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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF Carol De Witte Bowles for the
Master of Arts in History presented May 11, 1989.

Title: Women of the Tudor Court, 1501-1568

APPROVED BY MEMBERS OF THE THESIS COMMITTEE:

Ann Weikel

Susan Karant-Nunn

Charles LeGuin

Marjorie Burns

Writing the history of Tudor women is a difficult task. "Women's lives from the 16th century can rarely be constructed except when these women have had influential connections with notable men."¹ This is no less true for

¹Minna F. Weinstein, "Reconstructing Our Past: Reflections on Tudor Women," International Journal of Women's Studies 1 (1978), p. 133.

the court women of Tudor England than for other women of the time.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss some of the more memorable court women of Tudor England who served the queens of Henry VIII, Mary I, and Elizabeth I,² and to determine what impact, if any, they had on their contemporary times and to evaluate their roles in Tudor history.

The role of patronage and favor by the queens in appointing court positions will be discussed to show the ways in which a woman could become a court attendant. Foreign women at court had a unique experience of having to adapt not only to a new court, but to a new country, culture and language as well. How well they adjusted and what they achieved will be discussed. Court intrigue, politics and social issues will be covered relative to the court woman. And, last of all, the role of humanism, the new learning and reform, all important developments in sixteenth-century England, will be looked at in relation to these women.

Attempting to uncover sixteenth-century women's history is extremely difficult, especially given lack of source material in this area of the country. Attempts have been made to use original sources as much as possible, and when not possible, to use reliable secondary sources. Use

²Due to the confines of this paper, only the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign will be discussed.

of the inter-library loan service has aided in achieving this goal. In addition, this author was able to do research in London, England, for a short two-week period. Original resources at the British Library Western Manuscript Room and Reading Rooms, the Public Record Office, and the Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, University of London were used. Source materials used were the State Papers of Henry VIII, State Papers of Mary I-Elizabeth I, G.E.C., and rare books and manuscripts not available here or through inter-library loan.

My results have indicated that there were, indeed, many court women who did affect their contemporary times and, in some cases, the future of English history. Considering the status of women at that time, the fact that there is any information on them at all after so many centuries is important in itself. But the more research done on these illusive women, the more interesting their lives become; the more important their lives seem, the more frustrating it becomes to realize that their life histories were lost in the first place. This thesis attempts to collect and clarify this in a small way.

WOMEN OF THE TUDOR COURT, 1501-1568

by

CAROL DE WITTE BOWLES

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS
in
HISTORY

Portland State University

1989

TO THE OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES:

The members of the Committee approve the thesis of
Carol De Witte Bowles presented May 11, 1989.

Ann Weikel

Susan Karant-Nunn

Charles LeGuin

Marjorie Burns

APPROVED:
Bernard V. Burke, Chair, History Department

Bernard Ross, Vice Provost for Graduate Studies

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Writing the history of Tudor women is a difficult task. "Women's lives from the 16th century can rarely be constructed except when these women have had influential connections with notable men."¹ This is no less true for the court women of Tudor England than for other women of the time. Lack of concrete birth and death dates even for the most notable of Tudor women are at times non-existent.² Loss of identity is also compounded through name changes upon marriage,³ the woman taking on her husband's name and

¹Minna F. Weinstein, "Reconstructing Our Past: Reflections on Tudor Women," International Journal of Women's Studies 1 (1978): p. 133.

²The birth year of Anne Boleyn, possibly the most famous woman of early Tudor England, is still not known and historians continue to speculate. See Paul Friedmann, Anne Boleyn: A Chapter in English History 1527-1536, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan, 1884); E. W. Ives, Anne Boleyn (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986); James Gairdner, "Mary and Anne Boleyn," English Historical Review 8 (1893): pp. 53-60; James Gairdner, "The Age of Anne Boleyn," English Historical Review 10 (1895): p. 104; Hugh Paget, "The Youth of Anne Boleyn," Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research 54 (1981): pp. 162-170; and Retha M. Warnicke, "Anne Boleyn's Childhood and Adolescence," Historical Journal 28 (Dec. 1985): pp. 939-952 for several opinions.

³Weinstein, p. 133.

title, if ennobled. When one realizes that women often married two or three times (or more) during their lifetime and that the woman's married name and title, if a noblewomen, were many times different, the frustrations in tracking a woman's life history from beginning to end are numerous. As Weinstein states "moving away from male-defined experience to examination of uniquely female experience"⁴ can be a key in unraveling women's lives in a male-dominated world.

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss some of the more memorable court women⁵ of Tudor England who served the queens of Henry VIII, Mary I and Elizabeth I,⁶ to determine what impact they had on their contemporary times and to evaluate their roles in Tudor history. The role of patronage and favor by the queens in appointing court positions will be discussed to show the ways in which a

⁴Ibid.

⁵Terms such as lady-in-waiting, "gentlewoman," "waiting gentlewoman," "lady," "attendant," "servant," and "woman" were all terms found by this author to mean basically the same thing: a woman of the nobility or upper gentry who attended upon her queen. For the purpose of this paper, the general term "court woman" will usually be used. "Lady-in-waiting" was not a contemporary term but is sometimes useful as a synonym for "court woman". Other specific terms such as "great lady," "lady of the Privy Chamber," "maid-of-honor," or "chamberer" are used when warranted. These terms will be explained in the course of the paper.

⁶Due to the confines of this paper, only the first ten years of Elizabeth's reign (1558-1568) will be covered.

woman could become a court attendant. Foreign women at court during the time of Catherine of Aragon and Anne of Cleves will be discussed as a separate group since they had a unique experience of having to adapt not only to a new court, but to a new country, culture and language as well. A chapter on women involved in court intrigue, politics, and social issues will show that many women spent their time doing more than needlework and other various pastimes. Humanism and reform in relation to court women will be discussed, particularly during the reigns of Anne Boleyn and Katherine Parr. Perhaps most importantly, who these women were as individuals, where they came from (family background), and what became of them will be discussed when relevant in the course of this paper, and also in Appendix B, which consists of a short biography of some court women whose lives have been better documented. It is important to note that due to the time period being discussed, the status of women at that time, and the problem of access to original source material, many court women who served Tudor queens are known only by name. Appendix C is a list of names of Tudor women who served their queens compiled by this author during the course of research. It does not profess to be a complete list, but simply an aid to show the potential for more research in this area.

A brief look at the Tudor court during the time of Henry VIII and the development and organization of the

queen's household will be necessary to give a clear picture of the place where these women "worked." By the time of Henry VIII, the court was undoubtedly the center of Tudor existence. This court, as G. R. Elton defines it, comprised "all those who at any given time were within 'his graces house'" and was clearly "the true seat of power, profit and policy."⁷ It was the hub of life--the place to be for anybody who wanted to be anybody. The heyday of the great liege lords and bastard feudalism had passed and by the time Henry came to power in 1509, a nobleman on the scale of Edward Stafford, third duke of Buckingham (ex. 1521), was becoming a rarity.⁸ This was due in great part to the successful use of crown patronage which lured noblemen to court with offers of lucrative offices and positions. Elton states,

The true court of our imagining could not exist until the Crown had destroyed all alternative centres of political loyalty or...all alternative sources of worldly advancement. The jealousy of Tudor monarchs, who took care to sterilize such out of date endeavors ["Court-like centres" such as Buckingham's], was really very well advised: their rule, their power, depended on their uniqueness, and

⁷G. R. Elton, "Tudor Government: The Points of Contact, III. The Court." Presidential Address Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fifth Series 26 (1976), pp. 217, 228.

⁸Buckingham's household included "over 500 servants, who were not merely a domestic staff but his political power base, his centre of patronage, his home and also in many ways his social community." Kate Mertes, The English Noble Household, 1250-1600 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 1.

it was their courts that gave continuous expression to that solitary eminence.⁹

To be near the king was to be near the nucleus of power and it is evident that "throughout the Tudor period, the lords who rose were those who attached themselves in service to the Crown, and those who fell were those who tended to depend on more ancient allegiances."¹⁰ Of course Henry VIII knew what he was doing. By offering his noblemen positions at court, he, in turn, was weakening their own power at home and strengthening his. He could also keep his eye on them and spot trouble before it occurred.¹¹ David Starkey puts it succinctly in describing the gentlemen of Henry's court:

The court not only stripped the leading members of the political nation of the protective cocoon of their own households; it also brought them--as individuals--face to face with each other in a lively and often viciously competitive society. Behaviors, manners and dress were nicely observed; rumours started and reputations made and lost.¹²

The above statement was also applied to court women. Anne Somerset states in her book on ladies-in-waiting that

⁹Elton, "Tudor Government" p. 212.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 190.

¹¹Louis XIV later used this idea for the concept of Versailles.

¹²David Starkey, "The age of the household: politics, society and the arts c. 1350-c. 1550," in The Later Middle Ages, ed. Stephen Medcalf (London: Methuen & Co., Ltd., 1981), p. 277.

Until the present century the court was one of the few British institutions where women had a role to play, and one moreover that was not purely ornamental. At a time when virtually every profession was an exclusively masculine presence, the position of lady-in-waiting to the Queen was almost the only occupation that an upper-class Englishwoman could with propriety pursue...Any lady with a position at court could feel she had a finger on the pulse of power, even if, as in most cases, she could not determine the rate at which it beat...A word in the ear of a King or Queen could make or mar a career, confound the schemes of enemies or assure the success of a business undertaking and ladies in royal service were in a position to utter that word.¹³

Just as there existed an ideal courtier, there existed an ideal court woman whose character, theoretically, was many-faceted. In Castiglione's The Book of the Courtier, Gaspare states that the same rules which apply to an ideal courtier should apply to an ideal court lady, that is, discretion and decorum, nonchalance and gracefulness. The court woman like the courtier "should pay heed to time and place."¹⁴ The ideal court lady should be of a good family, well mannered, naturally graceful, well accomplished, shun affectation, and be neither proud, envious, nor "evil-tongued." Among many other attributes, including beauty, she should have a knowledge of literature and painting, know

¹³Anne Somerset, Ladies in Waiting From the Tudors to the Present Day (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1984), p. 2-3.

¹⁴Baldesar Castiglione, The Book of the Courtier, trans. George Bull (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967), p. 209.

how to dance, play musical instruments and games, and gracefully perform those sports suitable for a woman. She should know how "to gain and keep the favour of her mistress and of everyone else," while remaining more circumspect than her male counterpart. She must "take greater pains to avoid giving an excuse for someone to speak ill of her" while remaining absolutely above reproach and suspicion. Above all, her main occupation should be the care of her husband's belongings, house and children, which included being a good mother.¹⁵ In short, she should be perfect by Renaissance standards.

However, the ideal court woman possessed a knowledge of many subjects while seeking modestly to "win credit for her knowledge."¹⁶ But, possessing knowledge of many subjects and having an academic education were two different matters. The latter was far from common for the sixteenth century English woman, even for the most privileged of these, the court lady. Maria Dowling, in discussing humanism during the reign of Henry VIII, states that "before the reign of Henry VIII women did not receive anything approaching an academic education,"¹⁷ and that the average

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 211-216.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 214.

¹⁷Maria Dowling, Humanism in the Age of Henry VIII (London: Croom Helm, 1986), p. 220.

Henrician woman was not educated for public office, but that "their domain was the household, their cares were their own moral well-being and the upbringing of their children."¹⁸

There are always exceptions to the rule, and at the Tudor court this was no less the case. An area which Tudor court ladies seemed to be somewhat proficient at were languages of the vernacular, particularly French. Many noble ladies at court, including some of Henry's wives, cultivated the French language, as well as Spanish and Italian. The chronicler Harrison noted that it was rare for a courtier to speak any language other than English, but that many court ladies were skilled in French, Spanish and Italian.¹⁹ And due to the advent of humanism in the early sixteenth century, Tudor court women were not only studying

¹⁸Ibid., p. 221. The one exception to this was the education of Mary Tudor (Mary I). The described education coincided, however, even with humanist ideals for a woman's education.

¹⁹Kathleen Lambley, The Teaching and Cultivation of the French Language in England during Tudor and Stuart Times (Manchester: The University Press, 1920), 64, fnnt. 2. Roger Ascham, Cambridge scholar and tutor to Elizabeth I, praised her ability in languages while chiding the young court gentlemen for their lack of linguistic knowledge. Ibid., p. 64-65. See also Holinshed's Chronicles: England, Scotland, and Ireland, vol. I England, p. 196 (New York: AMS Press, Inc. 1965).

languages of the vernacular but classical languages such as Latin, Greek and Hebrew.²⁰

Since women's minds were naturally inquisitive, education prevented idleness, which could lead to such detriments as mischief and boredom. Although humanist education for girls did not equal that of boys by any means, by the end of Henry VIII's reign humanistic studies for females were now accepted and even de rigueur. Tudor women such as Margaret Beaufort, Catherine of Aragon (a "pioneer of female education in England"), Anne Boleyn, and Katherine Parr to name a few, paved the way as patrons of scholars, commissioners of handbooks for women students, advocates of the publication and circulation of the English vernacular Bible, and authors who had works published during their lifetime. Although humanism by far did not reach the majority of Tudor women (and that applies to women of the court as well), as Dowling states,

...the new learning by its recognition of the utility of education to women marked a fundamental change in the general attitude to women's studies; these were now a means of inculcating piety and morality rather than a hindrance to them.²¹

²⁰For the purpose of this paper "humanism" will be defined as "the reappraisal of religious and secular thinking through examination of the literary bases of theology and philosophy" (i.e., Christian scriptural and patristic writings and "acceptable" pagan classics, that is, those which did not concern love or lust. Dowling, p. 1.

²¹Ibid., p. 243.

A Tudor gentlewoman generally received her position at court as servant to the queen due to her social status or her relationship to the king or queen. She might be, 1) a relative of the king or queen, 2) a friend (often from childhood) of the queen, 3) the daughter, sister or wife of a gentleman in service to the king, 4) the daughter, sister or wife of a nobleman, 5) or, a noblewoman in her own right.

The female attendants of a Tudor queen were technically considered court officials not personal servants, in part, because final approval of their appointment lay with the sovereign.²² The queen-consort could suggest names, but the final decision rested with Henry VIII. Once chosen, their responsibilities were manifold: they supervised the domestic household of the queen, officiated at court functions, entertained ambassadors and other important guests, and generally were at the beck and call of their mistress, the queen. They often had daily contact with the king and members of his council and for that reason were chosen with care.²³ Because the number of positions was limited with a potential for longevity if they played their cards right, competition

²²Anthony Martienssen, Queen Katherine Parr (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), p. 38.

²³Ibid.

was fierce.²⁴ Some women were able to serve all six queens of Henry VIII, not an easy feat when one considers the number of factions, political pitfalls and religious controversy which a court woman could become involved in during this thirty-eight year period.²⁵

There were definitely perquisites to being a lady-in-waiting, such as payment for services, gifts, and accommodations provided. This aided in minimizing daily expenses for one who lived at court. Women who were unmarried or whose husbands did not have court housing were given free room and board. All court women had specific and detailed arrangements for their housing and food. As an example, maids-of-honor were allowed "one servant and one spaniel each,"²⁶ plus a daily breakfast of one chine of beef, one loaf of bread and one gallon of ale. In addition, the remaining two meals of the day (dinner which was served at 10:00 a.m. and supper which was served at 4:00 p.m.) were supplied. They were also given allowances of firewood and

²⁴The maneuverings of Honor Lisle to find a place at court for her daughters, Anne and Katherine Basset, are a case in point.

²⁵Anne Parr Herbert (sister to Katherine Parr and wife of Sir William Herbert, later earl of Pembroke in 1551) and Margery Horsham were ladies-in-waiting to all six queens of Henry VIII, while Mrs. Stonor, "Mother of the Maids," served all six queens also. Martienssen, p. 38; Somerset, pp. 14-15.

²⁶Somerset, p. 14.

candles which totalled 24 per annum.²⁷ On top of this, maids of honor were paid annual salaries with which they were to outfit themselves according to strict but elaborate court fashion, not always an easy task when budgeting one's money.²⁸

The title of a Tudor court woman derived from the room in which she served her queen.²⁹ To understand this, it is necessary to briefly discuss the floor plan of the king's and queen's apartments and the development of the king's

²⁷These provisions were called "bouche (or bouge) of court" which consisted of a "commons of bread and ale, candles and fuel, served only to those of sufficient rank to be lodged in the palace itself." This allotment goes back at least as far as AD 1290 where it is shown among the Chamberlain's fees as "cibus," "potus," "busca," and "candela." E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1923), p. 51, fn. 4, from John Seldon's edition of Fleta, seu Commentarius Juris Anglicani, ii (1685), p. 7.

See Appendix A for a list of bouche of court for the queen's attendants. "Ordinances for the Household Made at Eltham in the XVIth Year of King Henry VIII AD 1526," in A Collection of Ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns from King Edward III to King William and Queen Mary, ed. Society of Antiquaries (London: John Nichols, 1790), pp. 162-165, p. 193, pp. 208-209.

²⁸During Henry VIII's reign, the salary for a maid-of-honor rose from £5 to £10 per annum. Somerset, p. 14.

²⁹Ibid., p. 10. David Starkey, "Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547," pp. 71-118; and Pam Wright, "A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603," pp. 147-153, both in The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War, ed. David Starkey (London: Longman, 1987).

Chamber in the royal household beginning at the time of Henry VII.

Although each royal residence of late-fifteenth and sixteenth century England had unique aspects, most residences had basically the same floor plan up to the end of the seventeenth century.³⁰ The royal apartments were located on the second floor accessed by a stairway leading to a gallery. The queen's apartments usually led off from the king's unless the palace was especially large, in which case the queen might have her own private stairway.³¹ During medieval times, the king's Chamber, or private room, had been simply one room where he ate and slept, conducted most official business and all private business. However, during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries this one-room Chamber gave way to three separate rooms, each having a specific purpose: 1) the Great or Guard Chamber where the king's guard was stationed, 2) the Outer or Presence Chamber where the throne and canopy stood, where the king dined on state occasions, received important guests and met with his

³⁰Neville Williams, The Royal Residences of Great Britain (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1960), p. 5.

³¹Ibid. By 1445, the queen's chamber was separate from the king's. David Loades, The Tudor Court (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Nobel, 1987), p. 18.

council, and 3) the Privy Chamber which served as the king's private day-room and bedroom.³²

The queens of Henry VIII had their own apartments which were basically modeled on their sovereign's. By 1509, there existed three separate chambers for the queen as well: the Outer or Presence Chamber, the Privy Chamber, and the Bedchamber.³³ The queen's household was physically and financially separate from the king's household, and although smaller in size, it was similar in organization and under the authority of the queen's Lord Chamberlain. Although the

³²Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation," p. 73. Loades states that organizationally the Chamber did not reflect its multiple room status even up to the creation of the Liber Niger in 1478, although physically the Chamber was divided into "a number of distinct rooms through which the monarch could retreat to the inner sanctuary of the Bedchamber." He goes on to say that although there were indications of a separate Privy Chamber during the time of Henry VII, not until the reign of Henry VIII did the Privy Chamber evolve into a distinct department, in imitation of the French household of Francis I. Loades, pp. 40-41. See also A. R. Myers, ed. The Household of Edward IV, The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478 (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1959), pp. 114-115. Starkey believes the Privy Chamber was probably established as a distinct department in 1495 during the reign of Henry VII. For his reasoning, see Starkey, "Intimacy and Innovation," pp. 75-76.

³³Wright and Somerset agree on the three-room configuration. Wright, p. 217; Somerset, p. 10. Starkey does not discuss the queen's rooms. Loades divides the chambers into two rooms, the Chamber and Privy Chamber. Loades, p. 41. Wright's and Somerset's terminology will be used in this paper.

queen's rooms were inhabited mainly by women, all officers of her household were men.³⁴

Within the above three chambers of the queen's apartments there existed a group of women known homogeneously as "the queen's attendants." From the time of Henry VIII up to Elizabeth I they were divided hierarchically into four groups: 1) the great ladies--the queen's principal women who came from the best and oldest families of the English aristocracy, the majority of whom were not only married to a peer, but often of ancient lineage in their own right and who attended the queen on important occasions such as banquets, weddings, coronations, christenings, and receptions; 2) the ladies of the Privy Chamber--women of distinguished families who, for the most part, had married into the baronage but were not as socially eminent as the great ladies and who attended the queen while in her Privy Chamber, keeping her company and ministering to her everyday needs; 3) maids-of-honor--unmarried young women usually from noble families who entered the queen's service in their early teens to complete their schooling in manners and to contract a good marriage with an eligible suitor of breeding and money; and 4) chamberers--untitled women who assisted the ladies of the Privy Chamber in their duties, sometimes referred to as chambermaids. During the time of Elizabeth I

³⁴Loades, p. 41.

this hierarchy became even more complex. Great ladies were now called "ladies of the Bedchamber" and for part of her reign a fifth group of women was created--"ladies of the Presence Chamber"--who were directly subordinate to the ladies of the Privy Chamber. These women apparently served Elizabeth while in the Outer or Presence Chamber of the palace.

The availability of positions such as these for women were extremely important because a queen's household was one of the few places of "employment" for a woman during the sixteenth century.³⁵ Although many of these women did not need the financial considerations, indeed living at court was very expensive and often cost more than one earned, the experience of living with and serving a queen in her own household was important to women as a whole in other ways. It was a framework upon and through which a woman or women as a group could organize and control their lives, a structure which helped women in "conceiving, comprehending and carrying out" their existence, and a community within a community, having a life of its own. The household (and court as a whole) was a religious, social and political arena where women could make and sometimes alter the course of history. On the other hand, the court woman had to

³⁵Mertes, p. 57.

realize she was totally dependent on the queen's (and king's) good graces and often her good (or bad) humor.³⁶

Out of this century of turmoil, change, and growth a few women who served as attendants to Tudor queens have distinguished themselves for various reasons, but their lives and deeds have often been forgotten, in part, simply because they were women. In this paper, I hope to bring back some of those forgotten lives by selecting certain women of the Tudor Court and expanding on various episodes in their lives to show that they truly did play an important role in the political, religious, and social history of sixteenth-century England, and that they did affect in lasting ways those whom they served and those around them. My goal is to attempt to change the too-true statement of Minna Weinstein in her analysis of Tudor women's lives: "The poignant truth is that most women die twice: their physical death and then when their memories are eradicated."³⁷

³⁶Ibid., pp. 183-184. Mertes uses these ideas to describe the effects of a noble household on women, but this author feels the same effects can be applied to that most noble household of all, the royal household.

³⁷Weinstein, p. 140.

CHAPTER II

PATRONAGE AND FAVOR: THE RECEIVING OF OFFICE

The number one goal of a Tudor court woman was in that most basic tie to patronage and favor--receiving a position as attendant to the queen. As stated in the introduction, this could be achieved in several ways. But one characteristic was required for all women candidates--the correct social status. All court attendants had to be of the nobility or gentry, preferably upper gentry. Women of the nobility, such as Margaret Plantagenet Pole, had status over the other court attendants and were referred to as "great ladies". This was totally a perquisite of their birthright (as in Margaret's case), or a right achieved through marriage to a nobleman. Sometimes a women was lucky enough to have both noble birth and marriage.

The concept of patronage and favor was an art form in Tudor England, having its own unwritten rules and laws. This applied no less to the manner in which a court woman obtained her "job," a position in the queen's household. She could achieve her employment in several ways. She could be appointed by the court (that is, the monarch). In this case, her appointment rested on either her birthright, or her ties to men in court employ, such as a father, husband,

or brother.¹ Most of the women in Catherine of Aragon's household, such as Elizabeth Scrope de Vere, countess of Oxford, received their positions in this manner. This was due to several reasons: 1) being a foreigner, Catherine did not know anyone at court, 2) being a royal princess in her own right, it would not have been appropriate or feasible to use her sisters, and 3) most importantly, Henry VII felt it necessary to "anglicize" her.

The same situation held true for Anne of Cleves. Most of her German retinue including her dear Mother Lowe, Anne's "homely companion," were replaced with English women who had court ties. Only the mysterious Katherine and Gertrude, "Dutchwomen," seem to have remained with Anne during her short time as queen.²

Another way in which women could receive a place at court was to have direct ties to the queen. In this case, the queen could exert her right of giving patronage and favor to relatives (usually aunts and cousins), or friends.

This is particularly exemplified in the cases of Anne Boleyn, Catherine Howard and Elizabeth I, where relatives filled a great many places at court. The giving of

¹In the case of a female monarch, such as Mary I and Elizabeth I, direct control in choosing attendants occurred. In the case of the queens of Henry VIII, the king had final approval.

²See Chapter III for more on Katherine and Gertrude.

positions to friends is shown in the reigns of Catherine Howard, Katherine Parr and Mary I, although we must not forget that Catherine of Aragon was able to keep two of her closest Spanish women--Maria de Salinas and Inez de Venegas.³

In the case of Anne Boleyn, herself a former attendant to Catherine of Aragon, she favored her aunts and cousins with positions in her household. Her aunts in attendance included 1) Elizabeth Wood Boleyn, wife of Anne's uncle, James Boleyn, 2) Katherine Broughton Howard, wife of Lord William Howard, 3) Elizabeth Stafford Howard, wife of Anne's uncle, Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk and older half-brother of the aforementioned Lord William, 4) Anne Boleyn Shelton, sister of Anne's father Thomas Boleyn and Anne's namesake (she was later governess to both Mary and Elizabeth Tudor), and 5) Dorothy Howard Stanley, Anne's mother's half-sister. Anne employed her cousin, Margaret Shelton, as a maid-of-honor and her sister-in-law, Jane Parker Boleyn, as an attendant. Her maternal step-grandmother, Agnes Tilney Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk and her aunt Anne Howard de Vere, dowager duchess of Oxford, were both "great ladies." The dowager duchesses of Norfolk and Oxford also

³Their success and longevity in Catherine's household had a great deal to do with their ability to successfully become "anglicized."

served by virtue of their husbands' former positions at court.⁴

Being Anne's relatives gifted with a place in her household did not necessarily mean they were sympathetic to her cause. One would think that these women would be grateful for such patronage and favor, but this was not always true. Some aunts such as Katherine Broughton Howard and Elizabeth Wood Boleyn were sympathetic to Catherine of Aragon and not at all close to their niece. Other attendants who were holdovers from Catherine of Aragon's household were also understandably unsympathetic to Anne, such as Gertrude Blount Courtenay, marchioness of Exeter. She worked behind Anne's back to aid Catherine and her daughter, Mary Tudor.⁵

Three other attendants in Anne's household gave evidence against her during her trial. One held her position due to her nobility by title and supposedly was

⁴Anne de Vere's husband, the fourteenth earl of Oxford, died July 14, 1526. He is not to be confused with the fifteenth earl, also John and also Lord Great Chamberlain, who served as Anne Boleyn's crown bearer at her coronation. George E. Cokayne, Complete Peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, ed. Vicary Gibbs, H. A. Doubleday, G. H. White, and R. S. Lea, rev. ed., 12 vols. (London: 1910-1959), Oxford, pp. 244-245 (Hereafter G.E.C.); B.L., Harl. MS. 41, fol. 2.

⁵See Chapter IV.

Anne's friend.⁶ The other two women were apparently chosen for her due to their husbands' places at court. They were Anne Braye Brooke, Lady Cobham, and Marjery Horsman Lyster.⁷

The last instance in which Anne was not able to choose her own women was upon her arrest and imprisonment in the Tower. All of the women attendants were chosen by Cromwell for the purpose of spying on Anne to note any incriminating conversation or actions. Included among them was her aunt, Elizabeth Wood Boleyn, who told Anne that "Such desire as you have had to such tales has brought you to this."⁸ Upon entering the Tower, Anne expressed her unhappiness at having to be surrounded by enemies, "I think it much unkindness in the king to put such about me as I never loved ... I would

⁶It is not certain why Elizabeth Somerset, countess of Worcester, gave evidence against Anne. Ives suggests she may have done it unintentionally "as another illustration of Cromwell's methodical pursuit of all the leads Anne presented to him." Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 382. He does not believe the fact that the countess' father, Sir Anthony Browne, and her uncle, Sir William Fitzwilliam, were supporters of Mary Tudor to have influenced Elizabeth. This is debatable.

⁷"And tuching the conffession of the Quene and thothers they sayd lytle or nothing. But was, [what] was sayd was wondrous dyscretly spoken the fyrst accusr the Lady Worster/and Nan Cobham with one mayd more/but the Lady Worster was the fyrst." Public Record Office, SP.3.12, fol. 51, (Hereafter P.R.O.).

⁸Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 398. From George Wyatt, "The Life of Queen Anne Boleigne", in The Life of Cardinal Wolsey by George Cavendish, ed. S. W. Singer (1827), pp. 454-455.

have had [those] of mine own privy chamber which I favour most."⁹

Anne's cousin, Catherine Howard, also gifted her relatives with service in her household, as she appointed several sisters, aunts and cousins. Catherine favored her half-sisters Margaret Howard Arundel and Isabel Howard Baynton.¹⁰ She also gave positions to her aunts Margaret Howard, wife of Lord William Howard, and Katherine Howard Daubeney, Lady Bridgwater. Three of her cousins, Elizabeth Bryan Carew, Joan Champernown Denny, and Mary Howard Fitzroy¹¹ also became attendants.

Catherine is also an example of one queen who gave patronage and favor to four of her childhood friends from her days at Horsham and Lambeth while in the care of her grandmother, the dowager duchess of Norfolk. Unfortunately, this partly led to Catherine's downfall.

Joan Bulmer, a confidante who had lived with Catherine at Lambeth, wrote the queen soon after her marriage to

⁹Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 265, ftnt. 42. From Wolsey, pp. 454- 457.

¹⁰They were both daughters of Joyce Culpeper by her first husband, Ralph Legh. She later married Edmund Howard from which union Catherine was born.

¹¹Mary Howard Fitzroy, duchess of Richmond, had previously served Anne of Cleves. She had been married to Henry Fitzroy, Henry VIII's illegitimate son, and received her position due to her marriage.

Henry. Wishing her "honor, wealth and good fortune," Joan reminded Catherine of the "unfeigned love that my heart hath always borne towards you," suggesting that "the nearer she was to the Queen the happier she would be."¹² In actuality, Joan was blackmailing Catherine for a position because she had aided Catherine in two past love affairs (one perhaps only a flirtation) which neither the dowager duchess nor the duke of Norfolk (Catherine's promoter) were aware of. As she had portrayed herself as a virgin to Henry, she felt it wise to hire not only Joan, but three other friends who had also known of her indiscretions--Margaret Morton, Alice Restwold and Katherine Tylney. Catherine perhaps could have kept this secret if she had not begun another affair (while queen) with Thomas Culpeper. She was aided in this escapade by another court attendant, Jane Parker Boleyn.¹³ At Catherine's fall her grandmother, two aunts, and Bulmer, Restwold and Tylney were sentenced to perpetual imprisonment and forfeiture of goods. However, they were all pardoned

¹²Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 2nd ed., 21 vols., arranged and catalogued by J. S. Brewer, rev. and enlarged by R. H. Brodie (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920; Vaduz: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1965), vol. XV, 875 (Hereafter L&P); Lacy Baldwin Smith, A Tudor Tragedy: The Life and Times of Catherine Howard (New York: Pantheon Books, 1961), p. 155.

¹³See Chapter IV. At Catherine's trial, each blamed the other for arranging Culpeper's visits.

after Catherine's execution in February 1542.¹⁴ As shown above, asking for court favors could sometimes jeopardize one's life.

The last queen of Henry VIII to use patronage and favor in giving positions to friends was Katherine Parr. She obviously favored women who had reforming inclinations, her five closest ladies all sharing Katherine's zeal for religious reform. These ladies were 1) Catherine Willoughby Brandon, duchess of Suffolk, 2) Joan Champernown, Lady Denny, 3) Joan Guildford Dudley, Lady Lisle, 4) Anne Parr, Lady Herbert (Katherine's sister) and, 5) Anne Stanhope Seymour, countess of Hertford. In addition, all of the above women had husbands under the patronage of Henry VIII and were all active leaders in the reform movement. Katherine's cousin Matilda, Lady Lane and Elizabeth, Lady Tyrwhit, were also attendants and reformers.

The third manner in which women received patronage and favor as attendants was to be a "holdover" from the previous queen. Sometimes this worked well and sometimes it did not, particularly if the court woman had developed close and emotional ties to the previous queen. This occurred under Anne Boleyn as mentioned above where even some of her

¹⁴For more on Catherine Howard's fall relative to her women see L&P., vol. XVI, 1331, 1334, 1337-1340, 1348, 1366, 1385; vol. XVII, 28, 137. As found in P.R.O., State Papers (Hereafter S.P.); 1.167; S.P. 1-168; and, Kaulek, 31/3.12.

relatives could not forget their prior allegiance to Catherine of Aragon.

Most of the women under Jane Seymour were holdovers appointed by the king. However, the majority of Howard and Boleyn women had disappeared, except for one notable exception, Jane Parker Boleyn, who lasted until Catherine Howard's fall. Catherine Howard's household also held several women who had worked for previous queens, as did Katherine Parr's--including her sister, Anne, Lady Herbert, who had the distinction of serving all six queens of Henry VIII.¹⁵

Patronage and favor to court women during the reigns of Mary I and Elizabeth I must be discussed separately because 1) they were monarchs in their own right, not queens consort, who had the power to choose whomever they pleased as attendants, and 2) they were female.

Each ruler had distinct preferences in choosing their attendants. Upon her accession in 1553, Mary chose women for her Privy Chamber who were reliably Catholic, who lived exemplary lives, and who, for the most part, had been with her since her youth. Women like Cecily Barnes, Frideswide Strelly and Susan Clarencieux (who had already served Mary

¹⁵Martienssen, p. 38.

25 years) were such women.¹⁶ Frideswide Strelly was also apparently an honest and forthright woman. She was the only one of Mary's women who did not accept the pretense of Mary's pregnancy in July-August 1555, and who never pretended to accept it. After Mary resigned herself to the fact that she was not pregnant, she said to Frideswide, "Ah, Strelly, Strelly, I see they be all flatterers, and none ever true to me but thou."¹⁷ Mary Brown, another old friend, had been a maid-of-honor for Mary while a young princess. She was able to remain with Mary in 1533 when her status and household were reduced due to the birth of the Princess Elizabeth.¹⁸ Upon the re-establishment of her household in 1536, after the fall of Anne Boleyn, Mary wrote Cromwell a letter requesting reinstatement of her past women.

I promise you upon my faith, Margaret Baynton and Susan Clarencieux have, in every condition, used themselves as faithfully, painfully, and diligently as ever did women. One other there is, that was sometime my maid, whom for her virtue I love and

¹⁶Loades, p. 56. John Murphy, "The illusion of decline: the Privy Chamber, 1547-1558," in The English Court from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War, ed. David Starkey (London: Longman, 1987), pp. 140-141.

¹⁷H. F. M. Prescott, Mary Tudor. 1953 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 317.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 86.

would be glad to have in my company, that is Mary Brown, and here be all that I will recommend.¹⁹

The other court woman who was particularly close to Mary was Jane Dormer, later duchess of Feria.²⁰ She received her position in Mary's household beginning in 1553 due to a recommendation by her grandmother, Jane Nudigate Dormer, and her maternal grandfather, Sir William Sidney. Two of Sir William's daughters had served Mary before becoming queen, and had refused to leave Mary's employ even though several of Henry's queens had requested their services.²¹

Like the other women of Mary's Privy Chamber, Jane remained unmarried up to Mary's death. It is ironic that although one of the main reasons young women came to court was to find a husband, both Mary and her half-sister Elizabeth had an aversion to their maids marrying, particularly without their consent.²²

¹⁹L&P., vol. X, 1186; Prescott, p. 86.

²⁰Mary had knighted Jane's father in the Order of the Bath upon her accession for supporting her against Northumberland. Henry Clifford, The Life of Jane Dormer, duchess of Feria. Transcribed by E. E. Estcourt, ed. & preface Joseph Stevenson (London: Burns & Oates, Ltd., 1887), p. 49.

²¹Clifford, p. 62. The queens' names are not given but it is likely that one was Anne Boleyn.

²²Although Mary had approved the marriage of Jane Dormer to the duke of Feria, she postponed the marriage in hopes that Philip would return to her in England and take

Upon Elizabeth's accession, she dismissed all her sister's attendants and filled the posts with Boleyn and Howard relatives, especially her female cousins, and women who had been in her household while growing up such as Katherine Asteley. In fact, Katherine's husband probably received his position as a Gentleman of the Privy Chamber due to his wife. "There is no evidence to indicate that Asteley's post of Gentleman was anything other than an honorary title, a reward for past services and in line with his wife's appointment to the Privy Chamber."²³

Elizabeth wanted to change the religious make-up of her court and dismissed many of Mary's servants for that

part in the wedding "which occasioned the want of great gifts and rich endowments wherewith the Queen had determined and promised to honour the marriage." This did not happen. On the other hand, Mary may have had selfish reasons to keep Jane from marrying. Mary "had no great will to leave her, and would say in the treating of these matters, that Jane Dormer deserved a very good husband; and would add further, that she knew not the man that was worthy of her." *Ibid.*, pp. 68-70. Elizabeth became enraged when both Katherine and Mary Grey married without her consent. But, in this instance, there were dynastic considerations. See Chapter IV. For Mary Grey also see Violet A. Wilson, Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour and Ladies of the Privy Chamber (London: John Lane The Bodley Head, Ltd., 1922), pp. 64-71. In the same vein, Elizabeth's mother, Anne Boleyn, had become extremely upset over her sister's unauthorized second marriage to William Stafford, a "hanger-on" at court, in 1534. Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 264. For more on Mary Boleyn see Karen Harper, "Mary Boleyn," British Heritage (April-May 1981), pp. 22-27. Mary's reputation was not a good one. She had been earlier referred to as "una grandissima ribalda, et infame sopra tutte" by Francis I who knew her as a maid at the French court. B.L., Add MS. 8715, fol. 220b.

²³Wright, p. 155.

reason. But, as Loades states, other servants were dismissed "not so much because they were uncongenial to Elizabeth as to make way for servants from her own former household."²⁴ Elizabeth filled her remaining posts with the wives and daughters of her administrators as Mary had done previously.

As with Mary, Elizabeth had servants who had been with her for years and after she became queen her court women held a record for their longevity of services. Frances (née Newton) Lady Cobham, Elizabeth (née Norwich), Lady Carew, and Katherine Carey Howard, duchess of Nottingham had a forty-year service average upon their death.²⁵

Thus, the above avenues of patronage and favor were open to women who wished to be court attendants to their queen. The following chapters will discuss some areas in which various court women became involved after receiving their positions and the impact they left by their actions.

²⁴Loades, p. 57.

²⁵Wright, 158, B.L., Landsdowne 3, fol. 192.

CHAPTER III

FOREIGN WOMEN AT THE TUDOR COURT

When Catherine of Aragon arrived in England in October 1501 to marry Arthur, heir to the English throne, and Anne of Cleves arrived in January to marry Henry VIII, they both brought with them foreign attendants to serve them. But the fate of these foreign women, Spanish and German respectively, and the roles they played at the English court were so startlingly different in all aspects that it makes for an interesting comparison.

The reign of Catherine of Aragon illustrates the influence in politics and court intrigue that several Spanish court women had on early Tudor England. When Catherine arrived at Plymouth on October 2, 1501 after a lengthy two-month sea voyage plagued with difficulties, her welcome by the English was a warm one.¹ Upon her arrival, one of her ladies-in-waiting wrote to Queen Isabella that

¹Garrett Mattingly, Catherine of Aragon 1941. (New York: Vintage Books, 1960), p. 29; G. A. Bergenroth, ed., Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, relating to The Negotiations between England and Spain, preserved in The Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere, 13 vols. 1862-1954 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office; London: Kraus Reprint, 1969), vol. I, i, p. 305. (Hereafter Cal. S.P. Span.)

"she could not have been received with greater rejoicings if she had been the Saviour of the world."²

Although approximately sixty persons came with Catherine from Spain for her personal household two dominated that household: Doña Elvira Manuel, her principal lady-in-waiting, and Doña Elvira's brother, Don Juan Manuel.

In years to come, Doña Elvira exerted such influence and power over the future queen, several ambassadors to the court of England, and other members of Catherine's household, that even Henry VII was intimidated by her. But her drive for power and intrigue was to be her ultimate downfall, the consequences of which caused her estrangement from Catherine and banishment from England. Doña Elvira was a woman of high birth, descended from an illustrious Castilian family. Her brother, Don Juan Manuel, was Ferdinand and Isabella's most famous and skilled diplomat and ambassador to the court of Maximilian I, Holy Roman Emperor. The power and intrigues of this brother and sister dominated Catherine and the court of Henry VII until 1505 when the young widow Catherine, her political naivety gone, asserted herself by banishing Doña Elvira from her household at Durham House.

²Cal. S.P. Span. vol. I, ii, p. 262; see also Anne Fulton Hope, The First Divorce of Henry VIII as Told in the State Papers, ed. with notes and introduction by Francis Aidan Gasquet (London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner, & Co. Ltd., 1894), p. 7.

During the period of Catherine's early widowhood Doña Elvira, always formidable, took control. After the death of Arthur on April 2, 1502, Catherine had returned from Ludlow Castle to London to spend her widowhood in seclusion at Durham House, a medieval townhouse belonging to the Bishop of Durham on the Strand. Mattingly calls Catherine's household there a "miniature court in exile," being inhabited solely by Spaniards, except for a few English gardeners and stable boys.³ "Into Doña Elvira's grasping, competent hands fell the management of Catherine's court."⁴

Isabella had relied on Doña Elvira as a sort of surrogate mother for Catherine while in England so she had complete authority over Catherine's household by royal command. Further, Isabella had informed Dr. de Puebla,⁵ the

³Mattingly, p. 61.

⁴Ibid., pp. 34 and 51. There is no doubt about the control Doña Elvira held over Catherine and her household at this time. In addition to Mattingly, see John E. Paul, Catherine of Aragon and Her Friends (London: Burns & Dates, 1966), p. 17; S. B. Chrimes, Henry VII (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972), p. 296; and Martin Hume, The Wives of Henry the Eighth and the Parts They Played in History (London: Eveleigh, Nash & Grayson, Ltd., n.d.), p. 47.

⁵De Puebla was a doctor of civil and canon law. A Jewish convert to Christianity, he was a vain and frugal man, jealous of all rivals, including Doña Elvira. Catherine grew to hate him. He was considered untrustworthy by the Spanish monarchs who used other diplomats for negotiations of the utmost importance, and he is generally considered to have served the interests of England rather than Spain. He prided himself on knowing how to handle Henry VII, but Henry knew how to use de Puebla. He died

Spanish ambassador, that he was to protect Doña Elvira as a deputy of the Spanish monarch and to support and approve anything she might do.

Doña Elvira's dominance is shown in the case of marriage negotiations with the future Henry VIII when Doña Elvira vanquished two key servants. The question of Catherine's virginity was in doubt. Dr. de Puebla reported to Spain that Catherine's confessor had told him that the marriage between Catherine and Arthur had been consummated and there would more than likely be issue from it.⁶ But before the letter reached Spain, Doña Elvira attacked de Puebla, saying it was an absolute lie and that she knew for a fact (as did all the other matrons of Catherine's household) that Catherine was without a doubt still a virgin. De Puebla, recognizing the weight of Doña Elvira's statement, became utterly convinced that Doña Elvira, not the confessor, must be telling the truth. The ambassador apologized profusely to the woman, promising to be more

soon after Henry VII in 1509.

⁶Mattingly, p. 53. The letter of Doña Elvira to Isabella is not extant, but in a letter dated July 12, 1502 to Ferdinand, Duke de Estrada, the Spanish ambassador who was negotiating the marriage of Henry and Catherine, Isabella writes that "since it is already known for a certainty that the said Princess of Wales, our daughter, remains as she was here [i.e., a virgin] (for so Doña Elvira has written to us), endeavor to have the said contract agreed to immediately without consulting us." She instructs him later in the same letter to "take care that Doña Elvira remain with her." Cal. S.P. Span., vol. I, p. 327.

thorough and careful in his dealings in the future while quickly writing a second letter to Spain regarding Catherine's newly discovered virginity. But the matter was far from over. Doña Elvira also wrote a letter to Isabella, relating what had happened and adding a "tart reference" concerning the ambassador which caused Isabella to warn de Puebla that he was to submit to Doña Elvira in all matters concerning Catherine. The implications of the importance of this matter are clear to us today. As Mattingly states, "Neither party to this colloquy could guess that the question of Doña Elvira's veracity would be vigorously argued for four hundred years."⁷ Don Alessandro lost his position as Catherine's confessor, chaplain and former tutor due in part because Doña Elvira also wrote to Isabella regarding the man whose influence with Catherine was secondary only to Doña Elvira's. That letter plus his previous blunder concerning Catherine's virginity caused Don Alessandro to lose his position in Catherine's household. Fifteen years after his return to Spain he was still an unforgiven man in Catherine's eyes.⁸

⁷Mattingly, p. 53. Paul states that Doña Elvira's contribution to this matter was "vital." Paul, p. 18.

⁸Ibid., p. 54. Doña Elvira also seems to have been instrumental in having another ambassador, Don Pedro de Ayala, returned to Spain. De Puebla had been trying for years to have Ayala recalled with no success.

Doña Elvira's authority at Durham House soon became overbearing. By the summer of 1504, Doña Elvira's strict control of expenditures created a household of bickering servants. She had insisted, in accord with the wishes of Catherine's parents, that Catherine, although by now betrothed to Henry, should live the remainder of her widowhood in seclusion. Henry VII was apparently pleased with the way Doña Elvira was running Catherine's household, because he sent her a present of a headdress as a token of her increased authority over the household. To emphasize her authority, the gift was presented in front of Catherine and her other ladies-in-waiting.⁹

Catherine became increasingly tired of being under the constant supervision and control of her leading attendant. However, after Isabella's death in November 1504, Catherine came to question the authority of Doña Elvira less and less.

Although Catherine was at times restive, Doña Elvira Manuel continued to rule Catherine's household until the second half of 1505, when her "inherent taste for intrigue," her increased desire for power, and her assumption of total

⁹The headdress was a "St. Peter in gold"--an unusual gift for a lady-in-waiting since it was usually reserved for royalty. Paul, p. 21. Mattingly states that even Henry VII did not wish to quarrel with Doña Elvira. Mattingly, p. 62.

control over Catherine caused her to become involved in a political intrigue which destroyed her power.¹⁰

Doña Elvira's intrigues became more dangerous when she began to pass on secrets of the English court to her brother, Don Juan Manuel, who was scheming on behalf of Philip of Austria against Catherine's father Ferdinand. These secrets compromised Catherine, who was, in fact, the unwitting source of the information procured by Doña Elvira. Her smooth handling of Catherine combined with Catherine's political naivety was a dangerous combination which seriously jeopardized her father's political power.

Doña Elvira's political machinations were revealed to Catherine before a catastrophe could occur by none other than de Puebla. The political intrigues of the Spanish brother and sister were foiled and Catherine's position at the English court saved. De Puebla's last advice to Catherine over this matter was not to involve herself in affairs of state without his advice and that "she should not listen to the advise of Doña Elvira, or anyone else."¹¹

The relationship between Catherine and Doña Elvira deteriorated from this point on and Catherine was no longer under her control. But it is not until December 2, 1505, that we learn in a letter from Catherine to her father that

¹⁰Paul, p. 22.

¹¹Cal. S.P. Span., vol. I, p. 440.

Doña Elvira had gone to Flanders.¹² She never returned. It was later stated by Don Alonzo de Esquivel, Catherine's Master of the Hall at Durham House, that Catherine and Doña Elvira had had a great fight and that that was the true reason for Doña Elvira's departure.¹³ Whatever was said we will probably never know since Catherine never spoke of the incident or Doña Elvira again. After leaving England, Doña Elvira, her husband and brother remained in Flanders at Philip's Court. Thus, Doña Elvira is an example of a foreign woman at court who had great influence over many people -- a future queen of England, ambassadors, an English king, and an entire household. She was a woman of noble blood who had intrigued in court politics and diplomacy with grave implications for all involved. Unfortunately, her lust for power and control overtook her ability to control others, and in the final analysis she lost everything she had worked and schemed for.

For the remainder of her widowhood, Catherine lived in poverty, having nothing to give the Spanish ladies remaining in her service and finding it necessary to sell her plate

¹²Ibid., vol. I, p. 448. The absence seems to have thought to have been a temporary one on Catherine's part as she had requested "an old English lady as companion" while Doña Elvira was absent. Paul states the reason given was to visit a physician to be treated for an eye disease which had caused her to lose an eye. Paul, p. 25.

¹³Mattingly, p. 74; Paul, p. 25.

and jewels in order to buy food and clothing. Her ladies, also of high birth, used their own money to live on until that was gone.¹⁴

Most of the Spanish ladies expected to marry English men. One of the stipulations of Henry VII concerning her Spanish attendants who remained in England was that they be beautiful (or at least not unattractive), since marriages between them and available English noblemen were important politically to the new Tudor dynasty as they "might in future count upon greater support in the country."¹⁵ Therefore Catherine had a responsibility to find English husbands for her ladies. Providing part of their dowry was not an easy task the poorer her household became.¹⁶ One of

¹⁴Cal. S.P. Span., vol. I, pp. 446, 448, 513, 532; Hope, pp. 17-18. Henry VII would not give Catherine money since Ferdinand had not sent the remaining 100,000 crowns of her dowry; Ferdinand would not pay her remaining dowry or answer her letters since she was not actually married yet to Henry, Prince of Wales. Catherine was a pawn caught in a political game. Because of money worries, her living conditions, and being in a strange land, her health deteriorated.

¹⁵Cal. S.P. Span., Introduction, xc. Henry VII wanted as few Spanish ladies-in-waiting to remain with Catherine as possible so Catherine would become "anglicized"; Ferdinand and Isabella wanted to send as many as possible. By August 1507, Catherine had "not more than five" women serving her. Ibid., vol. I, p. 532.

¹⁶Ibid., vol. I, p. 446. Even on her death bed Catherine's concern for her maids was evident. In her last letter to Henry VIII, she asks that "I must entreat you also, to respect my maids, and give them in marriage, which is not much, they being but three." Henry Savage, ed., The Love Letters of Henry VIII (London: Allan Wingate, 1949),

her attendants, Maria de Rojas, a ward of Isabella, was set to marry a grandson of the earl of Derby--Maria was willing, Henry VII had given his consent as had the Stanley family. But in 1504, Doña Elvira Manuel intrigued to arrange for her son, Don Iñigo Manrique, Catherine's equerry, to marry Maria. She married neither man. By 1507, her Stanley suitor had married someone else and Don Iñigo was out of the question after his mother's banishment from court. Moreover, by this time Catherine had no dowry to give her. Poor Maria was left husbandless.

By 1507 many of the women of Catherine's household had become disillusioned with their lives in England. Without money, Catherine could not give them dowries and without dowries her ladies could not interest men of noble English birth as potential husbands. Her ladies had been in England since 1501 and were not getting any younger. Their chances of a successful marriage were dwindling rapidly.

By this time, a clique of household servants who wished to leave England had developed. One of Catherine's favorite attendants, Francesca de Caceres was the leader.¹⁷

p. 16.

¹⁷Doña Francesca had been a former maid-of-honor to Catherine and has been described as "the gayest, the most vivacious and spirited" of all her ladies. Except for Maria de Salinas, Doña Francesca was Catherine's favorite attendant. Somerset, p. 15; Mattingly, p. 108. Her last name is sometimes spelled "Carceres", but this author has used the spelling seen most often for the purpose of this paper.

Doña Francesca greatly disliked a Franciscan monk close to Catherine because he continually encouraged Catherine to remain in England and weather out the storm. Doña Francesca considered Fray Diego the chief obstacle to the return of Catherine's household to Spain. Partially because of this mutual hatred, Doña Francesca was employed by Gutierre Gomez de Fuensalida, Spanish ambassador to England, as a spy in Catherine's household.

At this time, Fuensalida was living at the home of the Genoese banker, Francesco Grimaldi.¹⁸ Grimaldi had become infatuated with Doña Francesca on her many visits to see Fuensalida and she had decided that on the chance she could not marry a wealthy young English nobleman, an elderly and rich Italian banker would do. However, her main objective was still to return home.

With this objective in mind, Doña Francesca suggested to Fuensalida, that if he could permanently remove Fray Diego from Catherine's side, she, Doña Francesca, could become Catherine's number one confidante and persuade her to return to Spain. But when the ambassador attempted to have Fray Diego removed, Catherine's anger fell on Doña Francesca, who fled in the night to Grimaldi and married him without asking Catherine for her consent. When Catherine

¹⁸At this time, the crown of Aragon owed almost two years revenue to the House of Grimaldi. Mattingly, p. 109.

learned of the marriage, she would have nothing more to do with her former attendant, and although Doña Francesca remained devoted to Catherine, Fray Diego as late as May 1510 would not allow her to see Catherine, even though the new Spanish ambassador, Luis Caroz, wanted her reinstated.¹⁹

By 1513, Catherine had asked Wolsey to return Doña Francesca to Spain "for she is soo perillous a Woman that it shalbe daungerous to put hir in a straunge House." She adds that

...ye wol doo soo moche for me to make h[er] goo
hens by the way with thambassador of the King my
fader, it shuld bee to me a grete pleas^r, and with
that ye shal binde me to you mor than ever I was.²⁰

Catherine never took Doña Francesca back into her household. As Mattingly states "Catherine rarely trusted a

¹⁹In a letter dated May 28, 1510, Caroz complains to Miguel Perez de Almazan, First Secretary of State to Ferdinand, how he is "hampered by the Friar [Frey Diego] in his dealings with the Queen." He adds that "the man's mind is certainly deranged," and that there is "a servant of the Queen, named Francisa de Caceres ... but by the Friar forbidden to enter the Palace." He asks that Ferdinand persuade Catherine to take Doña Francesca back, or, if that is not possible, perhaps Henry VIII will find a place for her in the household of his sister, Mary. L&P, vol. I, i, 474. Catherine would not take Doña Francesca back, so she entered the household of Mary Tudor. Paul, p. 30. Caroz, ambassador between 1510-14, simply wanted to use Doña Francesca as a spy as Fuensalida had done before him.

²⁰"Catherine of Aragon Queen of England to Thomas Wolsey the Kings Almoner AD 1513," Letter XXVIII, in Sir Henry Ellis, Original Letters illustrative of English History, 1824-46 4 vols., 2nd series (London: Dawsons of Pall Mall, 1969), vol. I, pp. 80-81.

second time where she felt she had been once betrayed."²¹ It must have irked Doña Francesca to no end knowing that if she had held out for two months longer, she might have married a peer of England.

Two of Catherine's Spanish attendants had better luck in the marriage market. Inez de Venegas, who adapted well to the English court, married William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, chamberlain to Catherine of Aragon.²² She became the mother of Gertrude Blount Courtenay, who remained loyal to Catherine after the usurpation of her position by Anne Boleyn.

Another Spanish attendant, Maria de Salinas, became the second wife of Lord Willoughby d'Eresby who served both Henry VII and Henry VIII and who fought in France under the Duke of Suffolk. Before marrying, Maria was naturalized on May 29, 1516 and after marrying on June 5, she left the court to live her life in the country.²³ After becoming a widow in 1526 she returned to court where she began several successful lawsuits against her brother-in-law Sir Christopher Willoughby over her daughter's inheritance.²⁴

²¹Mattingly, p. 138.

²²G.E.C., Mountjoy, p. 340.

²³Ibid., Willoughby, pp. 671-673.

²⁴Ibid., p. 673.

She and Catherine had been good friends at the Spanish court while young and Catherine had persuaded Henry VIII to have Maria sent from Spain to be a lady-in-waiting to her. Henry must have also liked Maria since he arranged for her marriage to Lord Willoughby and named one of his ships after her--the Mary Willoughby.²⁵ In 1514, the Spanish ambassador, Luis Caroz, complained that Maria was

...the worst influence on the Queen ... whom she loves more than any mortal. The consequence is that I can never make use, in my negotiations, of the influence which the Queen has in England, nor can I obtain through her the smallest advantage in any other respect. I am treated by the English not as an ambassador, but like a bull, at whom every one throws darts.²⁶

Maria remained loyal to Catherine for the remainder of her life and was with Catherine when she died at Kimbolton January 7, 1536. Maria's date of death is not known, but she was apparently still alive in January 1547.²⁷ According to Paul, she is supposed to have been buried in Catherine's tomb in the Benedictine Abbey at Peterborough.²⁸

²⁵Martienssen, p. 6.

²⁶Cal. S.P. Span., vol. II, p. 201; Martienssen, pp. 5-6.

²⁷L&P., vol. XIV, i, 259; vol. XV, 942; vol. XXI, ii, 771; Paul, p. 132.

²⁸Paul, p. 132.

Prior to Catherine's marriage to Henry VIII, her retinue of attendants were all Spanish and her life a secluded one at Durham House. But after her marriage on June 11, 1509, all of this changed. In order to stress her integration into English culture and oneness with its people, and in order to portray herself as an English queen above all, an emphasis was put on a household of English ladies-in-waiting. Her attendants included a well-rounded group of great ladies,²⁹ those of the baronage, and young girls from the best families in England who attended Catherine as maids-of-honor.³⁰ Only two of her Spanish ladies remained with her--Inez de Venegas and Maria de Salinas, and, as mentioned earlier, they both became anglicized by marrying English lords and adapting well to their new homeland.

For the most part, the Spanish women who remained with Catherine in England adapted well to their new country. The

²⁹Catherine's "great ladies" included Margaret Plantagenet Pole, countess of Salisbury; Elizabeth Stafford Radcliffe, Lady Fitzwalter, sister of Edward, 3rd duke of Buckingham; Anne Stafford Hastings, countess of Huntingdon, sister of Edward, 3rd duke of Buckingham; the countess of Oxford (probably Anne Howard de Vere); Agnes Tilney Howard, countess of Surrey; and, Dorothy Howard Stanley, countess of Derby.

³⁰Some of Catherine's more famous maids-of-honor were Anne Parr, sister of Katherine Parr, last queen of Henry VIII; Elizabeth Blount, mistress to Henry VIII and mother of his illegitimate son and potential heir, Henry Fitzroy; Mary Boleyn, sister of Anne; Anne Boleyn, 2nd wife of Henry VIII; and, Jane Seymour, 3rd wife of Henry VIII.

exceptions were Doña Elvira Manuel and Francesca de Caceres who perhaps adapted too well for their own good.

Catherine's Spanish ladies adjusted well in great part due to the success of Catherine as queen of England, her ability to adjust to a new culture, language and climate, her successful marriage to Henry VIII (at least up to the mid 1520s), and the love which the English people bore her.

The same cannot be said of the German women who accompanied Anne of Cleves to England in December 1539. Anne arrived with an extensive German retinue, including three laundresses, but soon realized that protocol warranted she be attended by English court women.³¹ Anne had her 12-15 "Dutch maids" sent back to Cleves and was given six new English maids-of-honor, one of whom was Catherine Howard.

The only mention of any German women who remained with Anne after her marriage to Henry VIII is a warrant for payment of wages for certain of her officers dated July 1540. Among the names listed are "Katherine and Gertrude, Dutchwomen" to be paid £10 each.³² Since Anne's marriage to Henry was annulled on July 9, 1540 and since the warrant refers to her as "lady Anne of Cleves," the two Dutchwomen

³¹Catherine of Aragon had the same problem. See Chapter II.

³²P.R.O., S.P., 1.162, fos. 32-35 (old numbers 27-30). "To Katherin Duchewoman tenne pounds. To Gertrud Duchewoman tenne pounds." fol. 34. See also L&P., vol. XV, 937.

probably accompanied her upon her "retirement" to Richmond after the end of her short-lived royal marriage.

Unfortunately, we do not know whether these two German attendants adapted well to English life or not. They cannot really be compared to Catherine's Spanish women since they did not serve a queen or remain at court.

The failure of any of Anne's foreign retinue to remain in England as court women is due in large part to two main reasons: 1) the failure of Anne's marriage to Henry VIII, and 2) the apparent disgust and disappointment by the English nobility, particularly Henry, with the lack of "acceptable" culture and beauty of Anne and her female retinue. It is apparent that Anne did not receive anything touching a humanist education as did Catherine of Aragon. One may conjecture that Anne's women received an education similar to hers.³³ Henry's disappointment in Anne, both

³³Nicholas Wotton, English ambassador for the Cleves marriage negotiations, describes Anne as having been brought up very strictly by her mother "of verye lowlye and gentyll condicions." He adds that she "occupieth her tyme moste with the nedyll," but cannot sing or play any instrument since "they take it heere yin Germanye for a rebuke and an occasion of lightnesse that great Ladyes shuld be lernyd or have enye knowledge of musike." Anne could not read or write any language but her own. "Extract of a Letter from Nicholas Wotton to King Henry the Eighth, giving an Account of the Person and Accomplishments of the Lady Anne of Cleves," August 11, 1539, Letter CXLIV, Ellis, vol. II, pp. 121-122. The French ambassador described Anne's foreign women as "even inferior in beauty to their mistress and ... moreover dressed after a fashion so heavy and tasteless that it would make them appear frightful even if they were belles." Somerset, p. 36.

physical and cultural, led in part to the failure of the marriage. This failure was another reason why the German women could not adapt to English court life--they were not given the chance.

Thus, we have two examples of foreign women at the Tudor court--a Spanish group under Catherine of Aragon and a German or "Dutch" group under Anne of Cleves. One group was successful in adapting to court life and had a lasting impact on those they came in contact with--politically, diplomatically and socially; one group was not successful and did not have any impact or influence on court life in large part because they were not given the chance to become "anglicized."

CHAPTER IV

COURT INTRIGUE, POLITICS, AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Many Tudor court women became involved in court intrigue, politics and social issues. Intrigue at the Tudor court was closely associated with politics, but it could manifest itself in many ways. For example, Elizabeth Stafford Howard's support of Catherine of Aragon over Anne Boleyn was directly related to her marital battles with her husband, the third duke of Norfolk, Anne's uncle and initial promoter. (Although Anne's aunt by marriage and one of her most noble attendants, Elizabeth had previously served Catherine faithfully for many years.) By striking back at Anne, the duchess was striking a blow to her husband and his political status and power at court. And by using Thomas Cromwell as her petitioner to the king in her marital matters, she was striking another blow at her husband, whose ego had been wounded by the successful and effective usurpation by the upstart Cromwell in 1534 in guiding Anne's career.

The story of Elizabeth Howard's fight for equal rights not only reveals her personality but also social mores of the Tudor nobility. Elizabeth Stafford (1497-1558) was the eldest daughter of Edward, third duke of Buckingham, and Eleanor Percy, daughter of Henry Percy, fourth earl of

Northumberland.¹ We know that she was living at home as late as 1508 in Thornbury Castle, the duke's major household, and that she had received a level of education which enabled her to write.² She married Thomas Howard, future earl of Surrey and duke of Norfolk, in 1512 when she was 15 and he 35, although she had already been betrothed to Ralph, earl of Westmorland, her father's ward. She seemed content with the relationship. In a letter to Cromwell dated October 24, 1537, Elizabeth states,

My father had bought my lord of Westmorland for me; he and I had loved together two years ... had not my lord my husband made suit for me immediately after his first wife died I had married my lord of Westmorland before Christmas.³

The undeniable urgency of Howard's courtship was due to the fact that Buckingham was at this time the premier peer of

¹G.E.C., Norfolk, pp. 619-620; L&P, vol. XII, ii, p. 976. At this time, the Staffords and Percys were the two most important noble families in England.

²Barbara J. Harris, Edward Stafford, Third Duke of Buckingham, 1478-1521 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 48; p. 266, ftnt. 22. The poet John Skelton called Elizabeth "an admirer and friend of the Muses and his particular patron." Ibid., p. 48.

³L&P, vol. XII, ii, 976. See also Barbara Harris, "Marriage Sixteenth-Century Style: Elizabeth Stafford and the Third Duke of Norfolk," Journal of Social History 15 (Spring 1982): p. 372. Ralph, earl of Westmorland, married Elizabeth's sister, Catherine, c. 1523. G.E.C., Norfolk, p. 619.

England and its only ranking duke; in addition, Elizabeth's dowry was 2,000 marks, a larger than average sum.⁴

During the course of their marriage, the Howards had five children, three living to adulthood--Henry, earl of Surrey; Thomas, viscount Bindon, and Mary, duchess of Richmond.

Trouble began for Elizabeth in 1526 when the duke fell in love with Elizabeth Holland, a gentlewoman of the duchess's household. The duke soon made Bess his mistress.⁵ Although this arrangement was commonly accepted during this time by husbands and, as some later historians have assumed, by wives, it was not acceptable to Elizabeth Howard.⁶ She felt the duke had married her for love, not convenience, since he had been so adamant in wanting her and not one of

⁴Harris, "Marriage," p. 372. The average dowry for the daughter of an English peer c. 1500 was £1,000-£1,150. Harris, Buckingham, pp. 268-269, fn. 68.

⁵Although Elizabeth Howard referred to Bess Holland in derogatory terms ("washer of my nursery," "that harlot," "a churl's daughter," and "that drab"), she probably was of the minor gentry, her father being the duke's steward, a position usually given to men of gentle birth. In addition, the Hollands were related to Lord Hussey, a peer of the realm (although, in the duchess's opinion, "late-made"). Bess later became lady-in-waiting to Anne Boleyn, an office given only to women of gentle birth. Harris, "Marriage," p. 373.

⁶Lawrence Stone, The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641 (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1965), p. 664; Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," The Journal of the History of Ideas 20 (April 1959): pp. 195-216.

her other sisters.⁷ Besides, she had already borne the duke five children, fulfilling a major requirement of all wives at this time. She felt he had no right to treat her this way, especially since she had always remained a faithful wife, guarding her reputation, which ideally (though not realistically) a court lady should always do. As she wrote to Cromwell,

I have lived always a good woman, as it is not unknown to him [the duke]. I was daily waitier [lady-in-waiting] in the Court sixteen years together, when he hath lived from me more than a year in the King's wars. The King's Grace shall be my record how I used myself without any ill name or fame; and the best in the Court, that were that time, both men and women, know how I used myself in my younger days: and here is a poor reward I have in my latter days for my well doing!⁸

What has amazed the historian Barbara Harris is not Elizabeth Howard's outrage and objection to this situation, but that she expressed it so openly:

What was unusual in the case of the duchess of Norfolk was the openness with which she protested against her husband's behavior, and her willingness to destroy her marriage rather than tolerate it.⁹

⁷Harris makes the point that perhaps the duke, already 35, wanted Elizabeth because she was the eldest daughter (a young 15) and felt he could not wait any longer if he wanted children before he died. In the young Elizabeth's eyes, it may have seemed to be love on the duke's part, but was probably mere practicality. Ibid.

⁸L&P, vol. XII, ii, 976.

⁹Harris, "Marriage," p. 374.

Elizabeth continued to protest openly, and by the early 1530s, Norfolk (who refused to part with Bess Holland) decided to divorce, or at least separate from, his wife.¹⁰ By 1533, he and Cromwell had written to Elizabeth's brother, Henry Stafford, asking if he would take Elizabeth into his household. He flatly refused, although he made it clear that he sided with Norfolk, disgusted by his sister's "wild language" and "continual contention." He felt that, instead of selfishly complaining about her husband's infidelity, she should remember "the great honour that she is come to by that noble man her husband, and in what position she was in to do all her friends good."¹¹

Herein lies the crux of the problem. Because Tudor marriages of the nobility were not marriages of love but fusions of family dynasties, the duchess of Norfolk was a sixteenth-century anomaly--a woman out of time and place. She was a woman who thought of individual personal happiness

¹⁰The definition of divorce as we know it today did not exist in Tudor England--that is, the right of two parties to end their marriage with the right to remarry. A Tudor divorce was legally a separation of husband and wife a mensa et thoro, which left each person free to do anything but remarry. The wife received an allowance from her husband for support, as in a jointure. Any issue from that marriage remained legal. Divorce a vinculo, that is, an annulment, could be secured only if certain impediments were pre-existing. Remarriage was possible. Norfolk desired a divorce a mensa et thoro.

¹¹Harris, "Marriage," p. 374.

and rights above family obligation and who had the courage to express them. As Harris states,

Everyone expected, indeed demanded, that Duchess Elizabeth recognize that the main purpose of her marriage was not her personal happiness, but the social, political and economic advancement of her kin. Whether she understood it or not, the duchess of Norfolk was asserting her emotional needs against the interests of her kin in an environment that supported a completely different hierarchy of values.¹²

She was even alienated from her eldest son and daughter since they had taken their father's side in the matter. However, as Harris states, "In a society where the main function of the family was to allocate economic goods controlled by the father, their behavior was probably inevitable."¹³ This would be particularly true for the eldest son due to the law of primogeniture. Furthermore, her daughter, Mary, was the widow of Henry Fitzroy, duke of Richmond, Henry VIII's illegitimate son, and was totally dependent on Henry's good graces for her jointure--and Henry was on the side of the duke of Norfolk, Mary's father.

The duchess also accused her husband of wife abuse, saying that the duke had threatened her life and behaved in a violent manner by dragging her out of bed by the hair, pulling her around the house and stabbing her with a dagger while she was recovering from the birth of her daughter,

¹²Ibid., pp. 374-375.

¹³Ibid., pp. 375-376.

Mary. In several letters to Cromwell she stated that "he set his women to bind me till blood came out at my finger ends; and pinacled me, and set on my breast till I spit blood; and he never punished them." The duke denied any wrong doing, claiming that his wife had "had the scar in her head fifteen months before she was delivered of my said daughter," and that he was sure "there is no man alive that would handle a woman in child-bed of that sort, nor for my part would not so have done for all that I am worth."¹⁴ However, after separating in March 1534, the duchess was clearly afraid to return home for fear "my life should be but short," and that "I should be poisoned for the love that he beareth to the harlot Bess Holland."¹⁵

From this time on, the duchess of Norfolk lived in isolation in a house in Redbourne, Herfordshire, which was rented from the crown apparently by her husband, and she saw only those persons the duke allowed. Three years passed during which time the duchess wrote her husband three "gentle" letters in hopes of reconciliation, at least one by Henry VIII's commandment. However, none of the letters were answered by the duke, who, by this time, had had Bess Holland installed in his home at Kenninghall for quite some time. The duchess gradually became resigned to the fact

¹⁴Ibid., p. 375.

¹⁵Ibid.

that she preferred living as she was, stating that "I have been well used, since I have been from him, to a quiet life, and if I should come to him, to use me as he did, he [it] would greet me worse now than it did before; because I have lived quiet these three years, without brawling or fighting."¹⁶

The next five years of her life were spent in trying to recover her jewels and clothing, which the duke had taken from her, and in trying to have her jointure increased from 300 to 500 marks a year (the 500 marks being promised to her by Norfolk at the time of their marriage). The duchess knew that her husband, being the premier peer of the realm, would not do so except upon command by the king, so she addressed her letters to Cromwell, the one person she knew best. Norfolk continued to be outraged and embarrassed over his wife's suits, which he referred to as "her most false and abominable lies and obstinacy against me."¹⁷ At first he suggested she be put in someone else's household thinking that would keep her quiet. But she replied with wit and sarcasm that that would not work: "Seeing that my lord my husband reckoned me to be so unreasonable, it were better that I kept me away, and keep my own house still, and

¹⁶Ibid., p. 376. (Brackets inserted by Harris.)

¹⁷Ibid., p. 377.

trouble no other body, as I am sure I should so."¹⁸ The duke next tried to obtain a divorce from Elizabeth, promising all her jewels, clothing, part of his plate, and certain household items in return; the duchess would not give in.

After Cromwell's fall in June-July 1540, the duchess's letters in regard to her suit against her husband end. She may have either resigned herself to the fact that she could not win, or perhaps she did not know who could help her further, having been away from court for nine years.¹⁹ With Cromwell's death, on July 23, the major enemy of her husband at court was gone and there remained no other politically strong person to appeal to. Elizabeth may have known that her husband was already moving to place another niece, Catherine Howard, on the English throne. Norfolk was again in the ascendancy at court, and perhaps Elizabeth felt her attempts for retribution against her husband would be useless.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Elizabeth had been driven from court during the spring of 1531 by Anne Boleyn for making derogatory remarks concerning the Boleyn family tree and "because she spoke too freely, and declared herself more than they liked for the Queen." Friedmann, vol. I, p. 128; Cal. S.P. Span., vol. IV, ii, p. 720; L&P, vol. V; p. 238. She also refused to attend Anne's coronation June 1, 1533 "from the love she bore to the previous queen" even though the duke, her husband, was Anne's uncle. L&P, vol. VI, 585. Perhaps she identified with Catherine as the faithful wife left behind for another woman. L&P, vol. VI, 923.

She did triumph in one thing--she remained the duke's legal wife until his death in 1554, so that her children were able to inherit. But it remains an ironic triumph in that the one thing that caused her so much anger, pain and humiliation, a situation she spent most of her adult life fighting over--her marriage to the duke of Norfolk--was the only thing she could try and hold on to in order to save the social, economic and political status of herself and her children.

As we have seen, Elizabeth was one woman to be reckoned with. In addition to having a stormy relationship with her husband, the duke, she disliked Anne for several reasons. The duchess was extremely proud of her Stafford heritage and the fact that she was descended from Edward III on her father's side. She resented Queen Anne (whose paternal grandfather had been a mercer) being exalted over her and her mother-in-law, Agnes Tilney Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk, the two premier ranking noblewomen in England. And she openly told Anne what she thought of Anne's newly invented noble pedigree.²⁰ The duchess had

²⁰Chapuys to Charles V, December 31, 1530, Vienna Archives, P.C. 226, i. fol. 109: "Lon ma dict que la duchesse de Norphocq luy a naguyres derechiefz desclayre et deschiffre larbre de sa genealogie la blasonnant bien asprement. Le Roy en est bien deplaisant mays il fault quil aye pacience." As quoted in Friedmann, vol. I, p 128. Anne had created a pedigree which showed the Boleyns descended from a Norman knight instead of an English mercer. We have seen the duchess of Norfolk's pride in her own royal heritage exhibited above.

earlier been involved in a similar disagreement with Catherine of Aragon over Catherine's socially ranking the dowager duchess over her, Elizabeth Stafford Howard, the current duchess: "for he [the duke of Norfolk] knows well that the Queen has never forgiven him some angry words which he and his wife, the Duchess, said on the occasion of her not allowing the latter to take precedence of her mother-in-law, by which both were much offended, especially the Duchess, who belongs to the house of Lancaster."²¹

Elizabeth Howard also resented Boleyn interference concerning the marriages of her children, especially in Anne's insistence that the duchess' daughter, Mary, marry the duke of Richmond, Henry VIII's illegitimate son. The duchess wanted her daughter to marry the son of the earl of Derby, Edward Stanley. She argued vehemently with Anne over this matter.²² The other major insult to the duchess was that the title of earl of Wiltshire, previously associated with the Stafford family and the duchess' uncle Henry, had been given to Anne's father. This was adding insult to injury in the duchess' opinion, especially since the Boleyns were such parvenus.²³

²¹Cal. S.P. Span., vol. IV, i, p. 232.

²²Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 173, ftnt. 75.

²³Helen Miller states that the Boleyns rose more rapidly than any other family during the early 1530s. The Boleyn family's quick rise was manifested in the following

Being the aggressive woman she was, the duchess soon began her involvement in court intrigue to fight the Boleyn faction as she best could. In November 1530, she entered into court intrigue when she sent Catherine of Aragon a seemingly innocuous gift of poultry and an orange. Inside the orange was a letter from Gregory Casale, English ambassador to Rome. We have no record of what the letter said, but it was apparently important enough for Eustace Chapuys, imperial ambassador to England, to pass along to Charles V. The duchess continued sending reports concerning "la partie adverse" to Catherine.²⁴ In January 1531 Chapuys reported that "the duchess of Norfolk sent to tell the Queen that her opponents were trying to draw her over to their party."²⁵ By spring of 1531 the duchess had involved herself in intrigue and politics to the extent that she

gifts given by Henry VIII: In 1525 Thomas Boleyn was created viscount Rochford; in October 1531 he was granted two parks in Kent, which had previously belonged to the third duke of Buckingham. George Boleyn, Anne's brother, became a gentleman of the Privy Chamber and esquire of the body in 1528 with an annuity of 50 marks; he was styled viscount Rochford 1529-30 and knighted perhaps c. October 1529; he was given the manor of South in Kent in 1535. His sister attempted to have him knighted as a member of the Garter in early 1536, but failed. This was noted as an "ominous sign." Cal. S.P. Span., vol. II, p. 47; G.E.C., Ormond, p. 140; Helen Miller Henry VIII and the English Nobility (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 233-234.

²⁴Cal. S.P. Span., vol. IV, i, p. 509, pp. 818-819; Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 173; Paul, p. 129.

²⁵L&P, vol. V, 70.

became Catherine's major informant on court matters. But by May of the same year the duchess was dismissed from court by Anne Boleyn "because she spoke too freely, and declared herself more than they liked for the Queen."²⁶ By the summer of 1531, Catherine had broken with Henry VIII and left court.

Because the duchess of Norfolk was one of the premier noblewomen of the Tudor court, it was natural that she should make the transition from being an attendant of Catherine to one of Anne -- it was social protocol. In addition, her husband was Anne's uncle and, as stated earlier, the duke was in charge of Anne's rising star and therefore in the good graces of Henry. Ideally, the duke probably wished his wife would behave as other sixteenth-century wives of noblemen did -- accept the fact that he had a mistress (who happened to be an attendant of Anne's per the duke's request), be quiet, behave herself, and accept Anne as Henry's new wife. This the duchess could not do.

By the fall of 1532, the duchess was openly snubbing Anne. This was manifested in two instances. On September 1, 1532 Anne was created marquis of Pembroke. The duchess was supposed to attend the investiture due to her rank (again, an instance of social protocol), but she refused. Nine months later on June 1, 1538 Anne was crowned queen and

²⁶Ibid., p. 238.

again the duchess refused to attend "from the love she bore to the previous Queen."²⁷ What Anne's reaction to this royal snub was we can only assume. She was a strong woman in her own right and had waited years for the moment when she would be Henry's wife and queen. If the duchess' snub hurt her, she probably would not give Elizabeth Howard the satisfaction of that knowledge.

The duchess' reaction to Anne as the new queen and usurper of Catherine's rightful position probably in and of itself did not have a tremendous effect on court politics. However, because of the duchess' social rank and because other court women and more powerful noblemen had anti-Boleyn and pro-Catherine inclinations, Elizabeth Stafford Howard's stance against Anne (and therefore her husband) was important in the overall scene.

There were other court women who remained faithful to Catherine of Aragon and her daughter, Mary, while working for Anne. They also became involved in court politics and intrigue. One such woman was Gertrude, marchioness of Exeter. Gertrude was the daughter of William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, chamberlain to Catherine and Inez de Venegas, one of Catherine's former ladies-in-waiting.²⁸ She was the

²⁷Ibid., vol. V, 1239; vol. VI, 585 and 601.

²⁸G.E.C., Mountjoy, pp. 338-341. See Chapter II regarding Inez de Venegas.

second wife of Henry Courtenay, grandson of Edward IV whom she married in 1519. Courtenay and Henry VIII were close friends, having grown up together at court; in 1525 Henry created him marquis of Exeter. Although Gertrude and her husband were devout papists and loyal to Catherine, she became a member of Anne's household and in September 1533 was appointed godmother to Princess Elizabeth, Anne and Henry's first child.²⁹ The marchioness of Exeter did not really want to be Anne's daughter's godmother due to her loyalty to Catherine. However, in order not to displease Henry VIII, she accepted, and as a christening gift gave "three engraved silver-gilt bowls with covers."³⁰

The marchioness's loyalty to Catherine and Mary had developed by the early 1530s, prior to Elizabeth's birth, when Gertrude became an informant for Chapuys, warning him of the meetings that Henry's council was having regarding the reformation of Catherine's and Mary's households. Gertrude also kept Catherine abreast of the latest events regarding the divorce and Catherine's welfare and status. But in September 1530, Anne forbade the courtiers who were in the habit of frequently visiting Catherine from seeing

²⁹The other godmothers to Elizabeth, christened September 10, 1533, were Agnes Tilney Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk and Margaret Wotton Grey, dowager marchioness of Dorset. Friedmann, vol. I, p. 236.

³⁰Ives, p. 231. Ives states that this expensively de rigueur gift "can only have rubbed salt into the wound."

her, so the marchioness and her husband were impeded somewhat in aiding the queen. Then in the summer of 1532 the king forbade the Exeters from visiting Mary.

However, by September 1533, it seems Gertrude was back in the graces of Anne, or else Anne was "bribing" the marchioness with the honor of being godmother to Elizabeth, hoping that would lessen Gertrude's ties to Catherine and strengthen them with her. This ploy, if such, did not work because by late September of the same year the marchioness had again "entered into cautious communication" with Chapuys, whose orders were to restore Catherine and Mary at court.³¹ In fact, she was one of the first in her faction to talk openly to Chapuys of treason, and after the death of her father on November 8, 1534, "promised the adherence of the Blount connection in any revolt."³² In November 1535, the marchioness was still giving helpful information to Chapuys (often in disguise) regarding the status of Catherine and Mary which Chapuys passed along to Charles V. She had informed Chapuys that Henry had become enraged during a council meeting, saying that if Catherine and Mary continued to be stubborn, "he would seek to rid himself of them." She begged Chapuys to ask Charles V for aid (a

³¹Somerset, p. 24.

³²Mattingly, 382; G.E.C., Mountjoy, p. 341.

request deemed treasonable), and two days later on another visit to Chapuys, repeated her request.³³

On January 29, 1536, the Exeters sent a message to Chapuys telling him that Henry VIII had secretly confided to one of his gentlemen of the Privy Chamber that "he had been seduced and forced into this second marriage by means of sortileges and charms," and that God had shown the marriage to be invalid since no male issue had survived; that same day Anne miscarried a three and a half month old male fetus.³⁴

While working for Catherine's reinstatement, Gertrude Blount Courtenay had also managed to involve herself in a serious religious and political matter involving the Nun of Kent.

Elizabeth Barton, the Nun of Kent (sometimes called the Maid of Kent), had been a servant in the household of Thomas Cobb, steward of the archiepiscopal estates at Aldington in Kent. At the age of fifteen, during Easter of

³³Cal. S.P. Span., col. V, i, p. 570; L&P, vol. IX, 288-290.

³⁴Cal. S.P. Span., vol V, ii, p. 28; L&P, vol. X, 199. Ives believes that Henry's comment regarding his failure to have sons to have been made after the miscarriage. The Exeters must have heard of the king's remark and passed it on before they knew its cause. This makes sense due to the fact that Chapuys' report to Charles V dated January 29, 1536 mentions Henry's discontentment with his marriage and lack of issue, but does not mention the miscarriage; that event is covered in Chapuys' next letter. Ives, p. 343 ftnt., 33.

1525, Elizabeth became very ill and, while in a trance, was assured by the Virgin Mary that she would be cured by the following August; the prophecy came true. Dr. Edward Bocking, a Benedictine monk, was asked to look into the details of Elizabeth's story by William Warham, archbishop of Canterbury. Bocking was extremely impressed by Elizabeth's honesty and innocence and decided to become her spiritual advisor. Shortly after 1525 Elizabeth entered the Benedictine convent of St. Sepulchre near Canterbury where she continued to have seizures, leading her to believe that she had become the divine messenger of God for all society. Later, during a meeting with Wolsey she personally admonished him for spiritually neglecting the Church, and she prophesied that Henry VIII "would not live a month after his marriage" to Anne Boleyn. This statement obviously was made much of by those influential supporters of Catherine and Mary who did not care for the king's divorce, his marriage to Anne, or his new religious policies.³⁵ Among these persons was Gertrude Courtenay.

³⁵L&P, vol. VII, 72; Lacey Baldwin Smith, "English Treason Trials and Confessions in the Sixteenth Century," Journal of the History of Ideas 15 (October 1954): p. 482. Some of the notables who felt the nun's statements to be important in addition to the marchioness of Exeter were: the countesses of Salisbury and Derby, Lord and Lady Hussey, Sir Thomas More and the bishops of Rochester and Canterbury--John Fisher and William Warham. Friedmann, vol. I, pp. 243-247.

Cromwell felt that any dissenters against this goal should be punished. And when it was learned that the marchioness of Exeter was among those who believed in the Nun of Kent, who had seen copies of her prophecies, and who had concealed from the crown these treasonous statements, Cromwell decided to act against her. Her situation worsened when it was discovered that she had had a private meeting with the nun. Fearing her life to be in jeopardy, the marchioness wrote a venial letter to Henry on November 25, 1533, concerning her "abuse lightness and indiscrete offences commytted aswell in the frequenting the conversation and company of that mooste unworthie subtile and decevable woman called the holie maide of Kent."³⁶ She goes on to remind the king that "I am a woman whose fragylitee and brittelness ys suche as moost facillie easelie and lightlie ys seduced and brought in to abusion and light believe," and asks for his forgiveness, saying she had never acted from any "male opinion malice or grudge conveynd agenst your moost royall maiestie the Quenes grace your and her posteryte."³⁷ Fortunately for Gertrude, the king pardoned her, but she continued to work for Catherine,

³⁶B.L., Cotton Cleop. E., IV fol. 82 (new #94). The letter is a draft of three pages, unsigned, with editing in Cromwell's hand. The date in the upper left hand corner reads 1537, which is incorrect. The date of the letter used in the body of this paper is taken from L&P, vol. VI, 1464.

³⁷Ibid., fol. 82.

Mary, and her religion, spending eighteen months in the Tower after the failure of the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536-37, and from this point on was marked as a friend and supporter of Princess Mary by opposing factions.

Margaret Plantagenet Pole, countess of Salisbury, was another Tudor noblewoman who openly supported Catherine and Mary instead of Anne. She was of royal blood -- her father, George Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence, was brother to both Edward IV and Richard III.³⁸ Margaret and her sons were the last of the Yorkist dynasty, a dynasty which threatened the stability and future of the Tudor line.

The countess had close ties to Catherine -- they were old friends and shared the common bond of the Catholic religion. The countess had been a "great lady" and attendant to the queen since 1509, had attended Princess Mary's christening on February 21, 1516, and had become Mary's first governess by 1520. The countess had accompanied Mary to the Welsh borders in 1525 when Mary served as representative for her father, Henry VIII.

The countess fell into disfavor in 1521 at the time of the duke of Buckingham's execution because she was part of the so-called "Aragonese faction," its origins going back to

³⁸Margaret Pole was restored "to the dignity of" countess of Salisbury by an act of Parliament in October 1513 when her brother's attainder was removed. The lands restored to her were valued at 1,599 19s 10 1/2d per annum. G.E.C., Salisbury, pp. 399-402; Miller, p. 210.

the reign of Henry VII.³⁹ By the late 1520s to early 1530s this faction was fighting for maintaining traditional religion embodied in Catherine of Aragon and her daughter, Mary.⁴⁰

Although the countess was allied with one of the two major court factions at this time, it is not evident that she overtly participated in court intrigue and political maneuverings herself, as did other court women. Her support was rather of a different nature, manifesting itself in the care, concern and support which she showed for the Princess Mary. The countess' love and support for the young Mary are evident in several instances after Anne became queen and Mary's mother had been banished from court. In August of 1533 the countess refused Lord Hussey's verbal request to inventory and deliver the princess' jewels to a Mrs. Francis Elmer. The request had initially come from Henry VIII, but the countess refused to budge until Cromwell obtained and

³⁹Ives refers to this faction as the "Stafford-Neville" and later "Neville-Courtenay" faction after the major families involved. For more on this faction and the meaning of the term in general, see Ives, Anne Boleyn, pp. 123-125.

⁴⁰As Ives states, one characteristic of the term "faction" as applied to Tudor England is that it did not propound any ideological program as political parties do today; rather, one individual embodied the desired policy. Thus, Catherine of Aragon and her daughter, Mary, equalled traditional (i.e., Catholic, conservative) religion, adherence to the pope and Rome, and church over state, while support for Anne Boleyn equalled religious reform, enmity to Rome, and royal supremacy over the Church.

delivered to her Henry's written request. Later in December of the same year Chapuys noted that when Mary was commanded by her father to come to court and wait upon her half-sister Elizabeth (the "bastard"), the countess, who, according to Chapuys, was "a lady of virtue and honor, if there be one in England," offered to accompany Mary at her own expense. When Chapuys requested the following February that Henry return Mary to the countess' care whom Mary "regarded as a second mother," Henry replied that "the Countess was a fool, of no experience, and that if his daughter had been under her care during this illness she would have died."⁴¹

The countess' untimely and needless death came not from her own actions, but rather from the actions of the group she was allied with (particularly the actions of her second son Reginald, Cardinal Pole), and because of who she was. The cardinal's activities concerning a papal plot to return England to its old religion was feared by Cromwell. In August 1538 in a purge against disaffection, Cromwell arrested Reginald's brothers Henry (Lord Montagu) and Geoffrey, and their mother the countess of Salisbury. Others of the faction arrested were Henry Courtenay, marquess of Exeter, and Sir Edward Neville.⁴² All of those

⁴¹L&P., vol. VI, 1009 and 1528; vol. VIII, p. 101; G.E.C., Salisbury, pp. 400-401.

⁴²Geoffrey Pole was pardoned after giving evidence against the rest.

arrested were executed in December 1538; the duchess remained in the Tower until her execution on May 28, 1541.

Two other ladies, both relatives of Anne, who favored Catherine and Mary were Katherine Broughton Howard, wife of Lord William Howard, Anne's uncle, and Jane Parker Boleyn, Lady Rochford, wife of Anne's brother George. Jane Parker Boleyn was the daughter of Henry Parker, Lord Morley, a distinguished scholar and court official. In 1526 she had married George Boleyn, Anne's brother, who at that time was cupbearer to King Henry VIII. Upon Anne's marriage to Henry on January 25, 1533, Jane became a lady of Anne's Privy Chamber. She was subsequently to serve the next three wives of Henry VIII--Jane Seymour, Anne of Cleves, and Catherine Howard--suffering death on the block for her part in the intrigues of Catherine Howard. She seems to have been a friend of Anne's as late as the autumn of 1534, when she conspired with Anne to rid the court of a new flame of Henry's of whom Anne was jealous. However, the plot backfired and Jane was banned from court for her part in the scheme. As Chapuys describes in a letter dated October 13, 1534,

The wife of Mr. de Rochefort has lately been exiled from Court, owing to her having joined in a conspiracy to devise the means of sending away, through quarrelling ('fasherie') or otherwise, the young lady to whom the King is now attached.⁴³

⁴³Cal. S.P. Span., vol. V, i, p. 280. See also L&P, vol. VII, 1257, 1279, 1297, 1554.

Anne's plot had failed with her sister-in-law receiving the brunt of humiliation. Jane would not forget this. However, this did not stop Anne from using another one of her relatives to rid herself of her rival for Henry's affections. In February 1535 Anne and her followers employed her cousin Margaret (Madge) Shelton to attract the attention of Henry and rescue the king from his current mistress. This unknown mistress was discovered to have been a plant by the Aragonese (imperialist) faction to influence Henry against Anne. The unknown woman, who had been Henry's mistress for six months, was replaced by Margaret Shelton. In a letter dated February 25, 1535, Chapuys wrote to Charles V that

...the young lady who was lately in the King's favor is so no longer. There has succeeded to her place a cousin german of the concubine (Anne), daughter of the present "gouvernante" of the Princess.⁴⁴

Ironically, this was a great relief for Anne since Madge was one Boleyn relative sympathetic to Anne's cause. As Friedmann states,

The defeat of the imperialist favourite led to renewed agitation among the malcontents, for with the advent of Margaret Shelton disappeared the last hope that by means of female influence a reversal of policy might be obtained.⁴⁵

⁴⁴L&P, vol. VIII, 263.

⁴⁵Friedmann, vol. II, p. 57 (my underlining).

Thus, by becoming a king's mistress, Margaret Shelton had affected Tudor politics.

During some point between the above two episodes and the end of 1535, Jane Boleyn's friendship turned into hatred for Anne. In fact, she has been portrayed by most historians as Anne's enemy and rightly so since Jane was a major force in Anne's downfall and execution.

In April 1535 Jane and Katherine Howard had led a demonstration at Greenwich to show their love and support for Princess Mary. As Mary was making her way from Greenwich to Eltham, several wives of London citizens and "some ladies of the royal household not on duty" began to cheer her, calling out that she was still their princess in spite of any laws to the contrary. (This demonstration had been staged apparently against the wishes of the ladies' husbands.) Because of their social rank, Lady Rochford and Lady Howard were placed in the Tower although the matter was kept quiet.⁴⁶

By the end of 1535, Jane was fully supporting Princess Mary, with whom her family had had a long relationship.⁴⁷

⁴⁶L&P, vol. IX, 566. In the margin, the names are given as "Millor de Rochesfort et millord de Guillaume." (Letter of the Bishop of Tarbes to the Bailly of Troyes, October 1534.)

⁴⁷For more on the Parkers' association with Catherine and Mary see Retha M. Warnicke, "The Fall of Anne Boleyn: A Reassessment," Historical Journal 70 (February 1985): pp. 1-15. For more on Anne's fall see E. W. Ives, "Faction at the Court of Henry VIII: The Fall of Anne Boleyn," History

The reasons for her enmity toward Anne are questionable--perhaps she was jealous of Anne's close relationship to her brother (her own marriage to George was not on good standing to say the least and she also helped in bringing about his fall), or, perhaps she was embittered by her disgrace and exclusion from court and wanted to regain her status.

Whatever the reason, she provided testimony that Anne and her brother, Lord Rochford, had joked about the king being impotent and that Anne and George Boleyn were guilty of incest.⁴⁸ In return for this enlightening information, Lady Rochford was reinstated at court and given the position of lady of the Privy Chamber to Anne's successor, Jane Seymour.

Ives states in his book on Anne Boleyn that

...it is a feature of Anne Boleyn's fall that no lady of the court was accused with her. If Anne was a traitor, then anyone who had concealed knowledge

57 (1972): pp. 169-187.

⁴⁸Cal. S.P. Span., vol. V, ii, p. 55; L&P, vol. X, 908 where Chapuys writes to Charles V, "I must not omit, that among other things charged against him as a crime was, that his sister had told his wife that the King 'nestoit habile en cas de soy copuler avec femme, et quil navoit ne vertu ne puissance'." Burnet writes that "his spiteful wife was jealous of him: and being a woman of no sort of virtue...she carried many stories to the King, or some about him, to persuade, that there was a familiarity between the Queen and her brother, beyond what so near a relation could justify." Bishop Burnet, The History of the Reformation of the Church of England, 4 vols., revised and corrected by E. Nares (London: J. F. Dove, 1830), vol. I, p. 318.

of her crimes was, if not an accessory, certainly guilty of misprision of treason.⁴⁹

Lady Rochford ironically became proof positive of this when she was later accused, tried, found guilty, and executed for her active role in the love affairs of Queen Catherine Howard, "a twenty year old girl of great vivacity and exceptionally loose morals."⁵⁰

After her husband's execution on May 17, 1536, Lady Rochford wrote to Thomas Cromwell requesting "such power [poor] stuffe and plate as my husbonde had," and asks that the king look kindly on her as she is "a power [poor] desolat wydow wythoute comffort."⁵¹ Henry did look kindly on this lady-in-waiting until February 1542 when Lady Rochford's intrigues led to her final downfall.⁵² Her active role in court intrigue and politics lasted through service to five of Henry's queens. It is unfortunate that she did not learn from mistakes of past court women such as

⁴⁹Ives, p. 397. This point was first made by George Wyatt, in Wolsey, ed. Singer, pp. 445-446.

⁵⁰G. R. Elton, Reform and Reformation: England, 1509-1558. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), p. 289.

⁵¹"Lady Rocheford to Secretary Cromwell," Letter CXXIV, in Ellis, vol. II, pp. 67-68. Ellis amusingly introduces the letter as written by "The profligate woman whose smooth Letter now presents itself."

⁵²L&P., vol. XVI, 1331, 1333-1334, 1337-1340, 1366; vol. XVII, 28. P.R.O., Kaulek 31/2.12, fos. 387-392.

Doña Elvira Manuel that sometimes it is best to stop while ahead. As Marillac described Lady Rochford to Francis I two months before her execution, she was a woman "who all her life had the name to esteem her honour little, and has thus in her old age shown little amendment."⁵³

Before Lady Rochford's death, she, along with two other court women -- Lady Rutland (Eleanor Paston Manners) and Lady Edgecumbe (Catherine St. John) actively participated in the convocation which proved the marriage of Henry VIII to Anne of Cleves invalid. They were called upon to testify that Anne was still a virgin and that, therefore, the marriage had never been consummated. Their testimony upheld Henry's statement that there had never been any carnal copulation between him and Anne.

In his public declaration Henry stated that

when I saw her at Rochester ... it rejoyced my heart that I had kept me free from making any Pact or Bond before with her ... for then I adsure you I liked her so ill, and so far contrary to that she was praised, that I was woe that she ever came into England.

He admitted that he had lacked "enough of the Will and Power to consummate the same" and that he "never for love to the Woman consented to marry; nor yet if she brought maidenhead with her, took any from her by true Carnal Copulation."⁵⁴

⁵³Ibid., vol. XVI, 1366.

⁵⁴Savage, p. 80-81; Burnet, vol. I, pp. 450-451.

The ladies gave evidence to support Henry's statement by explaining how they had teased Anne around Midsummer stating they thought she must still be a virgin (after six months of marriage) due to her replies. Anne could not understand how she could be a virgin since she slept every night with Henry. She stated that,

...when he comes to bed, he kisses me, and taketh me by the hand, and biddeth me 'Good night, sweetheart,' and in the morning, he kisses me, and biddeth me 'Farewell, darling.' Is this not enough?

Lady Rutland replied that if this were all there was, it would be a long time before England had a duke of York. But Anne answered that she was content, "for I know no more."⁵⁵

By giving this testimony, these three court women made it possible for Henry to amicably end a marriage he was extremely unhappy with, while avoiding any diplomatic problems in the process.

During the reign of Mary I (1553-1558), Katherine Grey, daughter of Henry Grey, duke of Suffolk, and Frances Brandon Grey became involved in a series of court intrigues and diplomacy of the highest level. Whether she was actively involved in these intrigues or simply a pawn as her sister, Jane Grey, had been earlier, is debatable. Katherine was a maid-of-honor to Mary I when she became acquainted with a group of devout Catholics and Spanish

⁵⁵John Strype, Ecclesiastical Memorials. 3 vols. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1822, vol. 1, pt. 2, pp. 462-463.

diplomats at court. She was favored for a while by Mary's husband, Philip II of Spain, as a possible Catholic rival to Elizabeth and a Spanish-backed alternative to Mary, Queen of Scots, whom the French favored for the English throne. However, none of these plans came to fruition and Katherine continued as a maid-of-honor under Elizabeth I until her secret marriage to Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford, eldest son of the former Lord Protector.

This is when her real problems began. In 1561 she was placed in the Tower by Elizabeth when it was discovered she had secretly married without the queen's consent, her pregnancy giving the secret away. Elizabeth proceeded to have the marriage declared void. Marrying without consent was a grave mistake for any maid of Elizabeth since the queen "constantly extolled the superior merits of virginity, and sought to impregnate them [her maids] with her own aversion to matrimony."⁵⁶ But it was an even more serious offense for Katherine Grey since she was next in line of succession under Henry VIII's will, her maternal grandmother being Mary Tudor, Henry VIII's younger sister. Elizabeth feared her not only as a potential pretender to the throne but also because she was backed by certain factions,

⁵⁶Wilson, p. 4. Katherine's sister Mary also later incurred Elizabeth's anger for marrying without her permission. See Wilson, pp. 64-71. For more on Elizabeth's relationship concerning marriage and her attendants see Chapter V.

although she had lost Philip's support by marrying a Protestant. Elizabeth also feared she would have children and, thus, the potential threat to her rule could continue. In 1561, Katherine bore her first son. Elizabeth was enraged.

Then in 1563, despite being separated from her husband, (whom Elizabeth had also placed in the Tower), Katherine managed to conceive and bear another son (due to a visit by her husband). Elizabeth could not contain her "indescribable disgust and anger."⁵⁷ For the remaining five years of Katherine's life (which was spent in the Tower), Elizabeth continued to despise her, both for who she was and for the actions Katherine had taken against her will. Katherine remained one court woman caught up in Tudor politics to the end of her unhappy life, making an impact through no desire of her own, only a pawn in a political machine.

In discussing the above court women in relation to Tudor court intrigue, politics and social issues, we have seen many types of women. Some, such as Elizabeth Stafford Howard, were women before their time, whose fight for equality and respect seemed an anomaly to most sixteenth-century minds. Others, such as Margaret Plantagenet Pole,

⁵⁷J. E. Neale, Queen Elizabeth I (London: Jonathan Cape, Ltd., 1934; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1957), p. 110.

show a quieter but just as powerful strength, while women such as Jane Parker Boleyn and Katherine Grey Seymour remain enigmas in that one must wonder why they did what they did, knowing what the consequences might be. For whatever reasons these Tudor women became involved, as Martienssen states, "For those who cared to run the risk of politics it offered the most effective way for a woman to influence public affairs."⁵⁸

⁵⁸Martienssen, p. 38.

CHAPTER V

HUMANISM, THE NEW LEARNING, AND REFORM

Study of humanism, the new learning and reform by Tudor court women increased greatly during the first half of the sixteenth century, particularly under queens Anne Boleyn and Katherine Parr.

As discussed in the introduction, humanistic studies for women made great strides during the time of Catherine of Aragon, whose mother, Isabella of Castile, had instilled in her daughter a love for classical literature and languages, Christian literature as embodied in scripture, the Church fathers and other instructional texts, languages of the vernacular, music, science and mathematics. This love for learning was passed on by Catherine to her daughter, Mary, through development of a formally prescribed education.¹ And, through Catherine's efforts, interest in humanistic studies also passed to court women.

But it is during the time of Anne Boleyn that we see the interest in these studies widen among court women,

¹For more on Mary's education see Giles Duiwes, An Introductory to read, pronounce and to speak French truly, London: Bowiman, 1534?; Gloria Kaufman, "Juan Luis Vives on the Education of Women," Signs 3 (1978) pp. 891-896; Foster Watson, ed., Vives and the Renaissance Education of Woman, London: Edward Arnold, 1912.

particularly in the areas of the new learning and religious reform.² In fact, Loades credits Anne with being the first major patron of the new learning at the Tudor court during this time (late 1520s to early 1530s).³

Anne definitely was concerned about the new learning and religious reform and tried to help educate her court women in scriptural piety by keeping an English bible open in her chamber for all to read and consult.⁴ She also gave her women attendants books of devotion which they could hang from their girdles, thus having the books with them at all times. There is a Wyatt family legend which claims that Anne gave such a book to one of her women (a member of the Wyatt family) upon the scaffold before her execution on May

²For the purpose of this paper, "new learning" is defined as that which was concerned with reform of church and state, although not Protestant in its early stages. It also promoted a piety which was simplified and based on scripture, similar to early Erasmian thought. The new learning advocated the use of ecclesiastical resources to promote education, promoted social legislation, and use of the vernacular bible. Loades, p. 119. See also Dowling, Humanism, pp. 219-247; Maria Dowling, "Anne Boleyn and Reform" Journal of Ecclesiastical History, 35 (January 1984), pp. 30-46; and Retha M. Warnicke, Women of the English Renaissance and Reformation (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1983).

³Loades, p. 119.

⁴This may have been William Tyndale's new testament of 1534. Dowling, p. 232.

19, 1536.⁵ Two volumes have survived and are both purported to be this legendary book. It has been suggested that both of these manuscripts, one containing thirteen psalms or parts of psalms in English meter and the other twelve prayers and thanksgivings in English, belonged to attendants of Anne.⁶

Anne's relation to the Wyatts, particularly Thomas Wyatt the Elder, was a close one, and George Wyatt, Thomas's grandson, wrote a defense of Anne Boleyn, c. 1605, in which he describes her involvement in the early English Reformation:

That Illustrus Lady ... who was second wife to the renowned King Henry the 8, and mother to our late gracious Queene Elizabeth the al of them beringe a most greate part in the greate and remarkable conversion in the state of religion springing in our times throughout al Christendome originally and principaly here in England ... this Princely Lady was elect of God a most eminent agent and actor in the most dangerous and difficult part therof.⁷

⁵Ibid. The family member's name has not been found by this author. However, it might have been Anne Braye Brooke, Lady Cobham, wife of George Cobham, and an attendant of Anne. George Cobham's sister, Elizabeth was married to Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder.

⁶Ibid.

⁷George Wyatt, "The Introduction to the History in Defence of Anne Boleyn," in The Papers of George Wyatt Esquire, ed. D. M. Loades, Camden Fourth Series, 5 (London: Royal Historical Society, 1968), p. 24.

George Wyatt also used one of Anne's ladies-in-waiting as one of three contemporary sources in his book on Anne.⁸ Anne Gainsford Zouche was a court attendant to Anne Boleyn and one woman who attempted to vindicate Anne after her execution. Wyatt "interviewed" her probably around 1570-80 before writing his biography of Anne, "The Life of Queen Anne Boleigne," in the late 1590s. Anne Zouche would have been at this time between 60-70 years old.⁹ The earliest version of this story was related sometime before 1579 by Anne Zouche to John Lowthe, the Elizabethan archdeacon of Nottingham, who had at one time been employed in the Zouche household.

It seems that in late 1528 or early 1529 (no later than August) Anne Boleyn had lent her copy of Tyndale's The Obedience of a Christian Man to her lady-in-waiting Anne Gainsford (soon to be Zouche). In playing a trick on Anne, her future husband, George, had taken the book away from her. While glancing through it, he had become shocked by its "heretical" contents and refused to return it to his fiancée despite Anne's pleading. Unfortunately, he was

⁸His other two contemporary sources were "some helps" left by his grandfather, Thomas Wyatt the Elder, and the recollections of his mother Jane Finch Wyatt, who had married George's father in 1537 and lived until the end of the century. Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 65.

⁹Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 97-99. See "The Life of Queen Anne Boleigne" in The Life of Cardinal Wolsey by George Cavendish, ed. S. W. Singer, 2nd edn., 1827.

caught reading it by the dean of the Chapel Royal, whom Wolsey had assigned to direct a purge of heretical books at court. The book was passed on to Wolsey, but by this time Anne Boleyn was aware of what had happened. She went directly to Henry saying "it shall be the dearest book that ever dean or cardinal took away." Henry gave Anne his ring and she was thus able to get the book back from Wolsey, whom she detested anyway. Anne did not let the matter drop, suggesting to Henry that he would also enjoy reading it, which he did, stating that "this book is for me and all kings to read."¹⁰ This enlightening tale of personalities and religious machinations at the court of Henry VIII was passed down by oral history from a generally forgotten court woman, Anne Gainsford Zouche.

Indeed, Anne was so engaged in the spiritual edification of her women that she did not exclude reprimanding them when she felt it necessary. William Latymer, in his "A Brief Treatise or Chronicle of the most virtuous Lady Anne Boleyn," describes Anne telling her women that "all trifles and wanton poesies should be eschewed upon her displeasure." He also tells the story of how Anne berated her cousin and maid-of-honor, Margaret Shelton, for

¹⁰Ives, Anne Boleyn, pp. 162-163. Henry, however, did not feel Tyndale's book was for the "ordinary man," so it remained on the list of banned books.

having "idle poesies" (probably courtly love poems) written in her prayer book.¹¹

We know that Margaret Shelton's literary interests did transcend courtly love poetry because she is one of three court women, along with Mary Howard and Margaret Douglas, linked to the household of Anne Boleyn who contributed to Renaissance literary scholarship through their direct involvement with the Devonshire Manuscript, an anthology of 184 poems now in the Additional Manuscripts of the British Library. This anthology was apparently passed around at Anne's court by both men and women. The borrower would write down a poem, either an original or an already existing one, and then pass the book on to someone else.

The Devonshire Manuscript is an important anthology of Tudor poetry for several reasons. The manuscript contains many poems by Sir Thomas Wyatt, the great Renaissance poet who introduced many Italian literary forms into English poetry, including the Petrarchan sonnet.¹² Some of these poems are extant only in the Devonshire Manuscript, and

¹¹Dowling, p. 233. As quoted in William Latymer, "A Brief Treatise or Chronicle of the most virtuous Lady Anne Boleyn," MS C Don 42 fos. 20-33, fol. 31b, Bodleian, Oxford. Dowling refers to her as Mary Shelton, but this author believes she means Margaret (Madge) Shelton, daughter of Anne Shelton, Anne Boleyn's aunt.

¹²Ives states that "some 125" of the total 187 are attributed to Wyatt or have been designated to be his according to later scholars. Ives, Anne Boleyn, pp. 88.

others, extant also in other collections, are in their earliest forms here.

The Devonshire Manuscript also contains one poem by that other famous Tudor poet, Henry Howard, earl of Surrey, brother of Mary Howard, duchess of Richmond, who owned the manuscript at this time and whose initials are on the original binding. She is credited with having saved for posterity her brother's poem "O happy dames."

Mary Howard and Margaret Douglas are further linked to the Devonshire Manuscript by their contribution of original poetry.¹³ Furthermore, the collection and maintenance of this manuscript is owed to these three court women, as the Devonshire Manuscript was passed from Mary Howard to Margaret Douglas, probably at the time Margaret was living in the duchess' household.¹⁴ Margaret later passed on the manuscript to her son, Henry, Lord Darnley (future husband of Mary Queen of Scots), who added a few poems to the manuscript himself.

Thus, these three court women left their mark on Renaissance literary scholarship by contributing to the

¹³Other poems are by Antony Lee, Thomas Wyatt's brother-in-law, and Thomas Howard, brother of the third duke of Norfolk.

¹⁴Many of the poems concern Margaret's personal relation-ship with Thomas Howard, twelve of which were written by the lovers themselves. Ives, Anne Boleyn, p. 88.

collecting and preservation of a major manuscript of Renaissance poetry.

The next point at which court women become greatly involved with the new learning and reform (by this time more clearly Protestant), is during the reign of Katherine Parr, Henry VIII's sixth and last wife. The reigns of Jane Seymour and Anne of Cleves were so short that court women lacked a queen as mentor or patron to achieve advancements in these areas. And it seems that Catherine Howard lacked any interest in humanistic studies, the new learning or reform. Indeed, her education was quite poor and she is thought to have been illiterate.¹⁵

One court woman stands out among all others as the embodiment of religious reform during the time of Katherine Parr--a woman who was born a Catholic and died a Puritan, and whose zeal for reform left a mark not only in England but also on the continent. That woman was Catherine Willoughby Brandon, duchess of Suffolk.

In her biography of the duchess, Evelyn Read calls her "a very vital sixteenth-century woman." She states that "in an age when women were expected to be seen and not heard,

¹⁵L&P., vol. XVI, 1134; Dowling, p. 238.

Catherine was seen for her beauty and heard for her intelligence and wit, her spiritual integrity and zeal."¹⁶

Catherine, a baroness in her own right, was born and raised in the Catholic faith. Her mother, Maria de Salinas, had been a court attendant to Catherine of Aragon, after whom Catherine Willoughby was named, and who probably was her godmother.¹⁷ However, by the late 1530s she had turned toward reform. Hugh Latimer, the Protestant reformer, is credited by Read as having made the "initial and profound impression" on Catherine's religious conversion.¹⁸ This is possible since we know that Catherine was at court by September 1533 when she married the duke of Suffolk. She continued at court as an attendant for the last three wives of Henry VIII, Anne of Cleves, Catherine Howard and Katherine Parr.

Due to the increasing zeal of Catherine's reformist convictions, she made many enemies at court. One such enemy was, ironically, her former godfather, Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester. Catherine disliked him equally and

¹⁶Evelyn Read, Catherine, Duchess of Suffolk, a Portrait (London: Jonathan Cape, 1962), pp. 9 and 10.

¹⁷Pearl Hogrefe, Women of Action in Tudor England, (Ames, Iowa: University of Iowa Press, 1977), p. 92.

¹⁸Read, pp. 53-54. Latimer preached at the Court of Lent, 1530. From 1530-39 he was a frequent preacher at Westminster. In 1539, he was prohibited from preaching in England by Henry VIII.

she was not afraid to show it. She even had a pet spaniel named "Gardiner," which, when asked to heel, would cause much laughter.¹⁹ At a dinner party given by the duke and duchess sometime before 1545, the duke requested that each lady choose the dinner partner she would most like to dine with and invite that gentleman to escort her in to dinner. The duchess of Suffolk approached Gardiner, an invited guest, and said, "Since I may not ask my Lord [the duke] whome I like best, I ask your Grace whom I like least." Gardiner did not forget this insult and used it in 1554 when he attempted to prosecute the duchess for heresy.

On Good Friday 1554, Gardiner, now chancellor to Mary I, summoned Catherine's second husband, Richard Bertie, to his home, (the duke having died in 1554). On Bertie's arrival Gardiner said to him,

If I may ask the question of my Lady your wife, is she now as ready to set up mass as she was lately to pull it down, when she caused a dog in a rochet to be carried and called by my name? Or doth she think her lambs now safe enough which said to me when I veiled [doffed] my bonnet to her out of my chamber window in the Tower, that it was merry with the lambs now the wolf was shut up? Another time, my Lord her husband having invited me and divers ladies to dinner, desired every lady to choose him whom she loved best, and so place themselves. My Lady, your wife, taking me by the hand for that my Lord would not have her to take himself, said that for as much as she could not sit down with my Lord whom she

¹⁹Martienssen, p. 195. Somerset states the dog belonged to the countess of Hertford, but I agree with Martienssen, due to the conversation of Gardiner and Bertie (see below). Somerset, p. 44.

loved best, she had chosen me, whom she loved worst.²⁰

On January 1, 1555 Catherine and her family fled to the continent, not returning to England until 1559 during the reign of Elizabeth I.

Although the duchess served three of Henry's queens, she felt closest to Katherine Parr since they shared the same religious convictions. They were good friends, the duchess having attended Katherine's marriage to Henry VIII on July 12, 1543, and one historian, Pearl Hogrefe, has suggested that the duchess may have had an influence on Katherine's own reforming tendencies.²¹

This is possible since after becoming queen, Katherine appointed the reformer John Parkhurst as her private chaplain; Parkhurst, along with Alexander Seton, had been previously employed by the Suffolks as chaplains in their household.

The Catholic (conservative) faction attempted to use the friendship of these two women to their benefit by starting a rumor in February 1546 that Henry was looking for a new wife with which to replace Katherine, thus attempting to weaken her (i.e., the reforming faction's) position. In a letter dated the same month, the imperial ambassador, Van

²⁰Read, p. 60.

²¹Hogrefe, p. 188.

der Delft, wrote the emperor, "I hesitate to report there are rumours of a new queen ... Madame Suffolk is much talked about, and is in great favour, but the king shows no alteration in his behaviour to the queen".²²

Catherine's ties to Katherine Parr and reform even extended past the queen's death in childbirth in 1548. Before Thomas Seymour's execution for treason on March 20, 1549, he requested that the duchess take into her care Seymour's infant daughter by Katherine Parr, whom he had married after the death of Henry VIII in January 1547. This the duchess did, although what later became of the girl is unknown.

During the duchess' stay on the continent, her religious convictions became more and more reformist. Soon before her return to England in the summer of 1559, she answered a letter William Cecil had written her, expressing her disappointment with the lack of advancement Protestantism had taken in England. She wrote from Crossen on March 4,

how long halt ye between two opinions? ... If the Mass be good, tarry not to follow it nor take from it no part of that honour which the last queen, with her notable stoutness, brought it to and left in ... but if you be not so persuaded, alas, who should move the Queen's Majesty to honour it with her presence, or any of her counsellors?²³

²²Read, p. 60.

²³Ibid., p. 134.

She had earlier written Elizabeth with great enthusiasm saying "For if the Israelites found joy in their Deborah, how much more we English in our Elizabeth".²⁴

In August 1559, Queen Elizabeth restored to Catherine and Richard Bertie all lands, goods and chattels taken from them during Mary's reign. However, she remained cool to them for the rest of their lives, probably due to their outspoken Puritanism and the fact that Richard Bertie was a member of Parliament who was on the committee for the Succession and one who advocated marriage for the queen and the need for a designated successor, two things that Elizabeth would rather not commit to. In addition, she considered Catherine a religious zealot and she never trusted zealots, either Catholic or Protestant. As Thomas Fuller described her, Catherine was "a lady of a sharp wit and sure hand to thrust it home and make it pierce when she pleased."²⁵

Her importance to sixteenth-century English religious reform is also demonstrated in the amount of contemporary literature written about her. The story of the Berties' exile first appeared in the 1570 and 1576 editions of John Foxe's Acts and Monuments. Some time after 1588, Thomas Deloney, a silk weaver and pamphleteer, wrote a ballad

²⁴Hogrefe, p. 96.

²⁵Read, p. 50.

entitled "The Most Rare and Excellent History of the Duchess of Suffolk and her Husband Richard Bertie's Calamity." And, in the early seventeenth century a play concerning the duchess' life was written and produced at the Fortune Theatre in Cripplegate.²⁶

Catherine's dedication to the advancement of her religion (which included founding a church for alien Protestants in London and befriending such continental reformers as Martin Bucer and John à Lasco) is an example of a court woman, wife and mother, who was willing to risk everything for her deep religious convictions.

Catherine, duchess of Suffolk, was not the only court woman to risk her life for her religion. Five ladies of the Privy Chamber of Katherine Parr (including the duchess) became involved in reform and court intrigue due to their relationship to her, their husbands, and their own religious beliefs.²⁷

By early 1546 there had developed at the Tudor court two political/religious factions: the conservatives, led by the third duke of Norfolk and Gardiner, and the reformers, led by Edward Seymour. As a group, the conservatives were

²⁶Read, pp. 128-130.

²⁷For more on Katherine Parr's religious beliefs see William P. Haugaard, "Katherine Parr: The Religious Convictions of a Renaissance Queen," Renaissance Quarterly 22 (Winter 1969), pp. 346-359.

older, more uncertain and disorganized as policy goes. The reformers were made up of younger, more capable men who were aggressive and who held clear goals.

Besides Seymour, other key members of the reforming faction were John Dudley, viscount Lisle (later duke of Northumberland), Sir Anthony Denny²⁸ and Sir William Herbert, both of the Privy Chamber, Sir William Paget (whom Elton considers the "best political talent of the day"),²⁹ and Thomas Cranmer, archbishop of Canterbury. The wives of Seymour, Dudley, Denny and Herbert were all court attendants to Katherine Parr--Anne Stanhope Seymour, Joan Guildford Dudley, Joan Champernown Denny and Anne Parr Herbert (Queen Katherine's sister). The fifth woman involved, Catherine Willoughby Brandon, duchess of Suffolk, was a widow at this time.

The conservatives reasoned that they could quell the rising strength of the reformers by using Henry's fear of heresy to destroy them. Gardiner thus directed himself to acting against the queen and her women, spreading rumours in March 1546 that first the duchess of Suffolk, then Anne of Cleves was to supplant Katherine Parr. This ploy did not

²⁸For more on Anthony Denny and reform see Patricia C. Swensen, "Patronage from the Privy Chamber: Sir Anthony Denny and Religious Reform," Journal of British Studies 27 (January 1988), pp. 25-44.

²⁹Elton, Reform and Reformation, p. 329.

work and only bound the women closer together. Some court spectators such as Chapuys, imperial ambassador, felt the ladies were the more radical, not the queen. He writes in January 1546,

If the King favors these stirrers of heresy ... it is because the Queen, instigated by the Duchess of Suffolk, Countess of Hertford, and the Admiral's wife [Joan Dudley, Lady Lisle] shows herself infected.³⁰

By spring the conservatives had attacked Latimer and Edward Crome, a Cambridge reformer. Crome implicated Katherine and the members of her group as being involved with Anne Askew, a Lincolnshire gentlewomen.³¹ Anne had been in trouble once before between March and June of 1545 for her outspoken heretical views. She had been a frequent visitor to the afternoon sessions which Queen Katherine and her ladies held to discuss and study scripture and listen to learned visitors despite theology. Anne was arrested, interrogated and tortured, but would not implicate Katherine or any of her women as heretics. Anne was subsequently burned at the stake on July 16, 1546.

³⁰Martienssen, p. 205.

³¹Elton, Reform and Reformation, p. 329. Other accounts state that Gardiner had overheard Henry berate Katherine for lecturing him on religion and after she left the room told Henry that she was encouraging others to oppose Henry's efforts for religious uniformity. Martienssen, p. 213.

Before Anne's death, charges had been drawn up on July 4 to indict the court women and Katherine. But on July 13, one day before the warrants for arrest were to be delivered to Henry, Katherine went to Henry and, using "the sort of careful submission" that was always effective, she apologized profusely, pleading ignorance and submissiveness (as Elton describes it an "elegant surrender to his supremacy"),³² in order to save the lives of herself and her women. It worked.

On July 14, Thomas Wriothesley, lord chancellor, delivered to Henry the warrant for the arrest of Katherine and her ladies. When Henry read it, he exploded in anger and kicked the lord chancellor from his chamber. Thus, Katherine had literally saved her neck and that of her women by having the knowledge to evaluate her position and power at court, and to know when to pretend ignorance and submissiveness.

It is also important to note that her women were implicated not only for their religious beliefs but because they were a link to bring down Katherine and their husbands, thus destroying the conservatives' major rival for political power.

³²Ibid., p. 330.

No court women would have such an influence on Tudor religion relative to politics during the reigns of Mary or the first ten years of Elizabeth.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

In discussing the lives of Tudor court women what can we deduce? Did they affect their contemporary times and those around them? Did they affect politics by becoming involved in court intrigue? Did they present social issues of their day and solve them? Were they affected by humanism, the new learning and reform, and take an active role in it? Were their lives active and involved in creating history?

In looking at this limited number of court women, it can be seen that they did affect their times and left an impact, not only on those around them, but on history in general. They led active and involved lives, doing what they believed they must to achieve their goals. One cannot deny the active and potentially catastrophic involvement which Catherine of Aragon's Spanish women Doña Elvira Manuel and Francesca de Caceres, engaged in in the realm of politics and diplomacy. Their power was indisputable. In addition, women involved in the Aragonese faction such as Margaret Plantagenet Pole, countess of Salisbury, and Gertrude Blount Courtenay, marchioness of Exeter, also wielded power by using their position at court to show their

allegiance to Catherine, actively participating in politics and court intrigue, as their families did. They were involved in the highest echelons of intrigue, risking their lives for a cause they believed in.

Other women, such as Jane Parker Boleyn, had such power and influence as to help effect the downfall of a queen and those around her, including Jane's own husband, George Boleyn. It may be difficult to understand why a woman would risk her own name and status to aid in her husband's ruin; her love for Catherine or her hatred for her husband must have been very strong. Perhaps her love for power and intrigue was strongest of all.

It is more understandable for a twentieth-century mind to see why Elizabeth Stafford Howard fought her husband so long and hard, or why Katherine Grey, Mary Grey, and others disobeyed court etiquette by marrying without their sovereign's consent. Unfortunately, these women and others like them did not really change the status quo concerning marriage issues, but they did make an impact simply by rebelling against the system. Their voices were heard and their actions noted by their contemporaries and by later generations.

Humanism made great strides in England during the sixteenth century, and although it touched only a handful of court women compared to the whole, the advancement that these few women made in learning was an advancement for the

future of all women. Court women such as Mary Howard, Margaret Shelton and Margaret Douglas contributed to Renaissance literary scholarship due to their direct involvement with the Devonshire Manuscript. The new learning and reform also was advanced by court women, especially during the time of Anne Boleyn and Katherine Parr, whose women attendants benefited from their support and went on to express their religious convictions. Catherine Willoughby Brandon, duchess of Suffolk believed so strongly in her religious convictions that she not only became a patron to reformers but risked her life during the reign of Mary I, finally going into exile on the continent. And when the slow pace of Elizabeth I's reforms irritated the duchess, she let her views be known. Anne Stanhope Seymour, Joan Champernown Denny, Anne Parr Herbert, and Joan Guildford Dudley also were concerned with religious reform. Due to their position as court women for Katherine Parr and their husbands' place at court, these women had the power to promote active reform from the top of the Tudor political hierarchy. Although they had influential husbands who were reform minded for political more than religious reasons, I believe these women became involved for their religious convictions more than anything. And they risked their lives to do this.

It is interesting to note that the court women to queens consort seem to have exerted more power and influence

than court women to queens regnant (i.e., Mary I and Elizabeth I). Perhaps it had to do with the personality of the queen herself. Strong queens such as Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, and Katherine Parr certainly had more notable court women under them than other queens such as Catherine Howard or Jane Seymour. However, one must remember the shortness of Jane's reign, not to mention Anne of Cleves. But I still believe the above point has some validity.

But why did court women under Mary I and Elizabeth I lose that power and influence? This is somewhat difficult to determine, especially in the case of Mary due to lack of information on her women. Perhaps it was due to the nature of queenship itself relative to that of a queen consort, or perhaps it was due to the two very different personalities of the queens regnant.

Although all of these women lived through their fathers, brothers, uncles and/or husbands for most of their lives, as Weinstein implies, as noted on page one of the introduction, I believe that once they achieved their position at court, these women also lived through themselves. By having one of the few available "employments" open for women of their social status they were able to affect those around them and make their mark on history.

In Garrett Mattingly's foreword to Catherine of Aragon, he states that two aspects of Catherine's life story fascinated him:

...the way the decisions of persons by no means gifted with genius but strategically placed may influence the course of history, and the way that the divided loyalties common in thoughtful persons during a time of rapid change may affect their conduct in unexpected ways, and consequently give a twist, sometimes to remote events.¹

This statement could also apply to the Tudor court woman. Although most of these women did not become queens, they still led active and influential lives in varying degrees and did make a lasting impact on history.

¹Mattingly, foreword, p. vii.

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APPENDIX A

ORDINANCES FOR THE HOUSEHOLD MADE AT ELTHAM IN THE XVIIITH YEAR OF KING HENRY VIII AD 1526

BOUCHE OF COURT

A Duke or a Dutchess

Every of them for their Bouche of Court in the morning, one chett lofe, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for afternoone, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for after supper, one chet lofe, one manchet, one gallon of ale, one pitcher of wyne; and from the last day of October unto the first day of April, one torch, one pricket, two sises, one pound of white lights, ten talshides, eight faggots...and from the last day of March unto the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coals; which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 39l. 13s. 3d.

A Marquesse, Earle, Lord Privy Seale, Bishop, Countesse, The Lord Chamberlaine

Every one of them for their Bouche of Courte, in the morning, one chet lofe, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for afternoone, one manchett, one gallon of ale, one pitcher of wyne; and from the first day of October unto the first day of Aprill, one torche, one prickett, two sises, dimid pound

white lightes, eight talshides, six faggots...and from the last of March unto the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coales; which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 371. 12s.

A Viscount, Baron or Baronesse, the Queen's Lord Chamberlain, Treasurer, Comptroller

Everie of them being lodged within the courte, for their Bouche, in the morning, one chet lofe, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for afternoone one manchett, one gallon of ale; for after supper one chet lofe, one manchett, one gallon of ale, and one pitcher of wyne; and from the last day of October, unto the first day of Aprill, one torch, one prickett, two sises, dimid pound white lights, six talshides, four faggots...and from the last day of March unto the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coales; which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 351. 12s.

Knights, and Others of the King's Councill, Knights Wives, Gentlemen of the Privy-Chamber, the Cofferer, Master of the Household, Clerkes of the Green-cloth, Clerkes Comptrollers, and Clerkes of the Kitchen

Everie of them being lodged within the courte, for their Bouche in the morning, one chet loafe, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for afternoone, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for after supper, one manchett, one gallon of ale, dim' pitcher wyne; and from the last day of October, unto

the first day of April, three lynkes by the weeke; by the day one prickett, one sise, dim' pound white lightes, four talshides, four faggots...and from the last day of March unto the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coales; which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 20l. 13s.

Cup-bearers, Carvers, Sewers, and Surveyors, for the King and the Queen, Master of the Jewels, Squires of the Body, the Queen's Chancellor, Secretary, Almoner, and the Queen's Gentlewomen

Everie of them being lodged within the court, for their Bouch after supper, one chet loafe, one gallon of ale, dim' pitcher of wyne; and from the last day of October, unto the first day of Aprill, two linckes by the weeke, by the day one sisse, six white lights, three talshides, four faggots...and from the last day of March unto the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coales; which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 10l. 16s. 9d.

The Queen's Maides¹

Among them for their Bouch in the morning, one chet lofe, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for afternoone, one manchett, one gallon of ale; for after supper one chet lofe, one manchett, two gallons of ale, dim' pitcher of wyne; and

¹The queen's maids received "two measse of meate to their servants."

from the last day of October, unto the first day of April;
 three lynckes by the weeke, by the day six sises, one pound
 of white lights, six talshides, six faggots...and from the
 last day of March unto the first day of November, to have
 the moyety of the said waxe, white lights, wood, and coales;
 which doth amount in money by the year to the summe of 24l.
 19s. 10d.

The Wardrober of the Robes and Bedds on Both Sides

For their Bouch after supper, one chet loafe, one
 gallon of ale; and from the last of October, unto the first
 day of April, by the day one sise, eight white lights, two
 talshides, two faggots; and from the last day of March unto
 the first day of November, to have the moyety of the said
 waxe and white lights, which doth amount in money by the
 yeare to the sume of 6l. 13s.

Chamberers

No Bouch of Court.

CHARGE OF DYETTS

The Charge of Dyetts for the Queene's Grace, and her
 side.

	<u>l.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
The Ladies in presence 2 messes, every messe rated at 170l. 17s. 6d.	341	15	0
The first messe to the Ladies	170	17	6 1/4

	<u>l.</u>	<u>s.</u>	<u>d.</u>
The Ladies, Gentlewomen, and Chamberers, 7 messes, every mess rated at 125l. 14s. 10 1/2d.	880	4	1 1/2
The Robes, one Messe	46	8	9 1/2
The Bedds, one messe	35	9	0 1/4
The Queen's Maide Servants, three messes, every messe rated at 23l. 16s. 9 1/2d.	71	7	4 1/2

ADDITIONS

ITEM, It was commanded by the Lord Great Master at Westminster, in the month of June 35 Hen. VIII, that the Queen's maides should have dayly a chyne of beef served to them for their breakfast.

ITEM, one messe of meate increased, to be served to the Queen's maid servants.

SELECT GLOSSARY FOR APPENDIX A²

chet lofe, chet loafe, chett lofe, chett loffe, cheat loaf - wheaten bread of the second quality, made of flour more coarsely sifted then that used for manchet, the finest quality.

chyne (chine) of beef - a joint of meat from the backbone.

²All definitions taken from A. R. Myers, ed., The Household of Edward IV, The Black Book and the Ordinance of 1478, Select Glossary, pp. 271-285; and The Oxford English Dictionary, being a corrected re-issue with an Introduction, Supplement, and Bibliography of A New English Dictionary on Historical Principals founded mainly on the materials collected by the Philological Society 12 vols. (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1933).

dimid pound, dim' pound - one-half pound

manchett, manchet, maunchette - a small loaf or roll of the finest kind of wheaten bread

messe, mess, measse (pl.) - portion of food; prepared food.

moyety, moite, moitie - one-half of; a small part of; a lesser share or portion of

pricket, prickett, prikett - a candle or taper such as was stuck on a pricket candlestick

sise, sisse, size, syze - a kind of large candle used especially at court and in churches

talshides, shides, shydez - billets of firewood

APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION¹ OF MAJOR WOMEN DISCUSSED

INEZ (née de Venegas) BLOUNT, Lady Mountjoy

Spanish; accompanied Catherine of Aragon to England for marriage w/Arthur, Prince of Wales; married William Blount, Lord Mountjoy before 30 July 1509. Dau. Gertrude Blount (later marchioness of Exeter).

JANE (née Parker) BOLEYN, Lady Rochford

Daughter of Henry Parker, Lord Morley by his wife Alice. Married in or before 1526 George Boleyn, Lord Rochford, brother of Anne Boleyn. Instrumental in downfall of husband and sister-in-law May 1536. Executed 13 Feb. 1542 for involvement in queen Catherine Howard's love affairs.

CATHERINE (née Willoughby) BRANDON, duchess of Suffolk

Only daughter and heir of William, Lord Willoughby by Maria de Salinas, maid to Catherine of Aragon. Born 22 Mar. 1519, married Charles Brandon, duke of Suffolk, 12 Feb. 1539. Children born: Henry and

¹Information for this appendix is derived mainly from the G.E.C. and The Dictionary of National Biography (London: Oxford University Press, 1950).

Charles. Married second husband Richard Bertie, early 1553. Children born: Peregrine and Susan. Fled to continent during time of Mary I due to religious convictions. Died 19 Sept. 1580.

GERTRUDE (née Blount) COURTENAY, marchioness of Exeter

Dau. of William Blount, Lord Mountjoy and second wife, Inez de Venegas, maid to Catherine of Aragon. Born sometime between 1509-1515. Married Henry Courtenay, marquess of Exeter. Died 1558.

JOAN (née Champernown), Lady DENNY

Dau. of Sir Philip Champernown of Devonshire. Married Feb. 1538 Sir Anthony Denny of the King's Privy Chamber.

JANE DORMER, duchess of Feria

Born 6 Jan. 1538 at Ethrop in Buckingham. Dau. of Sir William and Lady Mary Sidney. Married Don Gomez de Figueroa y Cordoba, duke of Feria, 29 Dec. 1558. Several children. Widowed at 34. Died 23 Jan. 1613.

Lady MARGARET DOUGLAS

Dau of Margaret, queen of Scotland and her second husband Archibald Douglas, earl of Angus. Born 1516. Married Charles Stuart, earl of Lennox in 1544. Their son, Henry, Lord Darnley, married Mary, Queen of Scots. Died 1578.

JOAN (née Guildford) DUDLEY, Lady Lisle

Dau. of Lord Henry and Lady Jane Guildford. Born c. 1518. Married John Dudley Feb. 1538, son of Edmund Dudley, Henry VII's tax collector. Husband became duke of Northumberland under Edward VI and later executed.

MARY (née Howard) FITZROY, duchess of Richmond

Dau. of Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk and second wife, Elizabeth Stafford Howard. Born 1519. Married Henry VIII's illegitimate son by Elizabeth Blount. Died 1557.

ANNE (née Parr), Lady HERBERT

Dau. of Sir Thomas and Lady Maud Parr, an attendant to Catherine of Aragon. Born 1515. Sister of Katherine Parr, sixth wife of Henry VIII. Married Feb. 1538 William Herbert, Esquire of the Body to Henry VIII.

ELIZABETH (née Stafford) HOWARD, duchess of Norfolk

Dau. of Edward, third duke of Buckingham and Eleanor Percy, dau. of the duke of Northumberland. Born 1497. Married Thomas Howard, third duke of Norfolk before 8 Jan. 1513. Five children. Died 1558.

MARGARET (née Plantagenet) POLE, countess of Salisbury

Born Aug. 1473 at Farley Castle in Somerset. Dau. of George Plantagenet, duke of Clarence and earl of

Salisbury and Isabel Nevill, dau. of Richard Nevill, earl of Warwick. Married probably in 1491 but not later than 1494, Sir Richard Pole, Knight of the Garter. Three sons: Henry, Lord Montagu, Reginald, cardinal Pole, and Sir Geoffrey Pole; one daughter, Ursula. Executed 1541.

KATHERINE (née Grey) SEYMOUR, countess of Hertford

Second dau. of Henry Grey, duke of Suffolk and Frances Brandon, dau. of Charles, duke of Suffolk and Mary Tudor, younger sister of Henry VIII. Married secretly about Dec. 1560 Edward Seymour, earl of Hertford, third son of the Lord Protector under Edward VI, Edward Seymour. Two sons. Died 1568.

ANNE (née Stanhope) SEYMOUR, countess of Hertford

Dau. of Sir Edward Stanhope and Lady Elizabeth Stanhope, dau. of Lord FitzWarin and sister of John, earl of Bath. Descended through maternal great-grandmother from Thomas Woodstock, youngest son of Edward III. Married Edward Seymour, Lord Protector, before 9 March 1535. Died 16 April 1587.

MARIA (née de Salinas), Lady WILLOUGHBY

Spanish maid to Catherine of Aragon, brought over from Spain by Catherine's request. Naturalized 29 May 1516. Married William, Lord Willoughby d'Eresby on 5 June 1516 at Greenwich. Mother of Catherine

Willoughby Brandon, duchess of Suffolk. Died after
January 1547.

ANNE (née Gainsford) ZOUCHE

Born c. 1510. Married c. 1528-29 George Zouche,
gentleman pensioner. Died after 1570-80.

APPENDIX C

LIST OF COURT WOMEN¹

I. CATHERINE OF ARAGON (1501-1533)²

A. Spanish Women

Francesca de Caceres
Elvira Manuel
Maria de Rojas
Maria (née de Salinas), Lady Willoughby
Inez (née de Venegas) Blount, Lady Mountjoy

B. English Women

Elizabeth Blount (later Lady Tailboys)
Anne Boleyn (later queen)
Elizabeth (née Howard), Lady Boleyn
Mary (née Boleyn) Carey
Gertrude (née Blount) Courtenay, marchioness of Exeter
Anne (née Stafford) Herbert, Lady Hastings
Elizabeth (née Stafford) Howard, duchess of Norfolk
Agnes (née Tilney) Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk
Mary (née Stafford) Neville, Lady Abergavenny
Anne Parr (later Lady Herbert)
Maud (née Greene), Lady Parr
Margaret (née Plantagenet) Pole, countess of Salisbury
Elizabeth (née Stafford) Radcliffe, Lady Fitzwalter
Jane Seymour (later queen)
Dorothy (née Howard) Stanley, countess of Derby

¹This list does not purport to be complete, but simply an aid. No authoritative list of Tudor court women currently exists. The women are listed alphabetically by married name. The names have been compiled from many sources found during the course of this research.

²The date 1501 has been used instead of 1509 for Catherine, as she first married Arthur, Prince of Wales, in that year and had established a household and women attendants prior to 1509.

Mary (née Dacre), Lady Talbot (later countess of Shewsbury)
Elizabeth (née Scrope) de Vere, countess of Oxford

II. ANNE BOLEYN (1533-1536)

Anne (née Savage), Lady Berkeley
Jane (née Parker) Boleyn, Lady Rochford
Elizabeth (née Wood), Lady Boleyn
Anne (née Braye) Brooke
Margaret (née Bourchier) Bryan
Mary (née Boleyn) Carey
Margaret (née Dymoke) Coffin
Gertrude (née Blount) Courtenay, marchioness of Exeter
Elizabeth Holland
Katherine (née Broughton), Lady Howard
Elizabeth (née Stafford) Howard, duchess of Norfolk
Agnes (née Tilney) Howard, dowager duchess of Norfolk
Mary (née Scrope), Lady Kingston
Marjery (née Horsman) Lyster
Eleanor (née Paston) Manners, countess of Rutland
Anne Parr (later Lady Herbert)
Jane Seymour (later queen)
Margaret Shelton
Anne (née Boleyn), Lady Shelton
Elizabeth (née Browne) Somerset, countess of Worcester
Dorothy (née Howard) Stanley, countess of Derby
Anne (née Howard) de Vere, countess of Oxford
Bridget (née Wilshire), Lady Wingfield
Anne (née Gainsford) Zouche

III. JANE SEYMOUR (1536-1537)

Anne Basset
Jane (née Parker) Boleyn, Lady Rochford
Gertrude (née Blount) Courtenay, marchioness of Exeter
Eleanor (née Paston) Manners, countess of Rutland
Anne Parr (later Lady Herbert)
Mary (née Arundell) Radcliffe, countess of Sussex

IV. ANNE OF CLEVES (1540)

A. German Women

Katherine
Gertrude

B. English Women

Anne Basset
 Katherine Basset
 Jane (née Parker) Boleyn, Lady Rochford
 Catherine (née Willoughby) Brandon, duchess of Suffolk
 Dorothy Bray
 Alys (née Gage), Lady Browne
 Katherine Carey
 Joan (née Champernown), Lady Denny
 Lady Margaret Douglas (later countess of Lennox)
 Catherine (née St. John), Lady Edgecumbe
 Mary (née Howard) Fitzroy, duchess of Richmond
 Anne (née Parr), Lady Herbert
 Catherine Howard (later queen)
 Eleanor (née Paston) Manners, countess of Rutland
 Mary Norris
 Mary (née Arundell) Radcliffe, countess of Sussex
 Anne (née Stanhope) Seymour, countess of Hertford
 (later duchess of Somerset)

V. CATHERINE HOWARD (1540-1542)

Margaret (née Howard), Lady Arundell
 Anne Basset
 Isabel (née Howard), Lady Baynton
 Jane (née Parker) Boleyn, Lady Rochford
 Catherine (née Willoughby) Brandon, duchess of Suffolk
 Joan Bulmer
 Elizabeth (née Bryan), Lady Carew
 Katherine (née Howard) Daubeney, Lady Bridgwater
 Joan (née Champernown), Lady Denny
 Lady Margaret Douglas
 Mary (née Howard) Fitzroy, duchess of Richmond
 Anne (née Parr), Lady Herbert
 Margaret (née Gamage), Lady Howard
 Margaret Morton
 Mary (née Arundell) Radcliffe, countess of Sussex
 Alice Restwold
 Anne (née Stanhope) Seymour, countess of Hertford
 (later duchess of Somerset)

VI. KATHERINE PARR (1543-1547)

Catherine (née Willoughby) Brandon, duchess of Suffolk
 Lady Anne Carew
 Joan (née Champernown), Lady Denny
 Joan (née Guildford) Dudley, Lady Lisle

Lady Fitzwilliam
 Anne (née Parr), Lady Herbert
 Matilda, Lady Lane
 Anne (née Calthorp) Radcliffe, countess of Sussex
 Anne (née Stanhope) Seymour, countess of Hertford
 (later duchess of Somerset)
 Elizabeth, Lady Tyrwhit

VII. MARY I (1553-1558)

Cecily Barnes
 Margaret Baynton
 Mary Brown
 Susan Clarencieux
 Elizabeth (née Blount) Courtenay, marchioness of
 Exeter
 Magdalen Dacre
 Jane Dormer (later duchess of Feria)
 Lady Margaret Douglas
 Mary Finch
 Lady Katherine Grey
 Jane Russell
 Frideswide Strelly

VIII. ELIZABETH I (1558-1603)

Katherine Asteley (Ashley)
 Dorothy Bradbelte
 Frances (née Newton) Brooke, Lady Cobham
 Elizabeth (née Norwich), Lady Carew
 Elizabeth, Lady Clinton
 Dorothy, Lady Edmunds
 Margaret Howard, duchess of Norfolk
 Margaret, Lady Howard of Effingham
 Catherine (née Carey), Lady Howard (later countess of
 Nottingham)
 Anne (née Carey), Lady Hunsdon
 Catherine, Lady Knollys
 Lettice Knollys
 Elizabeth Knollys (later Lady Leighton)
 Anne, Lady Parry
 Blanche Parry
 Mary (née Shelton), Lady Scudamore
 Katherine (née Grey) Seymour, duchess of Hertford
 (marriage made invalid by Elizabeth I)
 Mary (née Dudley), Lady Sidney
 Lady Elizabeth St. Loe
 Dorothy, Lady Stafford

Lady Elizabeth Stafford
Dorothy, Lady Stratton
Ann Russell, countess of Warwick