and then their husband’s, they may be a mistress to servants but she is always subordinate to her husband and the “comparability of the roles of father and mother in relation to children is uneasily maintained...” (Graham, 1996, p. 216). Elizabeth’s parents were practically incomparable, the great King Henry VIII and the ‘whore’ Anne Boleyn, Elizabeth would have been well aware of this and the public perception surrounding her parentage which is why she was shrewd enough to never mention her mother. Plus Henry had a “warm fatherly pride in her (whatever his residual feelings about Anne Boleyn might have been)” (Starkey, 2001, p. 30) therefore, Elizabeth would never have sacrificed her father’s approval for the memory of a mother she had never met. Elizabeth knew it was better to please Henry as he was her only protector and source of living. The only physical evidence we have of Elizabeth’s feelings towards her mother is a ring which has a clasp, and when opened reveals two portraits, one of Elizabeth and one of Anne. This shows that Elizabeth never forgot her mother and unlike Mary when she became Queen, Elizabeth never tried to have her mother’s remains re-buried in more honourable settings or have her parent’s marriage declared valid and therefore herself legitimate. Elizabeth would not go this far as this would undermine the image she wanted to create for herself as the daughter of Henry VIII. However, during her coronation processions one of the images presented Anne Boleyn in a tableau representing Elizabeth’s lineage as Anne was “placed next to Henry VIII ‘apparelled with sceptre and diadem’” (Plowden, 2002, p. 214). This would have been done to show how different Elizabeth was to Mary, as Elizabeth was pure English and not half unlike Mary. Mary was half Spanish and had gone on to marry a Spaniard, the people blamed this Spanish influence for the horrors of the Marian burnings and so by presenting Elizabeth as pure English, which she was and therefore would, the people hoped, bring none of the terrors of the previous reign. Right from an early age Elizabeth had learnt that it was always best for the sake of her public image to play upon her pure English, Tudor, heritage as Elizabeth never wanted to lose the love of the people.

This is also shown in one of the personal emblems which she used, the eglantine, the white rose badge which was used by her grandmother, Elizabeth of York, another quintessentially English Queen. Elizabeth first used the eglantine when she bound the cover for her 1545 New Year’s gift to her father she sewed eight of them, four on the front, four on the back of the book, their leaves green silk and the centres yellow (Perry, 1990, p.19). This would also have showed Henry that unlike her sister Mary she did not associate herself with her mother but with him and her Tudor family, this would surely have appealed greatly to the controlling side of Henry who liked complete obedience in all things from all people, including his children.

There can be no doubting the fact that Elizabeth was a vain woman, yet she also knew how to present herself. As Queen, Elizabeth’s image was frozen in time. Portraits of her always depicted the image she wanted them to portray; beautiful, immortal and omnipotent. They depicted an idea, not the real woman, hundreds of images of Queen Elizabeth I exist; they are iconic yet highly stylized. Queen Elizabeth was to her people, Deborah, Astrea, Belphoebe and other biblical and mythical figures not a mere mortal woman.

“Above all, she was a figure of mystery and power-mysterious as only a woman could be in a world of men. As the prospects of marriage receded, even in the eyes of the most optimistic, virginity became her trade mark. She never exploited the Blessed Virgin Mary to provide a role model that would not have suited her Protestant conscience or upbringing; rather, she became an iconic version herself – a woman whose physical integrity became a symbol for the inviolability of her country. By remaining a *femme seul*, Elizabeth was able to develop a female style of monarchy that was quite distinct from the traditional male style to which all Queen Consorts were subjected, but just as effective” (Loades, 2009, p. 11).

Many of these images are still as instantly recognisable and iconic today as they were during Elizabeth’s reign. However, these were not used to depict Elizabeth’s intelligence, but as a Queen she may not have felt the need to depict this in portraits as she would quite willingly outwit any who thought themselves more intelligent than her. However, most of these portraits are of a public image not the real Elizabeth, but there is one portrait which is of the ‘real’ Elizabeth.

One which she could not have had flown into a rage over if it portrayed her as too old, or not beautiful enough, and that is the portrait painted of her in c.1547 when she was thirteen-years-old. This portrait truly reflects the girl behind the woman. The artist is unknown but it is often attributed to William Scrots and was painted perhaps for her father or maybe her brother, Edward who had asked in a letter for her portrait. However, “both children had been painted in the autumn of 1546, before their father’s death, and Henry’s last New Year present to Edward had been portraits (or miniatures) of himself and Kateryn. In a conclusive piece of re-dating Janet Arnold has linked the portrait of Elizabeth now in the royal collection at Windsor Castle with a letter formerly attributed to the 1550s. It shows Elizabeth at thirteen, perhaps in the new dress that was ordered for her in November for the Christmas festivities.

The portrait is mentioned in an inventory made for Edward in 1547 as ‘a table with the picture of the Lady Elizabeth her grace with a book in her hand, her gown like crimson cloth with works” (Perry, 1990, p. 24). In this portrait Elizabeth is seen to be studious and this is something she is clearly proud of in order to be painted in such a situation. Elizabeth was never described as beautiful, instead she was said to be striking to look at, she looks directly at the viewer and we can see she has inherited Henry’s red hair and hooked nose and her mother’s long, pale, thin face and dark, witty eyes. She seems much older than her years in the portrait, but then children in the sixteenth century were expected to grow up much quicker than today and some were even married at the age Elizabeth was in this portrait (Weir, 2008, p. 11). The portrait shows Elizabeth’s finger marking a place in her book along with a small book mark, possibly marking a page of interest to her or her tutor and on a table beside her is a large book, possibly the Bible open on what might have been the day’s reading or piece to be translated. Elizabeth clearly looked as though she had been disturbed and could not wait to return to her studies. This portrait sums up Elizabeth’s early life and even how she wanted the public and the court to perceive her. Even at this early age she wanted to project the right public image, in this case that of a richly dressed young lady, the daughter of someone of wealth and importance, in this case the King. Yet she also projects an air of gravity, self-awareness and self-confidence in herself as an intelligent, Renaissance Princess. Elizabeth sums up this portrait, her feelings towards her current situation and her opinion of her rigorous education perfectly in the letter she wrote which supposedly accompanied this portrait. To Edward she wrote “... for the face I grant I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present...” (Perry, 1990, p. 25)

Henry VIII died on 28th January 1547 clutching Archbishop Cranmer’s hand waiting to meet his God and answer for his sins, of which there were surely many, including his unceremonious discarding and execution of his wives. He left behind a country split by religion to be ruled by a young boy; and of his three children Elizabeth resembled him the most. In her work on the psychology of Elizabeth, Taylor-Smither states that “the effect of the death of her father... is not recorded, although it is known that she was not present at his deathbed or funeral. It is probable that like so many others, Elizabeth experienced ambivalent feelings – a genuine grief which recalled past losses, mingled with relief – yet for her it was magnified by her own unresolved feelings for him” (1984, p. 55). It was against protocol for Elizabeth and her siblings to have attended their father’s funeral. Elizabeth would have felt genuine grief at her father’s death, news of which was broken to her along with her brother Edward, at Enfield. Historians often state that the two young children threw themselves into each other’s arms and wept, perhaps they did, but we will never know (Starkey, 2001, p. 60). If Elizabeth didn’t weep perhaps if she had known what troubles lay ahead then she would, as she was never to live a secure life for the next fifteen years until she became Queen.

However, this grief cannot have lasted long as Elizabeth soon recovered her composure and “in a letter which showed a gravity commensurate with his new status, her brother, now King Edward VI, wrote to congratulate her on her fortitude: ‘There is very little need of my consoling you, most dear sister, because from your learning you know what you ought to do, and from your prudence and piety you perform what your learning causes you to know... I perceive you think of our father’s death with a clam mind’” (Somerset, 1991, p. 19). Elizabeth had probably thrown herself back into her studies; even Edward, who did not often compliment people, knew of Elizabeth’s intellectual abilities and saw them worthy of compliment; but Elizabeth also learnt a valuable lesson from her father’s death. The second Act of Succession in 1536 had seen parliament give Henry absolute power to determine anything and everything regarding the succession in his will. By the end of Henry’s reign there were bitter religious and political divides across Henry’s council. On 26 December 1546 Henry’s will was read out in the presence of the council. It outlined the succession in great detail, the crown would pass to Edward and if he died without legitimate heirs then it would pass to Mary and if Mary had no legitimate heirs then to Elizabeth and if she also died childless to the heirs of Henry’s younger sister Mary omitting the Stuart line descending from Henry’s older sister Margaret and her marriage to King James IV of Scotland. The will did not make Mary or Elizabeth legitimate and Henry died without ever making up his mind about his daughter’s legitimacy, perhaps he would know the answer when he met his maker but he did provide each daughter with an income of £3000 a year. He also made elaborate plans for his son’s minority, the power was to be shared by sixteen nobles, he did not appoint anyone as a specific ‘protector’ and the will was signed by his so called ‘faithful’ councillors and lawyers.

When Henry died on 28 January 1547 it was kept a secret for three days, enough time for the new King, Edward VI’s uncle, Edward Seymour, Earl of Hertford to seize the person of the new boy king. Seymour was able to overthrow the immediate provisions of the will mainly the provisions for the composition and power of the regency council by proclaiming himself governor of King Edward VI and Lord Protector of the kingdom and gave himself the title of Duke of Somerset (Johnson, 1974, pp. 21-22). This episode resulted in Elizabeth acquiring “a lifelong contempt for elaborate testamentary plans, or constitutional devices to provide for the future should she die. She learned that it was not within the power of a dead monarch to shape events” (Johnson, 1974, p. 22). This idea would not have appealed to Elizabeth who liked to have ultimate control over everything, even when her own death was drawing nearer in 1603 and Robert Cecil had the nerve to tell Queen Elizabeth “’Madam, to content the people you must go to bed,’” (Hibbert, 1991 ,p. 262). Elizabeth did not take kindly to this; “little man, little man,” she rebuked him with a flash of her former spirit, “the word *must* is not to be used to princes, if your father had lived ye durst not have said so much.’” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 262). Not only does this show that Elizabeth kept her wit even until her final days but also that she always wanted to take control, even if she had not seen the event of Henry VIII’s will unravelling she would have heard about it and would have stored the lesson, to never lose control, in her formidable memory. Although Elizabeth clearly ignored her father’s will herself because when, decades after Henry’s death a copy of his will turned up in the effects of old Bishop Tunstall of Durham, it attracted little attention. In addition, Henry’s will had directed that “his body should be laid alongside Jane Seymour, in a costly tomb, already under construction, in the Lady Chapel at Windsor. Instead, it was simply placed in Jane’s existing tomb. When she became Queen, Elizabeth ‘her father’s daughter’ or no, did nothing to remedy this defiance of his express wishes. She has the matter discussed in the 1560s; but to finish the tomb would have cost money, and she had better things to do with it” (Johnson, 1974, p. 22). In the meantime Elizabeth had to tread the political field over the next eleven years carefully.

“Unlike her sister, Elizabeth had not reached adulthood without any kind of sexual experience. At the age of fourteen she had tangled with Lord Thomas Seymour (the Lord Admiral), the brother of the then Lord Protector” (Loades, 2009, p. 212). Most of the ‘evidence’ for the Seymour affair which is well documented in primary and contemporary documents on Elizabeth’s life and is detailed in most biographies on Elizabeth, is taken from the confessions of Katherine Ashley and Elizabeth’s cofferer, Thomas Parry. This evidence was given at least twelve months after the event when Parry, Kat and her husband were being cross-questioned in a treason trial. However, the lessons it taught Elizabeth, and what is showed us will be outlined along with a brief explanation of what happened.

Thomas Seymour had married the now, Dowager Queen, Kateryn Parr, with what was considered indecent haste in secret in April or early May 1547 and duly moved into Chelsea, a house bequeathed to Kateryn according to the terms of Henry’s will, with Kateryn and the young Elizabeth. Soon after the attention from Seymour began, as Seymour’s first choice for marriage had actually been Mary or Elizabeth, but Kateryn had to do when both Mary and Elizabeth refused his advances. Although this did not stop Seymour’s advances on Elizabeth.

“According to Kat’s later testimony, early one morning, before the household had risen, she and her charge were shocked by the sudden appearance of the Lord Admiral in Elizabeth’s bedchamber. All innocence, he smilingly told them that he had simply come to bid his stepdaughter good morrow. The two women no doubt soon recovered themselves and laughed about it together, but both had been affected. Elizabeth already seemed infatuated with Lord Seymour and was seen to blush whenever he was spoken of. Kat, meanwhile, was evidently excited by such intimacy and gave little thought to its inappropriateness” (Borman, 2009, p. 106).

Kat Ashley’s husband, John, was clearly more aware of the potential gravity of the situation and although his wife was as taken with Lord Seymour as the Queen Dowager he did not allow himself to be taken in by Seymour’s charm unlike his wife, John realised that the situation was inappropriate. John Ashley saw that Elizabeth was “more than a little attracted by him, who seemed to listen intently when he was spoken of and to blush when drawn into conversations about him. Ashley told his wife that she ought to “take heed, for he did fear that the Lady Elizabeth did bear some affection to my Lord Admiral” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 28).

These visits soon became a regular habit for Seymour and he would enter the room before Elizabeth was “fully dressed, patting her ‘upon the back or on the buttocks familiarly’, snatching kisses, and even pocketing the key of the room so she could not escape” (Fraser, 1992, p. 404) or so he could gain entry whenever he pleased.

“Then he would appear himself bare-legged and clad in his night-gown... Elizabeth’s servant Katherine Ashley would tell tales of the Lord Admiral flinging back Elizabeth’s bed curtains to bid her ‘good morning’ while the girl herself burrowed back (whether in modesty, ecstasy, or a combination of the two, Elizabeth never revealed). On one occasion at Hanworth, Kateryn, with the ‘mirth and good pastime’ for which she had been noted during her marriage to King Henry, joined in. She held the girl down while Seymour cut her black gown into a hundred pieces. Of all these incidents – including that involving the Queen herself, however light-hearted – one can only repeat the verdict on the midnight rendezvous of Katherine Howard, Culpepper and Lady Rochford: all those concerned (except possibly Elizabeth) should have known better (Fraser, 1993, p. 404).

But with her intellectual capacity perhaps she should have been aware. However, Kateryn’s playful attitude soon changed and when she was pregnant with Thomas’s child her attitude changed. When Kateryn apparently came upon Elizabeth with her arms around a man’s, allegedly Seymour’s, neck she sent Elizabeth away from Chelsea to Cheshunt and the house of Sir Anthony Denny. “That she knew she had behaved badly, and recognised the tact and generosity Katherine had shown in extracting her from an embarrassing predicament, is evident from a distinctly chastened note in the first letter she wrote to her step-mother from Cheshunt” (Plowden, 2002, p. 95)

“Although I could not be plentiful in giving thanks for the manifold kindness received at your highness’s hand at my departure, yet I am something to be born withal for truly I was replete with sorrow to depart from her highness, especially seeing you undoubtful of health, and albeit I answered little I weighed in more deeper when you said you would warn me of all evil that you should hear of me, for if your grace had not a good opinion of me you would not have offered friendship to me that way, that all men judge the contrary, but what may I more say than thank God for providing such friends to me, desiring God to enrich me with heir long life, and me grace to be in heart no less thankful to receive it, then I now am glad in writing to show it, and although I have plenty of matter, here I will stay for I know you are not quiet to read.

From Cheshunt this present Saturday,

Your Highness’s humbled daughter,

Elizabeth” (Perry, 1990, p. 34)

The letter shows that Elizabeth was missing Kateryn but there is no hint of a deep rift between Kateryn and Elizabeth or a trace of the embarrassment that would be expected if Elizabeth had been caught in a compromising situation with Seymour. Kateryn had also written to Elizabeth at Cheshunt to tell Elizabeth that she was missing her. Before Elizabeth left Chelsea there was supposedly an interview between Kateryn and her young step-daughter, if there was we do not know what was said. According to Grigorio Leti, whose accuracy is doubted, Kateryn told Elizabeth: “’God has given you great qualities. Cultivate them always and labour to improve them, for I believe that you are destined by heaven to be Queen of England’” (Plowden, 2002, p. 95). This may have been Kateryn trying to soften the blow of sending Elizabeth away from her household and if it did happen it may have inspired Elizabeth in her obsessive studies.

On 30th August 1548, Kateryn Parr gave birth to a baby girl who was christened Mary; both parents were overjoyed and felt no disappointment over the child’s gender. Thomas Seymour promptly wrote to his brother, the Protector, Edward Seymour soon wrote back congratulating him on Mary’s birth: “we are right glad to understand by your letters and that the Queen, your bedfellow, hath had a happy hour; and, escaping all danger, hath made you the father of so pretty a daughter” (Plowden, 1990, p. 100). But disaster struck and on 5th September, Kateryn Parr died, of that common child bed killer puerperal sepsis or puerperal fever as it is more commonly known. During her last days Kateryn developed a fever and became delirious and began to tell her ladies that she was

“not well handled... for those about me careth not for me, but standeth laughing at my grief; and the more good I will to them, the less good they will to me! She was holding on to Tom’s hand as she spoke and when he exclaimed, ‘why, sweetheart, I would do you no hurt’, Kateryn said, ‘very sharply and earnestly,’ in his ear, ‘no my lord, I think so; you have given me many shrewd taunts’. Tom, distressed and somewhat embarrassed, lay down beside her on the bed in an attempt to calm her ‘with gentle communication’” (Plowden, 2002, p. 100).

The implication of these words on those around her cannot have been lost and rumours may have started about Seymour’s indiscretions with Elizabeth. Kateryn died on 5th September 1548 and with that the floodgates opened and Elizabeth’s earliest test began.

Thomas Seymour once again began plotting, including, again, marriage to Elizabeth along with other plots, but it is not necessary to detail those plots in this thesis. However, the result of these plots led to Seymour being arrested on suspicion of treason on 17th January 1549. A crucial part of the evidence against Seymour was his conspiracy to marry Elizabeth without the Council’s permission, which was unlawful under the terms of Henry’s will; this in itself was enough to send Seymour to the block. But something worse soon happened when Elizabeth learnt that Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry had been taken to the tower.

“She was marvellous abashed, and ded weype very tenderly a long tyme’, reported Sir Robert Tyrwhit, the formidable official who had been appointed to interrogate the Princess at Hatfield. Elizabeth would have been fully aware of just how much danger her governess was in. Only seven years earlier, Jane, Lady Rochford had proved how fatal complicity in royal affairs could be when she had been executed for helping to arrange Katherine Howard’s secret meeting with Thomas Culpepper. Was Elizabeth’s beloved Kat now to meet the same end?” (Borman, 2009, p. 116).

Not if Elizabeth could prevent it and her intellect, shrewdness and wit were all powerful tools which she used to their full advantage. A battle of wits ensued between Elizabeth and Tyrwhit. However, Tyrwhit either was not prepared, or was unaware of the fight Elizabeth would present but in this battle of wits Elizabeth proved to be more than a match for Tyrwhit.

After the initial shock of receiving the news of Kat and Parry’s arrest Elizabeth soon composed herself in preparation to answer Tyrwhit’s questions as she could not be sure what Katherine and Parry had revealed she had to play her cards close to her chest. “Tyrwhit thought her calmness and reason meant he was getting round her with his subtle questioning but he did have the intelligence to realise that he was up against... a formidable advocate: ‘I do assure your Grace’ he’, he wrote to Somerset, ‘she hath a very good wit, and nothing is gotten off her, but by great policy’” (Dunn, 2003, p. 94). But Tyrwhit was easily outwitted by this young girl and he was probably pleased to finish his duty as interrogator as he had clearly been outwitted by a ‘mere’ girl (Dunn, 2003, p. 96). But to begin with his first mistake was to allow her to write to the Protector – her principal judge, as it were – a privilege denied to most Tudor suspects of treason” (Johnson, 1974, p. 29), including his own brother, Thomas, who was at this point in the Tower. Elizabeth

“promptly passed to the offensive. Having dealt with the question of Durham House, a property which Elizabeth had been granted for life in her father’s will and the proposed marriage, she added:

Master Tyrwhit and others have told me that there goeth rumour abroad, which be greatly both against my honour and honesty (which above all other things I esteem) which be these: that I am in the Tower, and with child by my Lord Admiral. My Lord, these are shameful slanders, for the which, besides the great desire I have to see the King’s majesty. I shall most heartily desire your Lordship that I may come to the court after your first determination, that I may show myself there as I am” (Johnson, 1974, pp. 29-30).

“The next mistake Tyrwhit made was to show Elizabeth Kat Ashley’s and Thomas Parry’s confessions which she studied the contents and signatures of carefully and with her eagle eye assessed every aspect. Tyrwhit says she read them ‘half-breathless’, as well she might, but she immediately perceived – something which had eluded Tyrwhit – that their revelations about the sexual romping, though embarrassing, were legally harmless. She promptly confirmed them, adding a few details of no consequence. Exasperated, Tyrwhit wrote to Somerset: ‘they all sing one song, and so I think they would not, unless they had set the note before.’ In fact, Elizabeth was merely exercising her intelligence” (Johnson, 1974, p. 30).

Elizabeth clearly knew her rights well and had probably studied the contents of her father’s will which made it treason for someone to plan to marry her without the council’s permission but she had never promised anyone anything so therefore had not committed any crime. Tyrwhit clearly underestimated Elizabeth; she possibly knew this and set out to prove him wrong. Elizabeth again wrote to the Protector and the letters which she wrote to him during this turbulent time can be seen as “her first state papers, marked by shrewdness, insight into her character, a clear understanding of the political issues involved, and a determination to turn the whole episode to her advantage. First, she cleared herself in the Protector’s own mind. Having secured this, she pressed further and asked for her innocence to be publicly admitted” (Johnson, 1974, p. 30):

“... that should be but a breeding of an evil name of me, that I am glad to punish them, and so get the evil will of the people, which thing I would be loath to have. But if it might seem good unto your Lordship and the rest of the Council to send forth a proclamation into the counties that they restrain their tongues declaring how the tales are but lies...” (Tudor in Perry, 1990, p. 41).Elizabeth’s response to the rumours of her allegedly being pregnant with the Admiral’s child “illustrates how she was able to use this unfortunate episode to hone her growing political skills” (Cavanagh, 1998, p. 15).

Elizabeth’s next task was to save Katherine Ashley.

“... For whom I shall speak for, which is for Katherine Ashley... first because that she hath been with me a long time, and many years and hath taken great labour and pain in bringing me up in learning and honesty; and therefore I ought of very duty (to) speak for her. For Saints Gregory sayeth that we are more bound to them that bringeth us up well, then to our parents, for our parents do that which is natural for them, that is bringeth us into the world, but our bringers up are a cause to make us live well in it..” (Tudor in Perry, 1990, pp. 42-43).

Elizabeth was using her prodigious learning and skill in rhetoric and knowledge of scripture and the saints to her advantage. She was also demonstrating her increasing awareness of the power of modest expression (Cavanagh, 1990, p. 16) as seen by her signing off phrase when writing to the Lord Protector: “your assured friend to my little power” (Perry, 1990, p. 43). Elizabeth would have been motivated by her genuine love and affection for Kat “but what is so striking about this correspondence is her precocious concern for public opinion, not just at court but in ‘the counties’, and her determination to have it swayed in her favour. She did not want a grudging admission that there was no proof of treason against her; she wanted the nation to be clearly informed that she was a loyal subject. And, in effect, this is what she got. Kat Ashley was soon out of prison and back with her, and even Parry whose muddling of her accounts Tyrwhit had immediately noticed, was back at his job with a year. But, being a practical woman, Elizabeth appointed another financial officer to assist him, and supervised their joint accounts, initialling every line herself, as her grandfather, Henry VIII, had done, half a century before (Johnson, 1974, p. 30).

Thomas Seymour was beheaded on Tower Hill on 20 March 1549; there is no contemporary evidence which describes Elizabeth’s reaction to Seymour’s execution. “If she had made the famous remark ascribed to her by many biographers, ‘this day died a man of much wit and very little judgement’, it would have been a wonderful epitaph and an even more wonderful testament to her sang-froid, but the source is the scurrilous seventeenth-century biographer, Grigori Leti, a man of much invention...” (Perry, 1990, p. 43). Although her later free speech attests that a comment such as this, even at her tender age is plausible from this remarkable young girl. The mixture of maidenly modesty with sheer intellect was a shrewd move which served her well and erased all suspicion of treason from her and she was soon welcomed back to court with open arms. Her education had served her practically as well as in the literal sense of academic achievement. Whilst her cousin Mary, Queen of Scots was in France, living a privileged life being raised as the future Queen of France, her only troubles were those involving her household servants. Elizabeth at the same age was negotiating with Somerset for her life and the lives of her beloved Kat Ashley and Thomas Parry in the aftermath of the ‘Seymour scandal’ (Dunn, 2003, p. 117). However, when Elizabeth and Mary’s paths were to finally cross the results were disastrous for Mary yet Elizabeth’s education and early life had prepared her well for such events.

In the Victorian era historians were shocked by the immoral event which had taken place at Chelsea; but by the mid twentieth century historians saw the event as innocent frolics; today the situation is seen as something between sexual harassment and abuse (Rex, 2009, pp. 23-24). In the sixteenth century there was no sentiment like this and a relationship between a middle-aged man and teenage girl was perfectly normal for example her aunt Margaret Tudor married James IV of Scotland at the age of fourteen and he was thirty and her great-grandmother Lady Margaret Beaufort married Edmund Tudor aged twelve and he was twenty-four. But when the man was already married and the young girl the daughter of Henry VIII and was protected, to an extent, by certain conditions of her father’s will relationships were a different matter.

Elizabeth continued to learn throughout her life and in his work *The Scholemaster*, Roger Ascham wrote that “...the Queens Majesty herself... readeth here now at Windsor more Greek every day than some Prebendary of this church do read Latin in a whole week...” (Ascham in Arber (ed.), 1897, p. 67). The Scholemaster is essentially Ascham’s autobiography which provides us with most of the information we know about Elizabeth’s education. It was also written when Elizabeth was Queen so a lot of it may be seen as over complementary and like Ascham was trying to flatter Elizabeth. However, from the evidence provided by Elizabeth herself with her superb rhetorical skills as Queen and the praises of her contemporaries the claims made by Ascham are largely true. Ascham praises Elizabeth in a letter to his friend the German educator Johannes Sturm about Elizabeth who was now Queen:

“’The glory she derives from herself, and the adornments of talent and learning that she possesses, I have described to you in another letter. I will now only state in addition, that neither at court, nor in the universities, nor among our heads of church or state, are there four of our countrymen who understood Greek better than the Queen herself... All her own subjects, and very many foreigners, are witnesses to her proficiency in other languages. I was one day present, when she replied at the same time to three ambassadors... in three languages’” (Montrose, 2006, p. 32)

Elizabeth was very proud of her linguistic skills and her knowledge of classical and church authors and these accomplishments were admired by those around her.

“She herself eschewed false modesty when, speaking at the close of her fifth parliament in 1585, she allowed that “I am supposed to have many stoodies, but most philosophicall. I must yelde this to be trewe: that I suppose fewe (that be no professors) have reade more”. Such accomplishments constituted a mark of distinction and a source of authority for a monarch whose gender excluded her from opportunities for martial or chivalric prowess...” (Montrose, 2006, pp. 32-33).

Elizabeth also surrounded herself with prodigiously learned people making her court a distinguished place for artistic and intellectual talent (Dobson and Watson, 2002, p. 121).

Elizabeth knew that it was considered unnatural for women to control men and John Knox’s ill timed publication *First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women*, which was against the rule of Mary of Guise as regent in Scotland and Mary I of England but Mary I had died before its publication which coincided instead with the beginning of Elizabeth’s reign. Elizabeth did not take kindly to Knox’s *First Blast* whether it was directly aimed at her or not she still felt, as a female ruler, that it was indirectly aimed at her and therefore took immediate dislike to him and never thought any better of him. Queen Elizabeth never accepted the idea that women were intellectually inferior to men, she had an intellectual edge over the majority of the men around her and she was perfectly confident in her intellectual abilities and could confidently disagree with them unlike her sister Mary.

“At the same time, she could not overawe them as her father had done but rather had to invent her own methods for keeping them in their place. Women were supposed to be indecisive so she took advantage of that by delaying important decisions for longer than any of her advisers thought wise. Sometimes this was done in the hope that some last minute change in the circumstances would either need to be taken into account, or might make any decision unnecessary... Despite the reams of advice that she was given, Elizabeth always reserved the decisions in such matters to herself, and ultimately played her cards close, because it was not in her interest to reveal the workings of her mind to anyone. That was one of the main reasons for her success – no man was really able to follow her thought processes, and that gave her the degree of control that she needed...” (Loades, 2009, pp. 214-215).

Elizabeth had learnt from her past experience with the ‘Seymour episode’ that the only person she could ever fully trust was herself, Kat Ashley and William Cecil came close but even to them the workings of her prodigiously intelligent mind remained hidden. Elizabeth would often downplay her own abilities and would quite happily play the role of a ‘meek’ woman when it suited her and if it was required this role could be played in a certain situation. “When congratulated upon her gifts as a linguist she replied that it was ‘no marvel to teach a woman to talk’; it was “far harder to teach her to hold her tongue.” At the same time she insisted that, although a woman, she was a very special woman” (Hibbert, 1991, pp. 66-67).

“It is not fanciful to consider Elizabeth’s mind and expression deeply affected by her scholarly ready and study, a discipline and an enjoyment which she continued throughout her life. The solitariness of her youth; her natural aptitude; her attempts at gaining her father’s approval through the exercise of her intellectual skills; her subsequent loss of family and isolation from Court; the consequent danger and fears for her life: all conspired to make her books and her studies gain an emotional force far beyond the merely scholastic. As her life as an insecure Princess meant increasingly there were fewer living people she could trust, the company of these sublime dead became for Elizabeth a refuge and a consolation. They were the family circle of friends who expected nothing of her, could not betray her and yet taught her some of the most valuable lessons of her life” (Dunn, 2008, p. 123).

Elizabeth’s studies were a protective cocoon into which she could disappear and there was no controversy in this intellectual world to trouble Elizabeth, she could live peacefully in this world despite the turbulence that often surrounded her, especially after her father’s death.

One of the most remarkable examples of Elizabeth’s continuous education is her famous reply to the Polish ambassador this showed her remarkable rhetorical skills which were part of the ideal Humanist education. Her rigorous education emphasised Latin and Greek rhetoric and “Roger Ascham says that he and the Queen read “that most noble oration of Demosthenes against Aeschines for his thoughts dealing in his embassage to King Philip of Macedonia.” As Elizabeth rose to do battle with the young ambassador, perhaps she remembered” (Green, 2000, p. 987).

“On 25 July 1597, a Polish ambassador, Paul Dzialynski, chastised Queen Elizabeth I publicly for interfering with his country’s shipping trade with Spain. The furious Queen replied at once in extemporaneous Latin, a stunning rhetorical feat which delighted her countrymen and renewed the popularity of the aging Queen. With great rhetorical skill, Elizabeth used a characteristic arrangement, the balancing of antithesis, together with sentence variety, irony, wordplay, and even some Latin rhyme. This brilliant epideictic oration, though short, demonstrates her acute historical and political memory, her definitions of “the law of nature” and “books of princes”, and her perception of her royal power, and it demonstrates that at age sixty-three the Queen’s intellectual faculties were far from impaired.

As a tour de force, this Lain oration can be ranked with Elizabeth’s better known English oration at Tilbury Camp in 1588” (Green, 2000, p. 987). And the poor young ambassador will be forever known to history as the man whom Elizabeth shouted at and certainly outwitted. This young man clearly underestimated the aging Queen, her body may have been aging but her mind was as sharp as ever. “With the brief but scorching words, Elizabeth not only annihilated the unfortunate ambassador but reaffirmed her own intellectual and oratorical prowess, and she powerfully demonstrated her majestic authority. Times were hard in 1597, the court disgruntled, and Elizabeth’s popularity at age sixty-three less than it had been. This brilliant rhetorical coup was a welcome event. The court’s – indeed the nation’s – delighted reaction to her feat seems to reflect a sense of reassurance, as if the whole nation expelled anxiety and rumour, at least for the moment, and took a deep breath, suspending any preference for the prospective younger and male heir, waiting in Scotland for Elizabeth’s decay and demise” (Green, 2000, p. 988). This was England’s Queen dramatically embodying her own motto *Semper Eadem* – always the same – this encounter with the Polish ambassador showed Elizabeth to be as powerful, regal, eloquent and intellectual as she ever was. Practically Elizabeth’s skills as a linguist were extremely useful to her as she was able to converse directly with foreign ambassadors who spoke no English yet Elizabeth could converse in one of the five foreign languages at her command. This was important as Elizabeth meant to rule not to rely on others therefore, her position as Queen was strengthened by the fact that she never needed to rely on others to translate for her. This also meant that she had to keep her learning up to date and practice her linguistic skills, often through translation.

“Elizabeth may indeed be classified as what Heisch terms an ‘honorary male’, yet this was never a conscious decision on her part. It is precisely because Elizabeth ruled like a King that her success had so little effect on gender roles. To men she remained an exception – a part of God’s indestructible plan for women she neither could nor would act as a role model” (Taylor-Smither, 1984, p. 72). Despite Elizabeth’s love of learning she could not pass this on as she had no children. This led to the trend of women being well educated dying out as the Queen’s which followed Elizabeth were certainly no match for Elizabeth intellectually, and what Elizabeth may have thought about this one can only guess.

But how much of her success did Elizabeth owe to all those who had made her future Queenship possible? Her experiences and education which had come from the formal settings of the school-room and the less formal setting of the bed-chamber and Tower taught her to trust only herself, self-discipline and to know her own mind and hate religious extremism. She never did want to make ‘windows into men’s souls’. All of the influences on Elizabeth, her ancestry and background combined with a genius mind, the power to baffle and enthral along with remarkable acting talent both infuriated and amazed those around her throughout her reign and still baffle historians today. Even those who may have thought, and who we may think knew her best never fully understood her. Robert Cecil perhaps came closest when he remarked that Elizabeth

“was ‘more than a man, and (in troth) sometimes less than a woman’. And yet Glorianna always knew exactly how to use her femininity to disarm criticism and whistle justly irritated councillors back into puzzled subjection. She kept her secret then. She keeps it now, and is likely to go on keeping it for all time. The one thing that can be said of her with absolute certainty is that she loved England and England’s people with a deep, abiding, selfless love. When De Feria remarked that she seemed ‘wedded to the people’ he spoke no more than the literal truth, and it is one of the happy accidents of history that she and they came together at exactly the right moment for them both” (Plowden, 2002, p. 216).

We know her as England’s most famous Queen, Glorianna, Good Queen Bess, the Faerie Queen with instantly recognisable portraits and possibly the most famous parents in English history. Elizabeth was also the result not only of this marriage but also of Henry’s divorce; Elizabeth was *the* child of the Reformation. Yet we will never fully know or understand this truly remarkable woman.

Conclusion

What is clear and what can never be disputed is that Elizabeth was incredibly intelligent. But what is unusual are the circumstances surrounding Elizabeth’s education. Elizabeth, either consciously or unconsciously took full advantage of the opportunities given to her including the Humanist views of her tutors themselves, her governess, her genes and also her passion for learning. What can never be forgotten about Elizabeth’s education is that it was never meant to prepare her to rule. Mary was educated as a future Queen because during the time which she was being educated Mary was the sole heir. When Elizabeth was born in September 1533 she was pronounced England’s sole heir, Mary being bastardized. In 1536, however, when Anne Boleyn was executed, Elizabeth herself was also declared a bastard.

When Edward was born in October 1537 he was the undisputed heir in the eyes of the English (Catholic Europe’s opinion was another matter as they still saw Mary as Henry’s only legitimate heir). Edward was not the sickly child he has so often been portrayed as therefore, Elizabeth was not expected to become Queen but rather to be married to someone for political and potentially financial gain. Elizabeth’s education therefore, was the complete opposite of what it was meant to be by studying the classics and rhetoric in the in depth manner she did prepared her for the role she was never meant to have. That role being a submissive wife whose education was designed to ensure she could effectively run a household not rule for forty-five years as the benefit of hindsight shows us. On the other hand, Mary was educated as a future monarch yet she did not know how to rule as one in her own right, she was prepared to let her Spanish husband who was not in England very often, and her councillors make important decisions. Elizabeth, however, was the complete opposite as a result of the wide ranging, in depth education she received.

To begin with when looking at Humanism and its connection to Elizabeth it creates mixed views. Firstly the growth of Humanism is often seen as the biggest factor in Elizabeth’s education but the most prominent Humanist education authors, Juan Luis Vives, Erasmus and John Cheke all write about education in the masculine sense. Most educational guidebooks did include a few pages or even a chapter on women’s education but this never formed a major part of any educational work as educating women was still seen as dangerous as it might give them ideas which were deemed ‘incorrect’ particularly if they read ‘romances’.

Yet Grindal and Ascham were willing to educate Elizabeth for a role above and beyond the one which it was assumed she had been called to. After Edward’s birth Elizabeth was never expected to rule, even when named an heir in her father’s will. Yet Grindal and Ascham educated her to a better standard than her sister Mary despite Mary being educated as an heir, David Loades Mary’s most prominent biographer describes Mary as “placid and rather slow” (Loades, 1979, p. 7) in comparison with Elizabeth. Therefore, the Humanist experience which Elizabeth benefited from was not only the result of her tutors reassessing Elizabeth’s talent but also Elizabeth’s natural talents. As well as Kat Ashley’s encouragement of her prodigious young charge, Kat had no children, this may have been because she was unable to have children or because she saw herself as dedicated solely to Elizabeth. Kat was the closest thing to a mother and like most mother’s I believe that Kat wanted the very best for her young charge therefore Kat took advantage of the opportunities available for Elizabeth at the time.

The relationship between Kateryn Parr and Elizabeth is one which will be constantly debated there will be historians who see Kateryn Parr as an intelligent Protestant Queen and as seen in the chapter on Parr in this thesis, as a latecomer to education, especially a Humanist education. Henry VIII was an intelligent man himself and it is highly unlikely that he would have left the education of his two youngest children, especially his son in the hands of a woman who was a relative beginner to some aspects of education. This is where Elizabeth’s governess came in, Kat had clearly received an above average education but her sister Joan married Sir Anthony Denny one of Henry VIII’s most trusted servants who had links with Cambridge University which is where both Edward and Elizabeth’s tutors hailed from. Kat therefore had important links with Cambridge University which Elizabeth could clearly benefit from. It wasn’t simply a case of Elizabeth’s combined intellectual genes and whilst having two intellectual parents may have helped, it wasn’t the only factor. In the case of Mary who also had two intellectual parents she certainly did not inherit the combined intellectual genes of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon or if she did she did not use them to their full potential.

However, studying the education of Elizabeth I has its difficulties, historians give different emphasis to Elizabeth’s education some attribute a few paragraphs to it some a chapter, although this can sometimes be attributed to not being necessary to the overall aim of the book. Another problem, although this is common to all historical topics is inevitable inability to agree on certain historical ideas. For example, it is difficult to agree on what languages Elizabeth was taught; French, Latin, Greek and Italian are universally agreed upon as the languages which Elizabeth could speak. Einstein quotes Roger Ascham as saying that Elizabeth could also speak Tuscan, Spanish and Dutch (Einstein, 1921, p. 48) there are no other texts which support the claim that Elizabeth spoke Tuscan and Dutch. Although there are other sources which say Elizabeth spoke Spanish, it is thought that Mary could read Spanish like Elizabeth but unlike Elizabeth could not speak it which is ironic considering that Mary’s mother was Spanish. Borman also claims that Elizabeth spoke some Welsh as a result of Blanche Parry singing Welsh lullabies to Elizabeth to get her to sleep and then taught Elizabeth the rudiments of Welsh when she was older (Borman, 2009, p. 60). Most of our understanding regarding which languages Elizabeth spoke comes from her letters which were written in her own hand in those languages and speeches in those languages which were reported by ambassadors. Sadly, many reports and letters were unfortunately destroyed either at the time or during the English Civil War so sources which may have been useful in providing Elizabeth’s education or her continuing education and later displays of her learning may have been destroyed.

The primary evidence regarding Elizabeth’s education is very limited due to Elizabeth not being in the position of the heir. This is especially the case regarding Elizabeth’s education under Grindal’s tutelage however we luckily have more information regarding Elizabeth’s time under Ascham’s tutelage. *The Scholemaster’s* main advantage is that it gives us a clear picture of what Elizabeth learnt and her learning routine under Ascham. What must be considered carefully is how much Ascham was trying to flatter Elizabeth who loved flattery and who by the time Ascham wrote *The Scholemaster* was Queen. However, *The Scholemaster* was published posthumously by Ascham’s widow, perhaps she wanted to flatter Elizabeth in order to receive a bigger pension. On the other hand the examples we have of Elizabeth’s writings; ambassador’s reports and other letters and reports all make it clear that the Queen had attained remarkable intellectual achievements so perhaps there is truth behind most of *The Scholemaster’s* flattery although we will never be sure about everything.

Another difficulty arises when assessing William Grindal’s influence on Elizabeth’s education due to Grindal’s early death. It can be safely assumed that Grindal’s views were similar to those of his tutor Ascham who’s views in turn were similar to those of his tutor Cheke as was discussed in the chapter on Elizabeth’s tutors these views followed Humanist lines. Grindal’s untimely death means that Elizabeth was not under his tutelage long and we also have no evidence of Elizabeth’s time under Grindal, it is therefore difficult to come to any definite conclusions on Elizabeth’s time under Grindal. But coming to a definite conclusion on any historical subject is often fraught with difficulties. Another difficulty comes in the form of assessing the influence of Kateryn Parr on Elizabeth’s education.

There is much contradictory evidence and opinions on Kateryn’s educational abilities and her role in the upbringing of the royal children. Careful consideration must therefore be taken when trying to pinpoint Kateryn’s exact role in Elizabeth’s education especially when interpreting sources as everyone interprets things differently. The same can also be said when assessing Kat Ashley’s role in Elizabeth’s education. Most people assume that Kat was well educated because of Elizabeth’s known educational attainments before she was formally educated. We assume this on the basis of a quote from Sir Thomas Wriothesley when he visited Elizabeth’s household to wish the young girl and her household a happy Christmas “... She gave humble thanks”, Wriothesley reported “inquiring again of his Majesty’s welfare, and that with as great a gravity as she had been forty years old. If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove no less honour to womanhood than shall beseem her father’s daughter”” (Hibbert, 1991, p. 22). This tends to be the basis of the assumption that Elizabeth was well educated at a young age and as Kat was her Governess we assume that Kat taught her. Elizabeth was likely to have started a formal education which would have included reading and writing and not just in English but also in Latin at an early age. The lack of dedicated biographies to Kat Ashley also hinders a study such as this as most information about Kat only comes from biographies on Elizabeth and the information is often similar despite the importance of Kat in Elizabeth’s life. Although this could point to a lack of primary evidence regarding Kat and this is a problem in general with Tudor historiography.

Unlike education today it is difficult to trace educational documents from the sixteenth century whether it is documents on royal education or the education of the general population. Today numerous sources exist which document education from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. This probably explains why there are numerous articles and books which have been written regarding Victorian education especially in comparison with articles and books on Tudor education. This includes sources regarding the education of the Tudor dynasty and there is more evidence on the education of Queen Victoria’s children than there are the children of both Henry VII and Henry VIII. Despite this more sources exist regarding the education of Mary and Edward. In Mary’s case this is because when she was being educated she was Henry VIII’s only legitimate child and heir therefore, it was important to fully document her education in order to share this information with potential husbands. With Edward as Henry VIII’s only male child and therefore his heir it was inevitable that Edward’s education would be the very best available and thorough. As a result of this, Edward’s education was well documented and as a result of him dying at only fifteen biographies often focuses on his youth and education. This means that his education was technically still a working progress when he died and because he died so young he did not have the opportunity to carry out his monarchical duties to the same extent as his sisters, as his ‘Protectors’ largely did this for him whilst he was still in the schoolroom. Edward’s education forms a large part of biographies about him due to a combination of the reasons outlined above; his status and his age at his death. Elizabeth on the other hand was declared illegitimate before her formal education began and this probably resulted in it not being as necessary to meticulously document all aspects of Elizabeth’s education.

More work is still needed in order to fully understand the education of Elizabeth I especially in comparison to her contemporaries who were of a similar status including her siblings and cousins. This includes the Grey sisters especially Jane and Elizabeth’s other cousin Mary, Queen of Scots. The Grey sisters were offered similar opportunities and Jane in particular relished in the Humanist education which she was given and some argue that Jane excelled more in her intellectual pursuits than Elizabeth. However, when it comes to Elizabeth’s other cousin Mary, Queen of Scots she did not receive an education on a par with Elizabeth. Mary’s later political disasters show that she certainly did not receive a good political education either academically or from personal experience in early life like Elizabeth.

Unfortunately, Mary Queen of Scots’ political lessons were all learnt too late in life for her to know what to do when put into difficult and often life threatening situations. Whereas Elizabeth was put into compromising political situations at an early age which prepared her well for the situations in which she found herself in later life. Elizabeth, unlike Mary Queen of Scots, was well prepared this was probably a lesson learnt from her own mother’s death. Mary, Queen of Scots was brought up at the French Valois court as the future Queen of France; therefore, there would have been no need to rule her to high Humanist standards like Elizabeth. Mary, Queen of Scots was not expected to rule despite being a Queen from six days old, Mary Stuart was expected to forget France and to be a French Queen Consort and produce heirs not to return to France a childless widow; however we have the benefit of hindsight. Despite this Einstein states that the changes which took place in women’s education at Henry VIII’s court were due to Henry’s desire to recreate the “’spirit and cultivation emulated from the Valois Court’” (Einstein, 1921, pp. 125-126). However, Mary, Queen of Scots did not receive an education which was on a par with Mary Tudor let alone Elizabeth Tudor. This is surprising considering how enlightened towards women’s education the Valois court was supposed to be. Therefore, if the education of women at the Valois and Tudor courts were compared it would show how the Humanist movement had different effects on women at the two different courts.

Although Barbara Whithead concludes that two points become clear that “early modern women were educated to the standards established by their societies; and any attempt to judge them by one Humanist standard of education is bound not only to return false results, but to be a-historical as well” (Whithead, 1999, p. xi). Elizabeth is clearly an example of the opposite, of a woman being educated beyond the standards of her day as her education certainly covered more than what was considered to be the basics. To some extent Elizabeth cannot be compared to others, as different women were educated to different Humanistic standards but it is important to compare the overall effects and out comings of Elizabeth’s education.

It can never be denied that Elizabeth was a well-educated girl, despite never being educated to rule, who grew into a prodigious woman who used her education to its fullest potential possible both before and during her reign. What is unusual is the high level to which she was educated and the involvement in her education of those who surrounded her including her tutors and governess Kat Ashley. All of these things need to be looked into in more detail but what can undeniably be concluded is that their involvement contributed to Elizabeth’s intellectual abilities and the process of her education. But as always Elizabeth has the last word and in her intellectual way with her brilliant phrases sums up her education in one wonderful phrase “for the face I grant I might well blush to offer, but the mind I shall never be ashamed to present” (Perry, 1999, p. 25).

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