The women who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber, 1553 - 1603.

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Submitted for examination for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Charlotte Merton 'The women who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber, 1553 to 1603'.

A brief introduction to the history of the Tudor Court and the subject in hand is enlarged upon in the second chapter ('The Court'), which describes the nature of the evidence available, the process of admission to the Privy Chamber, the hierarchy within it and the titles given to the various Privy Chamber posts, and official payment (wages, food and accommodation). Chamber reform and the status of the women's own servants are also discussed. The third chapter ('Recruitment') turns to the criteria used by the queens in selecting their women and discusses specialised duties (laundry, dancing etc.), the use by the queens of service as a form of house arrest, the eager pursuit of places in the Privy Chamber by women and their families and the alternatives in the event of failure to obtain them. The low turnover and stability in overall numbers and membership is also considered, as are the unofficial, material rewards of office. The fourth chapter ('The Privy Chamber') is concerned with the women's official duties: the daily routine; the administration for and care of the Wardrobe of Robes, the jewels and royal books; the manufacture of royal clothing; and their duties in cooking, distilling, chaperoning and nursing. Their role in Court entertainments and on state occasions is also described. The fifth chapter ('Manners and marriage') analyses the social norms of 'Courtly' behaviour and then the women's part in arranging marriages (their own and others'), secret marriages and royal marriage negotiations. The sixth chapter ('Influence and politics') argues the point central to the thesis: that the unofficial role of the Privy Chamber women as power brokers and patrons of family, friends and fee-paying clients was of great importance. Their power derived from their constant and guaranteed access to their queen, and the importance of this access, the lack of representation in the Privy Chamber as a factor in rebellion and styles of pleading a suit are discussed. Their participation in international politics, including royal service away from Court, is analysed, as are their actions on behalf of their paying clients, their role as 'spies' and go-betweens, their relations with government officers and administration and their intervention in local politics. The rewards that this brought, both in bribes and in land grants from the queens, are also examined. In the seventh chapter ('Religion') an overview of the piety of the Courts is elaborated on to discuss the women's activities as patrons of religious activists and authors. Their relationship with the episcopacy and their dealings in advowsons are considered. It is argued that Catholics were present in the Privy Chamber, while others showed interest in non-Christian beliefs and in the 'sciences'. The standard of education of the Privy Chamber women discussed, as are the expectations which men had of them and aristocratic women in general. The conclusion is drawn that the women of the Privy Chamber were a force to be reckoned with because of their access to the monarch, and that subsequently this power was first misrepresented and then ignored.

There are three appendices (a list of the women of the Privy Chamber from 1553 to 1603 with a date and manuscript reference key, a transcribed Household ordinance relating to stabling of horses for women, and a list of New Year's Gift rolls with references) and a select bibliography.
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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own original and unassisted work, and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration.

All transcriptions are in accordance with H. Jenkinson, 'Report on Editing Historical Documents', The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research I (1923), 6-25.

For clarity I give married women's maiden names hyphenated with the surname of their husbands. If a woman was married more than once I have used the surname of the husband alive at the time discussed. For titled women I have given a woman's maiden name with her current title, but not her husband's surname where it differs from his title; hence Lettice Knollys Countess of Leicester rather than Lettice Knollys-Dudley Countess of Leicester. In the case of the two Frances Howards who were successive Countesses of Hertford I have distinguished between them by the addition of I and II.

All MSS are in the Public Record Office London unless otherwise stated.

Bibliographical abbreviations:

A.P.C...............................The Acts of the Privy Council
B.L.................................The British Library
Bodl...............................The Bodleian Library
C.S.P. Foreign....................Calendar of the State Papers, Foreign
C.S.P. Venetian ...............Calendar of the State Papers, Venetian
C.S.P. Rome......................Calendar of the State Papers, Rome
C.S.P. Spanish...............Calendar of the State Papers, Spanish
Cal.Pat. .................. Calendar of the Patent Rolls

C.A. .................. The College of Arms

D.N.B. .................. The Dictionary of National Biography

H.M.C. .................. Historical Manuscripts Commission

L.P.L. .................. Lambeth Palace Library

L.&P. .................. Letters and Papers of the Reign of Henry VIII

N.L.S. .................. National Library of Scotland

N.N.R.O. .............. Norfolk and Norwich Record Office

S.P.R.O. .............. Scottish Public Record Office

Sh.R.O. .............. Sheffield Record Office

Soc.Ant. .............. The Society of Antiquaries of London

S.T.C. .............. Short Title Catalogue of Books

published... between 1475 and 1640
I am indebted to a great many people for their help while I have been working on this thesis: to my supervisor Geoffrey Elton, who first pointed me in this direction and then made sure that I did not wander from my chosen path, and who has been a constant source of inspiration; to Patrick Collinson and the Cambridge Tudor seminar; to Bill Akers, Janet Arnold, Michael O'Boye, Dave Crankshaw, Patricia Crawford, Margot Heinemann, Sybil Jack, Mitchel Leimon, Julia Merrit, Bill Tighe and Susan Wabuda for invaluable references; to my peers Peter Cunich, Paul Hammer and Patrick Hotle for their friendship and assistance; to the invariably patient and helpful staff of the archives and libraries I have frequented; to Mark Welland, without whom the word would not have been made print; to the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, especially John Rallison and David McKitterick; and to my friends who live near archives and have suffered as a result.

My most heartfelt thanks are for my siblings and my parents, who have accommodated me literally and metaphorically without hesitation, and for my boyfriend Struan Gray. He has been unflagging in his support, and besides, he let me monopolise his computer for over two years without demur, so it is the least I can do to dedicate what follows to him.
1. Introduction

On June 4th, 1561, the spell of fine weather broke, for soon after eleven o'clock the sky clouded over, and heavy drops of rain sent the ladies and courtiers who were in the park scurrying back to the Palace for shelter. The rain proved the forerunner of a terrific storm: thunder vibrated overhead, whilst streaks of forked lightning lit up the darkened hall where the Court sat at dinner. Pale-faced Maids of Honour, quaking on their joint-stools, made pretence of eating, and durst not look upon their steel knives. (Violet Wilson, *Queen Elizabeth's Maids of Honour and Ladies of the Privy Chamber*, 1922)

The traditional portrayal of women at the late sixteenth-century Court has been dominated by the style embodied in Violet Wilson's entertaining but misguided work. Together with worthy authoresses such as Agnes Strickland in the last century and more recently Anne Somerset, Wilson was part a school of thought which never allowed the truth to interfere with the creation of a colourful tableau. The quotation given above is typical of this florid but inaccurate approach: only the date and violence of the storm are facts; all the other details are mere fabrication. As a result of the impression created by these essentially superficial writings the history of the late Tudor Court has been unjustifiably neglected because most historians were misled into believing that the subject was of no interest.

In 1553 the government of England, Ireland and Wales became the responsibility of a woman for the first time. Mary Tudor ruled the three countries until her death in 1558, when she was succeeded by her half-sister Elizabeth, who remained in power until she too died in 1603; their reigns spanned all but half a century. Personal rule by the sovereign of a country was still the European norm; the focus of political life was the monarch's person, hence Henry VIII's concern to provide a male heir
rather than subject the country to the horrors of a female ruler. Despite what some contemporaries perceived as the handicap of their sex both queens continued the style of monarchy developed by their grandfather and their father, Henry VII and Henry VIII. Neither queen was merely a vacuous, passive puppet of ambitious men; they were monarchs who not only reigned, but also ruled. As political power remained with the queen and was wielded in a very personal and direct manner with few constraints imposed upon it, the ability to influence the queen was a key to political success, and the Court remained the place to make or break fortunes. One vital corollary of female rule has hitherto gone unremarked, however: the preeminence of those women who served the queens.

The character and execution of Tudor government as a whole has come under intense scrutiny in the last four decades, and in recent years there has been increasing interest in the structure and politics of the Court. It is almost impossible to arrive at a general definition of the Court which comprehends its physical dimensions, the multitude of its functions, and its social implications, but essentially it was the retinue of servants and attendants who constituted the *familia*, or domestic establishment, of the monarch, together with the residence which they inhabited. However, the name was also applied to a body of courtiers, where the title courtier carried particular social connotations; by the sixteenth century a courtier was no longer merely an attendant at or frequenter of the Court, but more specifically one who was of gentle birth, drawn from what one might call the suing classes, the people who had the leisure to busy themselves about the realisation their social and political ambitions on a daily basis. Thus Sir John Stanhope, a Vice-chamberlain, can be called a courtier, while Joan Kaye, a 'Milkewife', cannot.¹ The

¹ LC2/4/3 fols.47 and 62. Elizabeth's funeral, 1603.
Court offices which many members of this circle held were invariably managerial rather than manual, except in the case of one specific group who, paradoxically, formed the Court élite. These were the courtiers who were occupied in the Privy Lodgings, the suite of rooms to be found in every royal residence, where the monarch slept, ate and spent much of the day. The Privy Lodgings always comprised the Bed Chamber, which usually led off the Privy Chamber, a day room which gave its name to the Lodgings' staff; the Presence Chamber, a larger reception room with a throne and canopy of state; and the Privy Closet, a small private chapel. The significance of the accession of first Mary and then Elizabeth was the change in sex of the body-servants, the staff who performed the daily domestic tasks for the monarch within the Privy Lodgings, and who thus lived and worked at the literal and metaphorical heart of the Court. Because most of the intimate personal needs of a queen could only be met by women, the royal body-servants after 1553 were all, without exception, women. This change was important because of the role that Privy Chamber staff played in addition to their official duties. As has been demonstrated by several recent works, the Privy Chamber staff had been prominent in the political life of the country during the reigns of Henry VIII and Edward VI.  

At first glance it would appear that Elizabeth's Court has been sufficiently scrutinised, while Mary's has been generally ignored. However, most of the emphasis has been on the relationship between the Council and leading male courtiers, and the formal ceremony of the Court, while the call for a history of the Court as a complete institution has been largely ignored. A few all too brief forays have been made into the subject in

2. Starkey, 'The development of the Privy Chamber', and 'Court and Government'; Hoak, 'The King's Privy Chamber'; Loades, The Tudor Court.
3. Neale was the first to point the way in 1948 in 'The Elizabethan Political Scene', and
general, and even less work has been done on the Privy Chamber itself. One group of authors, including Violet Wilson and Charles Bradford, followed in the steps of the remarkable Agnes Strickland, but failed to make the most of access to documents denied to Strickland, while they could have been more discriminating in the material which they did use in their appraisals of Tudor courtiers. Whatever their faults, however, neither these works nor the few published biographies of Court women address the central issues of the place of Court in society, and the place of women within the Court.

It is generally agreed that during the reigns of the Tudors there was a gradual decline in the political power of the regional magnates, which was balanced by an increase in central government by the Crown, although why this happened remains a matter for debate. The consequence was a greater significance of the Court in national politics, and it changed from 'a place where powerful men gathered' in Edward IV's day, to 'a place where men came constantly seeking the bricks and mortar to build their fortunes' in Elizabeth's. Even though at the end of Elizabeth's reign it was popularly thought that the county kings 'Have but their stings and teeth newly ta'en out', the common perception lagged behind the reality, for by 1553 it was essential for any man hoping to better himself in the demand was reiterated in 1961 by MacCaffrey ('Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics'), and in 1976 by Elton ('Tudor Government: the Points of Contact. III. The Court'). The works of J.Nichols, Feuillerat, Anglo, Yates, Strong and M.E.James epitomise the school of Court history dismissed by Elton as 'accession tilts and symbolism' (Elton, ibid., p.225).

5. Chambers in The Elizabethan Stage allows the subject one paragraph of a forty-three page essay on the Household. Of two recent studies Murphy, in 'The illusion of decline', gives two pages to a discussion of the Marian Privy Chamber compared to eleven on the Edwardian, while Wright's 'A change in direction' is of limited use because it approaches the Elizabethan Privy Chamber as if the Marian had never existed, and contains fundamental errors in both fact and analysis.
the world either to attend Court, or to have at least one reliable intermediary there.\textsuperscript{7} The Court was the stalking-ground of both the 'forward March-chick', ambitious for wealth and power, and any number of men who came to Court to defend their place in the social and political hierarchy of the country.\textsuperscript{8} As the centripetal power of the Court increased, so did the importance of the Court élite: the Privy Chamber staff.

Within the Privy Chamber there were three distinct groups, of which two were wholly female. The first, the body-servants, performed all the tasks which had bearing on the modesty of the queen. The second, the attendants, were a retinue of women of good birth or marriage who followed the Court and attended on the queen, but did not have to carry out any menial duties. The third group, all male, who were not body servants, acted as general servants and were less close to the queen. Non-domestic offices held by the senior staff of Henry VIII and Edward VI's Privy Chambers, for example the Keeperships of the Dry Stamp and the Privy Coffers, ceased to be the responsibility of the Privy Chamber because the staff of equivalent standing were all women.

The men - the Gentlemen, Grooms and Gentlemen Ushers of the Privy Chamber - had several very important duties. They kept the doors to prevent those without permission from entering the Privy Chamber and other chambers within the Privy Lodgings, they were used as messengers, and one of the grooms kept the Privy Purse which was the queen's personal petty cash. The Grooms fetched much of the food and all the wood, coal and water for the Privy Lodgings.

Even in the sixteenth century confusion reigned over the titles given to the Privy Chamber staff. When in 1553 twenty women and twelve men

\textsuperscript{7} Henry IV Part Two IV iii 334.
\textsuperscript{8} Much ado about Nothing, I iii 52.
replaced the six Lords, four Principal Gentlemen and eighteen Gentlemen of Edward VI's Privy Chamber, the women were listed merely as 'Ladyes and Gentlewomen'. Fortunately, in subsequent documents, the hierarchy within the Privy Chamber is much clearer. At the top were three or four Ladies of the Bedchamber, and at the bottom a similar number of Chamberers, who acted as chambermaids; in between were about twelve Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber, and six Maids of Honour under the supervision of the Mother of the Maids. There was similar confusion in the minds of many observers, ambassadors and the like over how to describe the lower attendants. In Mary's reign they are officially referred to as 'Ladies of Estate' or 'Ladyes and Gentlewomen' according to their rank; in Elizabeth's as 'Ladies and Gentlewomen of the Household'. This change in title does not seem to reflect any change in function.

The confusion over the different titles accorded to the women of the Privy Chamber by their contemporaries bears witness to the essentially unplanned nature of Court organisation; as long as the appropriate officials knew which women were to be paid and had to be provided with somewhere to sleep there was no particular need to resolve the muddle. Once she became a member of the Privy Chamber it was the woman, not the title, who was important. To answer the accusation of 'mere domesticity', it must be admitted that, taken at face value, the duties of the women of the Privy Chamber were wholly domestic, but again this does not take into account the informal way in which life at Court, especially political life, was conducted. Their unofficial work on behalf of complex

9. SP11/1 No.15 fol. 30v; Murphy, 'The illusion of decline', pp.129-132. This gives a brief account of Edward's Privy Chamber.
10. See Appendix 1.
11. SP11/1 No.15 fol.30v; LC2/4/3 fol.54.
networks of importunate clients and as gleaners of information was vital, and has never been studied. In no sense was the Privy Chamber between 1553 and 1603 a model of domestic tranquility, free from political cut and thrust, without initiative or ambition.

This is not to say that the received ideas about the nature of late Tudor government have to be swept away, but rather that there is a major component at the very top of the pyramid which has been overlooked. It is true that politically active men did not regard the Court women as a general threat, but this was not because the women were insignificant. Like the queens themselves, the women fitted perfectly into the flexible structures of government left by the Tudor kings, and employed the same methods as their male predecessors to achieve their own and others' objectives by manipulating the monarch. While it was still the case that the best position for a man to hold was that of Privy Councillor, access to the queen through the Privy Chamber was just as important, as Sir William Cornwallis so clearly demonstrated when he sought the position of Groom Porter:

I am sure she [Elizabeth] will make me none of her Council yet if she will make me one of her Court, she may bestow this place upon me...by which means I may have a poor chamber in Court, and a fire, which my years grow fast from, and a title to bring a payre of cards in to the privy chambe at x of the clock at night. So I may be about her majesty I care not to be Grome of the Schoulerye.\(^\text{12}\)

The last sentence was not a sycophantic nicety, it expressed a political necessity. Cornwallis was only slightly exaggerating when he claimed that he faced 'utter vndoing and disgrace' if he did not receive a Court post of some sort, and his seemingly casual reference to late-night card games in the Privy Chamber reveals his true ambition. The ability to influence the queen gave power, and power prestige and money; if he could not advise

\(^{12}\) SP12/263 No.75 fols.105-106v. Sir William Cornwallis to Sir Robert Cecil. Highgate, 7, 14, 21 or 28 May 1597.
the queen formally, he wanted to influence her informally, and to do that he would need 'a title', the right of access to the Privy Chamber. For the women of the Privy Chamber, their right of admission was assured by their work, and guaranteed access to the monarch was guaranteed power.
2. The Court

Unfortunately no records have survived to give a comprehensive picture of how the female element of an English aristocratic household was organised with which the structure of the Court may be compared. The set of sixteenth-century household regulations frequently referred to today, the 'Booke of Orders and Rules' devised by Anthony Maria Browne second Viscount Montague of Cowdray, has a wealth of detail on the duties of the male servants of his household, but nothing about his wife's female servants, and this in the most complete set of such regulations available to us, apart from those of the Court.¹ This means that any description of the Royal Chamber has to rely purely on the Court records which have survived, and no systematic or detailed comparison with an aristocratic household can be made. There is a further obstacle to be overcome in arriving at a description of how the Court functioned. Formal Household regulations are concerned with the ideal - the way in which the Household officers would like the staff to deport themselves - and not the reality of Court life. It is often only from documents recording the day to day administration that one can gather what actually happened. Despite these limitations, a reasonable idea of how the Chamber, and the Privy Chamber, worked as an administrative unit can be formed.

The varying titles given to the queens' staff can be confusing, but it cannot be overemphasised that it was the woman and not the title which mattered. Someone as au fait as Thomas Hoby cheerfully described 'Lady Katherin Grey, Lady Jane Seimer, the Lady Cecill, Mrs Blaunch Apparry, ¹'A Booke of Orders and Rules established by me Anthony Viscount Montague for the better direction and governmente of my householde and family, together with the severall dutyes and charges apperteynninge to myne officers and other servantts'. Published in Scott, 'A Booke of Orders and Rules'.

1.
[and] Mrs Mannsfeld as 'Queenes maides', clearly using 'maid' in the sense of servant; for although three were Maids of Honour, neither Mildred Cooke Lady Cecil nor Blanche Parry fits the bill as coquettish teenager. The former was a Gentlewoman of the Household, the latter one of the Bed Chamber.

On arrival at Court the women who were to take positions as Privy Chamber staff would go before the Lord Chamberlain to take an oath of service and loyalty to the Queen. The warrants for the payment of their wages make it clear that they were not necessarily admitted in a group, but there were occasions when several women were inducted together. For example three who later became Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber - Margaret Wentworth Lady Drury, Frances Howard later Countess of Hertford I, and Mrs Dorothy Edmondes - were sworn in together a few days before 28 November 1569, possibly on 17 November, Accession Day. Nor was it unusual to pick holidays for this event; Mary Shelton-Scudamore was almost certainly sworn in on New Year's Day 1570/1. Of course there were those who were admitted as the need arose, on a date of no particular significance. It is not possible to ascertain how formal the ceremony of taking the oath was, nor has the text of the oath survived. It should be noted that the women did not take the Coronation Oath, unlike senior male Household and Chamber staff.

2. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128. The women were guests at a dinner given by Thomas Hoby at Bisham on 8 September 1560.
3. LC2/4/3 fols.53v and 54.
4. B.L. Lansdowne MS 59 No.22 fol.43. ‘The wages of the Privy Chamber and others for one whole year’ (1589).
5. Canterbury Cathedral Archives, The Diary of Arthur Throckmorton, ii fol.14. On Sunday 8 November Arthur Throckmorton's sister Elizabeth was 'swourne of the pryvy chamber'. She was a Maid of Honour, whose secret and unlicensed marriage to Sir Walter Raleigh in the autumn of 1591 caused a furore, and led to both of them being sent to the Tower.
Once in residence at the Court it was supposedly impossible for any servant to come and go freely (a limitation also found in aristocratic households of the period), particularly anyone whose absence might be noted by the monarch in person. Because of this by 1553 a procedure had developed whereby those wishing for leave of absence from Court were meant to apply to the Lord Chamberlain for a licence. The difference between theory and practice was a large one. It was relatively easy for Household servants to slope off because they might well not be missed by their controlling officers, and in any case it was easier to find someone to cover for them. More surprisingly, the Chamber staff had also developed a relaxed attitude to the regulation, surprising because their disappearance could well be remarked on by the Chamberlain, or even the queen. Perhaps an old habit of minor proportions had grown and become well-established in the last, unsettled months of Edward VI’s reign, when the officers responsible for enforcement had greater problems to contend with than truancy.6

When either a servant or an attendant was licensed to be absent from Court for more than a fortnight their livery and bouge of Court were stopped until their return.7 This was clearly intended to remove any incentive for the absentee to leave her own servants behind to live at the Crown’s expense for long periods of time, especially as such mistress- (or master-) less servants did not fall under the control of any other person at Court, and so presented

6. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.10. ‘It is the Quenes...pleasure that...all suche persones as be Appointede to atende and wayte in the Quenes chamber dailie or quarterlie...geve there attendaunse every man in his romme accordinglie/ And the saiede attendaunte in no wis depte frome the courte onlesse theye be Licensede by the Quene, my Lorde chamberlane or the Vice chamberlane for the Quenes chamber...and not onelie, substantiallye Comptrollement be daylie made of there saieded attendaunce/ But also offendoirs in not doinge there dewties, to be corectede by the discrecon of the saieded officers aswell by the checkinge and defalcation of ther wage and other wise Accordinglye’.

7. ‘Bouge of Court’ consisted of fuel and lighting, and certain items of food and drink (mainly intended for breakfast). ‘Livery’ in this context was stabling and accommodation.
a problem of discipline.\footnote{Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.25v.}

The essential difference between the Chamber staff and the attendants was accommodation and remuneration. We shall see that it was acceptable for the attendants to live outside the Court, indeed it was expected in some cases, whereas the staff always lived in. More importantly, the staff received, or were meant to receive, wages. Admittedly these were low, and cannot have been thought of as a realistic living wage, but they did not have to be substantial because accommodation and food were free under the livery and bouge system. Confusion exists because attendants who frequented the Privy Chamber often received bouge of Court, despite being unfeed. The water is muddied still further by the curious position of certain categories of Privy Chamber staff, noticeably the six Maids of Honour and the Gentlemen Ushers, who were unfeed although definitely servants. The murk is not readily penetrated; wages paid to individuals are identifiable in the chamber finance records, but bouge of Court fell into the general costs of the whole household, and it is well nigh impossible to put names to the numbers who received it. Perquisites were one of the attractions of life at Court, even if they were not the main one for Privy Chamber staff, but it is hard to say exactly who received what in the Privy Chamber, or what the perquisites were worth to the recipient in monetary terms.

The women who received wages fell into two distinct pay-brackets. In the first were the ten to twelve women who were paid £33 6s. 8d. per annum, of whom three or four were Ladies of the Bed Chamber and seven or eight were Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber. Although the title denotes greater status (a Lady being superior to a Gentlewoman), it is not so strange that the Ladies of the Bed Chamber should have received the same wage as their apparent inferiors because it seems that official recognition of the office
of Lady of the Bed Chamber was a recent development, and one which post-dated the fixing of the wage levels in Henry VIII’s reign. For example Queen Katherine Parr’s Privy and Bed Chamber staff had not enjoyed such a differentiation on paper, although it may have existed in reality for some time. Certainly it was only at Mary’s accession that a formal distinction was made.

In the second pay-bracket were four or five Chamberers who were paid £20 per annum. There were some curious exceptions to this rule, above all Frances Newton Lady Cobham, who consistently received £20 per annum even when she was the senior Lady of the Bed Chamber, when one would expect her to be have been paid £33 6s. 8d. like her peers. None of the wages increased for either category during the Queens’ reigns, reflecting the wider Court wages freeze which had been effective from Henry VIII’s death.

Although Royal Household wages had once been generous compared with those of noble households, when the full effect of the price rises in the second half of the century began to bite, the women of the Privy Chamber were left without recourse. Many male servants had augmented their wages with well-paid jobs outside the Court or by pluralism, and in such circumstances lucrative supplements to their income were even more appealing. However, none of these options were open to the queens’ women. All wages throughout the period came out of the Treasury of the Chamber,

9. B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 fol.88/191; ibid. 29 fol.68/161; ibid. 34 fol.30/76; ibid. 59 fol.22/43; E351/1795 (see Appendix 1). It is possible that Frances Newton, who had begun her service in 1558 as a Chamberer with £20 per annum, continued to be paid her old salary once she had become a Lady of the Bed Chamber in the late 1570s, and the Queen never saw fit to increase it to the normal wage. The reason remains a mystery; administrative oversight could explain a mistake if it had only been for a few years, but cannot account for the consistency of the amount over many years.

10. The other striking feature of the wages’ structure was the parity between the Privy and Bed Chamber staff and the queens’ best musicians, who also received £33 6s. 8d. (An example of a Warrant to the Treasurer of the Chamber for the wages, board wages and livery of a sackbutter, John Snosman, dated 23 November 1599, has been published in full in Cooke, ‘Queen Elizabeth and her Court Musicians’, p.419).
and although the wages of the Privy Chamber did not form a large part of the wages bill for the Household as a whole (in 1574, for example, they came to £760 16s. 8d. out of a total of £7,127 4s. per annum), by the end of Elizabeth's reign the office employed a Clerk, whose only duty as recorded was that he 'paieth wages to the privie chamber'.

The Chamberer Elizabeth Marbury provides an interesting case history. Under a warrant dormant to the Cofferer of 3 January 1558/9 she received a pension of £20 per annum, but after the first quarter of the financial year of 1571 this warrant was cancelled and she began to receive the same sum from the Treasury of the Chamber under a warrant dormant dated 7 January 1570/1. This switch is unique, and apparently no reason given for it has survived. However, other evidence has shown that it is probable that she was unaware of the new arrangement, because two years after the new warrant came into action, she proposed to resign her pension 'granted to her at the beginning of the reign', that of 1558/9, in return for a re-grant of some Bedfordshire land to her and her husband Thomas. A clue to her ignorance lies in her additional offer to forgo the £60 of arrears due to her at Christmas 1573; for three years she had not had any money issued to her, and thus would have had no reason to notice the change in agency.

Amongst the unfeed members of the Privy Chamber were the Maids of Honour. They were never actually listed as Privy Chamber staff, unlike their peers, the six Maids of Privy Chamber, who were also unfeed. The Maids of the Privy Chamber were only so named in 1558: thereafter they were officially referred to as Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber. Although their

11. LC2/4/4 fol.48v. The Clerk was Paul Pert.
12. E351/1795 m.30; E351/541 m.124.
13. H.M.C. Salisbury, II p.69. The yearly rent of the land, which lay in the manors of Warden and Southill, Bedfordshire, 'together with certain tenements and a warren of conies', came to £9 10s. 4d.
title was changed their duties and status remained the same.14 Far more
senior to these teenage girls were the six unfeed Ladies of the Privy
Chamber. As their title implies, these Ladies outranked the Gentlewomen,
and they were not required to perform menial tasks, but their posts were not
merely honorific, for regular attendance in the Privy Chamber was expected.
In addition there was a group of ladies and gentlewomen denoted as
'extraordinary', who were held as a reserve to be called upon as the need
arose, and who did not normally have to reside at Court except when called
upon.15

* * * * * * * * *

All the women of the Privy Chamber received commons, but as with
wages, the distribution of food was far from straightforward. There were two
main systems of food provision, the 'dyet' and the bouge of Court. The 'dyet',
actual meals provided at the monarch's expense, falls into two categories.
The first of these was 'mease', or messes, the main meals of dinner and
supper made up of one or more courses, the quantities of which were, in
theory at least, laid down by Household regulations. Each mess was by
tradition meant to feed four persons - not only the allocatee but his or her
own attendants or servants - and it seems that the Crown had no real
influence over whom the allocatee invited to dine. Numbers of messes were
allocated to each person on a strict scale of precedence to the first rank of
officers and staff. Abuse of the system was endemic, which in part led to the

14. The confusion existed in 1559, when all the girls listed as Maids of the Privy Chamber
at the time of the Coronation were entered as Gentlewomen on a fee list. This may have
been a mistake, or it could be that they were in fact receiving fees before, and they were
listed as Gentlewomen so they would fit into the existing categories for the purposes of
accounting (LC2/4/3 fol.53v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fol.191).
15. LC2/4/3 fols.53v-54. 'The Quenes Majestes Chamb'.

gradual development of the second part of food provision included in the 'dyet', the payment of 'borde wages'. This was a cash payment, supposedly sufficient for one specific person to buy food for the whole day (not just the main meals), and was wholly separate from the recipient's normal wage. The advantage for the Crown was that it was, in theory at least, far harder to perpetrate fraud on the accounting system than to walk off with food, and the less actual food provided the less waste there would be in the Household. The advantage for the recipient was that he or she could be absent from Court at mealtimes, and still not go hungry. The disadvantage for the historian is that, unfortunately, both mess and borde wage costs were collated, and the whole was known as the 'dyet' for the purposes of accounting, which has left little information on how the constituents of this system both worked and altered in practice. The female staff of the Privy Chamber are not specifically mentioned in the documents relating to the 'dyet' for the simple reason that their needs were met by the queens' own personal 'dyet' - yet another Household catering institution, with its completely separate kitchen, the Privy Kitchen. The men who served in the Privy Chamber received their own mess, as did noblewomen who were attendants. Although all the female staff had their food prepared in the Privy Kitchen, because none of the department records survive it is not known exactly how it was organised. As time progressed senior - and not so senior - courtiers increasingly arranged to have their food prepared in the Privy Kitchen partly because the food was better, and partly for the kudos. It is easy to understand how this abuse of the Privy Kitchen could grow unchecked when it is appreciated that its Sergeant had to allow service to an Extraordinary woman of the Privy Chamber at Court for a few weeks, but not to a similar bird of passage of the same rank who was also receiving bouge of Court, but was not of the Privy Chamber. It must have been
difficult for him to establish whether a demand was legitimate in the absence of a formal scheme to notify him who was eligible; the scope for bribery must have been vast.\textsuperscript{16}

The other system of commons distribution, which supplemented the ‘dyet’, was ‘bouge of Court’, which was ‘to be served to euerye estate or Degree beinge of the Quenes ordinary Howse’. Bouge of Court was restricted to the upper echelons of the Court, and provided lighting, fuel and the minor meals not catered for by messes under the ‘dyet’. All persons allocated messes seem to have received bouge of Court, but not all who received bouge of Court were allocated their own messes, which in the case of resident staff of the Privy Chamber who did not dine off the queens’ ‘dyets’ would suggest that unless they were to starve they were consuming other people’s messes. In 1554 the ‘quenes gentlewomen’, the waged Privy Chamber staff, were to receive

\begin{quote}
for ther Bouche after Supper one chete Lof one gallon of ale [one half picher] wine, and from the laste daye of octobre vnto the first day of aprill ij Linckes by the weke by the daye one Sise vj white Lightes iiij talshides iiij faggottes And from the laste of Marche vnto the firste daye of Novembre to haue the Moytie of the said waxe white lightes and woodde whiche dothe amounte to the some of £10 16s. 9d.\textsuperscript{17}
\end{quote}

Officially they went hungry between their bread, wine and ale after supper and dinner at about midday the next day. Duchesses, countesses and baronesses - whether attendants or visitors - fared better. A duchess was allowed

\begin{quote}
in the morning one chete Lof, one manchet, one gallon of Ale / for after none one manchet; one gallon of Ale, for after Souper one Chete Lof; one Manchet
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{16} Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fols.1 and 2. Queen Mary’s personal ‘dyet’ in 1554 cost a total of £1,520 12s. 4d. for one year. The gentlemen of the Privy Chamber were allocated two messes (a first rated at £284 16\textsuperscript{1/4} d. and a second at £265 3s. 4\textsuperscript{1/4} d. per annum), while the Grooms of the Privy Chamber received one mess (rated at £46 8s. 9\textsuperscript{1/2} d per annum); B.L. Lansdowne MS 34 fol.50. June 1582. This expressed the vain hope that only the Queen and her Ladies should to have their food prepared in the Privy Kitchen.

\textsuperscript{17} ibid. fol.6.
one gallon of Ale; one picher of wine.\(^\text{18}\)

as well as larger amounts of lighting and fuel. The official records for the bourse of Court clearly cannot be relied on for a comprehensive picture of who ate what at Court, mainly because of the dictates of precedence and tradition that they and the formal 'dyet' books reflect. I refuse to believe that, for instance, most of the feed women had nothing to eat between ten at night and noon the following day, and it seems most likely that some or all breakfasted either with the queen or on her leftovers.\(^\text{19}\)

As a rule the queens did not eat in the Presence Chamber, where the royal table was set, but in private, although their meat was carved in public by the Carver, who was one of their most trusted women.\(^\text{20}\) Wilson described Elizabeth's arrangements as follows:

First her owne table in the presence chamber served with 3 courses, att ech course 40 or more several dishes, where notwithstanding she seldome or never eateth but the carver distributeth it to the ladies and Cortiers and keepeth for her owne table what she pleaseth, for with the Carver being some of the beautifullies maids in the court (every daye a change) dineth comonly the yong Contes, Lords, and other gallants whom she pleaseth to invite and some Ladyes for fashions sake and there is comonly the beste Cheere.\(^\text{21}\)

About eight women were meant to eat dinner and supper with the queen in the Privy Chamber, while about twenty women were seated in the Great Chamber, where there was a table for 'all the Queen's maids', and one

\(^{18}\) ibid. fol.5; B.L. Lansdowne MS 34 No.29 fol.75. This 'Extract out of ye Booke of howshold', made in September 1582, is exactly the same as the Stafford manuscript, and they were probably both copied from a master, which is known to have been held with all the other books of rules and regulations in the Compting House. The Compting House records were specifically kept for the 'head officers of the chambre and Householde' to refer to (Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.35v).

\(^{19}\) ibid. fol.88. Mary's requirements for breakfast were met by a total of ten loaves of different bread, ranging from fine manchet to coarse cheat, a joint of beef and two rabbits, and to wash it down gallons of clear broth, ale and wine. The different sorts of bread, as much as the sheer quantity, indicate that this hearty meal was not intended for the Queen alone. There is a tradition that Elizabeth shared her 'breakfast beef' with her women, but I have yet to find confirmation of this in any contemporary records.

\(^{20}\) Jane Dormer was Mary's Carver (Clifford, *Life of Jane Dormer*, p.63); Katherine Carey-Howard was probably Elizabeth's Carver from the 1560s (E351/1954 fol.5).

for 'all Wayting gentlewomen of great Ladyes', while their mistresses dined at a table in the Presence Chamber 'if there be roome'.\textsuperscript{22} The same sort of order seems to have been followed by the queens before their accessions, although on a smaller scale: Elizabeth dined in her Privy Chamber with several of her women.\textsuperscript{23} In Elizabeth's reign, if not before, the Carver presided at a table which originally had been shared with the overflow from the Lord Chamberlain's table.\textsuperscript{24} There was very little difference between the messes served in the different rooms, although the food may well have been presented on pewter dishes in the Great Chamber, rather than on silver dishes like those used in the Privy Chamber. The 'Quenes Maydes' were allowed a bouge for the whole day which included breakfast, either because of their aristocratic status (which seems unlikely, as feed women of greater social status went without), or because they were not expected to take part in any Privy Chamber breakfast there may have been. Whatever the reason, the Maids of Honour were expected to share between six of them the same quantity of food and drink allowed to a lone duchess, and cannot have been able to satisfy many servants on the leftovers.

The only real difference in the provision of food between the two reigns was in the observance of fish days. In Mary's reign they were strictly observed on all Fridays and holidays (which amounted to about a third all the days in the year), and her own 'dyet' (and thus that of most of her women) included 'fish' as varied as seal, pike, trout, porpoise, lobster and shrimps amongst the thirty-one varieties usually offered at her table. Elizabeth would have none of this, and no fish whatsoever was served to her on what were still termed 'fysh dayes', although she did still eat fish on other

\textsuperscript{22} ibid.  
\textsuperscript{24} In 1621 Katherine Carey-Howard was said to have headed a table as 'groome of the Stoole' in 1598. As she was also the Carver it is understandable that there was confusion about the capacity in which she presided (E351/1956 fol.15v).
days. Instead she ate mutton, veal, bacon and any kind of poultry (which then included game birds), all of which were termed white meats. By these means she avoided any taint of Roman Catholicism which would have resulted from a closer observance, but by the same token she did not slight traditional, religious dietary requirements out of hand by eating red meat. Both queens were making a religious statement in this, Elizabeth's the more extraordinary because it was a departure from the previous norm, and was finely balanced to avoid both extremes of Roman Catholicism and radical Protestantism. Although this regimen was in place by 1572, it is not known whether Elizabeth began it at the very start of her reign or after some time, nor whether it came by abrupt change or gradual introduction.²⁵

Not only was the food provided, but the Chamber staff were expected to eat it at particular tables. The 'Clerks Comptrollers' were instructed to check daily and

\[
defawte and Checke the wages of all them which be in the Howse Who by the Quenes ordynaunce shall syt at dynner and supper with the Quenes Chamber/ and do not so/ but be absent frome thence without Lycence so to be eatinge in places contrarie to the Quenes ordynaunces And agaynst her Honor.²⁶\]

There was obviously a running battle over the question of where food was to be served and eaten. By the seventeenth century the old idea of communal meals for both the Chamber and Privy Chamber staff had conclusively lost to the habit of eating in the private chambers, much as monarchs themselves had long since ceased to dine in Hall regularly.²⁷ Second only to the efforts made to ensure that staff did not evade their duty

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²⁵. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers fols.75-v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 18 fol.75. '1572 Howsould book'; B.L. Harleian MS 157 fols.11-12. This shows that Anne of Denmark had reintroduced the consumption of fish on fish days by 1613.
²⁷. B.L. Harleian MS 157 fol.5. A book of accounts of Anne of Denmark's Chamber, probably for the year 1613. Where only eight messes were served to women eating in the presence of the Queen and in the Chamber at least twelve were served to women - including the Maids of Honour - who ate in their own chambers.
to eat where appointed was the constant struggle to prevent interlopers
eating at royal expense; the officers of the Household were expected to make
a search once or twice a week throughout the whole Court to make sure no
'straungers' were eating in.28

* * * * * * * * *

The overwhelming impression created by all the Household records,
not just those which have bearing upon the Privy Chamber, is of Household
officials fighting a losing battle against laziness, incompetence and outright
corruption both in their departments and amongst their peers. The reason
for the creation of the only complete Household book to survive should be
noted. The collection of regulations and lists of staff eligible for wages,
perquisites and so on, was made for one purpose only:

It ys not vnknowen how the Quenys hieghnes sone after her of furste
assumpcion of her crowne . . . hathe muche travayled and tyme occupied in
suche Wise as many of the Officers and mynistres of hir howseholde being
ymployed and appoynted to the Makinge of provisicons and other thinges
concernynghe her outwarde affarres/ the accustomyd good ordre of her
howesholde hathe ben greatelie hyndered and in manner subverted/ Whiche
by litte and litte ys nowe comen more and more vnto an indirecte course far
from the good constytucons of olde tyme and sondrie seasons nowe of late
provided in that behaulf/ Wherefore sythe it hathe pleased almightie god
nowe to sende . . . honorable and profitable peaxe . . . her hieghnes . . . is
mynded and determynded to see a reformacon of the said errors/ And
establisle suche ordre bothe in hir howsholde and chambre . . . as the same
beinge dewlie fulfilled and observed/ All the said errours shall in breif tyme
be toallie removed and extintice. 29

Any attempt to stamp out abuse of the system was doomed to failure,
however, because the monarch could not afford to upset too many vested
interests at one time, and it was widely acknowledged that even to be
granted bouge of Court did not guarantee that the food would be available

29. ibid. fol.8; Rochester had been instructed to organise the reform of the Household in
1553, and his ordinances, a compilation of Cromwell's of 1539 and Wolsey's of 1526,
were published in 1554 (A.P.C., IV p.421; LS13/279 fol.5).
because of the numbers of intruders eating in. Inevitably the expenditure on the Court's food, drink and fuel remained high throughout the period in question.\textsuperscript{30} Throughout both reigns there was also the effect of the rising price of supplies, for the produce from Crown estates by no means sufficed to meet the Court's needs, which, combined with the queens' own changing requirements, meant that even the cost of Elizabeth's personal 'dyet' in 1573 was nearly double the cost that she had foreseen in her Household book.\textsuperscript{31}

The Marian reforms had no long-term effect, even if they did alleviate the worst abuses in the short term. Elizabeth seems to have put off any serious attempt at reforming the Household until the 1570s, in marked contrast with Mary. Perhaps Elizabeth learnt from her sister's experience. Mary's attempt at sweeping reform within the second year of her reign may have been necessitated by her marriage, but it can scarcely have made the Spanish influx any more welcome in the Household. Elizabeth would have seen the result, and she could just afford to let well alone for the first twenty years of her reign, since unlike all the previous Tudors she had no separate royal establishments to maintain (other than that of her cousin Mary Queen of Scots from 1569, whose Household was a closely restricted affair and was wholly unconnected with the royal Household).

\textsuperscript{30} ibid. fol.28; SP12/99 No.61 fol.201 shows that the cost of ale, beer and wines alone for the Court cost £9,371 5s. 10d. in 1573-4; SP12/228 No.18 fol.75. November 1589. By this year the best part of £3,000 a year was spent on wood and coal.

\textsuperscript{31} B.L. Lansdowne MS 16 fol.114. At the beginning of her reign Elizabeth had signed for an estimated expenditure for her own table (breakfast, dinner and supper) of £1,388 18s. per annum, but in 1573 it actually cost £2,824 11s. per annum, an excess of £1,435 13s. It was noted that 2s. 5d. more was spent on her Sunday diet than on her Saturday diet, and the whole exceeded the £1,520 12s. 4d. per annum spent on her father's diet for his own table in the last year of his life by £1,303 19s. Elizabeth's original estimate had been set below the costs of 1546 as a deliberate attempt to reduce expenses, but expenditure consistently exceeded it because of the rise in price of foodstuffs, and perhaps because abuse of the Privy Kitchen was on the increase (in other words, larger numbers of people were dining off food meant for the Queen's table than had been originally intended).
William Cecil's perennial worry was the number of Court hangers-on and the problems they created for accommodation and general costs (mostly food). Windsor Castle seems to have had particular problems with accommodation because of its age and concommitant limited space, and by 1593 conditions were so bad that he planned an inquiry into the matter. The initial purpose was to list 'how many persons do attend and serve on...all officers belonging to ye Queens chambre, as to ye bed chamber prive chambre and ye guard Chambre' as well as the Household officers, and to note which of them were lodged in the Castle. People living within the Castle without permission could be expelled readily, but the real cause for concern was all those who lodged in Windsor and Eton. The Mayor of Windsor with the Harbingers and the Knight Marshall's deputies were ordered to find out where such people lodged, and to report back with a proposal 'how to deincrease ye access of ye great multitud' who had no valid reason to be there.\(^{32}\) This was only a short-term approach, but plans which aimed to deal with the root of the problems of the Household were doomed from the start, as Thomas Wiseman, one of the few non-Householders to propose a solution, recognised when he gloomily concluded, 'I fear I shall have thoffycesrs of the howse enemyes to the furtherans of yt'.\(^{33}\)

No formal Chamber reform was attempted in this period which could compare to the changes made in Henry VIII's reign.\(^{34}\) Interest was shown in other monarchs' endeavours - Sir Edward Stafford even sent over a copy of

\(^{32}\) SP12/245 No.75 fols.114-115v. 'Memoryall for [decreasing] of ye excessyve [number] at Wyndso'. 9 August 1593.

\(^{33}\) SP12/126 No.43 fol.13. Thomas Wyseman to Walsingham. Stoke, 9 November 1578. Wysemans's plan was to make the most of the capital resources available to maintain the Household by cutting down on the amount which was paid to the staff. He hoped to 'flynde offyces & other Thynge Suffyfyente to recompes the moste of hyr Majesties seruants withowte grauntinge them leases', and to use a part of the increased revenue from the land not so leased to pay them annuities for life. In his view the cost of such annuities would have been more than adequately covered by the increased revenue from the Crown land.

\(^{34}\) See Starkey, 'The development of the Privy Chamber';
the new regulations and ordering of the French Chamber in 1584 - but no action was taken. If it is accepted that the earlier reforms were instigated as a reaction to the power and influence of the Privy Chamber habitués, the lack of any apparent attempt to change the staffing of the Privy Chamber after 1553 could reflect the insipid nature of the Privy Chamber of the Tudor queens. Another possibility is that there was no need to create the mechanism to distance the queen from her body-servants and force her to depend on her government officers because there was no dislocation of Court and government officers similar to, for instance, that in Scotland under Mary Stuart. Yet another possibility is that there was no need for formal reform because marriage ensured that there was a progression of junior staff (Maids of Honour and Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber) through the Privy Chamber which was sufficient to keep most of the governing classes happy most of the time. Thus there was no general pressure for reform as none was needed. This leads to a subject which will be elaborated upon in Chapter Six; the fact that it was important to noble families to feel that they were in touch with the queens through the Privy Chamber, an attitude borne out by the behaviour of the leading aristocratic families of the north in the late 1560s, which culminated in the revolt of 1569. Elizabeth so mishandled affairs that the Nevilles and Percies were inadvertently cut off from the Court, and no member of the families involved was present in the Privy Chamber. This created the conditions of isolation and ignorance of the Queen's general intentions which made revolt appear to be the only option left open.

35. H.M.C. Salisbury, III p.77. Sir Edward Stafford to Walsingham. 29 December 1584.
36. One wonders to what extent Elizabeth's behaviour towards the Neville family was governed by her outrage at Henry Earl of Westmorland's marital adventures at the end of the 1550s. When his second wife Jane Cholmley died he first lived with her sister Margaret and then married her (SP12/12 No.54 fols.11-112v; SP12/19 No.25 fols.47-48v; SP12/20 Nos.5 and 22 fols.11-12v and 57).
Let him allow you your coach and four horses, your woman, your chambermaid, your page, your gentlemanusher, your French cook, and four grooms. 37

Only a few of the Household servants were officially allowed to keep a servant of their own with them in Court - as opposed to living out in the town - and those that did had them on the understanding that they were being trained in the ways of the Court. Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, for example, were permitted to retain a page 'to the entent that younge gentlemen may be brought vp in s[er]vice and nurture'. 38 Jonson gives a fair idea of what a fashionable lady would require at the end of the century in the way of personal servants, and this can be taken as a guide to the sort of servants the queens' women would have liked to have. The 'French cook' would not have been necessary at Court, nor was the 'coach and four' possible for reasons of space, while the 'four grooms' were not needed since stable facilities were provided by the Queen for her Privy Chamberers. This leaves the four chamber staff. The 'gentlemanusher' would have been redundant for all but the most exalted women, but the 'page' may have been allowed to women under the regulation mentioned above: Philadelphia Carey Lady Scrope had a page called John Darcy at Court. 39 The 'woman' would have performed for her mistress the same domestic tasks which she in turn carried out for the Queen. 40 It is striking that in general even senior aristocratic ladies had only a couple of gentlewomen to attend upon them, and when young it was common to share one servant between several sisters, like 'Avyse, the children's woman' who tended to the four unmarried

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37. Ben Jonson, *Epicoene*, IV ii. Advice to a newly married woman on what to demand from her husband.
38. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.30.
40. See Chapter Four.
daughters of the Earl of Southampton, or Mrs Naseby, who was in charge of Thomas Earl of Northumberland's four daughters. The queens employed a positive swarm of female staff in comparison. Jonson's 'chambermaid' remains. There was no Household department in charge of cleaning as such, doubtless left over from the days when the monarch was never in one building long enough to warrant such a need, although in theory a rota of the most lowly Scullions cleaned 'the Court owtward gallaries & other places'. The queens' own suite of rooms were kept clean by their Chamberers, but the vast majority of rooms were officially untended. This was one of the reasons why the employment of servants by the Chamber and Privy Chamber staff was allowed, in the hope that they would have 'symple p[er]sonnes to Kepe their chambres/ or if they have in their Chambers p[er]sonages of good mann[er] they will gave Laddes & other Rascalles vnder to do their busynes'. Unfortunately the Lads and any chamber maids (the equivalent of a Lad) were themselves responsible for littering the Court by leaving dirty dishes and waste food lying about the buildings and courtyards, rather than taking them down to the Scullery for disposal, which added to the serious problem of scavenging packs of stray dogs. In these unsavoury circumstances it is surprising that the Court removed so infrequently.

The accuracy of Jonson's list of servants is borne out by the estimate of Anne Cecil Countess of Oxford's charges for living at Court for one year, when she was an attendant on the Elizabeth. She paid wages and board


42. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fols.31-2. Dogs were also seen as a health risk, not for obvious reasons, but as plague carriers. For example, Henry Machyn notes a proclamation issued for the killing of dogs during an outbreak of plague in London on 4 August 1563 (Nichols, The diary of Henry Machyn, p.312).
wages to two gentlewomen and a chambermaid, as well as providing their livery, at a total cost of £58.\footnotemark[43] It was not only those noblewomen who were resident for short periods who had such servants; the ladies who were in permanent attendance on the queen also had their own servants, but these are hard to trace as they were not accounted for formally in any Household department and were almost certainly paid for by their mistresses. Perhaps there was already sufficient allowance made within the system - for example the messes allocated to their mistresses were theoretically sufficient to feed both them and a few servants - so no new categories of servant’s servant had to be created and then regulated. Another possible reason is that there were so few such servants that it was easy for mistresses to bend the rules, so there was no real need for the departments to acknowledge their presence officially. A third is that there were sufficient numbers to make a considerable problem, but it was studiously ignored throughout the period. All this is speculation, and there remains a great deal of work to be done on this aspect of Court life before the position of servants’ servants can be understood fully.

There were fixed numbers of servants allowed to all those who were visiting the Court, or for those who were not able to call on the services of the queens’ own menials. A widow such as Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset was allowed a total of nineteen servants, of whom eight were fed at the queen’s expense; one chaplain, two gentlemen and three yeomen who could claim a mess in Hall, and two (possibly female) servants to look after her chambers (in which they were expected to eat ‘one messe of grosse meate’). The other eleven, of whom seven were stable lads, were meant to find their own food at their mistress’s expense in the town, although they all

\footnotetext[43]{SP12/172 No.3 fols.5-6v. ‘An estimate of my La: O Charges for one whole yere in the Courte’. 1 July 1584. She also employed one gentleman and two yeomen.}
had a bed somewhere in the Court. It was in the arrangement of where the servants ate that the only known difference between the servants of the resident staff and of the visiting attendants lay, for the chamber staff amongst the former were commanded to eat communally:

Item that Ladies and Gentlewomen's Weomen . . . be comanded to keepe their places at meale tymes in the Queens Majestes chamber and not in their Ladies and Mrs Chambers.

The difference was created by an economy drive, and the regulation was obviously suggested to prevent the residents' chamber servants behaving like their visiting counter-parts, who clearly cost far more as they ate in wasteful, small groups.

There are occasional glimpses of Privy Chamber staffs' servants who were active about the Court. William Denis, one of Anne Russell Countess of Warwick's servants, was revealed to be the main source of the rumour that the young widow Elizabeth Gawdy Lady Hatton was pregnant at the time of her marriage to Sir Edward Coke. There is every possibility that the new Lady Coke was 'a whore and one that had never lived in good name', but the rumour of an illicit pregnancy was certainly unfounded, and may have been part of the campaign intended to discredit Coke (and his friend Robert Cecil) by Francis Bacon, Coke's defeated rival for the Attorney Generalship, possibly with the blessing of Bacon's patron the Earl of Essex. If the Countess had in any way participated in her servant's rumour mongering, it would go some way to explain why Cecil 'did not much love' the Countess by the end of the reign. Another servant, almost certainly one of the 'Weomen', is only known of because she was confined to Bedlam in the late 1580s by her mistress the Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber.

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44. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fols.45 and 48.
45. B.L. Lansdowne MS 34 fol.50. June 1582. 'Speciall notes to be considered for ye diminishing of hir Majesties Household Expences'.
46. SP12/270 No.102 fol.177-v. The affidavit of Mary Berham, 30 April 1599; Clifford, The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford, p.22.
Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford, who continued to pay for her maintenance for several years. The history of the servants' servants at Court remains, however, as obscure as the means by which the Court supported and regulated them.

47. 'Barbara Heron sent in by the Ladye Stafford who hath remayned there some viij or ix yeares and is allowed for by her' (Court Books of Bridewell and Bethlem, vol. 1597/8-1604, fol.51v. 2 December 1598. Printed in Alderidge, 'Management and mismanagement at Bedlam', pp.152-3).
3. Recruitment

To have the courte and estate beautyfyed with the goodly garnishments of vertue.¹

The way in which women were recruited to the queens' service was, like the Privy Chamber itself, an informal business. Once a woman had been chosen the queen sent an order calling on her to attend the Court. The women of the Privy Chamber held their posts at pleasure, not by patent, nor were they in any formal sense hereditary.² Although informal, the system clearly worked; there are no recorded instances of Privy Chamber staff leaving their post for good without the necessary licence, nor yet of any hopefuls arriving at Court without a summons.

In most families, however exalted, the news that one of their number had been summoned was most welcome. 'I regoise muche Maddam...to perceyve (as ye have wrytten) that the Quenes Majestie hath cawld you agayne into her pryuy chamber in suche honerable wise as yt apperith her highnes dothe greatly faver you', wrote the Earl of Devon to his mother in 1555. Even in such happy circumstances, however, there was no place for complacency, and he continued, 'trusting that as you haue allwaies bowrne A trewe and faithfull hart towards her Majestie So yor contynuaunce therin with yor honerable wise and vertuus behavior besydes shall both nourishe & encrease the same'.³ Even though the summons was a personal royal

¹. Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fol.22v.
². It is difficult to date precisely when a woman took up a Privy Chamber post because of the lack of formal documentation. The problem is compounded if the woman was already at Court. Even the warrants for their wages cannot always be taken as giving the exact date on which service commenced.
³. SP11/6 No.2 fol.3-4v. Edward Earl of Devon to Gertrude Blount Marchioness of Exeter. Brussels, 6 August 1555. This gives the lie to the assertion that Gertrude was only influential for 'a short time in the autumn of 1553', and 'her favour did not survive
command, it was understood, and accepted, that a woman's attendance would depend upon the male head of the family giving his permission; this applied to all, from teenagers to matronly countesses. Only a few dowagers, like the Marchioness of Exeter, had a completely free hand.

At their accessions each queen was free to appoint whomsoever she chose to her Privy Chamber. However, each was constrained by ties of loyalty to old friends and the need to show their gratitude to former allies who had stayed faithful throughout the adversities both queens had undergone. Privy Chamber posts were given to the wives of the men who had declared for Mary in July 1553 (for example Mary Wentworth Lady Wentworth), while other women received the fruits of earlier service: Susan Clarencieux, Lady Eleanor Kempe, Frideswide Knight-Strelley, Barbara Hawke and Mary Kempe-Finch all received posts on the strength of their service and friendship in harder times. Elizabeth found herself in the same position in 1558, but as well as the throng of loyal servants and political allies she had a far greater number of relatives to satisfy than Mary had had. Mary surrounded herself with members of the families who had remained more or less loyal to her faith and her mother. Elizabeth had these obligations and all her own mother's kith and kin too, quite apart from the families which had suffered in Anne Boleyn's fall, the Norrises in particular. It was a serious problem: 'One begg'd of Queene Elizabeth, and pretended kindred and alliance, but there was no such relation. "Friend," says she, "grant it be so, do'st thinke I am bound to keepe all my kindred? Why that's the way to make me a beggar". Even so, when the house of her second

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5. Thoms, Anecdotes and Traditions, p.16.
cousin Elizabeth Hill burnt down the Queen was prepared to give £200 in relief; this was done on the recommendation of those Privy Chamber women who were related to both the Queen and Hill.\(^6\) There was no ‘tribe of Dan’ in Mary’s reign because her mother had been Spanish, which while it restricted the numbers who had a call on her as kin equally meant that there were fewer who had a vested interest in the success of her government. Mary was tied to some of the ruling élite by faith, Elizabeth was tied to most of her ruling élite by blood.

This tie was crucial, because all of the women at both Courts came from that ruling élite, either from aristocratic or from leading gentry families, in a natural reflection of the political reality of the day. Both queens drew heavily on staff from their old Households in their first appointments to the Privy Chamber, and they also called on the families which had staffed the Queens’ Sides of their father’s reign, particularly their mothers’. Frideswide Knight-Strelley was said to have been a Maid in Katherine of Aragon’s household before she joined Mary’s as a Chamberer in 1536.\(^7\) One of Elizabeth’s Mothers of the Maids, Mrs Eglionby, had been a Gentlewoman Extraordinary of Queen Katherine Parr’s household, and Elizabeth Norwich-Carew, one of Elizabeth’s servants of long standing and one of her first Ladies of the Bedchamber, was the daughter of Susan Norwich, a Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber to Queen Katherine Parr.\(^8\) In some families succeeding generations of women rose through the ranks; Elizabeth Page-Skipwith was one of Queen Katherine Parr’s Chamberers, but her daughter Bridget began her service in 1558 as one of the first Maids of the Privy Chamber, and became a Gentlewoman on her marriage to one of

\(^6\) H.M.C. Salisbury, IV pp.79-80. 1590.
\(^7\) H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.308. The life of Thomas Colwell; B.L. Harleian MS 6805 fol.7.
\(^8\) LC2/2 fols.58, 48v and 44v; LC2/4/3 fol.53v.
Burghley's Cave brothers-in-law in the 1570s. Elizabeth Clyffe and her daughter, another Elizabeth, mirrored the Skipwiths' careers exactly.

Elizabeth had another body from which to choose staff: her sister's Privy Chamber. Not all the women who had served Mary were passed over, although only one, Anne Reade, became a senior Lady of Elizabeth's Privy Chamber. She had first entered Mary's service as an unmarried Gentlewoman or Maid in 1525, and had left before 1533 to marry Sir Giles Greville, next Sir Adrian Fortescue and finally Sir Thomas Parry, brother of Blanche Parry, Elizabeth's closest friend and Lady of her Privy Chamber. Because of Anne Reade's last marriage she would have been considered eligible for a position in 1558 despite her earlier connection with Mary. Not all those who served Mary were necessarily unswervingly loyal of course. Barbara Hawk, one of Mary's Gentlewomen from the late 1530s, received russet-coloured material for gowns from Elizabeth on at least two occasions after her accession, which may have been part of some pension, or possibly recompense for services rendered during the previous reign. Elizabeth may well have suborned members of Mary's staff such as Barbara Hawk into acting on her behalf at Court. If this was the case then Barbara's daughter Jane Hawk-Brussells-Heneage was merely continuing a family tradition of service to Elizabeth in particular, rather than to the Tudors in general, when

9. LC2/2 fol.45; LC2/4/3 fol.53v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 29 No.68 fol.161; Bridget ceased to serve between 1584 and 1589 (B.L. Egerton MS 3052; B.L. Lansdowne MS 59 No.22 fol.44).

10. LC2/2 fol.45; LC2/4/3 fol.53v. The elder Clyffe is known to have maintained close links with the Court after her retirement. In 1565 she approached Richard Osley, one of the Clerks of the Privy Seal, as she wished to employ Osley's daughter-in-law as a 'waiting maid' (SP46/13 fol.305. 10 July 1585).

11. The best known example is George Brydyman, who had been Mary's Keeper of the Privy Purse. Elizabeth retained him as the Keeper of the Palace of Westminster, and he was clothed as a Groom of the Privy Chamber during her reign, although he did not perform any of a Groom's duties (B.L. Lansdowne MS 156 fol.104v. Fee list for Mary's reign, in which Brydyman is entered as Keeper of the Palace of Westminster; LC2/4/3 fol.65. Livery for Elizabeth's coronation; LC5/49 fol.45. Warrant for his livery as a Groom of the Privy Chamber, 16 October 1559).

12. B.L. Harleian MS 6807 fol.3; B.L. Harleian MS 6805 fol.7; LC2/4/3 fol. 53v.
she became one of the Chamberers.\textsuperscript{13}

By no means all of the women came to Court fresh from the bosom of their families, with no experience of ‘service’, especially at the beginning of the reigns. Elizabeth St Loe, one of the first six Maids of Honour of Elizabeth’s reign, seems to have been previously in the household of Elizabeth Stafford dowager Duchess of Norfolk, who had died just after the accession on 30 November 1558.\textsuperscript{14} It must have been a relief to her family when she was taken on by the Queen.

There were instances of women who performed specialised tasks who served several Queens, but they fall outside the standard Privy Chamber organisation. One such was ‘Jane the Fool’, who entertained both Queen Katherine Parr and Mary before and after her accession.\textsuperscript{15} Sybil Penne enjoyed a very unusual favour with all three Tudor children because she had been Prince Edward’s wet nurse. By Christmas 1553 she was a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, but this did not count against her in 1558, when Elizabeth accorded her the same status, although she never actually served at Court thereafter.\textsuperscript{16} Laundresses, however, were always personal to individual queens and never transferred their services, although they often married within the Household and thus remained connected with the Court after their service ended. They were not of high birth, and most served for exceptionally long periods: Christian Murset was Katherine Parr’s; Beatrice ap Rice and Margaret Hogg Mary’s (Beatrice having joined

\begin{itemize}
\item[13.] LC5/49 fol.23; B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C XIV fol.246; C/115/L2/6697 pp.17 and 29. The material was signed for by Barbara Hawk on 30 July 1565 and 30 July 1569, but as it was probably issued under a dormant warrant in the Wardrobe of Robes it may only have been occasionally recorded in the removing Wardrobe of Robes’ records. Jane Hawk seems to have entered Elizabeth’s service in late 1560s (see Appendix 1).
\item[14.] Nichols and Bruce, \textit{Wills from Doctor’s Commons}, p.55. Will proved 19 January 1558/9. St Loe was bequeathed ‘a newe Frenche hode and the silver cuppe with cover that I used to drynke of’.
\item[15.] LC2/2 fol.45; B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C XIV fol.246; SP46/8 fol.5.
\item[16.] LC5/49 fol.23; LC2/4/3 fol.63.
\end{itemize}
her Household in 1519); Joan Hilton and Elizabeth Smithson were Elizabeth's, and they were replaced during the reign by Anne Twist and Eleanor Cobham. Where two laundresses were employed simultaneously the senior washed the queen's personal linen and the other napery from her table. The only new development over the whole fifty year period was the advent of a 'starchwoman', Elizabeth Green, to set the large ruffs and collars fashionable in the last two decades of the century.\textsuperscript{17} Laundering in any household was a position of considerable responsibility because of the intimate nature of the work, so for a queen this assumed even greater importance.\textsuperscript{18}

A small minority of women who were connected with the Privy Chamber were at Court by virtue of their husbands' posts: Margaret Baptist Castilion was the wife one of Grooms of the Privy Chamber, John Baptist Castilion.\textsuperscript{19} Nor were all women who were at Court at a given time necessarily in residence. There was a constant stream of visitors who came to see and be seen, often staying little more than a few days. It was never easy to time one's arrival at Court to pay one's respects to the queen, especially if she was on progress. Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk did not want to leave it too late when Elizabeth was touring Warwickshire, for she had previously been chid for deferring too long on similar occasion, but neither did she want to 'come too soon and so come or I be welcome'. She 'would very fain do the best', an anxiety shared over the years by

\textsuperscript{17} Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fols.137v and 129; L.&P., III 970; Cal. Pat., 1553-4 p.320; LC2/4/3 fols.56 and 27-v; LC2/4/4 fol.50. The traditional colour for the royal laundresses' clothes was 'puke', a light charcoal colour. Christian Murset was one who married a Household servant, William Murset.

\textsuperscript{18} The reliance and responsibility placed upon them is reflected in bequests. Anne Bray Lady Cobham left her collection of yarns, hemp and 'all the wool that I refined for myself' to her laundry servants 'to make them frocks', a reward of considerable monetary and personal value (H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.147. Will of Lady Anne Cobham. 7 October 1558).

countless county dignitaries eager to make a good impression.\textsuperscript{20}

Some of the queens' ideas about who could be deemed suitable for service may be deduced by their negative effect. Although it is not easy to establish who the queens liked or to what degree they liked them, neither seems to have employed women whom they positively disliked. Elizabeth is known to have hated Lettice Knollys for her marriage to the Earl of Leicester, and she refused to receive the Countess at Court for years; indeed, her opinions were framed in such strong language as to be 'not materyall to wryte Of'.\textsuperscript{21} There were more general trends. Because both Mary and Elizabeth held strong opinions on clerical celibacy neither queen took clerical wives or daughters into their service. As the years passed this principle, which forced these women out of high society, was reinforced by the low social class of the women most bishops married.\textsuperscript{22}

It is clear that service in the Privy Chamber could be looked on as a form of protective custody; both queens liked to keep any woman with a claim to the throne well under their thumb at Court. Mary's treatment of Elizabeth was the main departure from this, but Elizabeth was not merely a claimant, she was universally seen as the only heir, and this brought with it the same problems for Mary which were to confront Elizabeth in the elegant shape of Mary Queen of Scots. Unmarried female claimants in particular must have caused both sisters sleepless nights. At Mary's accession there were three unmarried granddaughters of Mary Tudor Queen of France alive - Katherine and Mary Grey the daughters of Frances Brandon and Henry Duke of Suffolk, and Margaret Clifford the only surviving child of Frances'


\textsuperscript{21} Bruce, Leycester correspondence, p.175. Cotton MS Galba C IX fol.128. Sir Thomas Shirley to the Earl of Leicester. Court, 14 March 1585/6.

\textsuperscript{22} Had the queens accepted clerical wives into service the bishops' wives would have been the best qualified to serve in the Privy Chamber (see Chapter Seven).
sister Eleanor Brandon and Henry Earl of Cumberland - and one married granddaughter, Lady Jane Grey, in the Tower. Wyatt’s rebellion solved the problem of what to do with Jane, while Margaret Clifford, who was a lesser evil because her mother was the younger sister, was married to the heir of one of the families most loyal to Mary - Henry Stanley Lord Strange - on 7 February 1554/5, and continued to frequent the Court thereafter.23 This left Katherine and Mary Grey, both from the senior branch of the only part of the Tudor line untainted with illegitimacy, real or manufactured. During Mary’s reign they spent some time at Court, but were then sent to live with the widow Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset at Hanworth. Elizabeth returned to the earlier policy and took Katherine as a Maid of Honour from the start of the reign, while her sister joined her in the early 1560s, also as a Maid of Honour.24 Their descent gave the Grey sisters a significance with which neither came to terms, and their failure to grasp political realities was apparent in their disastrous, secret marriages.25 During Elizabeth’s reign various girls who had a potential if distant claim to the throne were made Maids of Honour, thereby ensuring that Elizabeth had a hand in their marriages in theory if not in practice. The most important were the great-great-granddaughters of George Duke of Clarence (Elizabeth and Mary Hastings), and the daughters of Henry Lord Hunsdon, widely held to be an illegitimate son of Henry VIII (Mary, Philadelphia and Katherine Carey).

One woman who had an extremely good claim, however, was never at Elizabeth’s Court for longer than a few days at a time, a situation completely reversed in the following reign. Arbella Stuart lived with her maternal grandmother, the dowager Countess of Shrewsbury, in Derbyshire, in increasingly oppressive circumstances. This may have had been due in part

23. B.L. RP 294.
24. LC2/4/3 fo1.54.
25. See Chapter Five.
to her unstable nature, or it may have been its cause. The most serious plot to 'release' her occurred just before Elizabeth's death, so it passed relatively unremarked. If the Queen had lived, however, one wonders how Henry Cavendish and his fellows would have fared.26

One may see that close relatives of the queens were not necessarily placed in the Privy Chamber out of family loyalty, but from the sense of security which this brought. This highlights the striking similarity in the criteria used by Mary and Elizabeth to select staff; although political circumstances varied, what the queen required in her Privy Chamber staff remained constant from one reign to the next.

Places for women, especially unmarried daughters, in a Royal Household had always been much sought after by noble families.27 Competition for places became fiercer on Elizabeth's accession because after 1558 there was no alternative to service in her Household, as there were no royal siblings left. Nor, as it eventually transpired, was there to be a consort's establishment or 'Side'. Under Mary there was an element of choice for those who sought to serve royalty because there were two other royal establishments, those of Mary's husband and Princess Elizabeth, apart from that of Anne of Cleves who died during the reign. The contraction in 1558 meant that it was generally harder to find a place at Court, and may in particular have added to the enthusiasm with which parents pushed their daughters forward to become Maids. Every opportunity was seized upon: the Kingsmill sisters were brought to the Queen's attention during the

27. B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian F XIII No.121 fol.172. Eleanor Countess of Rutland to Lady Lisle. 17 February n.a. Lady Lisle had wanted one of her Basset daughters to be placed as a Maid of Honour, but the Countess warned her that 'the Kings...pleasure be suche that no more maides shalbe taken in, vntill suche tyme as some of them that nowe be with the quenes grac be preferred', but there was a chance that 'Mother Lowe', the Mother of the Maids, could persuade the Queen otherwise. The Countess was herself to take an official Court post later in the decade, when she became one of Anne of Cleves Ladies.
progress of 1591, and one correspondent not only guessed that they would become Maids, but also cheerfully anticipated their swift seduction once at Court.\(^{28}\) There were always some who were disappointed of a place: in 1599 one man-about-Court reported that 'The young faire Mrs Southwell, shall this Day be sworn Mayde of Honor. My Lady Newton sought yt for her Daughter'.\(^{29}\) In this case both candidates were eminently suitable and came from families with a history of recent service in the Privy Chamber; the disappointed girl was the daughter of Katherine Paston-Newton who was a senior Lady of the Privy Chamber at the time, but Elizabeth Southwell had the advantage, for not only was she the Queen's god-daughter but her maternal grandmother was Katherine Carey Countess of Nottingham, one of the Ladies of the Bed Chamber and the Queen's close friend.\(^{30}\) One should note that it was the mothers of both girls who were instrumental in this action, not their male relatives. It could be argued that because Lady Southwell was a widow she would have been expected to take a more active role, but Lady Newton's husband was alive, if ailing.\(^{31}\) Even so, it was not deemed worthy of comment that she was the protagonist, not her husband. It was their positions in the Privy Chamber which enabled such women to act for their relatives, and this manifestation of power was clearly not considered exceptional. Of course it was not only immediate relations who played an important part in procuring places for women at Court; Blanche Parry was almost certainly responsible for her young cousin Frances

\(^{28}\) H.M.C. Salisbury, IV p.142. Richard Brackenbury to the Earl of Essex. Oatlands (Court), 4 October 1591.


\(^{30}\) Elizabeth Southwell had other family connections with Court. Her paternal grandmother, Mary Mansell, had been one of Mary's Maids of Honour (Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol. 127v), and had later married Thomas Southwell of Chickering and Hoxne, Suffolk, heir of Sir Richard Southwell of Wood Rising, Suffolk.

\(^{31}\) Sir Robert Southwell of Woodrising died on 12 October 1598. Sir Henry Newton did not die until 2 May 1599.
Vaughan being chosen as a Maid of Honour in the 1570s.  

The only alternative to obtaining a position for one's daughter at Court was to place her in a household of one's peers. This happened to the sisters Penelope and Dorothy Devereux, who in 1576 were committed to their relative Henry third Earl of Huntingdon and his wife Katherine Dudley, 'for maintenance' according to the codicil of their father Walter Earl of Essex's will. Although the Countess of Huntingdon prided herself on her abilities - 'Though myself do say it, I think there will be none make question but I know how to breed and govern young gentlewomen' - she had had far less effect on the moral wellbeing of the girls than she did on their fellow 'gentlewoman' and future sister-in-law Margaret Dakins. Penelope was taken as a Maid by Elizabeth after four years with the Countess, an arrangement probably made by the Devereux family because it improved her chances of making a wealthy match. Dorothy had to wait a few years more before she reached sufficient age to be marriageable, and thus suitable to be placed as a Maid of Honour. One of Sir Henry Sidney's two daughters, probably Mary, was sent to live with Mildred Cooke-Cecil to be brought up while she was still too young to hope for a place at Court, no doubt in part because her parents were both in Ireland at the time, which was not the best place to learn the social and academic skills they hoped she would acquire.

32. B.L. Lansdowne MS 27 No.38 fol.78. Receipt for two leases of land from Blanche Parry by Frances and her brother Francis. 13 December 1578; Egerton MS 2086 fol.135. Warrant dated 26 September 1578.


34. B.L. Lansdowne MS 162 fols.132-133v; Margaret Dakins married three times, first Walter Devereux, next Thomas Sidney and finally Thomas Posthumous Hoby.

35. Freedman, Poor Penelope, p.38.

As with Penelope and Dorothy Devereux it was not unknown for more than one sister to serve in the Privy Chamber. Occasionally they served simultaneously, an example being the two daughters of Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury who coincided in 1600. However it was less usual for sisters to hold identical posts because the offices rarely fell vacant in a way which would make this possible. Thus the older Talbot, Mary, became a Maid of the Privy Chamber while her sister Elizabeth was a Maid of Honour. Their lives thereafter reveal the difference between the two positions. Mary remained unmarried until 1604, while her sister married Henry Earl of Kent on 16 November 1601, barely a year after joining the Maids of Honour in the Coffer Chamber. Quite apart from any royal reluctance to let female staff marry, the families of Maids of the Privy Chamber may have been wary of pushing them into marriage when it could mean that the girl lost her place in the Privy Chamber altogether. Although this was accepted as the point of a Maid of Honour’s existence at Court, most of them married men of sufficient station that they were assured of the opportunity to return and even to reside. The Maids of the Privy Chamber, however, seem to have been the main recruiting ground for the higher posts in the Privy Chamber, and an inopportuné marriage when no post for a married woman was available would spell the end of any possible Court career. When the choice was available parents preferred their daughters to be Maids of the Privy Chamber: ‘if my Lord Borough cannot bring his Daughter to the Privy Chamber, tis thought she shalbe another of the Maides’.38

As marriage was the raison d’être of the Maids of Honour it was natural that the Coffer Chamber saw the highest turnover in membership. Because of the unprecedented length of Elizabeth’s reign one finds a new

37. Collins, Sydney Papers, I p.204. 28 June 1600.
38. Collins, Sydney Papers, II p.16.
phenomenon: some Maids of Honour, for example Mary Radcliffe, grew old at Court, and gradually it became clear that they could or would not marry. Although they were spinsters they were made Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber, which accorded to them the status appropriate to their advancing years. Such instances were limited, as were the numbers of married women who progressed up through the ranks, simply because the size of the Privy Chamber was restricted. Even a queen regnant only needed a fairly small number of body-servants, and amongst all the Household departments the Privy Chamber is remarkable for its lack of overstaffing.

Most of the queens’ women left the Privy Chamber when they married, some in better odour than others: illicit marriages rarely went undiscovered or unpunished.\(^39\) Obviously, any vacant places were swiftly filled. In 1571 Abigail Heveningham’s bed in the Coffer Chamber had scarce cooled before it was occupied by Elizabeth Fitzgerald, the niece of her namesake Lady Clinton. The Fitzgeralds could install their child speedily because her aunt was resident at Court as a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, and her father Edward was the Lieutenant of the Gentleman Pensioners, the royal guard of good birth. They could not have been better placed to persuade the Queen to take Elizabeth forthwith.\(^40\) Lady Mary Vere, the sister of the Earl of Oxford, was sworn in in the thick of the furore over Mary Shelton’s secret marriage in January 1573/4, although she cannot have been a direct replacement, for Mary Shelton had been a Chamberer whereas Mary Vere certainly joined as a Maid of Honour.\(^41\) In fact, by October Mary Shelton was back in favour, possibly because her skill in her domestic duties ensured

\(^39\) See Chapter Five. Secret marriages were a constant problem for those in charge of the Maids. It is the length of the reign which creates the initial impression that they were a uniquely Elizabethan phenomenon.


that she was never banished from Court despite the Queen's outrage.42

Bridget Manners, who was sworn a Maid of Honour in the autumn of 1592, probably on Accession Day, was the subject of a flowery correspondence between her mother Elizabeth Charlton Dowager Countess of Rutland, and the Vice-chamberlain Sir Thomas Heneage. He informed her that,

The exceedinge good modest and honorable behavior and carriage of ... your daughter, with her carefull and dilligent attendance of Her Majestie ys so contentyng to her Highness and so commendable in this place where she lyves - where vyces will hardly receive vysards and vertues will most shyne - as Her Majestie acknowledgeth she hath case to thanck you for her, and you may take comforte of so vertuouse a daughter.43

The Countess would have had reason to be pleased that she had such a jewel at Court, for she and her sister-in-law, Isabel Holcroft the older Dowager Countess of Rutland, were considering legal action against one of the Cecil family. The Queen's 'princely acceptance' of the girl was a heartening sign, because Bridget was the only family representative at Court and would have to be relied on not to impede the suit at a time when both Dowagers were not resident.44

Those Maids who were fortunate enough to secure a position after marriage would, depending on the social status of their new husband, either become Gentlewomen or Ladies of the Privy Chamber, or leave the staff altogether and join the group of aristocratic attendants. The latter befell Frances Sidney Countess of Sussex in Mary's reign, and in Elizabeth's Anne Russell Countess of Warwick and the two Frances Howards who confusingly both became Countess of Hertford. A suitable marriage was also the vital

42. C/115/L2/6697 p.47. On 26 October 1574 she received the richest garment yet given to her by the Queen, a forpart of cloth of silver with a fringe.
44. ibid. p.304, Elizabeth Dowager Countess of Rutland to Sir John Puckering. Belvoir Castle, October 1592; Bridget married Robert Tyrwhit, and was still one of the Privy Chamber in 1603 (LC2/4/4 fol.45).
qualification needed in order to progress from a Chamberer's position, for no unmarried Chamberer ever became Gentlewoman just because of long service, though even marriage was not a guarantee. The rise of Frances Newton Lady Cobham was the most spectacular, from Chamberer in 1558 to Lady of the Bed Chamber in the 1570s; the initial promotion resulting from her marriage to William Brooke Lord Cobham on 25 February 1559/60. The life of Frideswide Knight-Strelley was more usual; she began her service to Mary as a Chamberer in 1533, and was only made a Gentlewoman in 1553 some years after her marriage. It was not just women like Frideswide who had entered service before their mistress' accessions - and therefore experienced the fluctuations in fortune which would have forestalled any promotions within the Privy Chamber - who served long periods as Chamberers before their final promotion. Women like Mary Shelton-Scudamore and Elizabeth Stafford-Drury were not promoted from Chamberer to Gentlewoman until some time after their marriages. Others, like Jane Hawk-Brussels-Heneage and Dorothy Bradbelt-Abington, were Chamberers for the whole time of their service. Not everyone joined the queens' service either as a Maid or as a Chamberer. Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford was a Gentlewoman from the very beginning, and she lived to become one of the Bed Chamberers. Marriage did not only change the social status of the women, it often had immediate, practical effect: the newly-wedded could no longer live in the quarters used by the unmarried staff. When Frances Howard of Effingham, a Maid of Honour, married the Earl of Hertford at Richmond in December 1585 the Queen clearly expected her to continue in attendance in the long term, but in the meanwhile she had to move out to live with her husband because no suitable chamber was

45. LC2/4/3 fol.53v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fol.191.
46. LC5/49 fol.23; B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian No.108 fol.274; SP11/1 No.15 fol.30v.
47. B.L. Lansdowne 59 No.22 fol.43; LC2/4/4 fols.45v-46.
48. B.L. Lansdowne 29 No.68 fol.161; LC2/4/4 fol.45v (see Appendix 1).
available for them in Court.49 She had to wait until the Queen removed to Greenwich a few weeks later before she could have a chamber appropriate to her new station as a Countess. The Queen was not prepared to cause upheaval and ill-feeling by ordering a major room reshuffle when the problem of accommodating Frances would be resolved within the month.

Although one can point to the broad factors which determined the queens' choice of staff, it is very difficult, if not well-nigh impossible, to identify the qualities of any one individual which were found appealing. In some cases it is possible that the queens had never met a woman before she arrived at Court to take up her place. This may have been the case with some of the Maids of Honour, for example. Because of the social class from which all the women were drawn, there is not one of whom one can say that they were appointed on personal merit alone; all of them, without exception, represent a conscious political decision by the queen, and considerations of family background would be foremost in that decision. Once at Court their status there did not wholly depend on the Queen's whim, but also on whether they were married or not, or what title their parents held.50 Only one woman broke all these norms: she was foreign and did not have any family ties in England whatsoever. She was Helena Snakenborg, a Swedish girl of noble birth who came to England as a Maid of Honour to Princess Cecilia of Sweden, Marchioness of Baden, in September 1565. The recently bereaved Marquis of Northampton, William Parr, seems to have fallen in love with Helena soon after her arrival, and after bouts of cold feet finally married her, while the Queen was so taken with her that she gave her a position in the Privy Chamber, either as a Maid of the Privy Chamber or a Maid of

49. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.185. Roger Manners to Edward Earl of Rutland. Richmond (Court), 15 December 1585.

50. See Appendix 2 for a list of womens' horses and stable servants for whom accommodation was provided in Court. This was allocated on the basis of each woman's status as defined by her male kin, not her own office in the Privy Chamber.
Honour, when the Princess left England at the end of April 1566. The rest of Helena's life centred on the Court, first in the Privy Chamber until her marriage to the Marquis on 10 May 1571, and thereafter as a frequent attendant and friend of the Queen, barring a couple of years when her second, secret marriage caused a temporary cooling in that friendship.

* * * * * * * * *

In choosing their Privy Chamber staff, Mary and Elizabeth seem to have looked for the same attributes which were generally felt to be ideal in a female servant, and though no formal, detailed expression of employment policy survives, one may deduce what was considered desirable both from the duties the women undertook, and from other employer's attestations. One man promised his sister's future employer 'you shall have a diligent and trusti and tractable maiden of hir, besides sutch service as she is able to do in sowing, and the like qualities requisite in a maid'. The Countess of Bath's letter to a Devonshire gentlewoman about her maid sheds more light on aristocratic attitudes to such servants.

I perceve by my Lords man Shapton that you are very desiorus to have a searvant that hath served me. This mayde went from me not long sithens, which I would longer have kept yf soe I myght, for I found her to bee a diligent and true servant; and now knowinge she shall serve you, I cannot but commend her to you, as you by profe shall finde, carefull, I assure, in any thinge to content you. She can washe and sterch very well, and what eles you will employe her to. Her wages she likes well, but yet she desires every yeare a levery though not new; yet yf some cast garment of yours, I thinke yt will content her, or otherwyse she wilbe loth to serve; soe I leve yt to your good lykinge. Yf this mayd be not to your content, I pray let me know where in she is faulty, and I will make yt knowne to her best frindes, or eles exhorte her soe as I hope she will mend.

51. It is most unlikely, despite the unusual circumstances, that she was made a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber as stated by Bradford (Bradford, Helena, p.55); H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.326. Memoranda by Fowler. January 1565/6.


53. Trevelyan, Trevelyan papers, III p.27. Elizabeth Russell Countess of Bath to Grace
Differences in outlook, especially in religion, were not necessarily a bar to service at Court, and even friendship, so long as the woman showed all the outward signs of conformity in loyal and respectful service. Certainly neither queen ignored all women whose religion may have been at odds with the established Church. Mary was prepared to receive Margaret St John Countess of Bedford at Court, and even exchange New Year's gifts with her. The Countess, wife of the stridently Protestant second Earl who tactfully spent much of the reign on the Continent, was hardly a devout Catholic, but her mother-in-law Anne Sapcote the Dowager Countess of Bedford and widow of Sir Richard Jerningham may have been able to pour oil on any troubled waters because she was the step-mother of Mary's friend and Vice-chamberlain Henry Jerningham. 54 The younger Countess in her turn contrived to remain on amicable terms with Mary's staff - indeed, it was from Susan Clarendon that she first heard of her husband's 'valiantness' in the French expedition of 1557. 55 Mary Shelton-Scudamore and her Shelton relatives were welcome at Elizabeth's Court, despite the Catholic tendencies displayed by the family in their home county of Norfolk, as their blood tie to the Queen through her great-aunt Anne outweighed these considerations. 56

As well as unswerving loyalty and dedication to service, little more was demanded of the queens' women than would have been expected by any aristocratic woman of her female servants. The official domestic duties in

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54. B.L. RP 294. January 1556/7. The Dowager and the Countess gave £20 and £10 respectively, and received a gilt cup and a gilt cruets in return.
56. The Sheltons were friends of Sir Arthur Heveningham, whose circle in East Anglia included many crypto-Catholics and some noted recusants (MacCulloch, Suffolk, p.99; Smith, Norfolk, p.196). A Mrs Shelton was arrested at Mass in London together with her cousin by marriage Elizabeth Stanley Lady Morley (H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.99. 8 April 1573). The Scudamores were also known for their catholicism. Mary Scudamore, Mary Shelton-Scudamore's cousin, became a nun at St Monica's, the English convent in Louvain, in about 1603 (see Hamilton, The Chronicle of St Monica's).
the Privy Chamber obliged them to have, or to acquire, the mastery of various household skills. Although most of the Privy Chamber women were deft with a needle, unfortunately no comprehensive expression of the social niceties which dictated who would have expected to undertake what in the way of ‘work’ and sewing has survived to show whether more was demanded from the queens’ women than was normal in an aristocratic household. Some of the Privy Chamber women were famed for their needlework, but whether this was a criterion taken into consideration by the queens when they were choosing their staff is not known.57 Jane Dormer was known for her art ‘in such curious works of the needle as gentlewomen learn’.58 The extraordinary hangings at Chatsworth were sewn by Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury, her ‘grooms, women, and some boys’, and it was her proud boast that there was never more than one professional embroiderer at work upon them at one time.59 The Countess’ half-sister Elizabeth Leche-Wingfield, was held in equal esteem.60 Their close friend Frances Newton Lady Cobham was another needlewoman of note, and it is known from one of her rare surviving letters that she made up some sleeves embroidered by Elizabeth Hardwick when she was Lady St Loe as a present for the Queen. Frances informed her friend,

I have bassted the scleve of that wydenes that wyll best contente the quyne. the lenth all wrott wyll be shoure innouthe i know they will be well leked. the[ly] ar fyn[e] and strange. i have heyr sent yow inclosen the brede and lenth of a raylle for the quyne of the same worke for to shute wyth the scleves. yow may send yt up unmade for that the fasshuyne ys mych altared senes yow

57. Thomasine de Paris must have been at least a competent tricoteuse to warrant the delivery of ‘fower payer of knyttinge Nedelles’ to her in 1580, but clearly she had been chosen to serve the Queen because of her stature and value as entertainment rather than for any dexterity with the pins (B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fol.160v. Warrant dated 28 September 1580).
60. L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.106-107v. Elizabeth Leche-Wingfield to her brother-in-law George Earl of Shrewsbury. 15 December n.a. (probably in the 1570s). She had made some smocks for her sister, but as she was not certain that the Countess liked ruffs (a term which then applied to fluted attached collars), she had not sewn any on.
were heyr. x yarde ys innoufe for the roufes of the neke and hands.  

Mary Shelton-Scudamore was also known for her sewing, and this ability may well have been a decisive factor in Elizabeth’s receiving her back at Court after her secret marriage. Sir Robert Cecil told a friend that his house in London had fallen into such a state - because none of his female relatives were there to look after it - that he desperately needed the Queen to send down 'my Lady Skydmore...with a Needle and a thredd' to sort it out.  

As will be seen in the following chapter, the Privy Chamber staff were not only expected to be able to make the queens' night-clothing, sheets and underclothes, to tailor smaller items of clothing and embroider decorative work, but also to distill, cook, nurse, and to draw on infinite reserves of patience. Tractability was a prized virtue.

The queens themselves decided who would be on the staff, not the Lord Chamberlain who was nominally in charge of the Privy Chamber. Each woman selected therefore represents the personal choice of the Queen. The considerations outlined above would dictate that choice, and there were evidently occasions when the opinion of the women who were already in service affected the recruitment of new members, as with the selection of Maids of Honour, but it is still true to talk of Mary and Elizabeth and 'their' Privy Chambers. Sadly, few examples of either body-servants or attendants

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61. Folger X.d.428 (16). Frances Lady Cobham to Elizabeth Lady St Loe. 21 October n.a. but probably 1565. The ‘raylle’ was a shift, which would have been worn under the sleeves, leaving the embroidered ruffles at the throat and wrists visible.


63. In 1586 the Huguenot artist Jacques Le Moyne de Morgues published the earliest English printed pattern book of woodcut flora and fauna, which has been described as 'part bestiary, part florilegium'. It was intended for embroiderers among others. La Clef des Champs pour trouver plusiers animaux was dedicated to Mary Dudley Lady Sidney, but whether it was her skill with the needle or her strongly Protestant sympathies which attracted Le Moyne, a radical Protestant, is open to debate (S.T.C. 15459; Trustees of the British Museum, Le Moyne's botanical watercolours: the 1990 British Museum diary. London, 1989. This includes colour reproductions of some of the plates in La Clef des Champs).
pressing for the appointment of others have survived. Anne Clifford was beholden to her maternal aunt the Countess of Warwick, ‘to whom I was much bound for her continual love and care of mee, in so much as if Queen Elizabeth had lived she intended to prefer me to be of the Privy Chamber for at that time there was much hope and expectation of me as of any other young Ladie whatsoever’.64

Thus far it has been very much the queens’ perspective which has been sought. One must now turn to that of the women themselves. After 1553 there were some problems which women of the Privy Chamber, and their relatives, never had to face. Other than through the natural turnover in staff due to marriage, ill-health or some indiscretion of their own making, none would find themselves unemployed other than at the queen’s death. This had not been the recent experience of matrimonial queens’ sides; on five occasions in Henry VIII’s reign a queen’s Privy Chamber had been disbanded, four times after only a short period in existence.65 Picture the Great Chamber of Hampton Court when ‘all the ladies and gentlewomen and [the] servauntes’ of Queen Katherine Howard were called together before Sir Thomas Wriothesley, who ‘openly afore them declared certeine offences that she had done in misusing her bodye with certeine persons afore the Kinges tyme, wherefore he there discharged all her househould’.66 The staff of the queens regnant knew that they had tenure for as long as their mistress lived; no women in England before 1553 had enjoyed this security. Edward VI’s reign had been particularly barren for women who yearned to come to Court. Only Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset seems to have been able to make

64. Clifford, The Diaries of Lady Anne Clifford, p.21.
65. The queens’ Sides in the early Tudor period are little understood, and much needs to be done to establish how many women passed from one Privy Chamber to the next, how the fortunes of the women of executed and divorced queens varied, and the effect of this on their families and client networks.
herself at home there, while the wives of the other leading members of the 'oligarchy' which ran England lived in and around London. Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton spent the summer of 1551 at Esher, and the following winter in Winchester Place, Southwark (after a house swap with the Bishop), and hardly ever stayed at Court.67

Generally women were replaced individually, and there was never the violent fluctuation in numbers witnessed in Henry VIII's reign, as, for example, after the decimation of the Privy Chamber in 1519. The possible reasons why no member of the government - a powerful man following in the steps of Wolsey or Cromwell - tried to purge the Privy Chamber after 1553 have already been addressed, so it suffices to note that there was no such purge, and that the Privy Chambers in existence between 1553 and 1603 had a remarkably stable membership when compared with their immediate predecessors. There were, of course, times when the numbers fell slightly. Those who were very ill, like Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton in 1564, could expect leave of absence, although she was to be one of the many women to die at Court. The list includes Mary Kempe-Finch in 1557, Anne Cecil Countess of Oxford in 1588, Mildred Cooke Lady Burghley in 1589, Blanche Parry in 1590 and Katherine Carey Countess of Nottingham in 1603. Expectant mothers could retreat from Court as their time approached, but even the heavily pregnant were still liable for duty; Frances Newton-Cobham, seven months gone, was finally allowed to leave the Court in September 1565, but before she could retire for her confinement at the family home of Cobham in Kent she was instructed to proceed to Dover to grace the imminent arrival of Princess Cecilia, Helena Snakenborg's mistress, who was herself in an even further advanced state of pregnancy.68

67. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, pp.74-5.
68. SP12/37 No.28 fols.58-59v. Draft of an order to thirteen men, mostly Kent gentry, who with their wives were to accompany Lady Cobham to meet the Princess.
Lord Cobham had other plans, and arranged that he would greet the Princess, while as soon as news of the landfall reached his wife she would, 'with suche spede as a woman in her case maye make, drawe towards Cauntorburowy' and welcome the Swedish party as it made its way from Dover to London.69 This seems to have gone without a hitch, and by October Lady Cobham had returned home to Cobham, where she spent some of the time before the birth plying her needle for Elizabeth Hardwick-St Loe. Rustication hung heavily on her, and loneliness combined with her fear of the impending birth made a letter from her friend very welcome. She hastened to reply:

I have reseyvd your letter mi good ladi to me very welcom as Frome her i love dearely and most desyr to see. I wolde you had as good caus to com to ley in thes partes as i colde wyshe and thene yow shulde be as grete a stranger in darbi shere as now you ar in London. I am now at cobham wher i intende god wyllyinge to be brought a bed, i loke a weke before sente anderous day. i pray praye for me. i know i shall spede much the better for a good womananes prayer.70

She was safely delivered of a son, Henry, on 22 November 1565, and within months was back on duty in the Privy Chamber, her maternity leave over.71

The Duke of Norfolk was similarly concerned about the health of his pregnant wife Margaret Audley. They had been in the north of the country when she conceived, and as they prepared to travel south the Duke wrote that if the Queen was on progress he hoped that his wife, 'being so puling as she is unmeet to follow the Court', would be excused from taking up her

September 1565.

69. SP12/37 Nos.26 and 27, fols.54-57v. William Lord Cobham to William Cecil. 3 and 2 September 1565; The Princess gave birth to her son Edward Fortunatus on 15 September 1565, barely a week after her arrival in England.

70. Folger X.d.428 (16). 21 October n.a. but probably 1565. Frances Lady Cobham to Elizabeth Lady St Loe; See Chapter Five for the assistance Lady Cobham gave Elizabeth, then Countess of Shrewsbury, with choosing gifts for the Queen.

71. There was a pause in the flow of gifts to her from the Queen between the summer of 1565 and Christmas 1566 (C/115/L2/6697 pp.17 and 24). Estimating the date of parturition was not always an inexact science. Lady Cobham proved to be accurate to within twenty-four hours (St Andrew's Day was 30 November). That said, Elizabeth Cooke Lady Hoby's case is nearer the norm. At five months pregnant her 'great belly' was still thought to be 'a timpanie or dropsie' (Powell, *A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby*, p.128. 12 November 1559.)
duties there as an attendant. It was the disruption and strain of travel which concerned him, for he conceded that she would be capable of attending on the Queen if the Court was in permanent residence in one of the London palaces. 72

Women were expected to return to Court as soon as possible after giving birth, leaving their children in the care of a 'woman', to be fed by wet-nurses. It is not often that the problems this created are to be found in correspondence, and a rare example is the case of Elizabeth Brooke Lady Cecil's infant daughter. Her gentlewoman Anne White wrote to warn her parents that she was losing weight 'by means of her fretting and beastly sorrowing', the result of the ill nature and poor milk of her wetnurse, combined with the Cecil's views on infant feeding; they were 'doubtful for sweetmeat' while she was toothless, which White agreed with, but they also wanted her only to be given fruit, and not 'spoonmeat'. White was anguished. 'I do think that [if] you and my lady be fearful to wean her till she have all her teeth, then you will have her suck till she be 3 years old'. 73 As Privy Chamber women could not bring children to Court it was not possible for them to feed their own babies, even if they had wished to do so. Women like Anne Fitton-Newdigate were exceptions to the general rule, and those who chose to 'play the nurse' met with concerted opposition from their families and friends. 74

There were some occasions when it was intimated that a certain woman would not be welcome at Court, not necessarily because of disgrace. Henry Earl of Rutland was told that his decision not to bring his wife Margaret with him on a planned visit to Court in May 1557 would be for the

72. C.S.P. Foreign, 1560-61 p.215. The Duke of Norfolk to William Cecil. Newcastle, 5 August 1560. It would appear that the unfortunate Duchess was a martyr to morning-sickness.
best, and although the reason for this was not given, it may well have related to the recent arrival of Philip on 20 March and the concomitant pressure on Court accommodation.\textsuperscript{75} Conversely there were circumstances in which it is clear that a family was not so enthusiastic at letting a girl take a proffered place at Court. The death of John Lord Conyers in June 1557 brought his three daughters to Mary's attention, and the eldest, Anne, who was about eighteen at the time, was promptly summoned to Court. For reasons which remain obscure the girl hesitated, and she received a sharp letter instructing her to obey forthwith.\textsuperscript{76} She did so, and may well have become a Maid of Honour in place of her cousin Magdalene Dacre, who had recently married Anthony Viscount Montague.\textsuperscript{77} Anne in turn soon married Mr Anthony Kempe of Sussex, a cousin of Lady Eleanor Kempe, who had been a gentlewoman of Mary's Privy Chamber since 1536.\textsuperscript{78}

The advantages of service in the Privy Chamber were generally well-understood at the time. There was a definite expectation amongst anyone who served the queen that they would have some advantage over their peers in personal suits, or even when suing for others, and this expectation was as great, if not greater, amongst those of the Privy Chamber. When Anne Russell Countess of Warwick heard she was being ignored by the Queen over an important suit, her husband wrote angrily to Walsingham that she should have been given better treatment, 'conseadering she hath spentt ye cheffe partt off her yeares both painfully, faythfully, and servycably, yea after sotche sortt as without any dyshonor to her maiestie any kinde off wage nor

\textsuperscript{75} H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.68. Thomas Edwardes to Henry Earl of Rutland. London 16 April 1557; Nichols, Machyn, p.129.
\textsuperscript{76} L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.19-v. Francis Earl of Shrewsbury to Anne Conyers. York, 5 August 1557. The Queen may have feared that Anne, as a wealthy co-heiress, would be swiftly married off to someone chosen by her mother, Maud Clifford Lady Conyers. Unlike her younger sisters Anne was too old be a Ward, so Lady Conyers could have arranged this with impunity.
\textsuperscript{77} Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.127v.
\textsuperscript{78} B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C xiv fol.246
Aristocratic women visiting the Court could expect to see the Queen every day, although whether they all had continual access to the Privy Chamber during their visits is not clear, and of course they were not guaranteed the daily access to the Queen enjoyed by the female staff had.

Slowly the realisation dawned on the senior women that one reward was denied them, as it was denied so many of their male peers. Mary's reign was too short for any policy to be identified. Elizabeth's was clear; 'Assuredly as this Queene was not prodigall in any thing, soe was shee most sparing in distribution of honor, whereby shee advanced it to a very high valuatione'. Elizabeth never granted a woman a title in her own right even when it would not be a new creation. The issue of titles was never forgotten though - after all, the monarch was herself a case in hand. Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk spent many a long year in the fruitless pursuit of the barony of Willoughby for her husband Richard Bertie, and drove her suit even harder when the marriage of her daughter Susan to Reynold Grey de jure Earl of Kent was imminent, 'for if [then] we lack it, when all our friends shall be together, what countenance of her Majesty's favor shall I have to show for me amongst them, who have been persuaded that her Majesty hath had great misliking of me since my waiting of her the last progress' when she last pressed the issue. All her fears were realised.

79. SP12/181 No.77 fol.238. Ambrose Earl of Warwick to Sir Francis Walsingham. 31 August 1585.
80. L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.32-33v. Katherine Talbot Countess of Pembroke to her father George Earl of Shrewsbury. Woodstock (Court), 3 October 1575. She had been with the Queen every day since her arrival at Court.
81. Bruce, Annals, p.15.
82. Burghley kept notes on barons who had taken seats in the House of Lords in previous reigns by virtue of their wives' titles (H.M.C. Salisbury, III pp.395-6. March 1588/9).
The Court, as the cockpit of political life, was also an invaluable source of information. It was only because she was resident at Court that Anne Herbert Lady Talbot came to hear that the money which her brother the Earl of Pembroke had asked for from her father-in-law under the terms of her jointure was not as promised going to be spent on the repair of various houses in which she had an interest. Instead, to her horror, she discovered that he was going to put it up as capital for one of Sir Walter Raleigh's overseas ventures, so she quickly stepped in to prevent her father-in-law from giving him the money.84

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Do this, and I will give thee for thy pains
My cambric apron, and my Romish gloves,
My purple stockings, and a stomacher.85

Although there were some disadvantages to being in residence - the long hours of work for little thanks, the stress of living in such a competitive atmosphere, the back-biting and so on - the benefits were considerable.86 Apart from the chance to use one's access to the queen to great effect in a wide range of affairs, and the profits which could accrue through those activities, which I will consider later, there were the many perquisites of office. The wages were not large, but, as has been shown, the food and accommodation were free, and work clothing was provided from the Great

85. Dekker, *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, I ii 54-63. The heroine Rose to her maidservant Sybil.
86. See Chapter Five for a lengthier discussion of Court behaviour.
Wardrobe, so there were few major outgoings for the staff. The clothing or livery the women received was relatively plain, but since it was in the form of material either they or a hired tailor could make it up in a fashionable design.87 These livery gowns were probably worn daily, with the more formal, highly decorated gowns reserved for use on high days and holidays. Many of the liveries were russet in colour, as were some of the gifts of material made by the queens, of which a few were made to women who were only temporarily in attendance and so did not need a warrant dormant which would provide livery year after year.88 Many of the other liveries and gifts of clothing to staff were black, but whether this was a traditional colour for a female attendant, or because the queens liked the effect - black with white is known to have been Elizabeth’s favourite colour combination, for example - or even in some cases for mourning, is uncertain.89 That the fashion to clothe royal staff in black and white was not limited to England is clear from Sir Thomas Hoby’s observation, that the Queen of France, making a state entry into Nantes in 1551, was followed by ‘xx gentylwomen, of the which fowre were apparelled all in blacke, and xvj all in white damaske, white hatts, and great white fethers in them’.90 An anecdote related to Elizabeth by her agent in the Netherlands is also illuminating. During an audience with Don John of Austria, the Don ‘towld me he is so enformed of

87. Mary Shelton’s livery warrant was for twenty-three yards of various materials to make her one gown ‘against the Feast of Christmas’, but the colour was unspecified. It was a warrant dormant, with retrospective action to St Andrew’s Day 1570 (LC5/49 fol.174. 14 February 1570/1); Elizabeth Stafford’s warrant was virtually identical, but all the material was to be russet (LC5/49 fol.170. Warrant dated 20 November 1569).

88. Mary Yetsweirt, wife of a government officer Nicasius Yetsweirt, was given a plain gown of russet in 1567. Barbara Hawk was given two russet gowns, as mentioned above (C/115/L2/6697 p.26. 30 September 1567; ibid. pp.17 and 29. 30 July 1565 and 30 July 1569).

89. E101/427/11; C115/L2/6697. Both contain many examples of gifts, both of material and of madeup garments; C.S.P. Spanish, 1558-67 p.368. 10 July 1564. The Queen told the Spanish ambassador ‘These are my colours’; Paul Hentzer noted that the ‘Ladies of the Court’ who processed to the Sunday service in the Chapel Royal which he attended in 1598, were ‘for the most part dressed in white’ (Rye, Foreigners, p.104).

90. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.71. Sunday 12 July 1551.
Your Majestie, that if you wer in the cumpanie of your ladies, but in a blacke velvet frenshe gowne and a playne howde to the same, he myght discerne yow for the Queene, although he had never seen your picture before'. A black gown was therefore recognised as the uniform behind which the Queen's obvious nobility would fail to hide. It also encapsulates the idea that a queen would usually wear clothing which was immediately distinguishable. In fact this may not always have been the case; both queens gave their own clothes as gifts to their Privy Chamber staff which the recipients would have worn at Court, whilst Mary usually wore a plain gown 'being also that of the gentlewomen of England', and so not noticeably different from her womens' outfits.

Throughout their reigns the queens made gifts of clothing and material to their women and friends, which would have been most welcome when the cost alone of cloth and workmanship is considered. Most of the garments were the queens' own, occasionally altered at their expense to fit a larger or smaller recipient, like the black velvet gown given to Frances Howard Dowager Countess of Kildare in 1602. Shoes, despite their value, were not given away because most were heavily worn, and even if in good repair they could not readily be altered to fit the recipient, although for an unknown reason one Maid of Honour, Anne Knollys, was given specially made footwear for about a year. Otherwise it was only the shorter entertainers who were provided with shoes at royal expense. Court women

91. C.S.P. Foreign, 1575-7 pp.596-7. 11 June 1577.
92. C.S.P. Venetian, 1534-54 p.533. 18 August 1554.
93. B.L. Stowe 557 fol.26. Signed for by the Countess on 16 December 1602; LC5/37 fols.283-4. The alterations to the gown were made by Jones, the Queen's tailor, and it was further embellished by Parr, the Queen's embroiderer.
94. LC5/34 fols.109 and 125. Warrants dated 12 October and 14 October 1570. Anne Knollys was given fifty-three pairs in all, including thirty-one 'calves lether shoes' for daily wear which clearly wore out rapidly; Ippolyta the Tartarian and Thomasine de Paris both received footwear regularly (for example: LC5/33 fol.13. Warrant dated 20 October 1562 (Ippolyta); LC5/37 fol.23. Warrant dated 27 September 1594 (Thomasine)).
usually frequented the main London shoemakers. In *The Shoemakers' Holiday*, which was performed at Court (and thus before the very women concerned) on New Year's Eve 1599/1600, Eyre upbraids his journeyman Firk: 'Fie, defile not thy fine workmanly fingers with the feet of kitchen-stuff and basting-ladles! Ladies of the court, fine ladies, my lads, commit their feet to our apparelling'.95 Royal garments given as gifts carried an even greater significance than their cash value, for to accept and wear such a present was to acknowledge tacitly a close relationship between giver and recipient. This is manifest in an anecdote retold by Bishop John Aylmer.

Ye this I know that a great mans daughter, receavinge from Ladye Marye before she was Quene, goodly apparel of tynsyll, cloth of golde, and velvet, layd on with parchement lace of gold: when she sawe it, sayde, what shal I doo with it? Marry saide a gentlewoman weare it. Nay, quoth she, that were a shame to followe my lady Mary against Gods woorde and leave my Lady Elyzabeth, whiche foloweth Gods woorde.96

This was not merely because Elizabeth was virtuously wearing simple clothes, while Mary was not, but because to wear any such present from Mary, however plain, would have immediately bound the 'great mans daughter' to her.

There were many other privileges a woman of the Privy Chamber could enjoy: the best entertainments in the country; excellent music made by the Chapel Royal and the Court musicians; the opportunity to hear some of the leading preachers; for the Maids the *cachet* of attending the most admired finishing-school of the day. Other opportunities of a more prosaic nature abounded, an example being the unrivalled opportunity to purchase wine duty free from the queen, as did the select few, including attendants like Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk and the Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber Katherine Carey-Howard, who between them bought four

tuns of Bordeaux wine from Elizabeth in 1574.\textsuperscript{97}

It is hard to identify problems which were specific to courtiers, rather than to the aristocracy and gentry as a whole. It has been recognised by historians, as was known at the time, that men who frequented Court became poorer faster than their country relatives, and they may have been even more litigious, if that was possible.

In 88 when the Queen went to pauls, from temple Barr along Fleetstreat, the Lawyers were ranked on one side; and ye Companies of the Citty on the other. said Mr bacon to one that stood next him; doe but obserue the Courtiers; If they bend first to them then they are in debt; If they bend first to us; then they are in Lawe.\textsuperscript{98}

Spare a thought for the confusion of those who were ensnared in both. However until an analysis is made of both the debt and litigation of Tudor women of the gentry and the noble classes as a whole, it will not be possible to draw the same conclusion about the plight of female courtiers. Both sexes suffered equally from the costs of clothing themselves in suitable finery; fashionable men were just as likely to wear their fortunes on their backs in the shape of showy costumes as women were. When there was a mass Court refit in honour of a major state event there was usually a run on cloth prices, which happened when the Duke of Alençon threatened: ‘The comyng of Monsh is sometyme hott sometyme cold though the most of courtyers promysse his comyng & provyde (as they canne) to fytt them theragaynst with the best sylkes which makes them deare’.\textsuperscript{99}

Apart from the role played by women in the recruitment of other women to the Privy Chamber staff, they also played a similarly important part in procuring positions both in the Chamber and the Household for their

\textsuperscript{97} B.L. Lansdowne MS 39 fol.77v.
\textsuperscript{98} L.P.L. MS 2086 p.5.
clients, almost all of whom, because of the circumstances, were men. A revealing insight is given by Sir William Cornwallis, who was desperate that his first cousin once removed Thomas Cornwallis, or himself, or both, should hold the position of Groom Porter 'if God dyspose of my old cosene', who currently held the post, although, as Sir William was at great pains to point out, Thomas had in fact been serving in the position for the best part of sixteen years because of his father's ill health. The flurry had been caused by the appearance of a rival on the scene, one Parker, who was supported by Thomas Lord Buckhurst, and Sir William was appalled at the prospect of the 'utter undoing and disgrace...it will be vnto him [Thomas] for euer, if an other of less time standing in Court, and no title to the place, should preuayle'. In response to the threat Sir William appealed to Sir Robert Cecil, purportedly in case the Queen did decide to split the office, in the which case Sir William would himself need a patron, but clearly it was a move to include Cecil in the impressive group which was 'promist a frind' to Thomas. Besides Sir John Stanhope and the Earl of Essex, 'the Lady of Warwike is my cosens frind allso', and the Queen herself 'to his face gave him comfort of it 3 monthes since', but Sir William's strenuous efforts to gather as much support as possible amongst the Court power brokers show how much store he put by that promise. The Countess was one of a similarly select constellation whom Richard Fiennes asked for advice when it was mooted that he take his place in the House of Lords as Lord Say and Sele, and he feared to accept because of his dire financial straits.

Few people had recourse to so many patrons for one suit; the very family reputation for which Sir William Cornwallis feared, built up through service at Court by at least three generations, ensured that he had access to

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100. SP12/263 No.75 fols.105-106v. Sir William Cornwallis at Highgate to Sir Robert Cecil, Saturday 7, 14, 21 or 28 May 1597; L.C.2:4/4 fol.48.
101. SP12/264 No.146 fol.208. Richard Fiennes to Lord Burghley. 16 October 1597.
a good choice of potential patrons.\textsuperscript{102} The other side of the coin is shown by one Christopher Pays, who admitted to Lord Burghley that he had been 'a long surer vnto her Majestie for the Sargeantship of the poultrie/ And my only meane vnto her...from tyme to tyme was and ys by the right honorable the Countes of Warwicke, likewise your honor haue benn moved divers tymes in my behalf from or by her Ladyship'.\textsuperscript{103} But before we can consider the womens' activities as patrons more fully we must first turn to the reason for their existence at Court in the first place: their official duties as the 'home-makers' for the queens they served.

\textsuperscript{102} Sir Williams's father, Sir Thomas, was Comptroller of the Household from November 1557 until Elizabeth's succession, and his grandfather, Sir John, had been the Steward of the Household for Prince Edward.

\textsuperscript{103} SP12/242 No.63 fol.120. June 1592.
4. The Privy Chamber

She takes herself asunder...when she goes to bed, into some twenty boxes, and about next day noon is put together again, like a great German clock.¹

The daily life of the queens and their closest servants rarely varied, although there were seasonal alterations in the entertainments, and interruptions of the normal routine brought by holidays, as well as progresses and removals. The queen's habits naturally dictated the daily round of the Privy Chamber staff, although it is less clear how much her attendants were expected to follow the same time-table when they were not actually on duty.

It is very difficult to piece together a satisfactory picture of one 'normal' day for either Mary or Elizabeth, still less for their female staff. In general both queens seem to have risen before nine o'clock, the time when any night staff came off-duty. It is not clear whether women were included amongst the night staff, and if so whether they had the necessary skills to dress the queen in the morning if required to do so.² If they did, one could be certain that the day staff only came on duty at nine. If there were no women on duty overnight, or those who were could not dress the queen, the day staff would have been required from the moment the queen opened her eyes. We do not even know who had the task of waking the queen if she had to rise at a specific time: it may have been one of the Chamberers, as they were up to start the fires, or they may have woken one of the more senior women who in turn would wake the queen. If so, the woman may have been one of those who slept in with the queen, either on a truckle bed, or as bed

¹ Jonson, Epicoene, IV ii.
² Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.25v.
Both queens often rose before nine o'clock, but while Mary was busy from the earliest hour, Elizabeth admitted that 'I am no morning woman', which may go some way to explaining her absence from most of her Privy Council’s meetings; it was not uncommon for councillors to be conducting business 'before the Queen was stirring'.

When the business was urgent she received officers within an hour of rising, but she would have been en deshabille. Elizabeth rarely dressed immediately, but clad in a nightgown (something akin to a dressing-gown) would eat breakfast, perhaps take a brisk walk in her Privy Garden (or Privy Gallery if the weather was inclement), or undertake some of the scholarly work for which she was renowned; Sir John Harrington remembered that she was 'wont to sooth her ruffled temper with reading every morning'. She also liked to sit at the Privy Chamber windows and watch the world go by.

She took her time over dressing. When, after his precipitate departure from Ireland, Essex burst in on Elizabeth in the Bed Chamber at ten in the morning she was clothed, but her hair still was 'about her face'.

Washing in the morning probably consisted of a quick wipe over the face. In

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3. Jane Dormer is known to have done both (Clifford, Life of Jane Dormer, p.63).
6. S.T.C.20519. George Puttenham, The arte of English Poesie. London, 1589. He states that the Queen walked with a stately gait, 'unless it be when she walketh apace for her pleasure, or to catch her a heat in the cold mornings'; Harrington, Nugæ Antiquæ, II p.135.
7. L.P.L. MS 2086 p.21. By the end of the seventeenth century Elizabeth had the last word with the tart reply that 'Anger makes dull men witty, but it keeps them poor', (Thomas Tenison, Baconiana. London, 1679).
the evening one may safely assume that there was a similar ablution to remove any cosmetics which would otherwise have ended up on the bed linen. There are no records of either queen making use of those baths which were available. The problem of the total absence of lavatories from the Privy Lodgings in all the palaces was overcome by the close stool, a lidded chamber pot set in a padded box. They were often luxurious, like the four close stools ‘covered with black Velvet enbrauderid upon and garnished with riben and gilt nayles the seat and laythes covered with skarlet fringed with silk and golde’ which were delivered to the Bed Chamber in 1565, with their ‘iiij Pannes of pewter with cases of lether lyned with canvas to put them in’. Katherine Asteley is known to have been the keeper of the close stools, and after her death in 1565 their care probably fell to whichever Lady of the Bed Chamber was on duty at a given moment, although in 1598 Katherine Carey-Howard was recorded as being ‘grome of the Stoole’, the only time the term was used during the queens’ reigns.11 There is no record of where the stools were kept, or what the women were expected to do for their mistresses, although it seems certain that both Queens would have needed some assistance when dressed in the large, formal gowns. Some light is shed by this anecdote from a slightly later period.

Mr Wray when he was of K. James [I] his Bed-Chamber had 3 pair of gloves to shift euery morning: One when he combed his Head; Another when he pull’d on his Bootes; A third when he went to the etc. Harrington’s An anatomie of the metamorpho-sed Ajax, an illustrated pamphlet on the subject of water-closets, dedicated to Elizabeth’s women,
was a half-serious attempt to improve the unsavoury conditions created by the close stools. 13

Dressing was a time-consuming affair, and seems to have been the one feature of the queens’ lives which remained constant in the amounts of time and concentration it required. At least one woman would have been needed to assist with the donning of even the simplest costume. A lively account may be found in Erondell’s *French Garden*, where a lady is dressed by a maid and a gentlewoman. The former assists her into the various layers of under-clothing; smock, bodies (corsets), petticoat and stockings. The gentlewoman brushes the lady’s hair and puts on the attire (headdress) and the various jewels required, the gown chosen for the day with the relevant jewelry and knick-knacks attached - purse, handkerchief, fan - and finally the girdle with scissors, pen-knife, letter-closing knife, bodkin, earpicker and seal all suspended from it. 14 The queens underwent a similar, but more elaborate, ordeal, as befitted their status. It is most likely that they were dressed by the Ladies of the Bedchamber, perhaps with the assistance of a Privy Chamber woman or two. Estimates of the time taken are measured in hours; one authority states that ‘it would have taken at least an hour to set a starched ruff and pin the flounce round the edge of a drum-shaped farthingale in position’, 15 and as the fashionable gowns became more and more complicated even more time would have been spent fastening the constituent pieces together with pins and laces. We know the name of only one of the women, Elizabeth Bradbelt-Abington, who helped to dress Elizabeth: she kept the ‘Pynpillowe of crymsen vellat’ which would have been stuck with the hundreds of pins needed every day. 16

13. S.T.C. 12771.5. London, 1596
Once the dressing was complete, and the queen's shoes prised onto her feet, attention would have turned to her head.\textsuperscript{17} Portraits show that Mary did not affect very elaborate hair-styles, and usually wore French hoods.\textsuperscript{18} The same could not be said of Elizabeth, who took to wearing wigs as a matter of convenience because the elaborate dressings which became fashionable in her reign were extremely time-consuming to arrange, and only later to cover her greying hair.\textsuperscript{19} It is not known who acted as busker (hairdresser) to either Mary or Elizabeth, although it is known that certain women were recognised as possessing a special talent. Mary Seaton was praised by her mistress, Mary Queen of Scots, as 'the fynest dresser of a Woman's heade', and could execute such spectacular creations that they were mistaken for wigs rather than her mistress's own hair.\textsuperscript{20}

The sum of all this pinning and lacing was that for at least a couple of hours in the morning, and then again in the evening when the whole process was reversed, Mary and Elizabeth were closeted with their women, providing ample opportunity for idle chat or serious discussion. The queen's women were the only persons at Court guaranteed her close attention every day throughout the reign - not even the Secretaries had such a privilege. Outside the Privy Chamber it was normally the Maids of Honour who were expected to care for the queens' clothes by carrying any train to keep it out of the dust and dirt; it could need as many as four of them to keep up the long, heavy train of one of the very grand gowns.\textsuperscript{21} This provided one of their opportunities to engage the queen's attention, if they so wished.

\textsuperscript{17} LC5/33 fol.194. Warrant dated 10 February 1566/7 for three 'Burnished' shoe horns.
\textsuperscript{18} Her portraits reinforce the view that French hoods could be deeply unflattering, and they bring to mind a later description of a woman wearing one looking 'as a cat out of a pillory' (Dekker, \textit{The Shoemakers' Holiday}, III ii 33).
\textsuperscript{19} LC5/36 fols.212-3. 6 June 1592; LC5/37 fol.90. 29 April 1595. These warrants record the supply to the Queen of 'Two periwigs of haire' and 'iiij perewigges of heaire' respectively.
\textsuperscript{20} B.L. Stowe MS 560 fol.24v. Sir Francis Knollys to Sir William Cecil. 28 June 1568.
The clothes worn by the queens on a daily basis were made by and cared for by the Wardrobe of Robes, an off-shoot of the Great Wardrobe. The Wardrobe of Robes had its main store in the Whitehall area of the Palace of Westminster, and was in the charge of the Keeper of the Palace, but there were chambers which acted as wardrobes in all the royal palaces, to be used when the Court was in residence.22 These wardrobes usually lay within the Privy Lodgings, as, for example, at Windsor Castle, where it was situated between the Guard Room and the Presence Chamber.23 Any items transferred between the stores and the wardrobes were sent with a list, a copy of which was kept in the originating office. The list was signed on delivery and returned to the originating office, while a copy was made in the receiving office's day book. From the few surviving lists, which all date from Elizabeth's reign, it is clear that the queen's women took delivery of the queen's clothing which would remain in their care; Elizabeth Marbery signed for five petticoats in June 1565, while the sixth was noted as already delivered to Dorothy Bradbelt.24 Unfortunately no day book of receipt survives, and there is only one known example of a day book of transfer.25 The book was used to record occasional gifts and grants of clothing by the Queen between May 1561 and June 1585, so it is by no means a complete record of all clothing distributed in this period; dormant warrants in the Great Wardrobe for liveries are naturally not included, nor are some of the presents of clothing which are recorded in the compilations of warrants of the Wardrobe of Robes. Although there was no Mistress of the Robes,26 it

22. Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe, pp.163-5. In the whole fifty-year period there were only two Keepers of the Palace of Westminster: George Brydyman from 1553 to about 1593, and Thomas Knevet thereafter.
23. Williams, Platter's Travels, p.211.
24. Folger X.d.265.
25. C/115/L2/6697. This has been published in full, although the pagination of the original has become translated into foliation en route (Arnold, Lost from her Majesties back.).
26. See Appendix 1.
seems apparent from this book that the female Privy Chamber staff were in charge of the removing Wardrobe which contained the Queen's personal clothing. They received some clerical assistance from the Yeomen who cared for all the contents of the removing wardrobe, and in addition were responsible for any items which were not for the Queen's personal use. If this were not the case the transfer lists would have been signed for only by official Wardrobe of Robes staff, but as we have seen, women could, and did, take delivery of clothing into the removing Wardrobe, and also ordered the transfer of items out of the same.\textsuperscript{27} An example of the latter is the gift of an orange and white costume, embroidered with silver oak leaves, which was given to an unnamed Irish gentlewoman in 1583. Usually gifts recorded in the book were at the Queen's commandment, while deliveries to Privy Chamber staff often lacked any authorisation; this was natural, as the Queen would not have felt the need, for instance, to authorise every item taken out of the storage area of the room which she needed that very day. In this case, although it was a gift, and so no particular urgency was implicit, there was no command from the Queen, nor did the Irish gentlewoman sign for it, despite being the recipient. In the event three Chamberers, Mary Shelton-Scudamore, Bridget Chaworth and Joan Hawke-Brussells, signed for the outfit, and it was noted that 'theise thinges [were] gevon by all the gentlewemens consent of the privy chamber'. The Queen was obviously not the only source of authorisation for transfers out of the removing Wardrobe of Robes.\textsuperscript{28} The importance of the women in the care of the clothing and in dressing the queens should not be underestimated, for this was an age in

\textsuperscript{27} In this I differ from Arnold. Granted, this was not a role recognised by the creation of an official post within the Wardrobe of Robes for one of the Privy Chamber women, giving her formal control over the removing wardrobe. This happened in the seventeenth century when the Mistress of the Robes first makes her appearance. This office grew out of the informal position which the women obviously held in the sixteenth century (see Appendix 1).

\textsuperscript{28} C 115/L2/6697 p.83.
which the general appearance of the monarch was far more than a private, domestic matter. The richness of one's clothes made a political statement about wealth, power, and for the women who received cast-off gowns as presents from the Queens, favour. In vain Sir Thomas Egerton the Lord Keeper made a long and 'very graue speach in the nature of a charge to the Judges' in the Star Chamber instructing them to look to, among other abuses, 'the vanitie and excesse of womens apparell'. For Elizabeth her clothes were the focus of the visual cult of Gloriana, in the same way that her supposed virtues and academic skills were the centre of the parallel literary cult.

For all their importance, however, by 1600 the exact state of repair of the royal clothing and jewelry was unknown, and two attempts were made to clarify the situation which had arisen from what was a fairly casual system which lacked the overall control of, say, a Mistress of the Robes. Unfortunately there is no equivalent body of documents available for Mary's reign with which a comparison of the Wardrobe's condition can be made. In the summer of 1600 a comprehensive list of the Wardrobe of Robes contents was ordered, to include any jewels, and in the autumn an account of all of the Queen's jewelry, whoever held it; clearly the summer Commission had discovered that it was not enough to search through the Wardrobe of Robes, and that various persons had been holding jewelry for the Queen on an informal basis who were not covered by the terms of that Commission. The summer Commissioners produced at least two different inventories, of which survive: two copies of a large inventory which covered the whole contents of the Wardrobe of Robes's two main stores at Whitehall and the Tower; and a

29. E101/427/11 fols.34-38; C/115/L2/6697.
30. SP12/275 No.5 fol.6. John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton, London 13 June 1600. The speech was made on 12 June 1600.
31. B.L. Stowe MS 557 fol.4v. 4 July 1600; SP12/275 No.87 fols.138-141. 6 October 1600.
smaller inventory which seems to record all the items kept in one of the smaller Wardrobes of Robes. Arnold states that the latter was the Wardrobe in the office of the Robes at Blackfriars, but it seems more likely that it was the removing Wardrobe of clothes currently at Court, which would otherwise have been missed out of the search. The autumn Commissioners also produced an inventory, hitherto unrecognised, which lists hundreds of jewels in some four hundred separate entries. For what purpose the inventories were intended is not recorded. It may have been an attempt to find out how much was available for disposal to raise cash. Such a construction is not hard to put on the autumn Commission, which ordered that any jewels too decayed for repair or generally out of fashion were to be sent to the Mint to be coined. All of the inventories of 1600 record the Queen's personal jewels either in the care of her women, or lost for various reasons. The short 1600 inventory contains a partial, retrospective list of lost jewels in the style of the day book of transfer of the Wardrobe of Robes discussed above, so the inventory may well have drawn on a similar book, or books, for its information. Also, as the day book ends in June 1585 and the earliest loss recorded in the short 1600 inventory is in 1586, the latter seems to act as a continuation of the former, which is another reason for believing that a lost day book was the source. If, as I suspect, the short 1600 inventory records items held at the Court rather than at Blackfriars, it would explain how the compilers could use material from a book which would have been in the possession of one of the Court women, as its predecessor had been.

33. Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe, p.335.
34. N.L.S. Adv. MS 31.1.10.
35. C/115/L2/6697. The day book of transfer apparently made its way in Mary Shelton-Scudamore's possession to Holme Lacy, the Scudamore family seat in Herefordshire. In the nineteenth century the house was part of the Duchess of Norfolk's estate, whose documents made their way into the Court of Chancery in 1817 (Arnold, Lost from Her Majesties Back, pp.10-12).
The care of the queens' jewelry was altogether different from the almost casual arrangements made for clothing, which will be described below, and the coffers were always in the hands of particularly trusted women. The coffers seem to have been locked away in a closet or cupboard near the Bed Chamber, with the woman (or women) in charge holding the key. Nothing survives of the day by day administration of the jewels, and it probably relied very much on the memory of the keeper, though to keep track of hundreds of small items, like 'one bodkyn of golde' which Blanche Parry knew was 'remayning in the bed Chamber', must have required some sort of running written record. The value of the collection in the keeper's possession was often enormous: this may have been a domestic duty, but it was very far from insignificant, especially when it is realised that at least one woman had 'a ringe with a seal of tharmes of England' in her care. Nor should it be thought that the overall responsibility for the jewels rested with one of the Privy Chamber men; the women were the sole custodians, and accounted fully when they relinquished the position. Jane Dormer, future Countess of Feria, was responsible during at least the last part of Mary's reign. Katherine Carey Lady Howard and Blanche Parry both kept the jewels in the first half of Elizabeth's reign. The former seems to have specialised in receiving and keeping the jewelry given as New Year's Gifts, probably because she had titular precedence over her fellow Bed Chamberer Mrs Parry, who kept all the other pieces and took delivery of the jewels (especially jewelled buttons) removed from garments by the Queen's laundress prior to

36. The coffers were medium sized, perhaps a foot long, with 'drawing boxes lyned with cotten' to protect the jewelry (B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fol.119v. Warrant dated 27 September 1577). As well as the drawers for larger items, rings were kept on sticks and spare buttons and beads on laces. The finest pieces were kept in individual boxes; for example, a black and white enamelled gold ring with 'a very great table diamonde' and smaller sparks was kept in its own gold box (B.L. RM App.68 fol.23v).

37. B.L. RM App.68 fol.28v.

38. ibid. fol.24.
washing. Mary Radcliffe is known to have handled the jewels in 1573, when she made billments for the Queen, and she formally took over the care of hundreds of items from Blanche Parry in July 1587, remaining in charge until the end of the reign. In the summer of 1600 she held at least thirty-two separate pieces which were in immediate use.

The position was no sinecure. The jewels, because of their value, were an emotive subject, as the Count of Feria found out when he saw Princess Elizabeth just before her accession. He reported to his master that 'she told me that she had been given to understand that the queen our lady had sent your majesty large amounts of money and jewels...She said this with a certain air of authority...If my memory serves me well, I have heard your majesty refer to some jewels which the queen our lady gave you that had once belonged to her father, including a dagger and other precious objects, which your majesty had ordered to be left here in a coffer. It will be necessary for your majesty to inform me what jewels these were, and who was left in charge of them, because none of the jewels of the queen's chamber are missing'. Between the interview, on the 10 November, and the day he wrote to Philip, 14 November, he had been able to ascertain from his betrothed that Mary's jewels were all in order. In the event Philip gave Elizabeth all the items in question, but this was not the last he was to hear on the subject. Elizabeth claimed jewelry which he and his father had given Mary, and he eventually gave in to this demand also. It would seem that

39. B.L. Sloane MS 814. This lists the jewels Lady Howard kept between 1571 and 1587; C/115/L2/6697 pp.73 and 75; B.L. RM App.68 fols.25-v; Blanche Parry's tomb in St Margaret's Westminster describes her as 'Keeper of Her Majesty's Jewels'.
40. C/115/L2/6697 p.42; B.L. RM App.68. 'A booke of soche Jewells and other parcel as are delivered to the charge and custodie of Mrs Mary Radclyffe one of the gentewomen of the Quenes Majesties privie chamber...[which] were parcell of soche Jewells as were in...charge of Mrs Blanche Parry'. July 1587; B.L. Stowe MS 557 fols.102-104.
41. Rodriguez-Salgado and Adams, Feria's dispatch, p.333. 10 November 1558.
42. C.S.P. Spanish, 1554-58 pp.441-2. 'Memorandum of the jewels that lie in a coffer at Whitehall'. November 1558. This list was probably drawn up on Feria's orders, and was annotated by Philip himself.
Elizabeth preserved the best items, despite their associations; amongst the finest pieces recorded in the 1587 inventory were two heavily jewelled tablets, one containing 'the picture of kinge phillipp' and the other 'with a sprede Eagle of diamondes on thone side...and on thother side the Emperors worde standinge vpon a mounte of diamondes'.

The Count of Feria may have been satisfied by his future wife's account of her charge just before Mary's death, but her successors were not so easily reassured. Neither Katherine Carey-Knollys, Margery Williams-Norris nor Blanche Parry, the women appointed to hear Jane Dormer's explanations for the empty spaces in the coffers, were likely to let her off lightly, because, once she had made her formal account, the next incumbent became responsible for any deficiencies which came to light thereafter. It was their search through the coffers and account books, followed by the inquisition, which almost certainly postponed her departure for Spain until well into 1559. Her answers make fascinating reading. Occasionally jewels had been reset, creating a problem of identification when using old inventories, while one item, 'a Towchston tipped with golde', was 'in one of the cofers', and had simply been overlooked during the search. Her response to many items was simply 'I confesse the lacke', so they fell to her cost, while one 'greate diamount' from a steel bracelet was noted as 'fallen owt she knowethe not howe', implying that in the other cases she knew their fate. One 'litle Ringe with a small Rubie' was easily accounted for when memories had been refreshed: 'Mrs Pary confessethe the Quenes Majesti to haue this Juell sent from the late quene for a token', a fact which shows that Parry's association with Elizabeth's jewels pre-dated the accession. Anne Neville Countess of Northumberland was called on to confirm that Mary had given her twenty-three ruby buttons and two saphires, perhaps for her

43. B.L. RM App.68 fol.7.
wedding in June 1558. Mary Southwell's present of a 'longe Girdle of goldsmythes worke chain fashion' caused the greatest problem. The Queen had given it to her in February 1556/7 'in liewe of a longe girdell with friers knottes roughly wrought', and the exchange had later been effected, but it had been 'mysse entred by the Clerke that kepte the booke', which made it appear that Southwell still possessed the first, and better, chain.\textsuperscript{44} This Clerk was probably one of the Master of the Jewel's officers who attended the Court (rather than the central office in the Tower), and may have been the person who kept the daily running record which I conjectured upon earlier. Whatever the system, it was by no means perfect, for when Jane Dormer made her final account she handed over 'an overplus of Jewelles...not charged by her boke of Accompte' totalling thirty six items. Some were of little consequence - like the 'broken Claspe of a booke' or the 'two flaggon chaines' - and constitute the last of the broken bits and pieces to come to light after the search, but which nevertheless had to be accounted for. However, one item should sound very familiar: 'A Tablite of golde with a spred eagle of diamondes on thone side...and on thother side with two pillers of diamontes and the Emperours Worde standinge vpon a mounte of diamontes'. The bulk of the overplus was in fact the jewels to which Philip had forgone his claim in order to placate Elizabeth; he used Jane Dormer's final account to make them over with the minimum of publicity. One wonders how Mary would have felt if she had known that the locked coffer he had left behind in England contained his miniature of 'quene Marie in golde with a boxe of wood' and 'a faire great Ballace hartwise', as well as a collection of loose stones, ropes of pearls, and several outstanding pieces like the 'saphere blewe beinge verie great in a collor of golde'.\textsuperscript{45}

\textsuperscript{44} SP12/8 No.24 fols.51-2. 1559.  
\textsuperscript{45} ibid. No.25 fols.53-54v. 1559.
Most of the deliveries of cloth were made to women of the Privy Chamber under the action of various Great Wardrobe warrants; thus one of the main channels between the Great Wardrobe and the Wardrobe of Robes was through the women.\textsuperscript{46} In many instances the women to whom the material was delivered were also in charge of making it up into garments and accessories, and by these means one can deduce which women had control of which kinds of clothing. For example, Elizabeth Norwich-Carew was in charge of Elizabeth's hoods, Frances Newton-Cobham of her mufflers and forehead cloths, and Jane Hawk-Brussells of her ruffs and cuffs.\textsuperscript{47} There does not seem to have been much distinction made between the different positions of the women when it came to care of these items; of the three examples given, the first two were Ladies of the Bedchamber and the latter a Chamberer, so one may conclude that such tasks were allocated according to the different skills of the women, and not according to their formal status.

Nor were these tasks without their responsibilities. Not only were many of the materials in use the finest that money could buy, but the finished items of clothing were often heavily jewelled; Blanche Parry may have had the care of loose buttons, but while in place they were the responsibility of the women in charge of the garment. Even the humble 'little chayne of golde and pearle' which adorned a muffler had its value.\textsuperscript{48} Because of their employer, the Privy Chamberers did not suffer from the problems with supplies of suitable material and threads which bedevilled most other needleworkers of the period. Not for them the frustrations of Grace Carey-Kirkham's maid, who had 'wrought out her worke, all savyng the sydes. Her thread is all done, so that she is dryven to lay it asyde', because no match could be bought

\textsuperscript{46} For example, of six deliveries of material for the Queen's use made to Privy Chamberers between 15 May 1563 and 30 July 1565, all were by Great Wardrobe warrant (C/115/L2/6697 pp.9-18).

\textsuperscript{47} C/115/L2/6697 pp.7, 8, 9, 11, 31, 40, 41, 44, 46 and 48; ibid. pp.17 and 24; B.L. Egerton MS 3052

\textsuperscript{48} B.L. RM App.68 fol.14.
locally in Devon.\textsuperscript{49} There is no evidence that either Mary's or Elizabeth's women were expected to sew for anyone other than the queen, probably because that duty alone was so time-consuming. For whatever reason, they differed in this from the women of previous queens matrimonial. Before every progress Anne Boleyn was said to have ordered 'a greate quantitie of canvas to be made into shortes and smockes and shetes to thuse of the poore. And to thende the ladyes and maydons of honour attending her highnes might...learne like consideracion of the poore, she commaunded the said ladies and maydons of honour to make a greate nowmbre of the same shurtes, smokkes and shetes with their awne handes'.\textsuperscript{50}

Although their official duties were demanding, not all the sewing undertaken by Privy Chamberwomen was strictly functional, and it was enjoyed as a pastime, although there are no recorded instances of either Mary or Elizabeth joining their women round a piece of work like other queens. This was probably due to the lack of time available to a ruling monarch, as much as inclination; even the most famous embroidering queen, Mary Queen of Scots, seems only to have become really active once she was in captivity in England, with more than enough time on her hands. Katherine of Aragon was said to have spent her life in retirement at Kimbolton in prayer, 'and when she was not this way occupied, then was she and her gentlewomen working with their own hands something wrought in needlework costly and artificial'. But even this was not mere frivolity, for she intended it 'to the honour of God to bestow upon some churches'.\textsuperscript{51} Sewing

\textsuperscript{49} Trevelyan, \textit{Trevelyan papers}, III p.23. William Kirkham to his wife Grace. Feniton, 19 October 1588.

\textsuperscript{50} Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fols.27-v.

\textsuperscript{51} Pocock, \textit{The pretended divorce between Henry the Eighth and Queen Katherine}, p.200; The queen's traditional role in tending to the needy was not forgotten, however. Apart from the Maundy service, and the Almoner's distributions of food and money, there are occasional examples of charity to be found, like the 'two sheets of two breadths' delivered to Susan Clarencieux 'for poor folks at the Savoy' in 1553 (H.M.C. \textit{Salisbury}, I p.130. Arthur Sturton's account).
was a serious business.

The care of jewels and clothes were virtually the only duties of the Privy Chamber women for which any formal records survive, so it is tempting to see a defined structure and intent behind these activities. In fact there was a certain amount of fluidity in the arrangements, displayed in lack of fast rules about which kind of Privy Chamber woman performed which task. An example of this is the care of Elizabeth's furs. In the 1570s and 1580s Blanche Parry was in charge, because furs were generally bracketed with jewels, but it depended very much on who was on hand, for in the autumn of 1587 Mary Radcliffe, the current keeper of the jewels, was helped by Mary Shelton-Scudamore to manhandle the bundles of furs, which had been sent by Ivan the Terrible to Elizabeth, from the Privy Chamber into the removing Wardrobe with the assistance of the Vice-chamberlain John Stanhope, while the Queen gave her emissary Sir Jerome Horsey an audience in the company of Anne Countess of Warwick, Helena Marchioness of Northampton and other 'great ladies'.

Earlier in the same year Radcliffe had taken over the care of the most valuable furs from Parry, including a sable skin with a jewelled gold head, four gold feet, and, of all things, 'a clocke with little diamondes and a Rubie in it', complete with gold key to wind it with. As a rough guide, however, one can say that the more valuable the item to be cared for, the more likely it was one of the more senior women would have its keeping. Chamberers looked after the bed linen, the queens' underwear and small items of clothing, the assorted coffers to store them in, ewers,

52. C/115/L2/6697. For example, one tippet of three sable skins was delivered to Blanche on 26 January 1579/80 (ibid. p.68); Bond, Travels, p.234. They had to move 7 long pieces of material, a large Turkish carpet, 160 sable skins, 6 lynx skins and 2 large ermine gowns.

53. B.L. RM App. 68 fol.21; The gold headed sable skin with a black enamelled, gold collar set with diamonds and rubies, a pearl hanging at and a ruby in each ear, gold feet with sapphire claws (two broken), and a clock set with a diamond, held in the Tower Office of the Jewels in 1553 was almost certainly the same skin (H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.129. Account of Sir Andrew Dudley and Arthur Sturton).
locks for doors and windows, and so on, while Bed Chamberers, Ladies and Gentlewomen cared for the jewels, the main items of clothing and the other valuable knick-knacks which passed through the Privy and Bed Chambers. Although there was no such person as a Mistress of the Robes, it is clear that women mentioned above had far more to do with the queens' clothes than their peers in the Privy Chamber, and probably held the keys to the removing Wardrobes of Robes in the different palaces. Again one sees the essentially informal nature of the arrangements which ensured that daily life in the Privy Chamber ran smoothly.

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The queens did not have fixed meal times, unlike the rest of the Court who were usually expected to eat in Hall at about noon and six in the afternoon. The women did not officially fetch food at other than the main meal-times. This was the job of the Gentleman Ushers of the Privy Chamber who 'do fetche Lyverye for all nyght for the Quene betwene viij of the clocke and nene [in the morning]'. Similarly, breakfast and any bread and drink required during the day was ordered by one of the Gentleman Ushers from a Groom of the Privy Chamber, who fetched it from the Buttery, Pantry or Cellar and brought it to the door of the Privy Chamber where it was tasted, accepted (or rejected), placed on the Cupboard in the Privy Chamber and

54. LC5/33 fols.15 and 145; LC5/33 fol.130. Warrant dated 16 April 1570 for the delivery to Dorothy Bradbelt-Abington of replacement parts for a coffer 'to put our slevis and partelets in'. This may either have been kept in the removing wardrobe, or in her own chamber.

55. B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fols.32v, 37v, 81v and 228v. Warrants dated 4 April and 24 September 1571, 13 April 1575 and 3 April 1588, for the renewing of locks and keys of the removing Wardrobe of Robes's doors at Richmond, Somerset House, Westminster and Richmond again.

56. Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.34.
watched over by the Gentleman Usher until he was 'discharged thereof', in other words, until the food was served to the queen, probably by one of her women. However, the women do seem to have prepared and cooked many of the confections, jellies and hot sweet drinks for which the queens had a great weakness, and which were also standard invalid fare. Although there was a staffed 'pottage place' attached to the Kitchens, the weight of spices it required was nearly equalled by that used by the Ladies of the Privy Chamber, and both used similar proportions of identical spices.

This overlap is hard to explain. Perhaps the pottage place's products were consumed by the same courtiers who made illegal use of the Privy Kitchen in preference to the main Kitchen, and the Privy Chamberers only prepared those items ordered by the queen herself. The fact that the pottage place received its supplies direct from the Spicery, whereas the women collected theirs from the Privy Kitchen would seem to reinforce this possibility. The quantity of spices used was consistently high in Elizabeth's reign, and in one month in the autumn of 1582 a total of £6 13s. 4d. was spent on

Sundrie kyndes of Spices, as Sugar, Cinnamon, Zinzer, Cloves, mace, nutmegges... &c. Comaundd into the privie chamber by Ladies and others for possettes, Cawdelles, &.

This equalled the cost of all the spices (as opposed to groceries) used in the Privy Kitchen in the same accounting period. As well as preparing these hot dishes and drinks the women shared with the men of the Privy Chamber the responsibility of keeping the pepper and loaf sugar for sprinkling on the

57. ibid. fols.25v and 43.
58. SP12/170 No.20, fols.30-30v. November 1584; Some women excelled at this. Grace Sherrington Lady Mildmay was known to be 'one of the most excellent Confectioners in England' (Nichols, Progresses of James I, I, p.96).
59. SP12/156 No.37 fols.61-62v. 'Zinzer' is ginger, a possett is a hot, spiced milk drink curdled with alcohol of some sort (usually ale or wine) and a caudle is a warm spiced gruel. In the sixteenth century the term 'spices' covered not only produce which would be recognised as spices today, but also items like dried fruit (dates, raisins, currants and prunes), preserves (olives and capers), rice, almonds, salad oils (usually olive) and even soap.
queens' food, although whether they carried it about their person or stored it on the Privy Chamber Cupboard is not known. The women alone took delivery of expensive and rare items of food like olives and oranges. The fall in the price of most spices in the latter part of the century despite galloping inflation must have allowed Elizabeth to indulge her passion at less expense. Where two hundred pounds of cinnamon had cost the Spicery £280 in 1565, it only cost £57 17s. 4d. for the same amount in 1581, a huge saving of £222 2s. 8d. It was not reflected in the overall costs of supplying the Household, however, for despite the massive reductions in price the Court as a whole still contrived to consume spices worth £2,140 10s. 8d. in 1588-9.

In Mary's reign the costs were noticeably lower although the prices were much higher, possibly because she lacked her sister's fondness for spicy food. The courtiers' expectations about the conspicuous cost of their food were certainly far lower in Mary's reign, but as prices fell it became more feasible for Household servants to demand the highly spiced food which had previously been a status symbol reserved for none but the most senior.

Unfortunately there are far fewer surviving sources which shed light on the role of the Still-house, the office which provided cordials and the 'swete waters' that were used in both the food and the cosmetics of the queens and their immediate entourage. At the end of Elizabeth's reign the

60. SP12/224 No.59 fols.87-87v. 23 May 1589. By this date the Privy Chamber officers between them were accounting for £60 of the total £227 8s.12d. spent on spices for the Privy Kitchen and Chamber, and the ladies were using the best part of two pounds of assorted spices each month. The latter amount may seem very large, but it should be remembered that most spices had lost much of their flavour in the months spent in transport, so a large amount was required to achieve any discernable effect. Thus it is not impossible that Elizabeth could consume such a quantity by herself; SP12/201 No.65 fol.126. 12 October 1590. Even Elizabeth must have had assistance eating one hundred and twenty oranges and forty-two lemons, let alone five and a half gallons of olives and thirty-one pounds of capers, in one month. Perhaps they were offered to visitors and attendants.

61. SP12/156 No.38 fols.63-64; SP12/225 no.76 fol.124.
62. Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.111v.
63. SP12/36 No.31 fol.62v. 31 March 1565. Among the debts left by Elizabeth Brooke
Keeper of the Stillhouse at Hampton Court (who was also an Esquire for the Body) was related to one of the women of the Privy Chamber and may even have been her husband. The only women who definitely had dealings with the distilled goods were Chamberers; Bridget Chaworth-Carr had at least four bottles of 'swete waters' in her possession in 1584, while Elizabeth Marbery had earlier been the keeper of a large coffer 'with diverse particians in it to put our swet waters in'. The coffer must have been kept handy for use in the Bed Chamber, as its contents were in fact the ineffective precursors of toothpaste, thick syrups used in conjunction with tooth cloths and golden 'tooles for the teeth'.

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Not only the needs of the flesh were satisfied within the Privy Chamber, for the Privy Closet, into which the queens could retire to their private devotions, was counted as part of that suite of rooms. Although the women had no formal position within the Closet - it was staffed wholly by men, of course - they attended the services with their mistress, so even there the queens were not safe from the privileged importunate. Mary Talbot Countess of Northumberland proudly reported that she had successfully presented Mary with an important petition in the Privy Closet at St James'.

Marchioness of Northampton was 40s. due 'to the Quenes Majestis Keper of the still howse' for items provided out of his office.

64. LC2/4/4 fols.47 and 57v. The Queen's woman was Mrs Elizabeth Huggins, who had been in service since the 1580s (B.L. Egerton MS 3052), the Keeper was William Huggins. They gave their name to their apartments in the palace: Anne Clifford records that her aunt, Elizabeth Russell Countess of Bath, 'lay in Huggins lodgings' in 1603 (Clifford, The diaries of Lady Anne Clifford, p.25).

65. B.L. Egerton MS 3052; LC5/33 fol.115. Warrant dated 27 September 1564.

66. B.L. RM App.68 fol.35.

67. L.P.L. MS 3205 fol.6-7v. Mary Countess of Northumberland to her brother Francis Earl of Shrewsbury. Coldharbour, 23 November 1555. The petition was for the
It was accepted by most courtiers that divine service did not always command rapt attention, an attitude reinforced by Elizabeth, who was quite prepared to order Robert Cecil to draft a letter there and then as she sat in the middle of a Sunday service. Neither Court was known for strict piety, although Mary's may have appeared more religious simply because of the number of festivals and holidays associated with the Roman Catholic church. One wholly genuine moment of religious fervour is recorded, but only one woman other than the Queen participated, the occasion being Mary's oath on the sacrament to marry Philip, at which only her closest friend Susan Clarencieux (a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber) and Simon Renard (the Imperial Ambassador) were present. The main service on Sundays served as the social high point of the week, and both queens normally processed to the Chapel Royal attended on by all the women available at Court - not just Privy Chamber staff - while the public, who were allowed to line the route, pressed forward with petitions. The queen's train was born by the most senior woman present on the occasions that were recalled by visitors; in 1585 it was a Countess, in 1598 a Marchioness.

Both queens had received the best education available at the time, and both indulged in scholarship of a kind, although it has been suggested that Mary was at best passive in her approach, whereas evidence for Elizabeth's activity abounds. Scholarship requires books, and the queen's women would have been the obvious choice to care for them while in the Privy Lodgings, but Blanche Parry and Mary Radcliffe are the only women

68. SP12/264 No.54-54 II fols.74-78. Sir Robert Cecil to the Earl of Essex. Court, 25 July 1597.
69. C.S.P. Spanish, 1553 p.328. The oath was taken on 29 October 1553.
70. Klarwill, Foreigners, pp.322-3; Rye, Foreigners, p104. The ladies might be identified as Anne Russell Countess of Warwick and Helena Snakenborg Marchioness of Northampton.
71. Loades, Mary Tudor, p.118.
known to have looked after books, both receiving those which were given as presents and storing those in current use in the Privy Chamber. 72 The value placed upon books was high, and it is no coincidence that it was the keepers of the royal jewels who also cared for the Privy Chamber library. Among various volumes, Radcliffe kept Elizabeth's 'seruice booke', wrought with gold 'and in the middest the Queenes armes ennameled', and a 'booke of priuate praieris in latten' - a insight into how Elizabeth liked to address her God. 73 Many of the books were, of course, presentation copies to be relished but not heavily used: at one point Mrs Parry is known to have had in her possession a book written by Dethicke, the Garter King of Arms, 'conteyning the Armes of the nobel men of Inglande in the tymne of King Richarde the seconde', as well as one bound in gold-embroidered white velvet entitled 'explicatio orationis domini', two books of latin verse and an unidentified book bound in vellum. 74 The women certainly would have cared for any books which Elizabeth called out of the Royal Library to improve her 'perfect readiness in Latin, Italian, French and Spanish', as well as her Greek. 75

There is little evidence of the activities of the Privy Chamber women in educating their juniors (the Maids especially) in a fashion similar to that in noble households throughout England, no doubt because this was an unofficial activity. Nor is there any indication that the Mothers of the Maids were anything more than chaperones and instructors in the domestic arts. It is possible that those women who were interested had access to the library, or were allowed to read any books not currently in use which were still in the Lodgings. The several accounts of Anne Boleyn's gentlewoman

Anne Gainsford, who lighted on a copy of Tyndale's *Obedience of a Christian*


73. B.L. RM App.68 fol.10v. July 1587.

74. B.L. Egerton MS 3052. The Latin verses were by 'Syppio gentilis' and 'Ogerus Bellehachius'.

Man in the future queen’s Privy Chamber and promptly settled down to read it, reveal that it was not considered unreasonable behaviour for such a servant to read her mistresses books.76

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One of the main raisons d’être of the Privy Chamberers was to act as chaperones. Someone was meant to be in attendance on the queen at all times for appearance’s sake, if nothing else. It was possible for the queen to have a private conversation by placing the women out of earshot, or by adopting the practice used by Princess Elizabeth when she had a private interview with the Count of Feria; she gave orders ‘that only two or three women who could speak no other language than English should remain in the room’.77 Court security was a constant headache, especially the problem of the queens’ personal safety. Each queen faced a moment when open rebellion swirled before the Court gates, and although in both cases the queens remained very much in control, some of Mary’s women at least did not display the sang froid of their mistress. One Gentlemen Pensioner remembered that as Wyatt’s forces threatened London ‘wee came uppe into the chamber off presense with ower pollaxes in ower handes, wherewith the ladies weare very fearefulle; sume lamentynge, cryinge, and wrynginge ther handes, sayde, “Alas, there is sume greate mischeffe towarde; we shalle alle be distroyde this nyght! Whatt a syght is this, to se the quenes chamber full of armed men; the lyke was never sene nor harde off”’.78 Two days of waiting took their toll, and when the Court gates had to be slammed in the

77. Rodriguez-Salgado and Adams, Feria’s dispatch, p.330. 10 November 1558.
face of the rebels many 'were so amased that men cryed Treason! treason! in
the court and had thought that the erle of Penbroke who was assayling the
tayle of his enemeys had gon to Wyat. There should ye have seene runninge
and cryenge of ladyes and gentyll women shyting of dores and such a
scryking and noyse as yt was wonderfull to here'.79 So much for the effect of
Mary's resolute speech the previous week, said to have had a galvanising
effect on the population of London, which was also heard by her 'company of
ladies' who had attended her at the Guildhall.80 By 7 February calm had
prevailed, and Mary took up station in the Privy Gallery which ran over the
Court gatehouse, no doubt with some of her women, to await news from the
Gentlemen Pensioners, who had set out from Court to find and fight Wyatt
(which they failed to do).81

Taking the fifty year period as a whole, the risk of assassination was
far greater than being killed in open rebellion. Mary does not seem to have
been under quite the same threat as her sister, possibly because her reign
was too short for such ideas to gain much credence amongst the Protestant
radicals, whereas Elizabeth was seen as being at constant risk from the
guns, knives and poisoned saddles of Roman Catholic extremists, especially
after 1571. The Captain of the Guard and the Sergeant Porters had to be
seen to be of unimpeachable loyalty. This was why Sergeant Thomas Keys
plumbed the depths of disgrace when he treasonably married Lady Mary
Grey, and why only the most trusted men, like Sir William St Loe and
Christopher Hatton, were made Captain. The women were involved because
they were in a position to exercise vigilance, and the Ladies of the Bed
Chamber almost certainly executed the sort of evening search which had

flushed Pierre de Chatelard out of Mary Queen of Scots’s Bed Chamber on two separate nights in January 1562/3.82 There was still very little which could be done against foolhardy men like Thomas Lee, whose plot to seize Elizabeth immediately after the Essex rebellion was foiled because he was betrayed by two confederates.

[The death of the Earl of Essex] was the more hastened, by that bloudy practise of Thom Lea, who not fower dayes after the Erles apprehension, dealt with Sr Henry Nevill sonn in Law to the Lord Treasurer, and with Sr Robert Crosse, assuring them, that he would deale also with some fower other Gentlemen of resolution, who at supper tyme, when the Queen should haue ben in the Privy Chamber should haue taken her, Locked the doores, and as he sillily pretended haue pynned her up there, tyll he had forced her to signe a warrant for the Erles delivery out of the Tower: which vile purpose, being discovered by those two Gentlemen, and avowed to his face, he being that very night watching at the Privy Chamber dore, to discover how he might the next day haue had accesse, he was seased on, and being examined confessed thus much; onely vowing that he would not haue hurt her Royall person, whome God bless, except others would haue forced in vpon her, to hinder that course which he pretended for their delivery: but within fower dayes he receaved the due reward of a Traytor at Tyborne.83

Lee had already decided that the evening would be best for his purpose, because ‘her Majestie about supper tyme is attended with a fewe Ladies, & suche as that ar knowen in Court and haue creddit might easily Come to the Priuie Chamber door without susspcion’.84 The problem of familiar faces which the guard allowed past without question was highlighted in 1599, when Essex returned hot-foot from Ireland to plead his case with the Queen, ‘lighted at the Court Gate Post, made all haste up to the presence, and so through the Privy Chamber, and stayed not till he came to the Queens Bedchamber, where he found the Queen’.85 The Guard let him through without hindrance, although whether this was from fear of a powerful man, or because a great many of them had been in his service prior to entering Elizabeth’s, or both, one will never know.86 Normally the restriction on who

82. Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots*, pp.247-250.
83. L.P.L. MS 604 fol.70v. Robert Cecil to Sir George Carew. London, March 1600/1, received Limerick 16 April 1601.
84. SP12/278 No.61 fol.102. The examination of Thomas Lee. 13 February 1600/1.
86. SP12/278 No.84 fol.146v. The declaration of Sir Ferdinando Gorges. 18 February
could enter the Privy lodgings, which was partly a security measure and partly to maintain privacy for the monarch, worked well because the courtiers co-operated and sought to circumvent its action not through violence, but by straining every nerve to gain access legitimately. There was no way to overcome the relative ease of access to the Court precinct by those who were sufficiently determined, as Katherine Knyvett Lady Paget discovered when her chamber was burgled and £60 in plate taken. Her suite was 'in the privy lodgings', close to the Queen's own Chambers. With good reason, extreme care was taken of the royal clothes and jewels, the burden of which fell on the Privy Chamber women. The Secretary was nominally in charge of state documents, but it would seem that Privy Chamber women were involved in keeping an eye on the queens' personal papers. As Mary lay dying, the Count of Feria tried to obtain from one of her women all the letters Philip had written since their wedding, which the Queen had kept about her, in order to destroy their potentially disastrous contents. As they have not been located, one may assume that he was successful.

It was not only outsiders who committed crimes within the Court, of course. There was a great deal of pilfering, of which the queens' women were not wholly innocent. Of all the one hundred and eleven jewels and precious trimmings which were recorded as 'lost from her Majesties back' in a twenty year period in Elizabeth's reign, only one was ever found and returned, and, because very few people had access to the rooms where most of these items are known to have come adrift from the Queen's clothes, the finger of

1600/1.

87. The Earl of Leicester was furious when Simon Bowyer, the Gentleman Usher on duty, turned back one of his clients (Naunt, Fragmenta Regalia, p.17). The Queen supported Bowyer, as she decided that he had interpreted the regulations in a reasonable way, and had turned back the client in all innocence, not as a deliberate slight to the Earl.

88. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.222.

suspicion has to point to the Privy Chamber staff in the first instance.\textsuperscript{90} There must have been a strong temptation for finders to become keepers where small, easily concealed and valuable items like buttons and aglets were concerned. Larger items were 'lost...at the voyd' of the Court, like the 'gylt standynge spice plate with antyke worke' which went missing the night of the removal from Winchester after Mary's marriage in 1554.\textsuperscript{91} Large quantities of less valuable items also vanished in the normal course of events.\textsuperscript{92}

The remaining duty of the Privy Chamber staff fell to them because they were the only suitable companions and chaperones for the queens. They acted as nurses, both for their mistress and for each other, an extension of the normal role which such women undertook in every aristocratic household. This was not without its risks, of course; Mary Dudley-Sidney was scarred for life because she nursed Elizabeth through smallpox in 1562 and then contracted it herself. The infection probably entered the Privy Chamber with Margaret St John Countess of Bedford, who was killed by the disease a few weeks earlier after a visit to Court. It was normal for pregnancy to be treated as an illness at this time, and when Mary thought she was pregnant she soon retired into her Privy Chamber and hardly saw anyone other than her women, a situation which continued when first doubt and then despair had set in. It must have been a thankless task to nurse as obstreperous a patient as Elizabeth, who hated to admit defeat in the face of illness and prided herself on her good health. Once she made

\textsuperscript{90} This remarkable statistic has gone unnoticed hitherto. The item was a silk point with two gold black-enamelled tags, lost in the Privy Lodgings at Whitehall on 24 January 1580/1, and found and returned in the next six days (C/115/L2/6697 p.72).

\textsuperscript{91} Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.155v.

\textsuperscript{92} ibid. fol.155. For example, three napkins were 'lost' in the Privy Chamber in early 1553/4. Two napkins and a towel were lost from Susan Clarendon's chamber in the at the same time, though whether she was disinclined to return them or whether they were stolen by an outsider is not clear.
a tremendous fuss about having hogsheads of Buxton water fetched
specially, but when the moment of bathing actually arrived 'she seemeth not
to make any great account of it', and even lost her temper because her
orders had been followed, all because 'somebody told her there was some
bruit of it about, as though her Majesty had had a sore leg', which, in fact,
was true.\textsuperscript{93} Her vanity may have hastened her end, for when Sir Roger
Wilbraham had his last audience with her 'not 5 daies before she beganne to
sicken, at lest in mynd,...in extreme cold wether', she drew his attention to
'her sommer like garments, contemning furres to withstand winter cold'.\textsuperscript{94}
Both queens were nursed in their final illnesses by their women, who
remained with them to the last. Elizabeth was 'by fitts troubled with
melancholy some three or four monethes' before her death, then for a
fortnight she was 'extreame oppressed with it, in soe much that shee refused
to eate anie thing, to receive any phisike, or admit any rest in bedd', until
the last couple days of her life, when the Earl of Nottingham 'got her to bed'.
On the evening of her death, after several hours of very public deathbed
prayers led by Archbishop Whitgift, with courtiers squashing into the Privy
Lodgings to hear, everyone went to bed 'all but her women that attended
her', and it was in their company alone that she breathed her last.\textsuperscript{95} In con-
trast, her sister had kept her Bed Chamber for over two months before her
death, retreating there at the end of August 1558 with influenza, which had
reached the Privy Chamber in July, or possibly earlier.\textsuperscript{96} The day of her
death was not marked by a throng of courtiers eager to hear her last profes-
sion, indeed many of them were already in Hatfield, and she died during

\textsuperscript{93} H.M.C. \textit{Salisbury}, II p.159. Leicester to Burghley. 8 August 1577.
\textsuperscript{94} Scott, \textit{The journal of Sir Roger Wilbraham}, p.57. As already seen, she possessed a large
quantity of valuable furs.
\textsuperscript{95} Bruce, \textit{Manningham's diary}, p.146. 23 March 1602/3; Mares, \textit{Memoirs of Robert
Carey}, p.59. 21 March 1602/3.
\textsuperscript{96} Clifford, \textit{Life of Jane Dormer}, p.69. Jane Dormer caught the disease in July, and may
even have infected Mary.
Mass, attended only by her women, the celebrant, and his assistant.

However hazardous, the queens' ill health did not necessarily work to their womens' disadvantage. For example, on one occasion Elizabeth stayed in 'her chamber thes three dayes, and is very unapt to be dealt wyth', for, 'being trobled with an extreeme cowld and defluxion into her eyes, so as she cannot indure to reade any thing'. During that time only her women had constant access.

There was a steady consumption of the royal apothecaries' wares by constantly ailing queens and servants alike, and there was the usual marked predeliction for purges, a form of preventative medicine intended to cleanse the system of the evil humours which could cause disease. There is no contemporary record of either queen taking a purge, but the recipe for one survives, a fearsome concoction which 'purgeth Coller, and melancolly, helpeth much the consumption of the Lungs, Cureth the Liver, and strenghneth the Backe. Also, it Cleereth the Kidneis, and breaketh the winde Collicke, purgeth yll humors, and may be taken at all times without any offence: this was made use off by Queene Elizabethe twise a yeere'.

There seems to have been some sort of sick pay for the Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber, who received half of their normal wages, and it is probable that similar allowance was made for waged female Privy Chamberers. Provision for the ill did not stop there, for the Privy Kitchens were geared to


98. B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C XIV No.22 fol.71v. 'Item to the Potycarys vpon bookes signed by the Quenys Majestes Phesicons for divers drugges perfumes Water & ther potycary Stiffe by them boughte & delyvered aswell for her Majestes won persone As for divers gent and gentill Women of the pryvye chambr As more perticularlye apereth by the same bookes...100 marks'.

99. Bodl. Ashmole MS 1402 II. It contained 'Sipresses Nutts', senna, rhubarb, various seeds and dried fruit, all boiled up in water and taken in quarter-pint doses. It would have had a dramatic laxative effect, but unusually contained nothing which would have done active harm.
providing food for 'sikke folkes'. Visiting women who were unwell often remained at Court, for example Frances Sidney Countess of Sussex, who was bedevilled with ill-health. She was reported to have been 'long sick and weak' in the spring of 1571, suffering from something like a heavy cold in the winter of 1575, and 'very sick' in 1582, although she was fortunately absent when she fell prey to smallpox in the summer of 1571. At the same time as the Countess of Sussex was ill in 1582, one of the Chamberers, Katherine Paston-Newton, was 'very sore sick of an ague', and by the following week Anne Herbert Lady Talbot had caught it. With so many people in such a small area, it was inevitable that illnesses could spread easily.

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Sport was already recognised as a means to preserve health, the exercise recommended ranging from early morning aerobics ('walke 20 paces er yow comb your head. Jump of your tiptoes downe backewarde...stretche or ruske your bodie') to more strenuous activities, like hunting. The latter was also the main aristocratic entertainment of the day, and it has been said

100. B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C XIV fol.71v. Treasurer of the Chamber's account for 1558; Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fols.69v and 53v.
102. Ibid. p.134. Henry Harvey to Roger Manners. The Court, 3 April 1582; ibid p.135. Roger Manners to Edward Earl of Rutland. 9 April 1582. They could have been suffering from the influenza which killed Lady Talbot's husband in the August of 1582. Katherine Paston-Newton was another particularly unhealthy woman much given to 'fittes of ague' (ibid.p.192. Same to same. Court 20 March 1585/6).
103. Bodl. Ashmole MS 1375. Other 'Profitables counsailes for healtthe' included listening to some music in the morning, rubbing the teeth with red wine vinegar and avoiding 'ill smells hurtfull to ye braine'.

that Elizabeth was 'a mightier hunter than Henry VIII of any of the kings before him', but it is hard to substantiate such a claim.\textsuperscript{104} When Elizabeth was reported as 'riding abroad every fair morning' one autumn, the chances are that it was to take the air, and not to hunt, for reasons which will become apparent.\textsuperscript{105} Records showing the frequency of royal hunts before Henry VII's reign are sparse, and there are precious few even by the late sixteenth century. Both queens maintained the hunting departments of the Household, but this alone does not constitute enough evidence to piece together how much each queen hunted in a season, nor who attended upon them. One should bear in mind that the term 'hunting' did not refer solely to \textit{par force} deer hunting, the idea conjured in the modern mind by the word, but applied to different styles and levels of refinement of the slaughter of a broad cross-section of English wildlife. It has also been forgotten that the sex of the hunter customarily dictated the style adopted. When aristocratic women in the sixteenth century went hunting they would usually set off for the nearest vantage point to enjoy what today would be called drive shooting. Drives were looked on askance by (male) hunting purists because of the artificial circumstances imposed by the necessary emparking of the animals to ensure a supply of bow fodder at will. On the Continent parks were seen as something peculiarly English, 'made onely for the pleasure of ladyes and gentylwomen, to shote with the longe bowe, and kyll the sayd beastes'.\textsuperscript{106} They were usually sited close to the owner's residence so the sport could be watched from the building, such as at St James's Palace, and often there were purpose built scaffolds or stands at strategic points; one of the few to survive is the building now called the Queen of Scot's Bower at Chatsworth House in Derbyshire. Another source of confusion: a 'stand' could also

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{104} Rackham, \textit{The last forest}, p.51.
  \item \textsuperscript{105} H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.143. Roger Manners to Edward Earl of Rutland. Windsor (Court), 29 October 1582.
  \item \textsuperscript{106} Pannier, \textit{Le Débat des hérauts}, pp.5-6.
\end{itemize}
refers to a naturally advantageous spot.

**Princess**  Then, forester my friend, where is the bush
That we must stand and play the murderer in?

**Forester**  Hereby, upon the edge of yonder coppice --
A stand where you may make the fairest shoot.107

Occasionally local traditions, if used carefully, can fill in the lacunæ in our knowledge of the queen’s hunting habits; Elizabeth is said to have used the hilltop hunting grandstand built by Henry VIII at Chingford in Epping Forest, a three-storey building without walls used both to shoot from during drives and to watch *par force* hunting.108 During Mary’s reign more mention is made of Philip’s hunting than Mary’s, but even this is not conclusive. It is even less clear how many of the queens’ women accompanied them on these occasions. A woodcut in Turberville’s *The noble art of Venerie* shows Elizabeth standing on a scaffold accompanied by three of her women, one of whom is holding her train and thus is presumably one of the Maids. Although the Master of the Hounds is shown presenting hart *fumées* for inspection for the Queen to decide whether that hart would be pursued, the scaffold and the elaborate clothing make it clear that she and her women are going to watch the hunt, rather than take part on horseback. However, Turberville’s books also show Elizabeth engaged in *par force* hart-hunting (hunting on horseback with running hounds), and hunting heron with goshawks.109


109. S.T.C. 24328. Anon., *The noble arte of venerie or hunting*. London, 1575; S.T.C. 24324. George Turberville, *The booke of faulconrie or hauking...collected out of the best authours*. London, 1575. Three woodcuts from these books are reproduced in Arnold, *Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe*, pp.115 and 141. Elizabeth is always depicted riding side-saddle. Goshawks and sparrowhawks were considered to be womens’ birds, and they were trained by astringers rather than falconers. The bird (and hence the astringer) had been looked down on in England because it was traditionally used for mean quarry (ground game and low-flying birds), but in Spain goshawks were prized for their rarity, and they were considered to be heron specialists (Cummins, *Medieval Hunting*, pp.193-4 and 220). I would suggest that the woodcut in Turberville’s *Book* showing a royal heron hunt records a change of attitude in England brought about by the
Hunting was a great deal more than a simple, healthy pastime. It was a sociable activity, and was thus yet another occasion when the queens were on show, hence my suspicion that they would never have ventured forth unattended. It was frustratingly difficult to restrict the numbers of enthusiastic courtiers; Mary was forced to make a regulation which stipulated that only those specifically sent an invitation by means of a Gentleman Usher should attend on her when she went 'furthe in walkinge huntinge hawkinge or other disportes'. Bitter experience had shown that the moment she set foot outside the Privy Chamber there was a gaderene rush to join the party, either to attract her attention or to be seen to be participating and thus receiving the Queen's special favour, all of which not surprisingly meant that her pursuits were 'let hindered and empeched'.

This would have been enough to dampen anyone's spirits, and there is little evidence that either queen actually enjoyed field sports, but rather participated from a sense of propriety. In her middle-age Elizabeth evinced scant enthusiasm, and regarded such exercise purely in terms of health. One Earl was told that 'she knoeth you are lyke her in that she is not delyghted with anye sport much, yet for your health sake...she would you shuld enforce yourselfe to such exercyses as agre best with you'.

At Court everyone was meant to hunt with the queens' own animals, and all other dogs, hawks and fishing tackle were banned not only from the Court precincts, but also from the chambers of those who lived out of Court. Poaching must have been a problem if a Court regulation had had to be formulated. The only exceptions to the rule were 'some fewe smale

Spanish courtiers in the 1550s. Spanish influence combined with the increased importance of the traditionally feminine styles of hunting, as a result of fifty years of queens regnant, may well have improved the status of gos- and sparrowhawks in this country permanently.

110. Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.42.
spaniellles for Ladies', which were obviously lap-dogs rather than hunting
dogs; a rare instance of the Court women receiving special treatment.112
They were not alone in keeping pets, for one of the duties of the Privy
Chamber staff was to tend the queens' collections of small animals. Most
were probably presents, although on at least one occasion Elizabeth
persuaded a doting owner, Dr Boleyn, to part with a pet dog, 'and he should
have what soever he would aske'.113 In one two-year period Elizabeth's Privy
Chamber housed a parrot and a monkey, cared for first by Dorothy Bradbelt
and later by Katherine Carey-Knollys, whilst Blanche Parry looked after 'oure
muske catt'.114

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The staff were expected to take a leading part in of many of the
queens' entertainments, and in some instances, to help organise them.
Elizabeth liked going to friends' dinner parties in London 'covertly', and it fell
to the women of the family to arrange them, as when Elizabeth Fitzgerald
Lady Clinton rustled up a suitable supper at very short notice.115 Both
queens particularly enjoyed dancing, indeed Mary's passion for it led Prince
Edward to pen a formal rebuke at the instigation of one of his tutors.116
Elizabeth was just as enthusiastic, and when she was not sprightly enough
to dance in public herself she happily watched her ladies perform; one

112. Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.33v.
113. Bruce, Manningham's diary, p.149. Having checked that she intended to stand by her
promise, he asked for the dog back.
114. LC5/33 fol.s.15, 50, 51, 71, 91 and 118. Warrants dated 20 October 1562, 4 May and
2 November 1563, and 31 May and 27 September 1564. These duties do not seem to
equate with the womens' status. The latter two were Ladies of the Bedchamber, but Lady
Knollys had taken over the care of the monkey from a Chamberer.
Christmas it was noted that ‘almost every Night she is in the Presence, to see the Ladies dawnce the old and new cowntry Dawnces, with the Taber and Pipe’. Another time ‘the women did dance before her whilst the cornets did salute from the gallery’, and although she was extremely tired she ‘smiled at the ladies, who in their dances often came up to the stepp on which the seat was fixed to make their obeysance, and so fell back into their order again’.

Courtiers also held informal dances to pass the time - and to practice - not only to entertain the queens; Robert Carey ‘found the lords and ladies dancing’ in the Presence Chamber one Boxing Day, even though the Queen was not present. There were improptu gatherings, when there was dancing \( \textit{à la folie} \), and even when the Court was at its busiest Sir Robert Cecil surprised a party of senior courtiers making the most of a sunny afternoon: ‘for this is true which I will tell you’, he wrote, ‘that my lord Chamblain with my lady Sheffield and my lord Cobham with my lady Marquis and divers other of our Cortiers dansed Contry danses at mrs Walsingams now dubbed a Lady for 4 houres together on a Green, tyll my Lady Sheffield allthoug doing it in good sadnes had never a legg to stand on. My lady Marquis surely you know danses brauely, and he that dansed with her very lettily’.

The queens also employed professional performers like Lucretia ‘the dauncing Mayde’, and several dwarves, among them Ippolyta the Tartaryan and Thomasine de Paris and her sister Prudence. Although neither

119. SP12/264 No.54 fols.74-75v. Sir Robert Cecil to the Earl of Essex. Court, 25 July 1597. The partners were George Lord Hunsdon the Lord Chamberlain with Ursula Tyrwhit Lady Sheffield, and Henry Lord Cobham with Helena Marchioness of Northampton.
120. LC2/2 fol. 48; LC5/33 fols.10-11; B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fols. 145v-6 and 149v; There is some question whether Ippolyta was a child or a dwarf. The latter is more likely, as Elizabeth gave her 103s. 1d. at the christening of her child (SP12/35 No.41 fol.93v. Michaelmas 1564). Between them the service of Ippolyta and Thomasine
Elizabeth nor Mary had had the benefits of a first-hand French musical education like Anne Boleyn or Mary Queen of Scots, they both played instruments themselves and appreciated musical talent in others. Mary employed three singers in the Privy Chamber at £6 13s. 4d. per annum, which was more than the majority Household staff received. Elizabeth had inherited some of her mother's skill, of whom it had been said that 'Besides singing like a syren, accompanying herself on the lute, she harped better than King David and handled cleverly both flute and rebec', and although Elizabeth did not have Privy Chamber singers she did employ, among others, William More the 'blynde harper' and Mr Mathias the lutenist in the Privy Chamber. It was the men of the Privy Chamber, above all Ferdinando Heyborne-Richardson and Edward Darcy, who made a name for themselves as musicians outside the immediate confines of the Privy Chamber, and although some of the women were musically gifted there was nothing which could compare with the polished, professional approach of the singing women of Ferrara.

As virtually everything a monarch did had greater significance than the simple act itself, it was natural that the queens' pastimes should be construed in a political manner. Elizabeth's 'pleasures' as listed in 1600 not only included that which we would consider today as enjoyable - 'shewes, triumphs and such like, great mariages with any of her maids or Ladyes publiquely in the Court, and comedies, shewes [and] devises' - but also political events like 'the entertainement of Ambassadors publicquely...vizt the Duke of Bullion who cost her every day 100li, besides the charge of his solemnne entertainement, likewise the Danish Ambassador and others of

spanned the whole reign: 'Mrs Thomasine' was still in service when she attended Elizabeth's funeral (LC2/4/4 fol.69v).

121. Sh.R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.125.
123. See Newcomb, Ferrara.
these'.  

The queens' behaviour on all these occasions was dissected and scrutinised - behavioural psychology flourished at the Tudor Court. After one Christmas near the end of Elizabeth's reign it was reported that,

"The Queen hath so played ye goodfellow amongst us these hollidayes at dansings and musick, that the Courtiers (which make her lookes thayr kalendars) made a conjecture by her goode disposition of goode newes owt of Irland."  

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The twelve days of Christmas were the focus of the Court year. It was the time when everyone who had aspirations made strenuous efforts to be allowed to come to pay their respects to the queen and join in the festivities. Anne Clifford treasured the memory of her first visit to Court: 'In Christmas I used to go much to the Court and sometimes did I lie at my Aunt Warwick's chamber on a pallet'. One of the high points was the exchange of presents with the queen on New Year's day, although by 1553 this was by no means an informal occasion, nor was the present expected to be a spontaneous expression of true feeling - such presents were the exception. The present was as much a statement of loyalty on New Year's day, as it was throughout society for the rest of the year. For the aristocracy it had deteriorated into presenting purses of gold to the queen, the weight of which was determined by convention, and in return the queen gave an appropriate weight of silver-gilt plate. Most Bishops and senior male Chamber staff gave cash, whereas the queen's women and lower ranking Chamber and Household staff gave presents. Neither reign saw any major change in this, although there

127. The standard procedure for someone of the rank of an Earl was as follows:
were of course exceptions, and it seems that as Elizabeth’s taste became better known more senior Courtiers began to give presents.\textsuperscript{128} It was quite usual for those who could not attend in person to send their present in advance to one of the Privy Chamber women.\textsuperscript{129} The delivery of the cash, in the traditional coloured silk purses, was made to one of the senior members of the male staff, either to the Lord Chamberlain or occasionally to Henry Seckford the Keeper of the Privy Purse: in 1583/4 Henry Seckford collected all £838 7s., but in 1574/5 the Lord Chamberlain took the collection. The presents of jewelry or clothing were delivered to the appropriate woman of the Privy Chamber. One year Blanche Parry was handed five books, and Katherine Carey-Howard took delivery of all the jewelry - three heavily ornate necklaces, four jewels, two bracelets, a jewelled attire, twenty pairs of aglets, two jewelled bodkins and a bezoar stone, besides a heavily spangled lawn doublet and an orange taffeta waistcoat covered with small metal plates and gold lace - although Mary Shelton-Seudamore was responsible for the tiny gold spade, garnished with mother-of-pearl and diamonds, which the Queen had immediately had pinned to her ruff. Apart from the spade, Mary cared for all the smaller cloth items - smocks, coifs, cushion covers, ‘swete badges’ (the origin of the modern lavender bag), lawn veils, handkerchieves - and

\begin{quote}
You must buy a new purse of about v s price, and put thereinto xx peeces of new gold of xx s a piece, and go to the Presence-Chamber, where the Court is, upon New-Yere’s day, in the morninge about 8 o’clocke, and deliver the purse and the gold unto my Lord Chamberlin, then you must go down to the Jewell-house for a ticket to receive xvii s vi d as a gift to your paines, and give vi d there to the box for your ticket; then go to Sir William Veal’s office, and shew your ticket, and receive your xvii s vi d. Then go to the Jewell-house again, and take a piece of plate of xxx ounces weight and marke it, and then in the afternoone you may go and fetch it away, and then give the Gentleman who delivers it you xl s in gold, and give to the box li s and to the porter vi d.
\end{quote}

(Nichols, \textit{Progresses of James}, I, p.471); an earlier example shows that the money was presented in crimson silk purses trimmed with gold which cost 22d. each, and the queen’s present was delivered on 7 January by one of the Sewers, rather than collected on the day. The man making the gift, an Earl, gave £10 and received a gilt cup in return (H.M.C. \textit{Rutland}, XII App.iv p.103).

\begin{footnote}
128. Arnold, \textit{Queen Elizabeth’s Wardrobe}, p.93; By the 1580s it was widely held that if a senior Court lady gave cash it was tantamount to an insult (see footnote 101).
\end{footnote}
any food, including the mysterious present from Morgan the Queen's apothecary of 'ij pottes of preserved things'. Jane Hawke-Brussels was in charge of the six ruffs, interestingly all presented by women, and Bridget Chaworth of the miscellaneous items - two ivory combs, a spangled scarf, two pairs of perfumed gloves, three embroidered hair brushes, and from the musicians Piero Lupo and Marco Antonio four small bottles of 'swete waters'. The identity of five women who were on duty on the morning of 1 January 1583/4 is thus known to us - a Lady of the Bedchamber, a Lady of the Privy Chamber, two Chamberers and one Maid of the Privy Chamber respectively.

The strenuous efforts which went into selecting the perfect New Year's gift were made easier if one had access to the queen's women, for they were in the best position to judge the queen's taste or current fancy. In the year in question Elizabeth Countess of Shrewsbury presented a French gown of 'black...Taphata striped with golde and sylver Layd abought with a pasment of venice golde lynced with white Taphata', one of the Queen's favourite colour combinations. She probably found it relatively easy to choose the right gift because of her own experience serving in the Privy Chamber until her third marriage in 1567, and she could get information from her old friends who were still in service, as well as engaging the assistance of her half-sister Elizabeth Leche, a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, the wife of Anthony Wingfield one of the Gentleman Ushers. It is rare to find lengthy details of the preparations and planning, but in the autumn of 1575 Elizabeth Wingfield was absent from Court, and fortunately her husband's letters to

130. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.102; B.L. Egerton MS 3052. A bezoar stone was beige-coloured precious stone 'so called because it is bred in the maw of a goat called a Bezaar' (John Minsheu, The Guide into Tongues. London, 1617. Quoted in Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe, p.360). All the larger items of clothing - kirtles, French gowns, nightgowns and the like - were taken straight to the removing Wardrobe of Robes by the Yeoman Ralph Hope.
131. LC2/4/3 fols.53v and 54v.
her have survived. The Countess had asked them for suggestions for her New Year's gift, and Anthony reported,

I have Dylte with my lade off sysex and my lade cobame Fore my ladys gyfte onto the quene, and my lady off sousex opynneone was that my lade should have gevene the fayere bede that my lady makes to hur hangynges and my lady co[cham] would in nowyes that ytt should be so, but would have my lade geve forte pound in monne, or a coupe off gould aboute that walleur but in onne wyes my lady off sysex would have my lade geve a safegard and a clouke off sume wacheche sattyne or peche coullore, and inbroyderyd with sume perete flowares and leves with sondery coullares made with gould sponggulles and sylke. thes fantaskecalle thynges wyll be moore exsyptyd thane coupe or Juell and my lady off susex would gavve waltare fyeses to have the Dowynge off ytt.132

The Countess chose to follow the advice of Frances Sidney, 'my lade off sysex', rather than the rather conventional suggestion by Frances Newton-Cobham, but because of the time it took to relay the initial information to the Countess and for her reply to reach Wingfield it meant that it was mid-December before Wingfield could approach Frances for details. She still thought wachet the best colour (although the Countess of Shrewsbury seems to have suggested ash), guarded or trimmed with carnation-coloured velvet 'imbroyderyd with pansys off all fasyenes so that in them be all mannar off coulloures and to be trumed with gleysterynge gould and sylver to the byste shoue'. Frances had her reasons for this choice; 'she sayes ye quene likes byst off that floware and to have the satten a lyte wacheytt becaues she hathe no garmente off that collore all Rede and she hathe sondery garmentes off as[h] coullore all Rede and begines to be wery off the coullore'.133 No doubt too many people had noticed that ash was one of the Queen's favourite colours, which meant that, now she was less enamoured of it than she had been, those who could find out what was likely to be more welcome.

132. Folger X.d.428 (127). 13 October 1575. The 'fayre bede' were bed hangings, a 'safegard' was a protective skirt worn when riding to keep clothes clean, and 'wacheche' was wachet, a duck-egg blue colour. Walter Fyshe had been the Queen's tailor since her accession, when he had made her coronation robes (LC2/4/3 fol.5 and AO1 Roll 1 Bundle 2339).

were at a definite advantage. The months spent in choosing the present meant that there was only a fortnight left in which to have it made, but it was completed in time and 'the color and strange triminge of the garments with the redie and grat cost betowed upon yt hath caused her [the Queen] to geve out such good speches of my lord and your ladyship as I never hard of better...she toulde my lord of Lester and my lord chamberlen that you had geven her such garments thys yere as she never had any so well lyked her'. Any present was a reaffirmation of the inferior's loyalty and affection, and a well received present could only reflect well on the giver; 'that good nobell copell', said the Queen as she purred over her astonishing new safeguard and cloak, 'show in all things what love the[y] bere me'. It was for this reason that most people wished to be one of the company in the Privy Chamber on New Year's Day; what better moment to reap the benefit from such praise? Even so, at least one half of the 'nobell copell' forgot the lesson, and a decade later, as New Year approached rapidly, her sister had to warn her that 'I went to my lady cobham and we longe consarde of the matter. I se by her she was muche against yow...givinge money'. Despite the lack of time in which to create something herself, it would still be better to buy 'any fine reare thinge' than resort to giving cash; 'truly if yow honour had geven money I feare yt woulde have bene ell liked'.

134. Ash may have become fashionable when the Queen was seen wearing a rich gown of the latest design in that colour sent specially from France in 1574 (B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fol.72. Warrant dated 14 October 1574). The 'Darnley' or 'Cobham' portrait, one of the most important portraits of that decade, painted in about 1574 shows her in an elaborate ash gown with a woven design (National Portrait Gallery). The conjecture that she had had enough of the colour by the end of 1575 may be born out by the gift she made to one of her Chamberers of a 'skarfe of Ash cullor cypers with ij edges of gould & Sylver'. The Chamberer, Bridget Chaworth, then gave it away to George Tenecre. It was probably too unfashionable to wear at Court once the Queen's dislike had become known. (PCC 58 Harrington. 2 April 1591).

135. Folger X.d.428 (130). Elizabeth Leche-Wingfield to Elizabeth Countess of Shrewbury. Court, 2 January n.a. but evidently 1575/6.


137. Folger X.d.428 (131). Elizabeth Leche-Wingfield to Elizabeth Countess of Shrewbury. 4 December n.a. possibly 1585.
Most people were gripped by anxiety the first time they presented a New Year gift of any kind, and Thomas Bentham, the newly created Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, was no exception. Fearful of offending the Queen, he enquired of Katherine Champeronon-Asteley, through their mutual friend Robert Cole, rector of St Mary-le-Bow, how large his gift should be, and the message came back that 'for a certantye then to prepayre twenti marks in gold'. Because of his absence from Court he had to ask Cole to find it for him, and was left with the problem of organising his 'iust recompence'.

Of course, people did not only give generously to the queen at New Year. Every opportunity was used to express loyalty and appreciation with a thoughtful present, especially during progress. Even St Valentine's day was part of the phenomenon; Elizabeth was given 'a valentynye of golde being a rosemarye brauche', for example. Gift-giving was widespread at Court as it was throughout society, and the queens' ladies were no exception. Mary Radcliffe and Dorothy Stafford-Stafford were both given presents by the same man because they both had worked hard on his behalf, in Mary's case doing 'daily good offices' for him with the Queen. This was an expression of client loyalty and thanks as much as a bribe for services to come.

Christmas was not the only time in the cycle of religious holidays when the Privy Chamber women had a role in Court ceremony. The Maundy Thursday service had a long medieval history. During it the monarch imitated Christ by washing the feet of the number of poor men, or in the queens' cases poor women, corresponding to the monarch's age. Both Mary and Elizabeth maintained the tradition, and both received paintings which

139. B.L. RM App.68 fol.33.
recorded the ceremony, Mary in 1556 and Elizabeth in about 1565. The latter, a miniature probably by Levina Teerlinc, shows the Queen about to embark on washing the feet of a long row of women, while her ladies assist, one bearing her train, one carrying a large flat plate, and the others lined up behind the Queen with their hands clasped in front of them. All the Court ladies, and the Queen, are shown wearing long white aprons. At the start of her reign the accounts reveal that Elizabeth wore a plain apron and carried a linen towel, but by 1585 both were trimmed heavily with gold and silver lace, and the apron fastened with pearl and gold buttons, perhaps the result of an increase in Elizabeth's self-confidence, and not just a change in taste; the service was not the most reformed, and it may be that at the beginning of her reign Elizabeth deliberately shunned the rich, Catholic spectacle which had hitherto characterised it, even when her mother had performed it. The Maundy was not the only medieval, quasi-religious ceremony which was performed. Mary touched for scrofula, or the King's Evil, and also revived another form of healing, in which the first Good Friday offering made by the Queen was converted into cramp-rings, which were then distributed to sufferers of epilepsy, convulsions, rheumatism and similar conditions once the rings had been blessed by being rubbed between the Queen's fingers. The prayers composed for the ceremony during her reign have survived in a manuscript with illuminations also attributed to Levina Teerlinc. Elizabeth also touched for scrofula, and on one occasion

142. All the clothing used in the service, including the Privy Chamber staffs' aprons, was issued under the Maundy warrants of the Great Wardrobe (rather than the Wardrobe of Robes) early in the year. For example four were dated in March, two in February, and one on 27 January 1572/3 (B.L. Egerton MS 2806 fols.1, 11v, 21, 28v, 39, 50v and 63v).
143. LC5/34 fol.16. Warrant dated 28 March 1567; B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fol.205v. Warrant dated 16 April 1585; Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fol.25. c.1535.
145. Westminster Cathedral. 'Certain prayers to be used by the queenes heighnes in the consecration of the cramp rynges'; Strong, *Artists of the Tudor Court*, pp.53-4.
'laid her hands on the King's Evil with which 8 were afflicted', but complained about the 'swart water' she was proffered to wash her hands in afterwards. Her successes were held up as proof of the signal failure her excommunication, proclaimed in the Papal Bull *Regnans in Excelsis* of 1570, thereby proving its illegitimacy, but she discontinued the distribution of cramp rings, although curiously she does seem to have worn one herself. Both queens were attended on by their women on these occasions, but unfortunately no first-hand account survives from which one can ascertain whether the women assisted with the proceedings, or were merely passive observers.

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It was well understood how important the impression created by state occasions was, and the queens' women played an integral part throughout the period. It was a wise queen who appeared 'most royally furnished, both for her persone and for her trayne, knowing right well that in pompous ceremonies a secret of government doth much consist, for that the people are naturally both taken and held with exteriour shewes. The rich attire, the ornaments, the beauty of the Ladyes, did add particular graces to the solemnity, and held the eyes and hearts of men dazeled between contentment and admiratione'.

There is scant record of the part played by Mary's women at the most important state event of her reign next to her coronation, her wedding. She

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146. H.M.C. *Bath*, IV p.197. Earl of Hertford's diary. Tuesday 15 May 1582; H.M.C. *Hatfield*, X pp.168-7. The arguments for English precedence over Spain during the peace negotiations. May 1600; B.L. RM App.68 fol.22v. In 1587 Elizabeth had in use 'one Crampe ringe of golde'.

147. *Bruce, Annals*, p.15.
would have been accompanied by her women and a number of appropriate aristocratic wives when she left for Bishop’s Waltham on 16 June 1554, to spend the weeks waiting for Philip to make landfall at Southampton fifteen miles away.148 A few would have chaperoned Mary at her first meeting with Philip at ten o’clock at night on 24 July, when they ‘talked together half an hour’, and all would have turned out for his formal reception the next day. The wedding took place in Winchester Cathedral on 25 July, beginning at ten thirty in the morning with Mary’s entry through the west door, followed by ‘a great company of ladies and gentlewomen very richly apparelled’, Elizabeth Capel Marchioness of Winchester bearing the train. The marriage vows were taken on a scaffold erected in the traverse, when, ‘the ring being laid upon the book to be hallowed, the prince laid also upon the said book iij handfuls of fine gold; which the lady Margarget [Clifford] seeing, opened the queen’s purse, and the queen smilingly put up in the same purse’. They heard ‘hie masse’ in the choir, and the ceremony ended with the proclamation of their new titles.149 The celebrations, which spanned several days, were held in the bishop’s palace, where the couple feasted in public, with ‘suche soundes and noise of al maner of instruments as hath been seldom hearde’, and led off the dancing in the Presence Chamber. There was no lack of ‘triumphing, bankating, singing, masking, and dauncing’, and ‘to behold the dukes and noblemen of Spain daunse with the faire ladyes and the moste beutifull nimphes of England’ was considered one of the dazzling sights.150

148. C.S.P. Spanish, 1554 pp.283-5. 21 June 1554; C.S.P. Spanish, 1554-58 p.11. July 1554; On 20 July a proclamation was read in London ordering the attendance of ‘noblemen, gentlemen, ladies and other...according as they are appointed’ in Winchester (Hamilton, Wriothesley’s Chronicle, II p.118).
149. Nichols, The chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, pp.140-1 and 168-9. Margaret Clifford was the senior relative of royal blood present at the wedding. Princess Elizabeth was of course absent, imprisoned at Woodstock.
150. Nichols, The chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, p.143.
It is unfortunate that so little is known of this important milestone in Mary's life, when there is so much material relating to the Privy Chamberers' participation in other state ceremonials. Both coronations were attended by women who had been to similar services before: Frances Brandon Duchess of Suffolk, who complained bitterly that she had 'had great occasions of expenses...at the Quenes Majestes coronacon' in 1558.151

1553 saw the largest congregation of aristocratic women for years, when the individual and combined forces of the households of Queen Mary, Princess Elizabeth and Anne of Cleves, as well as several Duchesses, processed through London on several occasions, culminating in the Coronation procession. On 30 July Elizabeth rode out from the Strand with her women to meet her sister near Wanstead. On 3 August the Queen made her entry into London on a 'rich trapped palfrey' at about seven o'clock in the evening, attended by three principals, her sister, Elizabeth Stafford Duchess of Norfolk and Gertrude Blount Marchioness of Exeter, and 'so great a number of ladyes after them, evry one in their degrees', in a procession which had been mustered on Wansted Heath.152 For the next procession, on the afternoon of 30 September (the day before the coronation), Mary 'donned a magnificent head-dress', and rode from the Tower to Westminster 'in a riche chariott of clothe of golde', followed by 'a flock of peeresses, gentlewomen and ladies in waiting, never before seen in such numbers', with Anne of Cleves, a cheerful Banquo's ghost, and her household adding to the throng.153 There is disagreement between sources on how the women were disposed. Two concur that immediately behind the

151. SP12/7 No.30 fol.48. Frances Brandon to William Cecil. Charterhouse, 3 November 1559.
Queen ‘cam another chariott having a canapie all of one covereng, with cloth of sillver all whitt, and vj horses betraped with the same, bearing the said charyat; and therin sat at the ende, with her face forward, the lady Elizabeth; and at the other ende, with her backe forwarde, the lady Anne of Cleves’.

A third, however, says that the two ladies ‘followed in separate carriages or litters’. Behind them ‘cam theyre sondry gentyllwomen rydyng on horses traped with redd velvet, after that charyet, and their gownes and kertelles of red velvet likewise...then followed ij other charyots covered with redd sattyn, and the horses betraped with the same; and certayne gentillwomen betwen every of the saide charyots rydyng in chrymesyn satteyn, ther horses betraped with the same. The nomber of the gentillwomen that rydd were xlvj in noumber, besides theym that wer in charyots’.

Or were there ‘ijj other riche chariotts followinge with ladies’ seen by another eyewitness, who makes no mention of the ladies on horseback at all? A slip of the pen may explain the difference between the latter examples, but it is hard to envisage how the confusion over the royal ladies’ mode of transport arose, unless one of the self-proclaimed eyewitnesses was, in fact, absent.

In whatever order, all the women reached Westminster. Coronation day, 1 October, dawned, and the Queen ‘in a long scarlet robe according to the ancient custom’ walked across to the Abbey, ‘escorted by the same company’: ‘a great companie of noble wemen, as the Ladie Elizabeth, the Ladie Ann of Cleve, [Elizabeth Stafford] the Dutchess of Norffok, [Gertrude Blount] the Marquess of Exeter, [Elizabeth Capel] the Marquess of Winchester, and almost all other countesses and noble mennes wyves of the

154. Nichols, Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, p.28; Hamilton, Wriothesley’s Chronicle, II p.103. Even then it was the inferior who sat with her back to the engine.


156. Nichols, Chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, pp.28-9. 30 September 1554.

realm, with a number of knights wyves'.\footnote{MacCulloch, \textit{Vita Mariæ Reginae}, p.276; Powell, \textit{A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby}, p.97.} ‘The coronation Mass and other ceremonies endured from x a’clocke in the morning untill iij and past in the afternoone’, after which everyone followed the Queen over to Westminster Hall, where she ‘retired to an inner chamber to rest her weary limbs’, and, no doubt, to be tidied by some of her women for the festivities to come. At the banquet she was served by ‘noblewomen’, although their names go unrecorded, unlike those of their male peers who discharged hereditary duties. At the end of the day, she returned to Whitehall by barge, almost certainly attended by noblewomen as well as Privy Chamber staff.\footnote{ibid. p.97; MacCulloch, \textit{Vita Mariæ Reginae}, p.276.}

Thus Mary’s coronation, itself unique, was celebrated in an unprecedented manner; never before had the households of three royal ladies been the sole focus of such festivities. In comparison, the processions which marked Elizabeth’s accession - her entry into London on 8 November and her ride from the Tower to Whitehall on 14 January, the day before her coronation - must have been smaller, if no less impressive, and thus the number of women present greatly reduced, for the only royal household taking part was her own.\footnote{Hamilton, \textit{Wriothesley’s Chronicle}, II pp.142-3.}

Then, as now, the monarch did not attend funeral services, and for services where the monarch was to be represented - a relative’s, or a memorial service for another ruler - the Chief Mourner was the senior peer of equivalent title to the deceased, or the most senior peer available if the deceased was royal.\footnote{SP11/5 No.40 fol.117; SP12/90 No.16 fols.56-63.} It was also traditional at these funerals for the principal mourners to be of the same sex as the deceased, which meant that there were a large number of funeral services in this period where women took the leading roles, although this exclusivity was not adhered to on all
occasions. Attendance was at royal command, usually by letter, and was only in the rarest of circumstances avoidable. Although Elizabeth’s choice of Bridget Hussey Countess of Bedford as Chief Mourner for the funeral of Mary Queen of Scots at Peterborough on Sunday 30 July 1587 was appropriate enough on grounds of sex, it would seem that it represented a deliberate insult, as there were at least two women of higher social status who could have performed this function, Helena Snakenborg Marchioness of Northampton and Anne Howard Marchioness of Winchester.

Already in Henry VIII’s reign the staff of the Privy Chamber were taking a prominent part in state occasions by virtue of their position, and there was a straightforward substitution of women for men after 1553. In the street processions to Parliament both queens were followed by their Master of the Horse, who bore the train, and then ‘Ladies ij by ij’. Only once is there any reference to the women’s dress, when they are reported to be ‘in their ordinary apparell’. Aristocratic women in this period did not have state clothes akin to the robes worn by the nobles in Parliament, but it seems highly likely that they had a red velvet costume to wear to these events, perhaps their livery from the most recent coronation if means were lacking. Elizabeth Stafford dowager Duchess of Norfolk found it reasonable to make over, as her only bequest to Margaret Audley, the current Duke’s wife, ‘my gowne of crymysyne velvete’, no doubt a grand affair only suitable

162. L.P.L. MS 697 fols.2-3. The funeral costs of Francis fifth Earl of Shrewsbury on 22 September 1560. This was attended not only by his the male remaining relatives but also by his sister Mary Countess of Northumberland, his daughters Lady Anne Bray and Lady Elizabeth Dacre of Gilsland (the latter with her daughter Lady Dorothy Windsor), and his daughter-in-law Gertrude Manners Countess of Shrewsbury with her daughters Katherine, Mary and Grace Talbot.

163. An example, ordering Sir George Hastings to Mary Queen of Scots funeral, has survived (H.M.C. Hastings, II p.38).

164. SP12/203 No.4 fol.9. This ‘Remembrance’ was drawn up by an Englishman, who leaves nearly all the non-English present unnamed (for example seventeen persons are dismissed as ‘Scots in Clokes’).

for a Duchess to wear.166 Privy Chamber staff attended, but whether they wore their smartest 'work' clothes in the queen's colours, or whether the term 'ordinary apparell' referred to what they normally wore to this event - in other words, the grandest costume they could muster - is open to debate. Once at Westminster Abbey the most senior peeress replaced the Master of the Horse as the bearer of the train and the other ladies withdrew. As most of the women did not attend the opening ceremonies, and none could sit in the House, it seems most likely that they waited in the Privy Lodgings at Westminster, whence the queens retired to change into and out of Parliament robes, and to wait while the peers prepared to take their seats in the House.167 It was not only peeresses who joined in the Parliament processions, but also women of the Privy Chamber, although a distinction was made between the 'ladies of estate' and the 'ladies of honour', the former usually having status by virtue of their husbands, the latter having no formal status other than their own position in the Court.168 There was some doubt as to whether women would attend at the opening of Mary's second Parliament on 2 April 1554, but whether this was by decision or because of the absence of suitable women is not apparent.169 Mary's 'Ladies' definitely accompanied her to and from the House when she was present at sittings of this Parliament, but these processions were not in the nature of a state event, like the opening.170 As to participation in the actual proceedings, the women naturally had no traditional role, but a few of them did attend on the

166. Nichols and Bruce, Wills from Doctor's Commons, p.55. Proved 19 January 1558/9.
167. SP12/153 No.80 fols.159-162. A list drawn up in the 1580s of 'Proceedings to Parliament'. Gentlemen of the Privy Chamber assisted with the royal train on 28 April 1540, and the whole Privy Chamber walked immediately behind the King in Edward VI's processions (fols.159v-160). At the opening of her first Parliament on 5 October 1553 Mary's train was carried by the dowager Duchess of Norfolk (fol.160v), whose daughter-in-law was to perform a similar service for Elizabeth (fol.161).
168. SP12/222 No.59 fols.82. The marshalling list for the opening of Parliament on 4 February 1587/8.
169. SP12/90 No.16 fol.64.
queens in the House. They would certainly have been present at the sitting of Mary's third Parliament on 27 November 1554, when 'the parliament [did] sit at the courte at Whit-hall in the chamber of presence, where the quene sat highest, rychlye aparelid, and her belly laid out, that all men might see that she was with child'. Of course, parliamentary sessions did not only mean that the Privy Chamber staff would be on show to the population of London; it was recognised that during the sessions it was much more difficult to get access to the queen if one was not one of the Privy Chamber staff, simply because she was so busy, and so their importance as intermediaries may have increased at these times.

The celebrations after the Armada on 24 November 1588 saw the largest formal procession in London since Elizabeth's coronation. Virtually the whole ruling class processed from Somerset House to St Paul's, the Queen's train carried by the Marchioness of Winchester (no mean feat as the Queen was riding in 'her Chariot' and the Marchioness was on foot), and the 'Ladyes of Honor' following behind flanked by the Gentlemen Pensioners.

The cult of Elizabeth has already been given more than adequate treatment, by Roy Strong and Dr Frances Yates in particular, and it needs no rehearsal here. However, it does have some bearing on the lives of the Privy Chamber staff because they too were part of the creation, by forming a suitable backdrop to the tilts, entertainments and formal occasions which helped create the myth, and in some cases taking part themselves. There were also the many formal receptions which all the women were expected to

171. Nichols, Narratives of the Reformation, p.289. The annalist points out that 'at this parliament they said labour was made to have the kinge crowned, and some thought that the quene for that cause dyd lay out her belly the more'. A child would have confirmed Philip's tenure of the crown matrimonial.

172. L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.110-101v. Ann Herbert Lady Talbot to George Earl of Shrewsbury, 20 February n.a. (between 1582 and 1590. For the role of Privy Chamber women as intermediaries see Chapter Six.

173. SP12/218 No.38 fols.59-60v. The marshalling list drawn up for Burghley.
attend. When the French ambassador dined with Elizabeth at Whitehall one warm evening the supper was served outside in the colonnade underneath the Great Gallery. The seating was rather cramped at the long table, where 'the French lords and gentlemen sat at one side, and on the other all the ladies, of whom there was no small number, and who required so much space on account of the farthingales they wore that there was not room for all; so part of the Privy Chamber ate on the ground on the rushes, being excellently served by lords and cavaliers, who gave them courage and company at their repast'.

Scaramelli, the Venetian Secretary, was suitably impressed with the gathering in the Presence Chamber for his audience with the Elizabeth, and noted that 'the Chamber was all full of ladies and gentlemen and the musicians who had been playing music up to that moment' when he had entered. The image of a powerful queen surrounded by 'courtly and audacious ornaments' was one which was maintained to the bitter end.

The organisation of the Privy Chamber was unaffected by war, as there was no occasion when either queen led an army into battle, or even took part in something like the Chaseabout Raid. The nearest they got to action was in Mary's case the march on London at the beginning of her reign, and in Elizabeth's her appearance at Tilbury in 1588. Women would have been present, but have left little trace of their involvement, although Thomas Delony's ballad about Tilbury includes the lines 'To the Camp she came to dinner/ with her Lords and Ladies all'. It was only the Household which was placed on a war footing, either in the face of rebellion

174. C.S.P. Venetian, 1558-80 p.92. 30 May 1597. The supper was held on 24 May.
175. C.S.P. Venetian, 1592-1603 pp.531-2. 19 February 1602/3; Jonson, Epicoene, II v.
177. Quoted in Arnold, Queen Elizabeth's Wardrobe, p.xv.
(like Wyatt's Revolt in 1554), or when invasion threatened as in 1588, and not the Privy Chamber as in previous reigns.¹⁷⁸

Both queens were confronted with the problem of how to handle particular male preserves. How Mary and Elizabeth conducted war whilst they could never themselves fight falls outside the scope of this work, but war's close cousin, tourneying, does not, for it was an activity almost wholly based at Court in the sixteenth century, and the focus had always been the monarch. Mary seems to have been uninterested in tournaments, even though their importance as 'instruments of prestige propaganda', and not mere fripperies, had been recognised by all the Tudor Kings (including Edward VI).¹⁷⁹ Philip instigated a few tilts, perhaps in an attempt to bring the Spanish and English closer together, which in itself points to the male nature of the sport. Mary herself never organised a tilt as her father had done on countless occasions, and neither did her sister. Apart from Philip, there may well have been no suitable man to set up such an event during Mary's reign, whereas Elizabeth could call on the services of both the Dudley brothers and Sir Henry Lee, and later the Earls of Cumberland and Essex.

Four royal tournaments for important aristocratic weddings took place after 1553. The first and only one in Mary's reign was for Henry Lord Strange’s marriage to Lady Margaret Clifford on 12 February 1554/5, when traditional English jousting was followed by the oft-cited Spanish 'Juego de cannes' which left the diarist Machyn cold.¹⁸⁰ In Elizabeth's reign there was a tourney for Henry Knollys and Margaret Cave on 16 July 1565, three days of contests for Ambrose Earl of Warwick and Lady Anne Russell between 11 and 13 November of the same year, and finally jousts for the Earl of Oxford

¹⁷⁸. SP12/211 No 21 fol.34 and No.22 fol.35-36. August 1588. The Council decided that the Lord Steward was 'to take order for the arming & putting in a readines her Majestes howsehold servants'.


¹⁸⁰. B.L. Cotton MS Vitellius F v; Nichols, Machyn, p.82.
and Lady Anne Cecil on 17 December 1572.¹⁸¹ All four husbands had been participants in tournaments themselves, and all the wives had close connections with the queens, which may explain why they were singled out for such an honour.¹⁸² Thereafter tournaments were only held on 17 November -Accession Day - and St Elizabeth's Day two days later, and occasionally to entertain foreign dignitaries or to celebrate unusual occurrences (like the failure of the Armada of 1588), no doubt in an attempt to cut back on costs. The wedding tournaments were the only four occasions at which the queens were not the unchallenged focus of the day, although both were always attended on by their women in the normal course of events, with whom they would consult to determine the victors of the contest with the Heralds' guidance.¹⁸³ A pair of the queen's women also brought the victors forward to receive their prizes.¹⁸⁴ Other than performing these roles, which had always fallen to women even before the accession of a female monarch, the queen's women merely sat with their mistress and watched, and in doing so formed part of the spectacle themselves. Some do seem to have taken part in the interludes devised to entertain the audience during the long pauses before the start and during the adjudication. These interludes were far more akin to normal revels even if the theme was warlike; the six pike-trailing Amazons who engaged knights in mock battle and then danced, together with some of the normally-dressed Court ladies, in order to entertain the Duke of Alençon, seem to been the closest any women came to the actual combat in the whole period.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸². Margaret Clifford the Queen's cousin, Margaret Cave may have been a Maid and Anne Russell and Anne Cecil were both Maids of Honour.
¹⁸³. C.A. Portfolio MS No.63.
The other major departure from the normal routine of the Court was the progress, which differed from the standard remove of the Court from one palace to the next in the choice of destination - not only royal residences were visited - and a widening of the usual range of Court movement out into the counties. Mary seldom extended her circuit of palaces, but Elizabeth's 'gestes' came to form a key part in her style of government.186 A progress combined the advantage of the better summer weather to travel longer distances with that of avoiding the London palaces during a time of increased risk of disease. It meant a great deal of extra work for the Privy Chamber women, and it is not known if any of them relished the thought; young male courtiers saw it as an opportunity to pursue the region's beauties, and much was made of the 'good sports' to be had.187 There is very little information left which can shed light on how the progress was organised. In most years the arrangements were made by the Secretary and the Lord and Vice-chamberlains, and a book was drawn up of the proposed route a few weeks before the progress began. This was then given to the queen for her approval.188 The Harbingers were sent out in advance to find the accommodation, but once the Court was on the move the Gentleman Ushers (who were responsible for dispositions in normal circumstances) had to police the Chamber staff's chambers, make check lists of all the furniture and moveables in the houses and arrange to punish those who pilfered.189

One document survives, drawn up in 1590 for Burghley by the Harbingers or their deputies, which describes the dimensions of all the rooms in an

186. Clifford, Life of Jane Dormer, p.64.
189. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.27.
unnamed castle including lodgings available for twenty-seven persons, all of whom would have shared a chamber, and a list of 'Places of State' for gatherings for meals and entertainment, which gives a fair idea of what was considered necessary for suitable accommodation for the key members of the Court, including the Privy Chamber staff.  

Some notes for a proposed progress from Hampton Court to Thetford in July 1578 also survive, visiting several houses including Lady Chester's near Royston which is described as 'A very small hows standing pleasantauntly...haveinge plesent p[ro]spectes walkes and flyshinges', but even more important than the potential recreation was the fact that it lay well away 'from all infectiows dysease'.  

When suitable accommodation had been found, all the arrangements were liable to be disrupted by a Royal whim, even if common sense did occasionally triumph in the end.

The Queen, when she went to Rochester, would haue layd in the House neare the Castle. faith [said] my Ld Hunsdon. Madam, that's a little House; there's neuer a Roome bigg enough for you to turne yor Farthingale in. Being [in] the Towne, she came to see the House: And when she was in the Hall, she turned her round; Looke here my Lo: Is not this Roome bigg enough for me to turne my Farthingale in. Therepon the House was called satis.  

Even so, she returned to the lodging he had suggested. During progress the queen's meals continued to be at whatever time she pleased, but Hall was suspended and 'the service for Dynner aswell in the Quenes chambre as in all other places of the house where anye allowance of Meatt is hadde to be observed at one certen and convenient houre', usually dinner at about eleven.

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190. SP12/235 No.51 fols.100-101. Endorsed 'The discripcon of the Roomes in [destroyed]' and '1590'. The 'The Places of State' were as follows: 'The Hall, The half passe, The great Chamber in the West Tower, A Withdrawing chamber, A principall duble lodging, A Gallerye, A duble lodginge in thende of ye gallery, A great chamber betwen the north and west tower, a withdrawinge Chamber in the third story of the North tower called L. Lecesters Chamber, Fower Types over euery Tower'. Despite the name, the Earl of Leicester did not necessarily own the castle, for rooms were often called after their most illustrious occupant, in the same spirit as 'Queen Elizabeth slept here'.

191. SP12/125 No.46 fols.98-102. 9 July 1578. In contrast Royston House, which was owned by Lady Chester's son, is crushingly described as being a 'very vnecessary hows for receipt of her Majesty and stands adioynning to the Churche on the sowth syde therof not haveing any pleasaunt p[ro]spectes'.

192. L.P.L. MS 2086 p.81.
in the morning and supper at about six in the evening.\(^\text{193}\) Disruption of meals was the least of the problems which confronted the queens’ women. Those who were in charge of the queen’s clothing had to decide which items would be needed, presumably in consultation with the queen. The Yeomen of the Wardrobe of Robes would then pack the clothes into the ‘Close Carre of the Robes’, a waggon specially designed to keep the contents dry and uncrushed.\(^\text{194}\) Elizabeth’s habitual vacillation often posed endless problems for all those involved.

The remove...is quite dasht, conformable to the speech of the carter, that three times had been at Windsor with his cart to carry away, upon summons of a remove, some part of the stuff of her majesty's wardrobe; and when he had repaired thither once, twice and the third time, and that they of the wardrobe had told him the third time, that the remove held not, clapping his hand on his thigh said these words, now I see quoth the carter, that the queen is a woman as well as my wife. Which words being overheard by her majesty, who then stood at the window, she said, What a villain is this? and so sent him three angels to stop his mouth.\(^\text{195}\)

Most gestes included at least one stop at one of the Court womens’ houses: the biters were occasionally bit. Preparing for such a visit was daunting, even for someone who knew the Queen as well as Frances Howard Countess of Hertford I, and much of the detailed advice she was given shows how sophisticated the organisation and dispositions made at Court were, and, though usually taken for granted by courtiers, how they constituted a formidable hurdle to even a large aristocratic household.\(^\text{196}\)

Only a skeleton Household staff went on progress; even the Chapel Royal travelled at half-strength with a bare minimum of books and vestments.\(^\text{197}\) The Privy Chamber was the exception, as all the staff went

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193. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.34.
194. LC2/4/3 fol.52; LC2/4/4 fol.58. The ‘Carr’ was in the charge of a Groom (Richard Ashe in 1558, Robert Stapport in 1603) who was one of the Stable staff.
196. H.M.C. Bath, IV pp.239-9. James Orenge to Frances Countess of Hertford. 7 August 1591. She was even reminded that the rushes only went down the day of the Queen’s arrival, and to make sure fuel was ready in the chambers in case it was wet or cold.
197. Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33 fol.35.
with the queen on her peregrinations, and were joined \textit{en route} by Extraordinary women and visitors. When a meeting between Elizabeth and Mary Queen of Scots was proposed in 1562 a list of women was compiled of whom sixteen would travel from London with Elizabeth, nineteen would be collected along the route north and eleven, mainly from northern families, would travel up to the Border to accompany Mary south to the rendez-vous. None of the Privy Chamber are listed, and would have been extra to those considered by the Queen and William Cecil as suitable attendants for such an event.\footnote{198} Although the meeting never took place the groundwork done by Cecil has left a clear idea of which women would have been called upon for such formal Court events, such as the visits of foreign ambassadors, and dignitaries like the Duke of Alençon.

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Once the weight of the official duties of the women at Court has been appreciated, to which are added the multifarious, unofficial roles which they adopted, which will be discussed in the following chapters, one may well begin to wonder if the women ever got any time off to themselves. At the time it was recognised that it was not an easy life. It was Frances Newton-Cobham's wish to visit her husband and to 'rest her weary bones awhile' in Kent, but she was only too well aware that it depended on her ability to extract leave from Elizabeth, while Frances Sidney Countess of Sussex's husband thought it was only her sense of duty to Elizabeth which kept her 'in hard company and place'.\footnote{199} Certainly, solitude 'was very hard to do in

\footnote{198. B.L. Lansdowne MS 5 No.37 fol.124.}

that place'. 200 The physical constraints imposed by too many people in too small an area meant that privacy was a luxury. All the Privy Chamber staff had to be available most of the time, although not infrequently only one woman would be required to attend, as when Bridget Chaworth-Carr sat in with Elizabeth when she was 'disposed to quietness' one night. 201 It is also probable that most women were considered, and considered themselves, permanently on duty (there was no provision made for any regular time off, a rule which applied to the Court as a whole), but what did the women do when they were not particularly busy? Although leave of absence was required for periods longer than a day or so, it was normal for women to make use of any lulls to visit friends and relatives in the vicinity the Court. 202 When in London there were the shops to look forward to. Otherwise the hours seem to have been whiled away in sewing, reading, gossip, and, that great prop of Tudor society, gaming. Virtually everyone at Court indulged at one time or another, although not all women could shrug off the loss of £500 in one night like Sara Harington Lady Holles, whose reaction was to polish up her 'knacke of game' (skill at cheating) and settle to winning it all back. 203 Occasional anecdotes survive to show that the women were capable of enjoying themselves as a group - until someone put a stop to it.

The Lord Knollys, in Queen Elizabeth’s time, had his lodging at Court, where some of the Ladyes and Maydes of Honour us’d to friske and hey about in the next roome, to his extreme disquiete at nights, though he had often warned them of it; at last he gets one to bolt their owne backe doore, when they were all in one night at their revells, stripps off [to] his shirt, and so with a payre of spectacles on his nose, and Aretine in his hand, comes marching in at a posterne doore of his owne chamber, reading very gravely, full upon the faces of them. Now let the reader judge what a sadd spectacle and pittifull fright these poore creatures endur’d, for he fac’t them and often traverst the roome in this posture above an hour. 204

204. Thoms, Anecdotes and Traditions, p.71. Sir Francis Knollys was in fact never a peer, although he was a Knight of the Garter. ‘Aretine’ was a book by Pietro Aretino, who wrote racy stories about famous Roman prostitutes.
5. Manners and marriage

The Quenes Howse...whiche is requisight to be the myrrowure and example of all other within Her realme. ¹

When this hopeful statement was made it was widely held that in theory the Court should reflect all that was most virtuous. The reality fell far short because, as with any other large group of people, it defied the primitive attempts at social engineering embodied in the Household regulations, and continued to reflect the full range of the vices of the day, as well as the virtues. This is not to say that in their behaviour courtiers were indistinguishable from their country counterparts. There was a definite Court manner which came in for a great deal of ridicule in the popular theatre of the day. One need only recall the mauling dealt to the English language by Jonson's Mrs Otter in her ingratiating attempts to speak in a courtly fashion to appreciate this; when she was politely greeted she simpered the nonsense reply, 'It shall not be obnoxious of difficil, sir'.² It was generally believed that courtiers of both sexes spoke in a way that ensured the words conveyed no actual meaning, and disguised the true intent of the speaker. For once popular conception did not fall wide of the mark, but there was a very good reason why so many at Court felt it necessary to imitate the action of a chameleon in preference to any nobler beast; honesty did not win suits. Besides, there was always the underlying fear felt by any inferior when in the company of a powerful person - 'one

¹. Sheffield R.O. Stafford MS 33 fol.28v.
². Jonson, Epicoene, III ii.
feels obliged to pay them such respect that one dare not speak until they do, and if one does speak, one goes pale with worry that one will make a slip' - which pervaded the whole Court, where gossip could quickly relay any such *faux pax*. and could thereby destroy a reputation overnight.³

The notion that deceit was the distinguishing mark of the courtier is borne out by one of the adages popular at the time; ‘Cogg, Ly, flatter, and face foure wais in Court, to win you grace:- If you be thrall to none of theirs a way good pegasus [sic], hence John Cheis'.⁴ It was said of Peregrine Bertie Lord Willoughby de Eresby, ‘that had he not slighted the court, but had applied himself to the queene, he might have enjoyed a plentiful portion of her grace; And it was his saying, (and it did him no good), that he was not one of the Reptilia: intimating, that he could not creepe on the ground, and that the court was not his element'.⁵ In vain did Edward Underhill hope that ‘the lyke be not practesed by souche flatterers in these dayes, accordynge to the olde provearbe, He thatt wyll in courte abyde Must cory javelle bake and syde for souche gett moste gayne'.⁶ The language courtiers spoke was considered vain and hypocritical, a trend which was exacerbated by Elizabeth and her 'cult' with its stress on verbose hyperbole, but it was thought to be a fair reflection of the vacuous approach to life typified by the average female courtier: ‘come abroad where the matter [women] is frequent, to court, to tiltings, public shows and feasts, to plays, and church sometimes: thither they come to show their new tires too, to see and to be seen'.⁷ Paradoxically, witty conversation, and the ability to produce a well

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6. Nichols, *Narratives of the Reformation*, p.159. Favelle was corrupted into ‘favour’ over the years.
turned, off the cuff remark, were highly prized in women no less than men. Commonplace books abound with anecdotes of this nature, which must have seemed uproariously funny at the time, but have lost something down the centuries: 'Mrs. [Mary] Ratcliffe, an old Courtier, told a Lord, whose conversation and discourse she did not like, that his witte was like a custard, nothing good in it but the soppe, and when that was eaten you might through away the rest'.

Because so many of the fashionable mannerisms, courtly modes of speech and accepted forms of behaviour, as well as their implications, are lost to us, on occasion the Court appears somewhat eccentric. Why was Elizabeth the proud possessor of 'a Haddockes hedd of golde ennameled blue', for example? It was an item of jewelry, but how was it worn, and what was its significance? Another example may be found in a letter sent from Court in 1602.

I send your Lo. here inclosed some verses compounded by Mr Secretary, who got Hales to frame a ditty unto itt. The occasion was as I hear, that the young Lady Darby wearing about her neck, in her bosom a picture which was in a dainty tablet, the Queen, espying itt, asked what fyne jewell that was: The Lady Darby was curious to excuse the shewing of itt, but the Queen wold have itt, and opening itt, and fynding itt to be Mr Secretaries, snacht itt away, and tyed itt upon her shoe, and walked long with itt there: then she tooke itt thence, and pinned itt on her elbow, and wore it some tyme there also: which Mr Secretary being told of, made these verses, and had Hales to sing them in his chamber. Itt was told her Majesty that Mr Secretary had rare musick and songs: She wold needes hear them; and so this ditty was soung which you see first written. More verses there be lykewyse, whereof som, or all, were lykewyse soung. I do boldly send these things to your Lo: which I wold not do to any els, for I hear they are very secrett. Some of the verses argew that he repynes not thoghe her Majesty please to grace others, and contents hemself with the favour he hath.

Why the Queen felt it necessary to pin the miniature to her foot like a buckle is a mystery, and there is nothing in the letter to show whether this

9. B.L. RM App.68 fol.35.
10. L.P.L. MS 3203 fol.36. William Browne to Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury. 18 September 1602. Neither the verses or the song have survived. Hales was the current 'Lute' of the Privy Chamber, a distinguished composer of lute-songs as well as an accomplished lutenist.
was considered odd or not. As to the behaviour of the Countess, her
coyness is the more strange because she was Elizabeth Vere, the Secretary's
niece, and it is scarcely credible that he should be giving her love tokens. At
a guess, the whole affair was an elaborate means of giving the Queen his
miniature, a farce in which she happily participated. In general such games
had a more serious side, and the rivalry which existed between the younger
women in the Privy Chamber made life particularly difficult even for the most
accomplished courtier; one earl was warned that, 'You should be here a
month before you could learn to speak to one and not offend the other'.

Life at Court was not always lived at a superficial level however.
Familiarity did breed friendship as well as contempt, and many women who
met at Court remained close for the rest of their lives. For the Maids of
Honour, as for girls in any household, sleeping in the same dormitory, if not
the same beds, forged friendships which lasted a lifetime; Anne Clifford said
that the night that she spent with her cousin Frances Bourchier and Mary
Carey 'was the first beginning of greatness between us', and that to be made
to sleep alone was held to be an appropriate punishment for a serious
misdemeanour. The friendship of Elizabeth Hardwick and Frances
Newton has already been mentioned. Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of
Northampton had been a close friend of Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Browne
since the early 1550s, a friendship which lasted until the former's death.
Blanche Parry became very close to her colleague in the Bed Chamber
Katherine Carey-Knollys and her husband Sir Francis Knollys, a friendship
cemented by the marriage of one of Blanche's cousins, Katherine Vaughan,

Mincing Lane, 22 March 1573/4.
13. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.77. 18 May 1552.
to their fourth son Robert. Blanche bequeathed one of her finest diamonds to one of the Knollys’s daughters, Lettice Countess of Leicester, and several female Knollys of the third generation also received legacies in her will. Occasionally a small circle of friends can be identified - for example Elizabeth Stafford-Drury and Francis Hastings-Compton, and their younger friend the Maid of Honour Frances Howard - but it was just as common for a woman to be a firm enemy of a friend’s close friend. Although Elizabeth Stafford-Drury was a friend of Edward Earl of Rutland their friendship must have been under continuous strain for the Earl’s wife Isabel Holcroft was ‘without love or any liking’ for Elizabeth’s close friend Frances Howard, an antagonism which dated from when they had been Maids of Honour together.

There never was any real consensus at Court between any conflicting group of friends, let alone the great nobles, and simmering discontent would suddenly erupt not necessarily into blows, but certainly into words which could further concentrate the normally poisonous atmosphere at Court. The bitter words between the Earls of Leicester and Sussex in the Presence Chamber in July 1581 were only one example of many occasions when nerves had been reduced to shreds by a rival’s presence. Since everyone was someone else’s rival just by their mere existence, one may appreciate that the Court was never a particularly happy or relaxed place to live, and must have been exhausting for queens and courtiers alike. As Elizabeth was always one to stand on her dignity, a slight when she was in one of her

14. B.L. Lansdowne MS 62 No 51 fol.123.
16. SP12/149 No.67 fol.156. Walsingham to Burghley. Court, 12 July 1581.
ill-humours could lead to some strange behaviour. Sir John Harington remembered 'a storie that fell oute when I was a boye'.

She did love rich cloathynge, but often chid these that bought more finery than became their state. It happenede that Ladie M. Howarde was possesede of a rich border powdered wyth golde and pearle, and a velvet suite belonging thereto, which moved manie to envye; nor did it please the Queene, who thoughte it exceeded her owne. One daye the Queene did sende privately, and got the Ladies rich vesture, which she put on herself, and came forthe the chamber amonste the Ladies; the kirtle and border was far too shorte for her Majesties height; and she askede every one, How they likede her new-fancied suit? At lengthe she asked the owner herself, If it was not made too short and ill-becoming? Which the poor Ladie did presentlie consente to. Why then if it become not me, as being too short, I am minded it shall never become thee, as being too fine; so it fitteth neither well. This sharp rebuke abashed the Ladie, and she never adorned her herewith any more. I believe the vestment was laid up till after the Queenes death.17

However, one of the problems in dealing with Elizabeth was her inconsistency. She may have shamed Lady Howard, but she never strictly enforced the sumptuary laws which were regularly formulated, and just as often ignored. Mary's second Parliament passed an Act in 1554, while Elizabeth issued a Proclamation on 20 October 1559, another in 1574, an Enforcement in 1577, a Commandment in 1580 and finally another Proclamation in 1597. It is questionable whether they would have been enforceable, even if the determination was there, and the courtiers blithely continued in their 'fonde disguised and monstrous maner of attyring themselves', with only the occasional interruption from either queen.18

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17. Harington, Nugæe Antiquæ, II pp.139-40. Sir John Harington to Robert Markham. 1606. As this happened when he was young it seems probable that the M. Howard of Harrington's story was Mary Dacre, the first wife of Thomas Lord Howard of Audley. In 1577, when Harrington was in his teens, she had married Lord Howard and entered Court as a result. It may have been her inexperience of Court and Queen which meant she did not realise the mistake of buying and wearing such a garment.

18. See Baldwin, Sumptuary Legislation.
Here lyeth enterred under this Mound,
A Female of Sixteen yeares old.
More Men then yeares have been upon her
And yet she died a Maid of Honor. 19

One of the main concerns of all courtiers was marriage. Whether it was their own, a relative’s, a friend’s, an enemy’s or a client’s, marriage held a fascination which was inevitable given the money, land and power at stake. All the letters reporting Court news throughout the period are peppered with references to negotiations, engagements, nuptials and disputes. Given this obsession, it may come as a surprise that only two marriages were celebrated in the Chapel Royal, and three in the Queen’s Closet, in the whole of Elizabeth’s reign, while there were only two christenings.20 The queens were expected to dictate the marriages of all their women, and it took a good deal of courage to discuss the subject, especially with Elizabeth. Although the Maid of Honour and royal favourite Frances Howard was already calling herself the Earl of Hertford’s wife in 1582, it was not until the end of January 1584/5 that they finally risked asking for the Queen’s consent for them to marry. Her brother Charles Lord Howard of Effingham broke their suit to the Queen, who ‘as with all sutche like’ became angry, and announced that she was sure that the Earl ‘wolde be contented to geve her a pensyon’, an extraordinary suggestion which stung Howard to point out ‘that it touched her Maieste in honor to have any gentellwoman aboute her to take a pensyon of any man in such a maner’, to

20. Rimbault, The old cheque book of the Chapel Royal, pp.160 and p.173. The marriages in the Chapel were: Elizabeth Knollys and Sir Thomas Leighton, 1587; Elizabeth Stafford and Sir William Drury, 1579. The marriages in the Closet were: Helena Snakenborg (‘Mrs Frohelin’) and William Parr Marquis of Northampton, 1571; Anne Russell and Ambrose Dudley Earl of Warwick; Mary Sidney and Henry Herbert Earl of Pembroke, 1580 (actually 1577). The children christened were Elizabeth Cobham in 1560 and Edward Fortunatus son of the Princess Cecilia of Sweden in 1566.
which she ‘rose up and lafte’ saying he had been a loyal brother, but she was unconvinced that Hertford was seeking marriage. The next day she questioned Frances, who proclaimed her love for the Earl and her wish to marry him ‘wyth her good favore’. The Queen was still unimpressed - ‘many persuasions che used agaynst maryge . . . and how littell you wolde care for me . . . how well I was here and how muche she cared for me’ - but in the end she capitulated.21

It was in the arranging of marriages that those closest to the queen had the edge, for she could be brought in to help bring negotiations to a happy conclusion. When the son of Mr Edward Griffen of Dingley in Northamptonshire, was mooted as a possible husband for Lucy, the second daughter of Sir Thomas Gorges and Helena Snakenborg Marchioness of Northampton, the negotiations had reached the stage of deciding the jointure when Griffen suddenly lost interest. He probably considered the amount on offer too small. Immediately a letter from Elizabeth was obtained which outlined all the benefits such a match could bring, and in which she claimed that ‘it be not vsuall with vs to take knowledg of our servaunts dealing in their domesticall Cawses yet out of iust consideracon of the Long and faythfull seruice of the gent, and the neerenes vnto vs of the Ladie Marquis his Wyfe, a ladye of our priuy Chamb[er] well fauered by vs we haue ben moued with a desire to further any matter Whereof we can’. The reasons given why she thought Griffen should proceed with the match are striking. There were ‘circumstaunces farr beyond thatt of money’:

Consider either the Gentlewomans birth both on her fathers side and on the Ladie her mothers, and the alliance which thereby you shall drawe to yor house or their present estates and neerenes of service to vs, and the fauour which therby we beare vnto them, you cannot but fynde both in reason &

example of others that either of both the consideracons is and hath been by manie esteemed aboue a greater oddes of profitt, then in this case is.\textsuperscript{22}

These arguments were sufficiently persuasive when they were combined with veiled threats. Griffen had previously been in trouble for recusancy, and there is much harping in the Queen's letter on his 'former disposition', and how the recent good report which she had had of Griffen's loyalty had come from Gorges; Gorges's praises are sung, but the opportunity to point out that he is Griffen's only real hope of remaining in the Queen's favour was not passed over. The negotiations reopened, and eventually Lucy became Mrs Griffen.\textsuperscript{23}

Not all marriages were arranged under the beady eye of the queen. The Earl of Rutland was told that it was rumoured at Court that he was not only engaged but already secretly married to the widow Bridget Hussey Lady Morrison. The rumour was partly correct, for the couple were engaged to be married, and had probably kept it secret to facilitate the negotiations for a jointure and to avoid any embarassment should these fail. It was fortuitous that the bride-to-be was at Court and could argue her case at first hand once the news had broken there. Bridget quickly 'made means to the Queen for her good will in the matter', possibly with the help of a Manners family friend, the Gentlewoman, Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton.\textsuperscript{24}

Lady Clinton had definitely been the origin of the warning sent to the Earl.\textsuperscript{25} In many instances the problem lay in how best to broach the subject

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{22} SP12/260 No.25 fols.34-35v. The Queen to Edward Griffen. 26 September 1596; SP12/260 No.26 fol.36. Insertion for the previous letter; see also A.P.C., 1596-7 p.488.
\item \textsuperscript{23} LC2/4/4 fol.67v. Lucy probably attended the Queen's funeral because her mother was Chief Mourner, not because she held any Court postion at the time.
\item \textsuperscript{24} LC2/4/3 fol.53v.
\item \textsuperscript{25} H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.71. John Bateman to Henry Earl of Rutland at Rufford. Holywell, 23 February 1559/60.
\end{itemize}
with the queen. Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk was driven to
distraction by her son Peregrine Bertie, and his 'wilfulness and uncourteous
dealings' with the equally obstreperous seventeenth Earl of Oxford
concerning his sister, Lady Mary Vere, whom Bertie wanted to marry. The
Duchess dreaded him being 'his own undoing, and the young lady's too', but
as neither her husband nor the Queen knew of the proposed match she did
not know where to begin. In the end she screwed up enough courage to
tell Elizabeth, who gave the match her blessing with very little fuss.

The jointure was crucial to the success of a marriage, not only from
the point of view of the couple themselves. When in August 1582 Anne
Herbert Lady Talbot was left widowed and childless to the great
disappointment of her father-in-law, she had the security of a good jointure
to support her, but it was thought that once a decent period of mourning
had passed 'the great Earl and she will not long agree, for she is to have all
Glossopdale in jointure, the one half presently, the other upon his
decease'. In other words, a dispute was inevitable because the Earl felt
cheated in parting with prime land when there were no heirs in return.
Bitter quarrels between a deceased woman's relatives were all too common:
after the death of Douglas Howard-Gorges her widowed mother Frances
Meautys Viscountess of Bindon with her second husband Edmund Stanfield
proceeded to challenge the new Viscount Bindon and Douglas' widower
Arthur Gorges for both dower and jointure. The latter wanted a settlement

House, 14 July 1577. In the event the couple married with their families' permission
early the following year, had six children and separated in about 1600.
27. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.143. Roger Manners to Edward Earl of Rutland. Windsor
(Court), 29 October 1582.
Stanfield versus Bindon. November 1595. The Viscountess had been a Maid of Honour
in the 1560s.
in favour of Ambrosia Gorges, Arthur and Douglas’ only child, while the dowager wanted to retrieve certain properties for her own use. A widow with jointure lands to dispose of was always the subject of intense interest, although the importunate did not necessarily have marriage in mind, as the Earl’s second wife Elizabeth Hardwick had found after the death of her third husband Sir William St Loe. A throng of suitors descended all asking for leases of land, including her cousin Henry Babington of Dethick. 29 She had to demand more time to consider his proposition, rather than rush into a decision. Meanwhile she mulled over her choice of prospective husbands; she cast out the idea of Henry Cobham, brother of Lord Cobham, early on, wondered next about Lord Darcy and Sir John Thynne, and finally settled on the Earl of Shrewsbury. 30 Joan Fitzgerald Countess of Ormond was bitterly aware of her position in the eyes of English law. “Whiles I was widow,” quoth she, “and had not married an Englishman, I defended and kept my own, or at the least, no man went about to defeat me of my right. Well is the woman unmarried; I am bade to hold my peace, and that my husband shall have answer made unto him”. 31

It was certain that women with access to the the queen via the Privy Chamber, or those who were themselves attendants or staff, stood a much better chance of receiving a favourable outcome in jointure disputes. Soon after the death of her husband Anne Russell Countess of Warwick heard that her brother-in-law’s widow, Lettice Knollys Countess of Leicester, and

29. SP46/13 fol.298. Lady St Loe to Henry Babington. 25 March 1565. Babington was the father of the traitor.
31. H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.78. Brian Jonys to the Lord Deputy of Ireland. 1549. After she had delivered herself of a lecture on the iniquities of the English legal system, she threw a basketful of artichokes at her snoozing husband ‘one after the other’, and then took to her horse.
her new husband Sir Christopher Blount were suing the Queen for the lease of certain lands in Gloucestershire, which, despite being part of Lettice's jointure, had been seized by the Queen after Leicester's death. Anne was absent from the Court, so she begged Burghley to prevent this, successfully it would seem, for there is no record of such a lease being made, but her reason for opposing the lease going forward is an interesting one. She claimed that 'the graunting therof maie verie much preiudice me in the cowrses I am to take in that Countrey for my quiet, and the determining of my many troubles'; she was already in dispute with Lettice over other leases in the area arising from Warwick's death, and such a display of royal favour to Lettice could prejudice Anne's chances of success. It seems that her appeal achieved its aim.32

The life of Lettice Countess of Leicester brings us to one of the more remarkable features of the period - the number of aristocratic widows who married men of much lower rank, and often much younger in age. Lettice had 'maried the Gent of her hors Sir Christofor Blunt' soon after Leicester's death.33 Even those who made marriages which did not upset social order to this extent, liked to be reassured that the queen would not be displeased, even if she had already given her blessing once.34 When it came to bargaining, those widows who married beneath themselves were in a very different position from their less wealthy sisters. When Francis Newdigate married the Duchess of Somerset there was little in the way of financial negotiations,

34. Folger X.d.428 (129). The Gentlewoman Elizabeth Leche-Wingfield to her half-sister Elizabeth Hardwick the new Countess of Shrewsbury. 21 October n.a. but probably 1567. The Queen had said to her husband Anthony that 'I haue ben glad to see my lady Sayntlo but now more desyrous to see my lady Shrewsbury', and spent an hour chatting about the new couple. In other words, the Shrewsburys were still in favour.
and it was only well after their marriage that he enquired of the Lord Treasurer exactly what the Duchess's dower and jointure amounted to in order to arrange the best settlement of her debts; the position had not been clarified in any pre-marital contract. These marriages made for general unease, for remarriage was not compatible with a man's general expectation that his widow would continue to work in his interest, and in a Countess' case this 'wilfulness' was writ large. Acting as executrix or administrator was seen as the last wifely duty to be performed, hence the surprise when Katherine Dudley Countess of Huntingdon turned down flat the administration of her husband's property. It was felt that she was forsaking her husband. The history of women as executrices in this period has yet to be written, but it appears to be an important one; widows were not only left in charge of vast estates, but also had to administer any government offices which their husband had held, sometimes for years rather than months, rendering full accounts in their own name. In this they did not act as figureheads while men did the actual work: within weeks of her husband's death it was the Countess of Leicester who set about divesting herself of the greatest financial liabilities. For example she offered to resign her interest in the Fine Office to Burghley, hoping in return that, among other things, the Queen would take up the costs of a ship which lay at anchor off London, at the Countess' charge.

Court influence was not always used in a positive way in marriage negotiations of course. Even before Sir Thomas Rivett of Chippenham was

35. SP46/14 fol.1. The Marquis of Winchester to Henry Fanshawe. 6 January 1565/6.
dead, moves were afoot to ensure that the moment he died his youngest daughter, Anne, would be married off to one of Burghley's grandsons. Not only was she the right age - about fourteen - but she was worth about £1,000 a year - a good catch. Meanwhile one of Sir Francis Knollys's younger sons had high hopes. Once Sir Thomas had obligingly died, attention turned to his widow, Grisel Paget Lady Rivett, who found herself in charge of negotiations as the guardian of her child. Almost at once the Cecil match seems to have come to grief, for at Knollys's request the Queen had extracted a promise from the widow to further the match. The Queen had probably been persuaded to this by the family friend Blanche Parry (Knollys's mother, Katherine Carey-Knollys, who had been a Lady of the Bed Chamber, was long dead). Imagine their surprise when Anne rejected Knollys out of hand. Thomas Wilkes, sent by the Queen to investigate, decided that 'the obiections of the mother haue ben put into the daughters mouthe', but when Wilkes suggested that the girl should be removed to Court Lady Rivett flatly refused, 'sayng she doubteth not but she shall finde frends in Court to mediate her peace towards the Quenes Majestie'. He added in his report, 'Yt is true in myne opinion that she shall...for were she not backed and incouraged from the Courte, she wold not sett so lighte of this mater as she dothe'. Lady Rivett was certainly well-connected in the Privy Chamber, for her two sisters-in-law both held Privy Chamber posts: her brother Henry had married Katherine Knevet, one of the Maids, who was currently resident at Court with her second husband Edward Carey, a Groom of the Privy Chamber; her younger brother Thomas married Nazareth Newton-Southwell, who had also been a Maid before her marriage,


and was still a member of the Privy Chamber. Lady Rivett's opposition to the match must have stemmed from the hope that her daughter could make a better match because she had powerful relatives at Court. This hope was realised in 1586 when Anne married Henry, later Lord, Windsor. Knollys's credit with the Queen was not sufficient to overcome the coalition ranged against him, even though he may have had the assistance of Blanche Parry. Moreover, he promptly fell in love with Anne's elder half-sister, and consequently toned down his protests at his treatment.

To openly consider marriage and then decide against it was no way to endear one to the reject's relatives, as Sir Thomas Shirley found when he turned his back on the widow Frances Brooke Lady Stourton in favour of another. Her mother, Frances Newton Lady Cobham, and her twin, Elizabeth Brooke Lady Cecil, were outraged, and made life more than uncomfortable for him at Court until he had made formal apologies, and had loudly proclaimed Lady Stourton's 'unestimable worth'. Ideas about who was suitable were not, of course, uniform. Sir William Holles was less than pleased when George 'that brave and active Earle of Cumberland' asked for his daughter Gertrude's hand, because, as he said, 'I do not like to stand with my cap in my hand to my son in law. I will see hir married to an honest gentleman with whome I may have friendship and conversation'. And so it fell out. Occasionally money was not the only parental consideration.

Both queens had an equivocal attitude towards the marriage of their

40. C/115/L2/6697 p.6. Katherine Knevet was given a black gown, 20 October 1561; LC5/33 fol.167. Warrant dated 25 March 1566; Soc.Ant. MS 537; C/115/L2/6697 p.17. 2 June 1565. See also Appendix 1.

41. H.M.C. Salisbury, V p.361. Sir Thomas Shirley to Sir Thomas Heneage. 4 September given as 1595 but probably 1592 or earlier.

42. Wood, Memorials of the Holles family, p.41. 1577.
Privy Chamber staff. Mary apologised on her death-bed for having held back the marriage of Jane Dormer to the Count of Feria. Elizabeth does not seem to have had such moments of weakness, and it was the one policy about which she seems to have experienced no doubts. Although it was perfectly justified because of her role as guardian of her familia, the result over forty-five years was a string of secret marriages. In each case hope triumphed over bitter experience, and each unhappy couple in turn trusted that their influence would be enough to placate the Queen. In fact they were rarely proved right, and their experiences only serve as a reminder that both young and old were happy to do anything except learn from another's mistakes.

Secret marriages in Elizabeth's reign fell into three broad categories, which elicited an exponentially rising level of royal wrath: firstly the secret marriage of Court women; secondly the secret marriage of Court women of royal blood; and thirdly the secret marriage of Court women with the Earl of Leicester. The latter has been too well rehearsed elsewhere to warrant further discussion here. The marriages of those of royal blood will be considered anon, which leaves those of the Court women. Mary Shelton must have banked on her close relationship with the Queen to smooth her passage when she married John Scudamore without permission. She was much mistaken, and though she managed to struggle back into favour eventually the Queen's anger at the time was frightening.43 One of the Maids of Honour, Eleanor Brydges, took it upon herself to report the Queen's reaction to one of Mary's friends: 'She hath telt liberall bothe with bloes and yevell wordes, and hath not yet graunted her consent'. In

43. See Chapter Three, pp.42-43 and 44.
Eleanor's opinion no woman had ever got a husband more dearly.\textsuperscript{44}

It seems that the reason for the queens' attitude was as follows. The system of taking unmarried girls into the Privy Chamber, especially as Maids of Honour, was merely an extension of the well-established phenomenon of out-placing girls, in which the daughters of gentry and noble stock were sent to join the household of some suitable lady, usually their social superior, in order to learn the refining arts of being a successful wife. The conclusion of this was some suitable match, arranged by the girl's family and hosts.\textsuperscript{45} The same idea underpinned the existence of the Maids, and just as the family with which a girl had been placed took a leading part in organising any marriage, so the queens were expected to show an interest in those of the Maids.\textsuperscript{46} Personal preference, expressed in the form of secret marriages and illegitimate children, created financial chaos for the families of both parties anywhere in the social scale, but it took on even greater significance when the huge estates and reputation of a leading aristocratic family were in question, and the queen herself had been made to look foolish. The responsibilities of the Mother of the Maids must have been considerable, for although the queen was nominally \textit{in loco parentis} it was the Mother who did the actual chaperoning. It was a thankless task, but

\textsuperscript{44} B.L. Egerton MS 2806 fol.49. Warrant, 28 September 1572; H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.107. Eleanor Brydges to Edward Earl of Rutland. January n.a., but clearly 1574 (not 1576 as printed).

\textsuperscript{45} Mary Darcy, the widow of Henry Babington of Dethick in Derbyshire (he who had wooed Elizabeth Hardwick was eager to place one of her daughters in the sevice of Isabel Holcroft Countess of Rutland (H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.132. John Lord Darcy of Darcy to the Countess. Aston, 28 February 1581/2).

\textsuperscript{46} L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.16-17v. Anne Talbot Lady Wharton to her brother George Earl of Shrewsbury. Syningthwaite, 28 October n.a. (after 1560). She had just finished arranging the marriage of his ward Mr Neville to one of her young attendants Bridget Savile; SP12/243 No.66 fol.180. William Sterrell to Thomas Philippes. 26 November 1591. He reported that the Earl of Worcester was coming to Court: 'He bringeth 4 daughters with him all Marriage able'.
there is no evidence that any Mother was ever sacked for failure in her duties.

The fate of Mary Fitton, a Maid of Honour who became pregnant by young William Earl of Pembroke in 1600, is the epitome of the idea that all erring Maids were automatically thrown out of Court. This was not always the case, however, and a Maid's sexual indiscretions did not necessarily lead to expulsion from Court, or even to a shotgun wedding. Abigail Heveningham, a Maid of the Privy Chamber, 'tasted the quintessence out of the long-necked bottle', but though she was found out and the Queen informed, she kept her place at Court (but as a Gentlewoman not a Maid, of course) and she went on to make a reasonable marriage. One wonders what the merits of her case had been that she should receive such mild treatment from the Queen. The problem was that the Court ethos dictated that male courtiers should pursue the Court women, the Maids in particular, and the so-called game of courtly love, now far removed from its medieval antecedents, was generally played with gusto. One spring the Court gossip was that: 'Mrs Frances Howard is in perfect health, beloved, and scornfull. It is thought Mr Coningsby will overtake her. He is very far in love with her, and his device at tilt was a white lion devouring a young coney. His word was in English - Call you this Love?' At its most formalised a courtier would take one of the younger women as 'mistress', and as her champion express 'a reverent respect' and platonic love towards her, but nothing more; it was in this sense that Charles Lord Howard took Jane

47. Newdegate, Gossip from a muniment room, pp.35-52.
49. ibid.
Dormer as his mistress during Mary's reign. The game as it was played at the Tudor Court did not automatically preclude the women from pursuing men, a fact occasionally forgotten:

Th'Erle of Oxenforde hate gotten hym a wyffe - or at the lest a wyffe hathe caught hym - that is Mrs Anne Cycille, we hearunto the Queen hathe gyven her consent, the which hathe causyd great wypping waling and sorrowfull chere, of those that hoped to have hade that golden daye. Thus you may see whilst that some triumphè with oliphe brachis, others folowe the chariot with wyllowe garlands.

But the cultural convention was very much of the loving man and loved woman, with the choices made by the man, and affectation being the order of the day: 'ye amorous gallants of our tyme yt make a traffique of lovinge and a trade of dissemblinge, lovinge whom ere they see, and owlne lovinge whilst they see'. There was another side to the coin, noted sourly by one observer: 'Maides of the court goe scarce xx wekis with child after they ar maryed, wherein man hath lybertie of conscience to play the knave'. When Robert Tyrwhit secretly married the Maid of Honour Lady Bridget Manners when she was on leave from Court in the summer of 1594, it was said that part of the reason he had pressed his suit was that he feared losing her predatory to courtiers when she returned to Court. It is not too difficult to imagine the circumstances and feelings which impelled courtiers of both sexes to overstep the lines which divided formalised courtly love from love affair. However, the official social - and, more specifically, Court - ethics of the day dictated that when a woman was openly more than a

52. Thompson, *Correspondence of the Hatton family*, p.1. Sir Christopher Hatton to his future wife Alice Fanshaw. Court, about 1601.
passive recipient of man’s grand passion she was beyond the pale. Commentators seem to have thought that this was an hereditary tendency in women. The Earl of Leicester was said to have found his mistress Douglas Howard Lady Sheffield ‘an easy purchase, a frailty the women of hir family have beene generally but over prone to’. Of course, it had always been easier for certain women to flout convention: soon before her death in 1551, Ursula Stourton Lady Clinton had an affair with Sir Thomas Cotton’s brother, and when her husband threatened action she had it ‘brought to the hearing of the Duke of Northumberland, who caused it to be wrapped up in silence, with some threatening words to those that should in any wise stir in it’. An unusual move, but a sensible one, for her mother was the Duke’s aunt, and he was likely to be a partial judge, as he so proved.

One should not imagine that all the Maids were dedicated to the cause of romantic love, for many displayed mercenary skills worthy of their elders. One example of the rapacity of these fragrant harpies may be found in the escapades of a Maid of Honour Elizabeth Bridges, the daughter of Giles Lord Chandos of Sudeley, who set her cap at one of the minor courtiers, Charles Lister. The tone their relationship would adopt was established within ten days of her father’s death on 21 February 1593/4, when she borrowed £150 from Lister to pay her debts. A lull of three years followed which ended on 25 April 1597 when they secretly agreed to a contract of marriage, but Lister recalled that the very same day ‘she desired me to relieve her with money from tyme to tyme for shee was in great want of money’. In the light of what was to follow this seems more than a coincidence. By the end of May 1597 he had given her £110, and then

55. Wood, Memorials of the Holles family, p.70.
when the Court was at Whitehall Lister 'did deliuer her self 10li in gould in my Lady Staffordes chamber. Then shee spake to me againe for 10li the which I gave her in gould in the Chappell Chamber'. The demands came thick and fast: he paid off her creditors direct; he laid out £60 to redeem one of her diamonds from 'Mr Hardwicke in Paules churche yard'; he gave her £150 to back the Cadiz expedition; he raised £200 to pay off a bond; he even paid her physician's bill. On top of the cash he also bought her presents: 'a little chaine of pearle' cost him £10; £30 went on linen cloth, taffata for a safeguard and lawn for ruffles; the same amount on a silver basin and ever for her chamber; 'a sute of Tapestry hanginges for her Chamber' was bought from Mr Baradyne the Queen's upholsterer. Lister said that after all this, 'Then shee desired me to bestowe a Jewell on her the which was a Ruby and a dyamon which cost me 120li and then shee said that should be the token betweene me & her during our lyves'. By this time Lister was up to his ears in debt himself, but was still so taken with Elizabeth that he entered into a £1,000 bond on her behalf, and finally on 6 August 1598 redeemed the rest of her diamonds with £1,150 borrowed against his estates, which she promised to pay back within the six month deadline on his loan by repawning the jewels. This was the final straw, for by the end of five months it became patently obvious even to him that she had no intention of repaying him. The scales fell from his eyes, but it was far too late, and though he lodged a formal complaint against her with the Privy Council no action was taken.\(^{57}\) He claimed to have lost over £3,000, much of it borrowed, 'upon her faithfull promise of Marryage', which, allowing for exaggeration, was a formidable sum for a teenager to have

\(^{57}\) SP12/269 No.10 fols.20-v. Deposition of Charles Lister against Elizabeth Bridges. 11 December 1598.
extracted out of a seasoned courtier. From her perspective it must have been most satisfactory, because she paid off most of her debts, but was still free to make a good marriage in 1603 to Sir John Kennedy.

Although women like Elizabeth Bridges would appear to have been in their element, some did not have the temperament necessary for survival at Court. This showed itself mainly amongst the Maids of Honour because of their youth and inexperience, and because the criteria for their selection were slightly different from the other women; blood mattered far more than compatibility either with their colleagues or the queen. Mary Howard, one of the Maids of Honour, had particular problems, and seems to have succumbed to a prolonged fit of petulance worthy of her mistress. What happened is best described by William Fenton.

I have not seen her Highnesse save twice, since Easter last, bothe of which times she spake vehementlye and with great wrathe of her servante, the Ladie Marie Howarde, forasmuche as she had refused to bear her mantle at the hour her Highnesse is wontede to air in the garden, and on small rebuke did vent suche unseemlie answer as did breede much choler in her mistresse. Again, on other occasion, she was not ready to carry the cup of grace during the dinner in the privie-chamber, nor was she attending at the hour of her Majesties going to prayer. All whiche dothe now so disquiet her Highnesse, that she swore she would no more se her any countenance, but out with all such ungracious, flouting wenches; because forsoothe, she hathe much favour and marks of love from the younge Earl, which is not so pleasing to the Queene, who dothe still muche exhorte all her women to remaine in virgin state as muche as may be. I adventured to say, as far as discretion did go, in defence of our friende, and did urge mucche in behalfe of youthe and enticinge love, which did often abate of righte measures in faire ladies; and moreover related whatever might appease the Queene, touchinge the confession of her great kindness to her sister Jane before her marriage; all which did nothinge soothe her Highnesse anger, saying, I have made her my servante, and she will now make herself my mistresse; but in good faith, William, she shall not, and so tell her...It might not be amisse to talke to this poor younge to be more dutiful, and not absent at meals or prayers, to bear her Highnesses mantle and other furniture, even more than all the reste of the servantes, to make ample amends by future diligence; and always to go first in the mominge to her Highnesse chamber, forasmuche as suche kindnesse will muche prevail to turne aweie all former displeasure. She must not entertaine my lorde the Earl in any conversation but shunne his companye; and moreover be less carefull in attiringe her own person. for this seemethe as done more to win the Earl, than her mistresses good will...If we consider the favours shewed to her familie, there is ground for ill humour in the Queen, who dothe not now beare with such composed spirit as she was wont, but since the Irish affairs, seemethe more froward than commonlie she used to bear herself toward her women, nor dothe she holde them in discourse with such familiar manner, but often chides them for
small neglects, in such wise as to make these fair maids often cry and bewail in piteous sort as I am told. 58

Parts of this letter have often been referred to to show Elizabeth's obsession with virginity, but the true context has been long forgotten. It was an accepted part of a queen's duty to deliver long harangues on this subject. Elizabeth's mother did exactly the same: 'And that her lades, maydons of honour and other gentilwomen shoulde use them selves according to their callinge, her grace wolde comonlye and generally wolde many tymes move them to modestye and chastertie; but in esspeciall to the maydons of honour, whome she wold call before her in the prevy chambre, and before the mother of the maydes wold geove them a longe charge of their behaviours'. 59 However traditional, interminable lectures on the virgin state must have paled in comparison with 'enticinge love', and the relationship between the old Queen and her younger servants must have been strained still further when the Queen was out of sorts. By this time most of the women who had been in service at the beginning of Elizabeth's reign were dead, including the four women who had been her Ladies of the Bedchamber in 1558. Her sister Mary had never been in this position because she was outlived by all her favourite women except Mary Kempe-Finch. Even at the start of their reigns both queens were older than their Maids by at least a decade or more, and by the 1590s the age difference had stretched to approximately fifty years - easily two or three generations. When the news that the 'younge Earl' at whom Mary Howard had set her cap had secretly married another of the Maids of Honour, Elizabeth Vernon,

58. Harington, *Nugae Antique*, II pp.232-5. William Fenton to Sir John Harington. Court, 23 May 1597. The 'younge Earl' is often identified as the Earl of Essex, but it is more likely that he was the Earl of Southampton who still in his twenties and as yet unmarried, whilst Essex was in his thirties and no longer a 'young' man.

59. Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fol.31v.
the reaction was predictable.

Yesterday the Q: was enformed of the new La: of Southampton and her adventures whereat her patience was soe muche moved that she came not to ye Chapple. She threatenethe them all to the tower, not only the parties but all that are partakers of the practize. Yt is Confessed that the Earle was lately here and sollemnized the act him selfe and Sir Tho: German accompanied him in his returne to Margat...I now understand that the Q: haeth Commanded that there shalbe provided for the nouHl Countesse the sweetest and best appointed lodginge in the fleet, her Lord is by Commandment to returne uppon his alleageance with all speed

Nearly twenty years earlier another Maid of Honour had not been so lucky, although that may have been because her case was rather extreme.

On Tuesday at night Anne Vavyisor was brought to bed of a son in the maidens chamber. The E of Oxeford is avowed to be the father, who hath withdrawn himself with intent, as it is thought, to pass the seas. The ports are laid for him and therefore if he have any such determination it is not likely that he will escape. The gentlewoman the selfsame night she was delivered was conveyed out of the house and the next day committed to the Tower. Others that have been found any ways party to the cause have been also committed. Her Majesty is greatly grieved with the accident, and therefore I hope there will be some such order taken as the like inconvenience will be avoided.

He hoped in vain. In 1591 alone 'It is said that Mr. Vavisor is committed for Mrs. Southwell's lameness in her leg, and that Mr. Dudley is commanded from Court for kissing Mrs. Candisssh', and soon after it was rumoured that 'Sir Francis Darcy is committed to the Tower, and Mrs Jones, about Mrs Lee who was brought abed in the court, and Sir Francis saith she is his wife'.

Senior women, who were closer to Elizabeth than the Maids, evoked a similar response when they erred, even if they were no longer Privy Chamber staff, although in some cases the memory of their friendship seems to have assuaged Elizabeth's anger in time though the betrayal of personal trust

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was greater. When the widowed Helena Marchioness of Northampton secretly married Thomas Gorges, a Groom of the Privy Chamber, in 1576 the Queen’s wrath descended, and Helena became a ‘poure, desolat, and banished creture’ at Gorges’ house in Whitefriars, while her husband was jailed. Helena’s miserable letter of supplication to the Earl of Sussex shows that she knew that their only chance of rehabilitation lay in her return to Court, ‘if hit be but to se her Majestie’ and not even to speak to her, and she begged him to ‘remember my sorowfull cauce to her Majestie that if any hope be left I may receve sum reliufe’. Her pleas bore fruit, for both wife and husband were at Court to exchange New Year’s gifts with the Queen within eighteen months. The final return of the couple to favour was marked by the Queen’s agreement to stand as naming godparent to their first child in May 1578, and Thomas continued as a Groom of the Privy Chamber, becoming Gentleman of the Robes in 1586. The marriage had obviously been something of a cause célèbre; for it was alluded to over a decade later in Twelfth Night. The steward Malvolio, in mulling over his chances of marrying his mistress, remembers that her maid Maria has already told him that Olivia ‘did affect’ him, and he convinces himself that it is possible, for ‘There is example for’t: the lady of the Strachey married the yeoman of the wardrobe’.

It was not only the queen who could be angry, of course. Edward

63. B.L. Cotton MS Titus B II No.162 fol.346. 19 October 1576. Her aim was to ensure that neither she nor her husband were forgotten, hence the disingenuous request ‘but to se’ Elizabeth. In fact she wanted Elizabeth to see her, no doubt in a suitably sorrowful state: ‘out of sight, out of mind’ was a maxim which had to be taken to heart if one was to prosper at any Tudor Court.
64. Nichols, Progresses, II p.67.
65. E351/541; LC5/84 fol.121 1 July 1586.
66. Twelfth Night, II v 22-3 and 37-8. Although Gorges was known as Gentleman of the Robes, he held the office of the Yeoman of Robes.
Lord Beauchamp, heir to the Earl of Hertford, got into severe difficulties over his first cousin Honora Rogers, or 'Onus Blous' as his irate father chose to call her. Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset presided over a household of young people whose behaviour left much to be desired; Hertford's sons spent the summer of 1581 at Hanworth with Honora, her brother Andrew, and 'two old hags' Elizabeth Moninges and her sister Tomasine Audley. By the autumn Beauchamp had given Honora a ring as a promise of marriage, had called her his wife and 'knew her in the orchard'. When Mary Seymour Lady Rogers leapt to Honora's defence after the affair was discovered, it was pointed out that her supposedly exemplary manner had not been noticeable when the Duchess was ill, for Honora, 'being one who watched, stole the keys from under the chambermaid's bedhead and stole sweetmeats'. Hertford's information was not always the most reliable, of course: 'The clerk of her Grace's kitchen told me that he found by old Kyrton that his daughter told him that Elizabeth Moninges bade Onus not tell Tomsine of the ring, for she would surely tell her Grace'. For four years the rows continued, with the couple kept apart, attempting to prove their marriage valid, and finally their parents gave in.67

All stages of marriage could be subjected to Court influence, both during its arrangement or in its breakdown. One need only consider the Homeric battles between the Earl and Countess of Shrewsbury throughout the 1580s, and the reams of correspondence which has survived to see that the whole affair centred on the Court and the combatants' attempts to win the Queen to their side of the argument.68 Mary Browne Countess of

68. I have yet to find a major collection which does not contain at least one letter relating to the Shrewsbury separation. The best starting-point is the volume SP12/207 which contains a representative selection of material.
Southampton had good reason to be glad of her Court contacts in 1580, when her husband was treating her badly and threatening to end their marriage. Because her friends could sway the Queen against him if he took action, 'he stand so doubtfull and perplexed betwene hate and dread, as what to do he knoweth nott well'. She lived in the hope that the Queen would intervene 'to bestow her breathe to do good (if it may be) betwene vs'.69 The image of Elizabeth as marriage guidance counsellor may be a novel one, but it was merely another extension of her role as feudal lord to her tenants-in-chief.

Adulterous liaisons were viewed with strong disapproval, but occasionally little or no attempt was made to conceal them by the couple concerned. Penelope Lady Rich made few friends when she flouted convention by living with her lover Lord Mountjoy openly. Sir John Holles felt the full weight of Burghley's anger over a privateering venture in 1597, but it was commonly thought that the real reason lay in Holles' 'very much familiarity' with Burghley's granddaughter Elizabeth Cecil Lady Hatton.70

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The queens' own marriages were central to the policies they pursued at home and abroad, in Elizabeth's case until the early 1580s at least. The Privy Chamber staff were known to have taken part in the campaigns to pressurise the queens into one marriage or another, and do not seem to have considered interference in such affairs as beyond their competence.

70. Wood, Memorials of the Holles family, p.93.
Simon Renard was initially alarmed at the way in which Mary followed the advice of her ladies, mainly because he did not have that monopoly of the Queen's attention that he would have liked, and he chafed that they 'did nothing but chatter of marriage'.\(^{71}\) To his purpose it would seem, for despite his fears Mary's closest confidants, Susan Clarendon and Frideswide Knight-Strelly, supported him in his suit for Prince Philip.\(^{72}\) He could not bring himself to disapprove of the ladies' influence when it worked in favour of Spain. The Privy Chamber was not united in its support, however, and he had had good reason to worry, but once it was clear which way the wind blew the doubtful said nothing openly. Mary Kempe-Finch, during a 'familiar talke' with her half-sister in the winter of 1553/4, asked 'whether she thought in her conscience betwene them two that the matche was meete (meaninge...in regard of their yeares) she said plainlie she might saie to her she thought not and that she sawe no great joye that the Queen was like to have of it. Yet saide shee, suche is her affection as I feare mee we maye have cause to rue for her sake'.\(^{73}\) Many may have thought that they had Mary's best interests at heart when they backed the match, but it was not the only interest in question. When Philip opened his suit he 'bestowed sondry Joells of ye ladyes in the Court to furder ye mariadg', and he almost certainly rewarded his female supporters when he arrived in England.\(^{74}\)

Unusually it is Elizabeth's reign for which less information has survived, mainly because no foreign ambassador was allowed to penetrate

\(^{71}\) C.S.P. Spanish, 1553 p.189.  
\(^{72}\) Loades, Mary Tudor, p.204.  
\(^{73}\) Loades, The papers of George Wyatt, p.203.  
\(^{74}\) H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.153. Memorial by Cecil 'of sondry thyngs to be found out'. 20 May 1559
the Privy Chamber in the way that Renard had, so the influence that Privy Chamber women had on Elizabeth's decisions is unknown. Katherine Champeron-Asteley and Dorothy Bradbelt were prepared to run the risk of disfavour by writing a letter of encouragement to King Eric of Sweden, and suffered house arrest for their pains, but the politics behind this remain obscure. As Elizabeth used her women to manipulate ambassadors on other occasions, it is possible that the letter was originally her idea, a method used to test the water at Court and abroad, which enabled her to blame her women if it did not meet with general approval. Not all the politicking was necessarily engaged in at Elizabeth's behest; Mary Dudley Lady Sidney, while seeming to help the Spanish ambassador with his suit on behalf of Philip II's cousin, in fact indulged in a series of delaying tactics. This may have been an elaborate attempt to fend off the suit without actually refusing it made with Elizabeth's knowledge, but Mary's involvement may well have been on behalf of her brother Robert without Elizabeth's connivance at all.

It was not only their own marriages, however, which gave the two queens food for thought. It is hard to exaggerate the threat which the offspring of Henry VIII's sisters Queen Mary of France and Queen Margaret of Scotland posed to both Mary and Elizabeth. Mary successfully postponed any decision about what to do with Queen Mary's granddaughters Ladies Katherine and Mary Grey because they were still sufficiently young for their marriages not to be a pressing issue, but in Elizabeth's reign the problem

75. A Swedish match was put forward on several occasions, the first being when Mary proposed that Elizabeth marry King Eric in 1558, which Elizabeth strenuously opposed (B.L. Cotton MS Vitellius C XVI No.14 fol.333. Princess Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Pope? 1558); B.L. Add. MS 48023 fol.366; C.S.P. Rome, 1558-71 p.105.
76. Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton certainly helped Elizabeth to baffle the Spanish ambassador (C.S.P. Spanish, 1558-67 p.381).
77. ibid. p.95.
78. B.L. Harleian MS 248. An oration on the Brandon claim.
was going to have to be faced, and her solution, as ever, seems to have been to ignore it altogether until it was too late. The Spanish plan to kidnap and marry Lady Katherine Grey to Philip's heir was already suspected when one of Cecil's agents reported that in the course of a secret talk with the Count of Feria he had been told that she and her sister Mary were 'straytely' looked to in the Privy Chamber, no doubt because the plan was known of at Court.\footnote{H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.158. John Middleton alias Huggins to Sir William Cecil. Antwerp, 29 December 1559. The commission incorrectly suggests that the 'lady K' was Lady Knollys; ibid. p.197. Same to same. Brussels, 24 March 1559/60.}

Despite being at Court under the Queen's jaundiced eye, Katherine married Edward Earl of Hertford in November 1560, which was only revealed in August 1561 when her pregnancy could no longer be disguised. Mary married Sergeant Thomas Keys the Groom Porter on 6 July 1565, discovered only weeks later on 18 August 1565. While Mary was deprived of the chance to become pregnant because of the speed with which she and her husband were found out, Katherine produced two healthy sons, one of them conceived in the Tower, so the line was continued. It was inevitable that both marriages were pronounced invalid, but Katherine's descendants were still considered to have a real claim to the English throne in 1688.\footnote{B.L. Harleian MS 249 No.12 fol.45. Proceedings against the Hertfords and the sentence pronounced against them; SP46/10. The Commission's proceedings including accounts by the key witnesses heard by Edmund Grindal. The commission sat between 16 February and 12 May 1562. On the latter date the verdict was given that no marriage had taken place; S.P.R.O. GD224/1058/11; Elizabeth was not pleased to be reminded of the power of the claim by Hales in his 1563 tract which was written in support of Katherine Grey (L.P.L. MS 2872 fols.2-9v).}

This was due in no small part to the efforts of the Earl of Hertford after his return to Court in 1571 to have his children's illegitimacy reversed.\footnote{H.M.C. Bath, IV p.135. Sir John Thynne to Hertford. Corseley, 14 June 1571.} He even emulated Henry VIII, sending Robert Beale to the continental universities for their opinion in order to force the reopening of the case.

There was one major stumbling block, however; although the final decision
of the commission had been widely publicised at the time, Hertford was unable to obtain a copy of the verdict, even after his wife’s death. By this sure means the government forestalled him for many years, for without the full text he was unable to challenge the verdict’s legality.82

Not all potential brides of royal blood were kept at Court, which gave rise to the ease with which the marriage of Charles Earl of Lennox to Elizabeth Cavendish in 1574 was arranged, a match engineered by their fearsome mothers Margaret Countess of Lennox (the daughter of the Queen of Scotland) and Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury.83 Elizabeth Cavendish had not been a Maid, either because she was not of sufficiently high birth or because she lacked opportunity and was living in the north with her mother, which made it far easier to bring the marriage off without the Queen hearing of it. The Countess of Lennox and her husband had never really been trusted by either Mary or Elizabeth because of the Countess’s claim to the English throne. She had attended all the large state occasions and visited Court, but close friend to either she was not. After 1558 her crypto-Catholicism made her even more suspect, and Elizabeth’s low opinion was borne out by the marriage in 1565 of the Countess’s eldest son Henry Lord Darnley to Mary Queen of Scots.84

Once Elizabeth was too old to use herself as bait in the international


83. B.L. Cotton MS Caligula C IV No.134 fol.243. The Earl of Shrewsbury to the Queen. Sheffield, 2 December 1574; ibid. C V Nos.3-12 fols.3-20. The interrogations of principal witnesses. April or May 1575. Twenty years later the Countess arranged the marriage of her grand-daughter Grace Cavendish-Pierpoint to George Manners behind the Queen’s back (H.M.C. Salisbury, IV p.345. Roger Manners to Robert Cecil. Uffington, 2 August 1593).

84. C.S.P. Foreign, 1559-60 p.237. Secret instructions for the Duke of Norfolk. 25 December 1559. In particular he was warned about the Lennoxes, who were thought to be supporting the French in Scotland against Elizabeth's interest.
marriage market she used her women instead. When James VI and those who governed in Scotland began to look about for a bride in the early 1580s Elizabeth was only too happy to push foward an English candidate. The front runner for several months was the Maid of Honour Frances Howard, the daughter of the Duke of Norfolk. She was an ideal choice from the Queen's standpoint, for she was of good birth but not of royal blood, and so not too much of a danger; for Mrs Howard’s part, she was in love with the Earl of Hertford, so one may imagine how she viewed the prospect. Walsingham was first told of the rumours in Scotland in August 1584, and by the following January when a Scottish envoy was at Court it was noted that 'the Quene hathe used great Comendacyons to Kethe of fraunces howard And she daunced before hit Majestie he being bye. he must have A nother picture of hir with him', one destined for his master the King. The match came to naught, but it served its purpose at the time.

The queens’ Privy Chamber women were not mere pawns in the political game of marriage, money and power, but were active participants; it is to this game in its widest sense we must now turn.

85. N.L.S. Adv. MS 33.7.24. A book of genealogies of all the European royal and noble houses drawn up in 1580 for James VI. This was not merely of historical interest to James, but was intended to provide information on the available brides and their international standing.

86. B.L. Cotton MS Caligula C VIII No.79 fol.115. William Davison to Walsingham. Edinburgh 17 August 1584; ibid. C IX No.70 fol.188. Thomas Fowler to Leicester. 22 January 1584/5.
6. Influence and politics

Learn before your access her Majesty's disposition by some of the privy chamber, with whom you must keep credit, for that will stand you in much stead.¹

In an age when monarchs did not only reign but also ruled, those who were dedicated to ensuring that the monarch's daily routine ran smoothly, and were themselves an integral part of that routine, were ideally placed to play an active part in the politics of the day. Mary's women were at an even greater advantage because she was caught on the horns of a dilemma over whom to trust. All those men who had experience of government were to some degree tarred with the brush of heresy or disloyalty, while all her most loyal followers, men like Rochester, Jerningham and Waldegrave, were loyal but inexperienced and were ideally suited to running her household but not her country.² Although her main advisors were to be first Renard and then Prince Philip, there was much scope for the women in her Privy Chamber to use their influence on this relatively unselfconfident Queen, since all of them, in theory at least, had been loyal and trustworthy. Elizabeth may have been more confident, but she was still open to persuasion on any issue.

It was widely appreciated that some women exercised greater power than their peers over their mistress. The fair Geraldine's friendship with Elizabeth endured over forty years: as early as 1548 Sir Robert Tyrwhit wished that she was in currently in attendance on the Princess, as in his experience no one had greater influence over her, nor would so easily extract

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the truth from her about the Lord Admiral Thomas Seymour.  

The Privy Chamber staff did not grind axes identical to those of the powerful landed nobles who frequented the Court, simply because none of them were major landowners in their own right. Because of their sex and class most of them were at one remove from the immediate difficulties of managing large estates, and did not have their own pressing interests to promote. They were therefore a more useful means for those outside the Privy Chamber to extract land, promises, offices and pardons than a group acting in their own self-interest. Their concerns were those of their families and friends, and to an extent their own personal gain. One should bear in mind that feelings within the wide groups of kith, kin, and servants who constituted an aristocratic ‘family’, were always fluid. Even if not actually at daggers drawn, few members of the same family consistently agreed, and money and power politics only confused the issues: in 1564 Henry Cobham complained that his sister, Elizabeth Marchioness of Northampton, was cross with him about a land grant, but worse, this was not only the result of false report but also of her poor opinion of his business acumen generally.  

Nor were the women in the Privy Chamber honest, idealistic and selfless to a fault; they were just as unprincipled as the men at Court, and just as happy to profit from another’s misfortune. When a traitor’s property was on the market women were often to be found participating in the general scramble for pickings; in comparison with Lady Arundel, Susan Clarencieux was positively restrained in spending only sixteen shillings at the sale of Archbishop Cranmer’s goods and chattels in 1553.  

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5. L.P.L. MS 1468 fol.15. Clarencieux’s purchases included one very old Turkish ‘foot
The lack of self-promotion of Privy Chamber staff was a product of their general social status, not of any inherent limitation imposed by their office. Those women who did have large amounts of land and a great many interests of their own to pursue, such as Gertrude Blount Marchioness of Exeter and Anne Russell Countess of Warwick, always came to Court as attendants rather than Privy Chamber staff, and though they played a part in the political life of the country, it was in their own right and not specifically because of their service to the queen. That said, it is very noticeable that those aristocratic women who were seen as most powerful spent much of their time at Court and were particular friends of the queen, the Marchioness of Exeter indeed being Mary's bedfellow. Despite their own personal power they, like the female staff, achieved their own and their clients' ends by influence with the queen. Sadly, there is far less information about the Marian Court than the Elizabethan, but from what exists it seems fairly clear that there was no great change in the way Court women handled both queen, clients and their own interests.

It was comforting to have plenty of friends at Court, but to be one of the staff yourself gave added influence. When Henry Lord Clinton found himself at odds with his step-mother Elizabeth Fitzgerald Countess of Lincoln he rapidly discovered what an uncomfortable position he was in for she was one of Elizabeth's closest friends and had frequented the Privy Chamber for years. Open hostilities seem to have broken out over the care of young Thomas Clinton, his heir, who had, for a while, been brought up with his paternal grandparents, and he was left convinced that the Countess hated him. Matters came to a head as his father lay dying.

Clinton wailed that 'it hath pleased God...to suffer my mother in law to have that power over hym in thes hys weaker & Latter days that by her conyng & dylygent observation to pleas hym she hath wrought all to her self to ye vtter vndoynge of me & myne'. Although it was dastardly to turn his father against him, worse had followed. To ensure that he would be unable to defeat her plot to cheat him of various leases, she had turned the Queen against him too. How had she achieved this? ‘She fylleth ye eares of all ye pryvy chamber & all her frends about her maiestie with most false & slanderous reports which her hyghnes ys yncensyd with to my intollerable greefe’.8

Three days after the letter was written the old Earl died, and the new wrote in desperation to Burghley that only he could save him from ‘her malyce’ now. ‘She hath not only in my good fathers days sought my overthrow & much prevayled in thes hys latter days, but now ioyneth with my wyfe & moveth my la. stafford & Sir thomas heneage her instruments to blow innumerable slaunders into her hyghnes eares, therby to be Better able to make her conquest of me’.9 Not enough information has survived to confirm that the Countess was after the leases - it is possible that she had a perfectly legitimate claim - and there is more than a hint of paranoia about the letters, but the methods Henry was convinced she was using were recognised ones. His desperation grew from his lack of any equivalent influence. All his contacts within the Privy Chamber were against him, so he could not fight like with like, but had to turn to Burghley instead.

Access was in itself vitally important. The constant thread in all the letters sent by those who had fallen into a Tudor monarch’s extreme disfavour was a desperation to see her, or him, in person in order to prostrate

9. SP12/176 No.12 fol.22. Henry Earl of Lincoln to Burghley. Cannon Row, 16 January 1584/5. His wife was Katherine Hastings, the daughter of Francis Earl of Huntingdon.
themselves and beg for mercy. Her inability to gain access to her husband at the crucial moment sealed Katherine Howard’s fate. When Princess Elizabeth was haled to the Tower in 1554 she was fetched away on Palm Sunday ‘after the Queene had gone a procession, which was about x of the clock in the forenoone’.\(^{10}\) As the Queen was absent there could be no danger of Elizabeth making an embarrassing, last minute appeal when she was led through the palace past the Privy Lodgings. In most cases the only hope of rehabilitation was to see the queen in person, for it was rare that anyone would dare sue on the behalf of one in total disgrace with the vehemence of the unfortunate person concerned. Jane Howard Countess of Westmorland asserted that she was wholly innocent of any participation in the Northern Rebellion of 1569, and pleaded with William Cecil to ‘be a suter for me to the Quenes Majestie, to give me Leave to come to her royal presence’.\(^{11}\) Eleanor Butler Countess of Desmond fought long, hard, and unsuccessfully to be allowed to come over from Ireland to see Elizabeth in person in the winter of 1579, just prior to her husband’s rebellion. It seems that it was part of the rebels’ plans that she would arrange a token separation from her husband in the expectation that she would granted her jointure before to the rebellion began, for after the outbreak all Desmond lands would inevitably be confiscated.\(^ {12}\) In this manner the Desmonds may have hoped to have had money in hand during the rebellion or in the event of its failure. This was not the first time she had sought an audience with the Queen in such circumstances, for in 1570 she was to be found bewailing her fate, ‘barred from her presens’, and finding her ‘myldemeanor’ towards the Queen sorely tested as a result.\(^ {13}\) This concern was not confined to those out of favour with the

13. B.L. Lansdowne MS 12 No.74 fol.167. Eleanor Countess of Desmond to Sir William
Queen; it held good at all levels. Mary Seymour Lady Rogers was forced to appeal to Burghley to put in a good word with her mother Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset, because so 'many suggestions have been preferred to her Grace behind my back' that she was refusing to speak to her daughter at a moment when she needed her support.14

Whenever possible, preemptive action was taken. In 1553 Mary Howard Duchess of Richmond sped to meet Mary as she moved south towards London with her troops, and caught up with her on 24 July at Robert Wingfield's house. She hoped to be pardoned for a letter she had sent to Edward VI's Council which characteristically 'mentioned the queen with little honour and scant respect', and after being made to wait for twenty four hours was 'allowed up'. Unfortunately the outcome of any interview is not recorded; one may surmise that it was not altogether favourable for the Duchess retired into the country until her death in 1557. The 25 July was a day of supplications: Sir Thomas Heneage came to make his peace; and both William Cecil and Nicholas Bacon were received, despite their parts in the 'factious conspiracy', because Anne Cooke-Bacon pleaded with the Queen on the strength of her previous service in Mary's household as a 'waiting-woman'. After Mary had moved on to Beaulieu she was confronted by her cousin Frances Brandon Duchess of Suffolk, mother of Queen Jane, who came 'to intercede for her most unfortunate husband...and obtain his liberty on parole', which, astonishingly, was granted.15 Whether this says more about Mary's 'merciful nature, never enough to be praised', or the Duchess' persuasiveness, it is hard to tell. By steadfastly ignoring her daughter, and concentrating her efforts solely upon the Duke, the Duchess

may have strengthened her case.

The same process was repeated five years later, although with marginally less urgency, as Mary's well-publicised illness meant that those who wanted to establish their credentials and their claims, with the new regime had a measure of time in which to do so, and a more subtle approach could be adopted. When on 10 November the Count of Feria went to see the Princess at Brocket Hall, he found that Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton was also there. In his interview with the Princess after the three had dined together he was told 'that Clinton had never lost his office of admiral, for the deprivation was unlawful as it was contrary to the patent he held, which he had deposited with Paget and which Paget had kept for him ever since'.

One purpose of his fellow guest's visit is thus revealed, and what is more, one may see that Lady Clinton's threnody had had the desired effect immediately. To find another reason, we need look no further than the first staff list of the new reign, to find Lady Clinton as one of 'the privie chambre without wages'. Despite the advance notice, there was still a rush of suitors at Elizabeth's accession, and 'when shee came to London many greate persones, eyther for birth, or worthinesse, [or place in the State,] resorted unto her; and now, rising from defected feares to ambitious hopes, contended who should catch the first hold of her favour'.

In Mary's reign a hitherto unremarked feature was the close contact between the leaders of the most serious rebellion and Court staff; preeminent was Sir Thomas Wyatt's sister-in-law, Mary Kempe-Finch, who was a senior member of the Privy Chamber. Whether the course of action Wyatt and his peers decided upon was based on hints from the likes of Finch (who was herself secretly opposed to the Spanish match) that the Queen

17. LC2/4/3 fol.53v.
was susceptible to pressure, is not certain. If it was, the rebellion’s leaders must have misunderstood any information they did receive which confirmed their own prejudices, or may even have been deliberately misled.

However, in Elizabeth’s reign it is the total absence of women in the Privy Chamber who were close relatives or friends of any rebels which is so striking. This does not mean that the Privy Chamber was of no political importance. Far from it. I would suggest that it is precisely this lack of representation of interest within the Privy Chamber which was a catalyst of rebellion. If it was felt that there was no chance of persuading the queen to one’s way of thinking by the recognised means of influence and manipulation, resort to violence beckoned. Prior to the revolt of the Northern Earls none of their Countesses had particularly close relations with the Elizabeth, although Jane Howard the young Countess of Westmorland had been one of the first six Maids of Honour of the reign. In 1600, although the Earl of Essex had friends at Court, there was no woman in the Privy Chamber who would have been prepared to push hard for his rehabilitation. His wife, Frances Walsingham-Sidney, was rarely at Court, and even if she had attended more often it is doubtful that she would have been as enthusiastic a suitor as his sister Penelope Lady Rich, who, because of her adulterous liaison with Charles Lord Blount, was persona non grata. Meanwhile Elizabeth still loathed Essex’s mother for committing the ultimate sin of marrying the Earl of Leicester. By Christmas 1600 it was obvious that there was no chance of working the Earl’s return to favour through the normal Court channels. At least one woman was embroiled in his plot to force his way back into power: on 8 February, immediately after the rebellion, Lady Rich was taken from Essex House and placed in the custody of Henry Seckford. Her active role was limited to planning, and she and the

19. LC2/4/3 fol.53v.
Countess of Essex had spent the hours of the rebellion entertaining the Queen's envoys captured by the rebels.\textsuperscript{20} This did not help Lady Rich's case, although it ensured that the Countess was let off as an innocent bystander, despite some of her servants being deeply implicated.\textsuperscript{21}

Such leniency did not obtain on other occasions when women were involved at the very heart of political machinations. After her husband's execution Anne Stanhope Duchess of Somerset spent several years in the Tower closely confined, 'not for having committed a crime, but to prevent her from committing one', remarkable testimony to her desire for revenge on the Duke of Northumberland.\textsuperscript{22} Margaret Douglas Countess of Lennox spent three separate periods in the Tower, each time because of a political misdemeanour.

The Earl of Leicester had female relatives in or around the Privy Chamber from the very beginning of the reign, including his sister Mary Dudley Lady Sidney and Mrs Wayneham, one of the Gentlewoman of the Household.\textsuperscript{23} The Earl of Essex, as we have seen, was not so well provided for. His aunt Elizabeth Knollys Lady Leighton was a Lady of the Privy Chamber but was never very active on his behalf: as one of his earliest efforts to please he tried to obtain for her use the lease of a house in London from Caius College, Cambridge, but he was out-maneuvred by Lady Killegrew who was acting for her grandson.\textsuperscript{24} Essex also tried to maintain good relations with Philadelphia Carey Lady Scrope, probably in an attempt to counterbalance the power of her sister Katherine Carey Countess of

\textsuperscript{20} SP12/278 No.40 fol.56. 10 February 1600/1; ibid. No.46 fol.66; ibid. No.44 fol.62v.
\textsuperscript{21} Her servant Pettingale was seen in the thick of the action (SP12/278 No.45 fol.63 and No.47 fol.67).
\textsuperscript{23} LC2/4/3 fol.63v; H.M.C. Salisbury, II p.157. Leicester to Burghley. 23 July 1577.
\textsuperscript{24} H.M.C. Salisbury, IV p.73. Master and Fellows of Gonville and Caius College to the Earl of Essex. Cambridge, 12 November 1590.
Nottingham, wife (and ally) of his arch-rival the Lord Admiral. However, if romantic tradition is to be believed he then failed to take full advantage of this, when, on the eve of his execution, he sent the Queen’s ring with a plea for mercy to Lady Scrope to pass on, but was too vague in the direction, so that it was delivered to the wrong sister with disastrous results.25

Margaret Clifford Lady Strange was fortunately in attendance to excuse her husband’s absence from Court after the Queen had summoned him in December 1571. He had in fact gone to his father, who had fallen ill, but since his departure came so soon after the Duke of Norfolk’s treasons this must have been a cause for alarm until his messages reached his wife, who then hurried to explain to the Queen.26

The location in which one was received by the queen was seen as significant, as shown by the experience of the Earl of Essex’s messengers during one month. William Davison, when bidden to the presence, ‘found her Majesty above, retyred into her withdrawing chamber, which I tooke for some advantage’. In contrast, Sir Thomas Shirley was only shown ‘into the pryvy chamber, when she used most bytter wordes agaynst your lordship,’ and he was reduced to approaching her in the Privy Garden to try again.27 This meant that he had to stoop to join the other quite literally common or garden suitors pestering the Queen, with the concomitant risk of rebuttal and loss of face, in itself a sign of the Queen’s disfavour. In general, the less exalted stood no chance of reaching the Privy Chamber, but because access to the Privy Garden was much easier to achieve, on a sunny day it pulullated with nervous courtiers hoping that the queen would appear.28

Not all styles of pleading one's case were informal. There were certain times when it was traditional to present the monarch with an open supplication. One fictitious couple late for a Sunday lunch party explained that they had been at Court, where 'Wee have seen the Queen in her coutche which cam from walkyng out of the Parke: and as she went to the chappell to heare the service, there was a Lady of the court, auncient enough, which hath presented her a request: the Queene hath taken it very gentely, truly, and hath geeven her her hand to kisse'.

After her husband's rebellion, Jane Hawte Lady Wyatt, in addition to lobbying all and sundry on his behalf, made a formal appeal for clemency to Mary as she processed back from one of the sessions of the second Parliament. To her dismay a warning from Sir Edward Hastings, Master of the Horse, that 'she should find the Queene in no moode, beinge displeased with proceedinges in Parliament' proved true, and she 'found indeed some sharpe answer whereat she shrikinge and sinkinge downe, the Queene perceavinge it, torned backe and said she would have mercie on her, and to her Ladies, I thinke I must save bothe or loose bothe'.

The obsession with access to the queen was not limited to women of course, and in general there was little difference in attitude to political activity between men and women, even if the opportunities were different. Women at Court generally fulfilled the same roles as men in similar positions in society: they acted as suitors for their family, friends and clients. Married women were also in a position to act as mediators between their two families, if the inclination and the need existed. However, the women were

31. Katherine Talbot Countess of Pembroke hoped to resolve the argument between her husband and her father (L.P.L. MS 3205 fol.81-82v. Katherine Countess of Pembroke to George Earl of Shrewsbury. Ramsbury, 15 January n.a. (1550s)).
also in a privileged position not enjoyed by their male counterparts outside the Privy Chamber with regard to the gathering of information and rumour-mongering, and as one or more women were in almost constant attendance there was very little which would have gone unnoticed. The queen was not the only source of their information. Women took pains to keep abreast of state affairs, and with the heart of central government at Court across the corridor from the Privy Chamber, they could easily gather news from the Secretary downwards. Robert Cecil wrote to Essex that, 'I sent my lady Russell uppon her Importunity yor letter to me from Plymouth, she being desirus to hear from you, what she hath written I knowe not but here you have it'.\(^{32}\) There was also information, which can be seen either as gossip or as privileged information (for much of it was only initially available to the top echelons of the Court), which was easy to glean from the Privy Chamber. It was only because she was resident at Court that Anne Herbert Lady Talbot heard that the money which her brother the Earl of Pembroke had asked for from her father-in-law under the terms of her jointure was not going to be spent on repairing houses in which she had an interest, as Pembroke had promised. To her horror she discovered that he was going to put it up as capital for one of Sir Walter Raleigh's overseas ventures, and she had to act quickly to prevent the money changing hands.\(^{33}\)

Some of the women also kept abreast of international affairs on their own initiative. Anne Russell Countess of Warwick was sent secret reports on the Landgrave of Hesse from one of the members of the train of George Lord Hunsdon, who had been sent as ambassador to Hesse in 1596.\(^{34}\) Early in Elizabeth's reign, before it would have been construed as treasonable,

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32. SP12/264 No.54 fols.74-75v. Sir Robert Cecil to the Earl of Essex. Court, 25 July 1597. The lady was Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell.


Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton and Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton corresponded with unidentified persons in Spain, possibly Jane Dormer Countess of Feria whom both would have known from Mary's Court. It was noted at the time how well informed the Count of Feria was of English state affairs, and his wife's former colleagues may have been the source of some of that information. The Countess of Feria, once one of Mary's favourites, continued to support Roman Catholics in England throughout her long life, and was occasionally to be found embroiled in the activist's plots against Elizabeth. It should not be forgotten that a surprising number of Court women had lived abroad, and had had first hand experience of other countries and Courts. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign several had been Marian exiles, the most prominent being Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk. Others had been brought up overseas for a time: Frances Howard Countess of Hertford I lived in France before she became a Maid of Honour, and over twenty years later still counted Madam d'Angoulême as a close friend. It would seem that a daughter of Honora Pounde Countess of Sussex was sent to be educated in France in the de Marchaumont household, probably when she was already in her teens. There were also foreign nationals, although no Spanish women joined the Court after Mary's marriage, a striking example of how determined she was to keep friction to an absolute minimum. Helena Snakenborg Marchioness of Northampton, who was Swedish born and bred, was the exception to the

37. B.L. Cotton MS Caligula C III No.222 fol.509. Francis Englefield to the Duchess of Feria. Before November 1574. This was a letter intercepted on 12 November of that year.
39. H.M.C. Salisbury, II p.381. Seigneur de Marchaumont to Du Bex. Poissy, 19 Marcy n.a. The Commission gives 1580/1, but it is more likely to have been 1583/4.
rule that the only foreign women at Court were those who held specialised or professional offices.

In European countries ambassadors were often joined by their wives, especially on important embassies, or when they were in residence for long periods, hence Lady Mason's sojourn in France with her husband. In Anne Carew Lady Throckmorton accompanied her husband on his second embassy to France in the 1560s after his first, unaccompanied embassy had been cut short, using her illness as his excuse to return to England. The women were not just there to keep their husbands' company; the queens expected them to be useful, and not the least of their duties was to find and acquire various items on their mistresses' behalf. One of Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton's errands when she went to France as part of her husband's embassy in 1554 was to purchase Mary a looking glass. She returned to Court with 'a glasse of christall...Garnished with Jaspar', for which she was duly reimbursed. In 1567 the ambassador in Paris, Sir Henry Norris, was told that Elizabeth 'would fain have a tailor that had [skill] to make her apparel both after the Italian and French manner, and she thinketh that you might use some means to obtain some one that serveth the French queen, without mentioning any manner of request in our queen's majesty's name. First cause your lady to get such a one'. This lady, who was to entwine an appropriate tailor into her own service and thus provide cover for any negotiations, was Margery Williams, Elizabeth's 'own Crow', and an old friend and servant. It appears that she did not meet with success on this occasion, as no French tailor arrived in England to serve the Queen. The connection of another ambassador's wife, Douglas Howard

42. SP11/4 No.12 fol.25v. 16 June 1554.
43. Strickland, Lives, p.233; H.M.C. Pepys, p.99. 1 March 1566/7; B.L. Cotton MS
Lady Stafford, with the French Court was far more significant, especially her friendship with Catherine de Medici. After the Duke of Alençon's death Sir Edward reported that the Queen Mother was 'never out of great dumps and studies, which nobody hath seen her subject to afore. She told my wife the last day, that time might wear this grief away to the show of the world, but out of her heart never'.

Even as the women were interested in what happened abroad, so foreigners were interested in the staff of the Privy Chamber. The ill-health of the Countess of Warwick was a piece of useful business news in Venice, although the informant reported confidently that, to his mind, she was just 'more than usually...subject to fretting and melancholy', that it would take far more than that to kill her, and as evidence pointed out that she had outlived at least five personal physicians. The reason for this concern becomes plain when suits like that of an Italian merchant in London, Giovanni Darcuero, are recalled. The Countess of Warwick was asked to procure him a protection from his creditors, with the lure that Darcuero had some fine scented waters and rich material to present to the Queen, which could become available to the Countess. Not all the clients whose interests were represented at Court by Privy Chamber women lived in England.

Historians have rarely paused to wonder why both the national and the international bush telegraphs hummed so vigorously with all the latest Court gossip. Most would acknowledge that in Tudor England information was power, but they have not gone on to address the question, that if this was the case, why was interest in the Privy Chamber universal? Is it credible that all correspondents would fill their letters with useless intelli-

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45. SP12/271 No.106 fol.171-v. Francis Corda in London to Humphrey Galdelli or Giuseppe Tusinga in Venice. 21 July 1599.
46. SP46/125 fol.236. Pieter van Heille to the Countess of Warwick. August, 1596.
gence? Consider the potential value of these communications in the case of Frances Newton-Cobham and Mary Queen of Scots. When Mary had first arrived in England Lady Cobham had been her ally in the Privy Chamber, but she had severed the connection when her husband William Lord Cobham was arrested for his involvement in the Ridolphi Plot in 1571. Lord Cobham was returned to favour, and in 1585 was made a Privy Councillor, but almost immediately he and his wife had a major quarrel. The moment that one of Mary's informants, Thomas Morgan, heard of this he hastened to take advantage of the situation. He suggested that Mary should direct one of her staunchest supporters Anne Dacre Countess of Arundel to have two gowns made up as a present for Lady Cobham, to facilitate the revival of the old 'intelligence'. Clearly Morgan was certain that Lady Cobham would take the opportunity to cock a snook at her newly elevated husband. But at the same time, he warned Mary that if Lady Cobham was still 'in league' with Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury - and they had been particular friends - a more roundabout approach would have to be adopted, for the unstated but obvious reason that news of the gift would certainly be relayed through the latter, who was Mary's gaoler, back to Elizabeth. 47 It was vital to keep Lady Cobham's sympathies secret. As the letter was intercepted and copied the Queen knew anyway, and it seems to have had no ill effect on Lady Cobham's fortunes, indicating that the Queen was already aware of her earlier connection with Mary. Whether the gift was ever made, or accepted, is not recorded, but this demonstrates the potential use of the simplest piece of Court gossip.

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Service to the queen was not limited to service at Court. The same sense of duty which obliged women to accompany their husband’s to the continent also governed the actions of women within the realm. Thus Anne Morgan Lady Hunsdon was sent from Court to join her husband when he was based in Berwick-upon-Tweed as Governor, and to her alarm found herself footing the bill for his domestic servants and some of his staff officers too.\textsuperscript{48} Mary Carey-Hoby lived there from November 1584 with her husband Sir Edward when he was Governor.\textsuperscript{49} Frances Sidney Countess of Sussex, wife of the Lord Deputy, and Joyce Clopton Lady Carew, wife of the Lord President of Munster, went with their husbands to Ireland. Francis Walsingham Countess of Essex did not accompany her husband there, but this may have been as much due to the fact that his was a military expedition as to the poor state of their marriage. It was not considered unusual for wives to join their husbands who were on ‘active’ service, for example in the Netherlands, although when Sir Robert Sidney asked that his wife Barbara Gamage Lady Sidney be allowed to join him in Flushing it was because he was not campaigning at the time.\textsuperscript{50} The most famous example of a woman who served her queen away from Court has not been recognised as being part of this established tradition: Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury. She was just as much Mary Queen of Scots’ keeper as her husband, and even maintained her own spy in Mary’s household ‘to give her intelligence of all things’, reporting only to her. Lest it be thought that such behaviour was considered inappropriate, it is worth noting that the Queen, who was privy to this fact, sent a special message to the Countess commending her highly for her ‘manner of service’.\textsuperscript{51}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{48} H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.372. Anne Lady Hunsdon to Cecil. Berwick, 14 November 1568.
  \item \textsuperscript{49} H.M.C. Salisbury, III p.74. Henry Lord Hunsdon to Burghley. Berwick, 24 November 1584.
  \item \textsuperscript{50} H.M.C. Salisbury, V p.344. Sir Robert Sidney to the Earl of Essex. Flushing, 24 August 1595.
  \item \textsuperscript{51} H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.549. Examination of Hersey Lassells, the spy in question.
\end{itemize}
Information was the key to success in political life, then as now. It was vital that this information should be the best available: if one was to press a suit to full advantage one needed, for example, an accurate assessment of one's standing at Court. The poet Henry Lok could justify yet another fruitless attempt to obtain a Court post because, 'I am by the La: of Warwick incoraged to mak use of hir highnes gratius inclination towards me, which to farther she offereth hir ho[orable] assistans'. Even the most powerful people did not necessarily understand the workings of the royal mind completely, and required timely warnings. When the Earl of Leicester had a violent argument with Lord Buckhurst his instinct was to let it remain unresolved, while 'His L best frendes in coorte doe advyse' him to seake reconcylement for otherwyse he shall not long enioye har majestes good opynion'. How many of these friends were women was unfortunately not recorded. To know the queen's mood was just as important as to know one's own standing, as Beale warned in his advice quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This was why Mary Browne Countess of Southampton consulted with her step-grandmother Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton before seeking an audience. Her advice was to wait because of 'howe vnprepayrd the quenes Majesti is as yett to receave [the] sute'.

The queens' health was of even greater concern than their temper, and their women as royal nurses were best placed to know how the queens fared. The fact that Elizabeth was dying in March 1602-3 was kept as secret as possible while the final details of James VI's smooth succession were arranged, but of course not even Robert Cecil could keep the Queen's

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October 1571; ibid. p.571. The Queen to George Earl of Shrewsbury. 1 December 1571.


53. SP12/208 No.1 fol.2. Walsingham to Thomas Wilkes. 1 January 1587/8.

54. B.L. Cotton MS Titus B II No.161 fol.344. Mary Countess of Southampton to Thomas Earl of Sussex. n.d. (before 4 May 1572 when Lord Clinton was created Earl of Lincoln).
condition hidden from the women of the Privy Chamber. That this was fully appreciated at the time is borne out by James VI's arrangement with Philadelphia Carey Lady Scrope that she should signify the Queen's death to him by returning a particular blue ring by special messenger. Others took measures to ensure the safety of their relatives and friends. Anne Clifford remembered that 'About the 21st or 22nd of March [the time Elizabeth was finally persuaded to retire to bed] my Aunt of Warwick sent my Mother word about 9 a clock at night - she living then at Clerkenwell - that she should remove to Austin Friars her [Warwick's] house, for fear of some Commotions, but God in His Mercy did deliver us from it'. The Countess of Cumberland took her advice and removed thither, where on the 24 March 'Mr Focknall, my Aunt Warwick's man, brought us word from his Lady [who was at Richmond Palace], that the Queen died about 2.30 a clock in the morning.' There were no disturbances, although Anne noted that 'This peacable coming in of the King was unexpected of all parts of the people'. Most did not have such ready access to news of the queen's health, and John Manningham would not have been alone in going to Richmond on 23 March 'to heare Dr Parry one of hir Majesties chaplens preache, and to be assured whether the Queene were living or dead'.

The women of the Privy Chamber were not passive instruments. On their own initiative they frequently disclosed privileged information, usually without the queen's permission. In general both queens were aware of this but condoned it, for on occasion it could be turned to their own purpose; they used members of the Privy Chamber to disseminate royal wishes indirectly. Elizabeth Stafford, one of the Chamberers, informed the Earl of

56. Clifford, The diaries of Lady Anne Clifford, p.21; Ferdinando Richardson-Heybourne kept the Earl of Hertford informed throughout the Queen's final illness in the same way (H.M.C. Bath, IV p.205).
57. Bruce, Manningham's diary, p.145.
Rutland that it was the Queen’s pleasure that he should return from Paris, and she warned him that ‘She looks for you shortly, and I hope she will not be deceived’. The Queen had talked about this in front of Stafford knowing that she was in correspondence with the Earl. Indeed, Stafford was his best placed contact and he was always informed if she was likely to be absent from Court. However, the women were also used openly as messengers. When Elizabeth finally reached a decision on one of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton’s suits she told Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton who happened to be present, in order that she in turn should tell his wife Anne Carew-Throckmorton, a Lady of the Household, who would then inform her husband who was in Paris. Privy Chamber women did not only act as couriers for the Queen: when Sir Robert Cecil needed certain examinations taken before Sir Edward Stafford, because the latter was in Warwickshire, his mother Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford was asked to send for them from her London house, where they were kept, so that she could hand them to Cecil, who was also at Court. Because the Queen had previously ordered Sir Edward to inform her when the examinations were transferred, it fell to Lady Stafford to advise her of this.

The daily traffic to the queen by her women frequently consisted of nothing more important than polite messages of greeting and enquiries after

58. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv pp.95-6. Elizabeth Stafford to her cousin Edward Earl of Rutland. Hatfield (Court), 16 August 1571. They addressed each other as cousin because her maternal great-aunt Katherine Stafford Countess of Westmorland was the Earl’s maternal grandmother.

59. H.M.C. Rutland, XII App.iv p.115. Thomas Screven to Edward Earl of Rutland. 11 November 1577. He informed the Earl that Lady Drury, as she had become, was to be absent from the Court over Christmas. See also above Chapter Five p.126.

60. C.S.P. Foreign, 1560-61 p.355. Henry Killigrew to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton. London, 15 October 1560. This was not the only female involvement in the suit, however, for Killigrew was told by a member of the Privy Chamber that the Queen had refused to grant Throckmorton’s suit because of the influence of another woman at Court.

health, like that reported back to the Earl of Rutland: 'Mrs Shelton told the Queen that you had sent to know how Her Majesty did, whereunto she answered, well'. However, at a more significant level, one of the women could be an essential means of approach for those who were not welcome at Court themselves. When Thomas Wilkes was in disgrace in 1587 he was sent good advice by a friend, Lord Cobham.

Doe in all humblenes besech her Highnes, that by her speciall direction she will be pleased that yor cause maie be harde by the lorde of her councell: and I thinke this is verie neer verbatim as was delivrd me yeasternight. this must be donn with all speed and delivred by on of the maides of the chamber: And if you haue no answer with in five daies &c then yor course is by peticon to the councell table.

This was not just Cobham's opinion, and one wonders if the advice reported 'neer verbatim' had come from Cobham's wife, Frances Newton-Cobham, a Lady of the Bedchamber. Inevitably it took more than the five days mentioned for the suit to grind into action, probably because Wilkes had to set about suborning a suitable woman. In the end he managed to persuade one of the Gentlewomen, Bridget Skipwith-Cave, to take the petition, and it was not until 16 January that Wilkes received a letter from her announcing,

you shall vnderstand that I have delveryed that which you sent to me vnto her majestie. And at the first she wished me not to meddle in it for she wold not loke vpon it. Bhut then I told her Majestie that you wer an old acquaindance of myne for which cause I did beseche her highnes to rede it, and then you shold fynd frendes more then I, for to speke vnto her majestie, whereupon her maiestie hathe promysed me to pervse it, and then will I certyfy you of her answer.

Elizabeth was not happy with the idea of allowing suits to proceed if the woman had no particular interest in the outcome, which was why Bridget had to claim Wilkes as a friend, even if he was not. There must have been many such moments when women had to make snap decisions on whether

63. SP12/206 No.49 fol.80. Lord Cobham to Thomas Wilkes. Court, 24 December 1587. The term maid is used here to mean servant, not Maid of Honour.
64. SP12/208 No.12 fol.16. Bridget Cave to Thomas Wilkes. Court, 16 January 1587/8.
to continue and support the client, or whether to let the matter drop and not risk losing her own favour for a disgraced client. This is why Bridget spelt it out in her letter; she wanted Wilkes to know how far she was prepared to go on his behalf.

Of all the women Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford seems to have been more than commonly astute; when approached by her cousin the Earl of Hertford to help him repossess some of the family estates lost after his first marriage, she strongly advised him to proceed by direct suit to the Queen, which not only had the desired effect but left Elizabeth 'rather pleazed by her own confirmation than by parlament'. But even the most perceptive woman could find herself confronted by an extremely embarrassing, if not dangerous, situation. In the winter of 1586 Lady Stafford's 'graselesse' son William, 'a lewd young miscontended person', came close to jeopardizing her position at Court when he got involved in Michael Moody's plot to assassinate Elizabeth. Lady Stafford was so alarmed that she even forbore to petition the Queen for certain family properties, ironically in the Queen's hands by attainder, and only after a suitable interval made a tentative overture through her country sister-in-law Mary Stanley Lady Stafford, ostensibly because she was so distracted by William's 'odious dealinge' that she was incapable herself. Wisely, she was wary of testing her standing with the Queen head on.

In 1554 Mary Kempe-Finch, one of Mary's trusted confidants, was quite prepared to bring comfort to her unfortunate half-sister Jane Hawte Lady Wyatt after her husband's rebellion. She reported that the Queen 'sawe not whie she might not save him', because of his contrition, and good service 'yet freshe in memorie'. His undoing was widely considered to be the

threat that Philip would not come to England while he lived, and in the face of this all suits to the contrary were doomed. 67

In this case it was family affection which inspired action, but many women were quite prepared to help non-relatives, even those in the direst straits, if the potential rewards were good. Mary Shelton-Scudamore lent a willing hand in the attempts to rehabilitate the Earl of Essex in early 1599, which, had they succeeded, surely would have brought her a handsome present as well as undying gratitude. His mother, the Countess of Leicester, had had some success with an expensive present which she gave Elizabeth as a New Year's gift, and this encouraged her to send 'a curious fine Gown' on 2 March with an appeal to be allowed to see Elizabeth in person 'to kiss her Hands, upon her going now to her poor home', and no doubt to sue for her son. Both gown and petition were presented by Mary, but the latter was flatly refused and the former neither accepted nor rejected, so the dress remained in Mary's care, with neither the Queen calling for it nor the Countess daring to retrieve it. 68 One wonders how and when Mary finally disposed of it.

The intricacies of organising a suit are nowhere better displayed than in the case of Robert Booth. In 1595 he was successfully sued by Anne Ferneley Lady Gresham, jailed, fined and condemned to loose his ears. He was not without hope, however, for Lady Gresham's husband Sir Thomas the financier, had had an illegitimate daughter by a Belgian mistress. This child, Anne Gresham, had married Nathaniel Bacon, one of the Lord Keeper's sons, and because there was little love lost between the widow and the by-blow, the latter, her husband and his family sided with Booth. Anthony Bacon was the prime mover in the attempt to obtain Booth's pardon

from the Queen, and having decided to approach Lady Dorothy Edmondes one of the Ladies of the Privy Chamber, as a means to this end, he sent orders to his man of business at Court, Anthony Standen on Christmas Eve 1595. Unfortunately Standen followed them to the letter the next day, and his report to Bacon on what transpired, although lengthy, is worth quoting in full so that none of the nuances are lost.

I wente to the Lady Edmundes house and according to yor direction made her acquaynted with the matter wherein she made no dyfficultie so she might obteyne the favour of my L. Chamberlaine [Henry Lord Hunsdon] not to crosse ytt, whome hertofore she had harde bytterly to enveyghe against the matter and the man. In the ende she came yesterdaye to the Court talked with my L. Keeper [Sir John Puckering], whome she fyndes plyable accordinge to my speches with her, and fearethe no more but the breach of the yse, she hathe also delt with my L. Chamb: whome (as she saythe) she founde very wyfull but for her sake content to relent, but withall dyd aduerseyse her that yf she made not the sute wouthe to her a thowsande poundes she was vnwyse assuringe her that yf she handled ytt well ytt woulde be no lesse avaylable vnto her. Nowe here comes the Coggynge of this place, she sayes she must make an expres sute therof to her Majestie and therin plede her ancient and longe service for a recompence wherof, she muste content herselfe herwith, and that the maner of the Quene ys to aske what the sute wilbe wurthe, so that namyng 100li whiche ys the some I offred her, she saythe the Quene wyll not be moved with ytt, for so smale a matter to emplyoe her credyt and forces she will not, and therfore yow must thincke on ytt. I see she looks for grete matters, and howe mutche I cannot saye but alredye I fynde she hathe her preparatyves and ymmedyatly after the hollydayes (for in these tymes the Quene wyll here of no sute) she will gyve the attempt, thherefore advise Sir upon ytt and sende me wourde yf not this daye at leaste to morowe what I shall do and howe farre procede. her demaunde ys accordinge to the shoppes of the pallace att Paris who in the ende sell their wares for halfe. I knowe not what to aduise in this matter she belinge nowe possest of ytt and belevinge alredye to haue the coyne in coffer woulde by her owne and frendes vterly overthowre ytt, yf wee shoulde attempt any other, and I maye evydently see that the L Keper desirethe this water to be brought to her Myll, for I harde hym saye these wourdes vnto her Madame ytt ys not the house you desier but only the boothe she answeringe yea my lorde then sayde here do yow yor endeavour and yow shall fynde me redy. I saye againe for these reasons I knowe not howe wee can remove ytt from this woman without notorious damage, yett what yow shall herin direct me I will to my yttermost performe. This Rufflanery of causes I am daylie more and more acquaynted with, and see the maner of dealinge, whiche groweth by the Quenes strayghtnes to gyve these women wherby they presume thus to grange and hucke causes.70


70. L.P.L. MS 652 fols.312-313. Same to same. Court, 27 December 1595. ‘Coggyng’ was a cross between wheedling and cheating, to ‘grange and hucke’ was to bargain unfairly. One should note that it was thought that the Queen would not be interested in whether Booth was a friend of Edmondes, but how much the suit was worth to Edmondes in fees.
Bacon decided to proceed as planned, and Dorothy spoke to the Queen on 2 January, who was amenable to the idea of release, but had already promised the fine to one of the officers of the Stable and was adamant about the ears. Dorothy was now so far involved that she could not be ignored - 'she will doubtless crosse ytt and do hurt onles she be the Gamester' - and when Standen offered her £150 for her services reminding her that there were plenty who would do it for £100 she retorted that she had 'provided as none shoulde forstall 200 poundes'. Standen fumed at being trapped by such a successful operator, but was impotent; 'I am very sory that ever I brake the matter unto her but nowe there ys no remedye', he told Bacon. However, her deftness in fleecing Bacon was matched by her ability in winning suits, for the Queen did grant Booth a full pardon within the fortnight. Dorothy closed the business with a demand for her £200 fee, half to be paid immediately and the rest within six months.

In 1594 Sir William Cornwallis saw to it that the man who had libelled his daughter Frances was sentenced to a whipping and the loss of his ear. He was therefore enraged when one of the Privy Chamber women interceded to save the culprit. In a letter to Cecil Cornwallis cranked himself up to even greater pitches of fury.

A base merchant's son of Norwich shall go home and tell all that town in my own country, how he hath had more power by lending my Lady Skidmore 500l five year ago by, or rather indeed by putting some purse into her pocket, gathered among his friends akin to the knave, to stop decrees of due punishment, in such a reiterated wrong and villany, upon the pillory, than Sir W. Cornwallis had by his 24 years' of service, 20,000l spent in service, or by his giving or spending upon herself in his time 2,000l or 3,000l. What, Sir, must this teach me that desire to have but justice? To tarry at home and gather 500l to lend some lady there, rather than with miserable lodgings, fare and disease to toil out body with attendance and spend out all lands and living a man hath! If it had been her own humour to pardon him, my heart is a subject to her's: but when it is wrought by a base fellow for such a base respect as lending money or giving some 60l or 100 marks, by such a barbarous brassen faced woman, in such a a case of a woman, a poor girl she was then, the child of a courtier, in a matter that with the stay of his punishment stays the disgrace upon her still, I cannot choose, Sir, but complain my time.

71. L.P.L. MS 654 No.1 fol.1. Same to same. Court, 3 January 1595/6.
my youth spent, my charge lost in court, and all my faith and my affection there evil weighed and quited. If it had been a cosenage that had touched by Lords only, or goods or slander of myself, I would never have complained thus; but when there must be pity taken upon the base flesh of a villain, and no pity upon her fame, her fortune so pitifully spoiled by him and those confederates that platted to make money of it, I hold myself the unhappiest man alive.73

The size of a bribe depended upon general as well as specific circumstances. After the Essex uprising the relatives of rebels were so frantic for help, advice, or just news, that courtiers could demand virtually any sum for their services. Sir Thomas Tresham was told by a friend that,

The desperate and distressed state that your son [Francis] stood in, being made known unto me by [Elizabeth Tresham] Lady Mountegle and your daughter-in-law [Anne Tufton Mrs Tresham], for that the Lady Katheryne Haward had (at three several times) desired them to find other means for the stay of his arraignment and attainder, neither could she promise any security of his life by pardon, but utterly disclaimed of any hope she had to help him, and returned the like answer by Mr Osborne (as they informed me).

Alarming news, for Sir Thomas had earlier bound himself to pay Lady Howard £1,000 if she saved his son, and yet she felt that to continue was pointless. Meanwhile his daughter and daughter-in-law had set about finding different means, so when Francis Tresham was released without trial the victory was claimed by both Lady Howard and the Tresham women - to Lady Howard's fury, as she stood to lose a large sum.74 Sir Thomas, unsurprisingly, took the cheaper if less sensible option of believing his family.

Lady Edmondes and Lady Howard were by no means the only powerful women at Court to use their influence to obtain pardons. Blanche Parry worked hard to engineer the release of her relative James Parry who had been jailed in the Fleet for debt, and persuaded another of her relatives, Thomas Games of Brecknock, to stand bond for him.75 It is from this same

75. SP12/18 fol.21. Blanche Parry to Lord Treasurer Burghley. 11 August 1587.
James Parry that one learns of her suit on behalf of another of her cousins. She procured for Jane Parry-Shelley maintenance of £200 per annum from the Queen, on the written understanding that she would conform in religion. Mrs Shelley subsequently found the irregular payments of this pension a problem.76

It is unusual to find a complete account of a client being passed from patron to patron. The story of Thomas Throckmorton, a Warwickshire gentleman and noted Roman Catholic, is one of these rarities. When he was finally jailed for recusancy in 1592 by the Privy Council, the Queen promptly ordered the Archbishop of Canterbury to release him at the suit of the Countess of Warwick. Before that ‘he had been spared of that restrainste at the requeste of the late Earle of Warwicke while he lived and since that time at the peticion of Mr Middellmore one of the gentlemen of her Highnes privie chamber...for that he hath bene thoughte a man not malitiouslie affected to the state, nor busie in corruptinge other’.77 Either Middlemore had failed him for some reason which meant that Throckmorton was forced to appeal to the Countess, or Middlemore did not have the influence necessary to persuade the Queen to over-ride the Privy Council, whereas the Countess had both the influence and a reason to assist because of Throckmorton’s previous connection with her husband. That Privy Chamberers were not always fully aware of the import of their actions is shown by Edwin Sandys’s release from the Marshalsea in 1554. His friend Sir Thomas Holcroft, the Knight Marshal, secured this by the expedient of so arranging matters that both the Queen and the Bishop of Winchester would agree to release Sandys if the other one ‘could like of it’. The Bishop was brought to this point by besieging him until, exasperated, he gave in. The Queen required a more

delicate approach, so Holcroft ‘procured two ladies of the privy chamber to
move the queen in it’. The critical moment of the Bishop’s next visit to Mary
came, and, as they went together into the Privy Chamber, Holcroft quietly
‘prayed the two ladies, when as the bishop should take his leave, to put the
queen in mind of Doctor Sandys’. They did, the Queen and Bishop each
agreed to his release to please the other, and Holcroft, who had come armed
with the appropriate warrant, produced it for them to sign. The only hitch
came when the Bishop asked for sureties to be taken, but Holcroft later
suffered from temporary amnesia, Sandys was released without them, and
he immediately sailed for the Continent.\textsuperscript{78} There were two reasons for
Holcroft’s success: the speed with which he pulled the suit together; and
the fact that none of the participants bar himself realised quite how
‘heretical’ Sandys was until after he had escaped. Neither the Bishop, nor
the two ladies, let alone the Queen, would have acquiesced had they done
so.

* * * * * * * * *

Given the prevailing attitude it is not surprising that many Privy
Chamber women had a good understanding of the law and its processes;
that some of them were more than capable is shown by the hideously in-
volved law suits which they helped to set in motion. Gilbert Earl of
Shrewsbury’s opening move in one of his many battles with ‘lewd tenants’ in
Nottinghamshire was to send to Mary Shelton Lady Scudamore a detailed
account of his case, clearly expecting her be to able to grasp the

\textsuperscript{78} Robinson, \textit{Sandys}, pp.x-xii. As Knight Marshall, Holcroft sat as part of the commission
to resolve disputes between the Queen’s and King’s Sides between July 1554 and August
1555 (SP11/4 fol.10. May 1554).
fundamentals of the case, and therefore to present the Queen 's satisfaction of
the truth'. 79 Because of their class, it was inevitable that women of the Privy
Chamber would find themselves in conflict with each other, however
inadvertently. Dorothy Stafford-Stafford leased the 'backside' of the stable
adjoining Covent Garden from one Humfrey Gosling and his wife, 'towards
thenlarging of her backside and her Garden' of her neighbouring house, and
took down the dividing wall to facilitate this. Unfortunately, as Lady Stafford
may well have known, the lease was illegal because it ran against Gosling's
tenancy agreement with the landowner, the Earl of Bedford. By the time this
came to light the Bedford estates were in ward, and Lady Stafford found
herself scrutinised by the Countess of Warwick as part of the attempt to
rectify the position of her nephew's estates by appeal to the Privy Council.
Fortunately the dispute seems to have been settled amicably because Lady
Stafford realised that she had no case to contest. 80 Litigation may have been
a way of life in the sixteenth century, but there were still some cases which
families preferred to keep out of court because of the possible damage to
their reputation, and everything in their power was done to ensure that
marital disputes did not come before an ecclesiastical court, where such
hearings were held in public. Mary Browne Countess of Southampton
expressed her fears to her father during a crisis in her marriage, when she
besought him, 'good my L. if it may be, lett it be hard & ended by some
counsellors & go no ffarde: ffor very loth I wolde be to have my name come
in tryall in open courte'. 81

The protection of the family name was central to the preservation of
family fortunes as a whole, and as Ireland was the end of many a good

79. H.M.C. Salisbury, V p.76. Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury to Cecil. 1594?
80. SP12/197 No.26 fols.53-v. 16 January 1586/7; SP12/199 No.17 and 17 l fols.32-
33v and 34-v. 6 March 1586/7 and 27 February 1586/7.
81. B.L. Cotton MS Titus B II No.174 fols.370-373v. Mary Countess of Southampton to her
father Anthony Viscount Montague. 21 March 1579/80.
reputation, and recognised as such, a considerable interest was shown by the Court women on the behalf of their relatives and friends serving there, as well as for clients. They even intervened directly in apparently military matters when necessary. Anne Countess of Warwick maintained the influence which the Dudley family had wielded in Irish affairs; indeed it could be said that the power of that family did not die with her husband, but continued with her throughout the 1590s.\textsuperscript{82} She had particular reason to be concerned with Ireland at this time, for the province was once again the focus of English politics, and in addition her brother Sir William Russell was made Lord Deputy in May 1594. She did not restrict herself to a supporting role, presenting her brother to the Queen in the best light possible, but also helped with the daily administration of Irish affairs, for example, by dealing with Burghley on Russell’s behalf for new commissions for the army officers, or by recommending soldiers for office there.\textsuperscript{83} In February 1594/5 Elizabeth ordered the Lord Deputy to make better use of Sir Edward York, who was being ignored by Russell despite his ‘experyence and Judgement’, and was merely acting as a glorified housekeeper at Knockfergus. Russell may have feared that he would be shown up by York, who had had far greater experience of Irish warfare, or he may have doubted his loyalty, since he was a brother of Sir John York, the notorious traitor who had twice surrendered towns in the Netherlands to the Spanish, towns which Russell had had a hand in taking and defending. There must have been a great temptation for the Lord Deputy to post York to ‘those remoue’ where he could do no harm.\textsuperscript{84} The letter instructing Russell to give York the first substantial command of infantry to become available was delivered to the

\textsuperscript{82} Her sister-in-law Katherine Dudley Countess of Huntingdon seems to have had no desire to become involved in politics to this extent, even if she had been able.

\textsuperscript{83} H.M.C. Salisbury, V p.53. Lawrence Smith to Anne Countess of Warwick. December 1594; H.M.C. Salisbury, VI p.559. Troops for Ireland, 1596.

\textsuperscript{84} SO3/1 fol.509v. February 1594/5; Adams, ‘Stanley, York and Elizabeth’s catholics’, p.48.
Countess of Warwick from the Signet Office, 'by order from Sir Rob. Cicill', possibly because she was already about to send a courier over to her brother.\footnote{85. SO3/1 fol.511. February 1594/5. The clerks seem to have been in some confusion over these arrangements, as the letter was twice recorded in full in the Signet Office Docquet Book.} It was unusual for government letters to be sent by a third person's messenger (other than by the Secretaries' personal post), and one can only speculate how deeply she had been involved in the suit on behalf of one of Leicester's old clients; to one of the old Dudley circle experiencing problems with a Russell, even one as powerful as Sir William, the Countess was the obvious choice as patron.\footnote{86. There were only two other people to whom Yorke could have turned: the Earl of Bedford who did not have any close association with the Dudleys other than through his aunt Warwick, and who carried little clout with the Queen; and the Earl of Essex who, despite assuming Leicester's mantle, did not have the immediate family tie with the Russells.} There is less information about her later suit for one Master Gray who wished to be Sheriff of Cork, but it is noteworthy that she wrote direct to the Lord Deputy, Mountjoy, on his behalf, and did not feel it necessary to broach the matter through Queen, Council or any other intermediary.\footnote{87. L.P.L. MS 615 fol.340. Lord Mountjoy to Sir George Carew. 5 September 1601.} Normally she took a more circuitous route: when, on advice from Sir John Stanhope, Florence McCarthy asked for her help with various claims in Ireland, she induced the Queen to write to the Lord Deputy ordering him to support McCarthy.\footnote{88. H.M.C. Salisbury, V p.444. Florence McCarthy to Cecil. 10 November 1595.}

The Countess had shown interest involved in Irish affairs before her husband's death, however. One of the few surviving letters bearing her signature reveals that she acted independently at Court on behalf of Dudley clients when both Earls were in their prime. It is addressed to Lady Malby, wife of Sir Nicholas Malby the President of Connaught, one of Leicester's associates, and not only demonstrates her independence of action, but is a fine example of the normal intercourse between patron and client, and is here quoted in full for that reason.
My verie good La: I would haue written thankes vnto yow ir this tyme, for the cloth yow sent me, and for divers other good courtecies I haue receauid from yow, if my oportunitie would haue either serued, or I could haue gotten a convenient messenger to wryte bye/ I am not a little glade to vnderstand of the good service Sir nicholas hath done there of late, and how acceptable it is vnto hir Majestie, and other his good ffrendes in england whose wyshes noe better fortune vnto him, then they [are] sure he caries a mynde to performe good service, and for my owne parte ther shall be noe occasion pertermitted wherein I maie either wish him well, or doe yow both any pleasse, wherof I praie yow doe not doubt, but that yow shall fynde me, as reddie to performe the best good towards yow I can, as any frinde yow haue. Thus with my hartie comendacions vnto yor selfe, and Sir nicholas, I bid yow both hartely well to fare/...yor verie Loving ffrend Anne Warwyck.89

The cloth was not a bribe, nor was it merely a present, but rather a tangible expression of the bond between two persons of unequal status. A client gave presents to demonstrate dependency, gratitude and continued loyalty to a patron, and the patron reciprocated by reiterating the promise to be a ‘good friend’. There was no difference between the sexes in this, either as patron or client. On this occasion Lady Malby may well have wanted to reassure herself that the Countess would continue her support in case anything did go wrong, or her husband blundered, for he was away on active service as temporary President of Munster. The ‘good service’ which he had performed was the defeat of a rebel army at Monasternenagh on 3 October. Ironically, Malby’s vigorous campaigning thereafter put the Earl of Desmond in a quandary, for, despite the suspicions of some of the Irish government, he had no particular wish to join the rebels, but he was now confronted with an outraged tenantry demanding retaliation. Before he could make a move he was proclaimed a traitor by Sir William Pelham on 2 November, at Malby’s behest. As a pre-emptive strike this failed miserably, and merely served to enrage the Queen by making open rebellion Desmond’s only option.90 Lady Malby had been wise to make sure of their Court ally, in view of Malby’s

89. Bodl. Ballard MS43 No.138 fol.277 (S.C.10829). The Court, 23 November 1579. Ballard incorrectly identified the Countess as Anne Seymour Countess of Warwick, who had first married John Dudley Earl of Warwick (older brother of Robert and Ambrose) and then Sir Edward Unton.

90. Ellis, Tudor Ireland, pp.279-281.
disastrous command. She may even have known of her husband's intentions towards Desmond since she wrote to the Countess after the Monasternenagh victory. The Countess must have replied before news of the proclamation had reached Court, otherwise she would not have spoken of the Queen's favour towards Malby, so we do not know whether she did put in a word for Sir Nicholas or not, or to what effect. It is possible that the Countess saved Malby from disgrace, because he continued to serve in Ireland until his death in 1584.

Rich cloth played its part in Irish affairs in another way. Mary Dudley-Sidney was at her wits end in July 1573; her husband Sir Henry Sidney the Lord Deputy found himself in an increasingly impossible position, while she attempted to guard him from Elizabeth's disfavour. Then she was confronted with a worrying complication, which drove her to write urgently to her steward.

Her Majestie lyeks so well of the velvet yt my Lord gave me last for a Gowen as she hath very earnestly willed me to send her so much of hit as will make her a loes gown. I understand my Lord had his at Coopers or Cookes I pray you fayle not to inquyre sertenly for hit of whom and what is leaft of hit. Yf thear be 12 yards it is inough. You may not slake the care hear of for she will tack it ill and it is now in the wourst tyem for my lord for divers consyderacions to dislyek her for souche a tryfle. Whearfore ions againe ernestly requyre it.

It may have been a trifle, but it would have been enough to irritate the Queen when the Deputy needed her full favour to survive the onslaughts of his enemies at Court. Even a person as exalted as Mary Queen of Scots felt that such presents were worthwhile, for she embroidered a red satin skirt with a matching taffeta lining for Elizabeth, which produced a temporary softening in the latter's attitude towards her captive cousin.

91. ibid. pp.228-277. There was an erosion of the consensus through which the English had governed Ireland, culminating in the rapid deterioration in the 1570s when Sidney was Lord Deputy.
93. Swain, Needlework, pp.82-3.
Of course, such presents did not always produce the expected result. There is the glint of a well-ground axe about the following letter, which highlights all the hazards inherent in government by royal whim. However blatant the bribe, even a woman as esteemed as Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell was not guaranteed success.

Good Mr Secretary, move her Majesty to grant my lease, promised to your father in his days, to me now for Bess Russell’s good. It cost me truly, twelve years since, a gown and a petticoat of such tissue as should have been for the Queen of Scots’ wedding garment; but I got them for my Queen, full dearly bought, I well wot. Beside, I gave her Majesty a canopy of tissue with curtains of crimson taffety, belited gold. I gave also two hats with two jewels, though I say it, fine hats: the one white beaver, the jewel of the one above a hundred pounds price, beside the pendent pearl, which cost me then 30l more. And then it pleased her Majesty to acknowledge the jewel to be so fair as that she commanded it should be delivered to me again, but it was not; and after, by my Lady Cobham, your mother-in-law, when she presented my new year’s gift of 30l in fair gold, I received answer that her Majesty would grant my lease of Dunnington... I will be sworn that, in the space of 18 weeks, gifts to her Majesty cost me above 500l, in the hope to have the Dunnington lease; which if now you will get performed for Bess’s almost six years’ service, she, I am sure, will be most ready to acquit any service to yourself.  

Once again the suit was doomed. Bess, one of the Maids of Honour, died suddenly just five months later on 2 July, but her mother’s efforts show how hard it could be to obtain a grant or lease of land from the Queen. This piece of land obviously held some fatal attraction: twenty years earlier Margery Wentworth-Williams-Drury had asked for it for her husband Sir William Drury, with equal lack of success.  

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94. H.M.C. Hatfield, X p.51. Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell to Sir Robert Cecil. 5 March 1599/1600. The Queen of Scots was Anne of Denmark, who married James VI in 1589. It would seem that Lady Russell had managed to buy the cloth Anne had chosen for her wedding outfit. Elizabeth Brooke, daughter of Frances Newton Lady Cobham (who acted as Lady Russell’s proxy on New Year’s day), married Robert Cecil in the same year, 1589.

In an age when self-aggrandisement was seen within the context of the family, it is hard to identify specific instances when the women acted purely on their own behalf. This is because of the evidence on which any study of life at Court has to rely. If a Privy Chamber woman wanted from the queen a certain item of clothing as a gift, or a specific piece of land, or decided to encourage her mistress in a particular course of action, unless a third party was involved there is unlikely to be much evidence left of how she went about it. Therefore it is usually only the successes which are traceable, for example the grants of land recorded in the state papers, and even in these cases it will never be known how many of the queens' gifts were spontaneous and how many had been contrived. This is not only a problem for the historian. At the time it was very hard to measure someone's favour with the queens unless one was actually in the Privy Chamber or thereabouts; the normal yardstick used to judge the accomplishment of a courtier of either sex was the number of clients' suits which they had brought to a successful conclusion, not the number of their successful personal suits. This was the reason Anthony Bacon had turned to Dorothy Edmondes, for she was known for her skills as a broker.

Identifying land owned by the Court women is at best complicated. It is usually easiest to trace individual pieces of property when they are in the possession of unmarried women because marriage contracts and any subsequent reorganisation of estates add the confusion of unclear ownership. Blanche Parry, for example, had been given two leases of land in Yorkshire by the Queen on 16 July 1574, which she in turn four years later gave to her young relatives Francis and Frances Vaughan, the latter then a Maid of Honour. When Frances married Thomas Lord Burgh in the 1580s there must have been a rearrangement, for at Blanche's death the leases were once more in her possession. Blanche bequeathed them, together with
two other Yorkshire leases, to Francis alone.96

It is hard to discern a coherent policy behind the land grants made by the queens to their women, just as there are often no apparent reasons why a suit was refused, as was that of Lady Russell. There were gradations in the value of grants which corresponded roughly to the recipient's birth: one of the Laundresses, Anne Twist, was granted a lease in reversion of land in Lincolnshire and Buckinghamshire amounting to £30 per annum, of which she was to receive to her use only £15, while the remainder went to the tenants.97 Often, as in Blanche Parry's case, land was granted in areas where there was no particular family interest, though whether this represents a grim determination not to let Court families set up a power base in their local communities, or whether it was merely a reactive policy, the queen issuing a grant of the first appropriate piece of land available, is not clear. With small grants the latter was certainly the case: when Elizabeth gave Jane Buckley a lease in reversion in to show her gratitude for a 'stoute cusshyon' and a handkerchief the political repercussions would have small.98 Given the number of Privy Chamber women who came from East Anglia during the queens' reigns (Jerningham, Waldegrave, Cooke, Petre and Cornwallis in Mary's, Norwich, Howard, Wingfield, Gray, Heveningham, Shelton and more Cookes in Elizabeth's), to have given them all leases of land in that area would have left little to grant to anyone else. Those from Wales and the Marches - Susan Clarencieux, the Manxwells and Rices of Mary's Privy Chamber and the Parrys, Vaughans and Herberths of Elizabeth's - were in a similar position. The most striking feature is the pattern of

96. B.L. Lansdowne MS 27 No.38 fol.78. Receipt for the leases signed by both Vaughans. 13 December 1578; B.L. Lansdowne MS 62 No.51 fol.123v.
98. H.M.C. Salisbury, III p.65. August 1584. Valentine Dale noted that the Queen granted this petition with a lease worth between £8 and £10.
distribution. Of Mary's women, the only ones to receive leases and grants in their own right were the widows who had been in her service for some time, and some of the married women. None of the Maids received grants, nor did many of the Ladies and Gentlewomen, probably because they came from families who were already reasonably well established: their need was perceived as being less than those of lower social class who received many grants. Susan Clarencieux was granted four leases of land, and Jane Russell five, a difference which perhaps reflects the fact that Clarencieux had no immediate family to support, whereas Jane was married to one William Russell (who may have been a distant cousin of the Earls of Bedford), and had several children. Of course land was not the only valuable commodity at Mary's disposal, and Clarencieux had at least two wardships in her possession, which would have provided a reasonable cash income if administered carefully. It should be borne in mind that although wardships were ostensibly the queens' to dispose of at will other forces were at work: when Mrs Dorothy Tamworth thought she was not going to be granted the wardship of her son, she wrote to the woman who had already promised it to her, Elizabeth Brooke Lady Cecil. There was no doubt in Mrs Tamworth's mind that, once reminded, Lady Cecil would be able to extract the grant from her husband, the Master of the Court of Wards.

Throughout Elizabeth's reign there was a similarly unequal distribution for the same reasons, and it was mainly the Chamberers who stood to receive rewards - in the first year Dorothy Edmondes, Dorothy Bradbelt and

99. Cal.Pat., 1553-4 p.109 (Kent) and p.225 (Essex), ibid. 1556-7 p.40 (Leicestershire) and p.209 (Kent); ibid. 1553-4 p.197 (Devon) and pp.490-1 (Lincolnshire), ibid. 1554-5 pp.120-1 (Shropshire) and p.330 (Suffolk), ibid. 1556-7 p.256 (Middlesex).

100. Cal.Pat., 1557-8 pp.302 and 304. The two wards were William Latham of Essex and Robert Stapleton of Yorkshire, who came with 20 and 40 marks respectively.

Elizabeth Marbery - whereas those like Katherine Astley who had been in long service with her and came from a higher class were not often rewarded with leases and grants. The reasons for this disparity may become clearer with further research, but so far it appears that those who were favoured and of a poor background in Court terms stood to benefit, but not in particularly large amounts. No new landed Court dynasties were founded by the women of either queen, and any power enjoyed by the women was entirely based on their influence over the queen, not on any landed might. Thus in 1555 Sir William Petre, a staunch supporter of Mary, could extract from Lady Susan Norwich the surrender of all her copyhold lands in the Dodinghurst area, although she had been one of Queen Katherine Parr's Gentlewomen. She had no further influence once her mistress was dead, indeed her daughter Elizabeth's position as one of Princess Elizabeth's Gentlewomen may have counted against her. This in itself is crucial to an understanding of the Court. The power of the women was essentially the power of the moment. Although a woman's influence did not wholly cease when she left the Privy Chamber, it was usually because she could call on friends who were still in service there for assistance, and not only her knowledge of the workings of the government, which could speed a suit through to a successful conclusion. Frances Vaughan Lady Burgh demonstrated this when she managed to arrange her husband's recall from his position as Governor of Brill on grounds of ill-health. It was no doubt her friends, as well as her experience gained as a Maid of Honour in the late 1570s, who stood her in good stead.

103. SP11/5 No.3 fol.4. John Carrow to Sir William Petre. 15 January 1554/5; LC2/2 fols.44v and 48v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fol.191.
104. SP12/256 No.8 fol.13. The Queen to Lord Burgh. 8 January 1595/6; B.L. Egerton MS 2086 fol.135. Warrant dated 26 September 1578.
None of the women who had been really influential in Mary’s Privy Chamber lived to become powerful figures in the local, let alone national, community, because they did not own large amounts of land. One possible reason that many of the women did not become wealthy is that they concentrated their efforts on enriching themselves by the standard method - marriage - and did not consider a serious attempt to build up a landed power base as did their male predecessors. A woman like Blanche Parry might accrue enough money through her position to be comfortable, but never rich. When she died apart from the value of the jewels and land she bestowed which were all acquired during her service to Elizabeth she left £2,708 6s. 8d. in cash legacies; this was not an unusually large amount of money considering the length of her service.105 The best means to achieve real wealth was still to marry well, preferably more than once, as Elizabeth Hardwick so amply demonstrated. Also, as the financial administration which had remained in the Chamber was not in female hands, there was little opportunity for straight fraud. Fees for services extracted from clients after the manner so skilfully employed by Lady Edmondes against the Bacons were one of the simplest ways of making money, for it cost the woman nothing in monetary terms to act as a patron.

In the spring of 1596 Katherine Knyvet Lady Howard, once a Maid of Honour and thereafter a frequent visitor at Court, turned her mind to financing her second husband Thomas Lord Howard of Walden’s part in the Cadiz expedition. She decided that ‘my lord mought overthrow sum leass...which if he could, sum money mought be maed to helpe pay for thes journey’. There was one problem with this scheme, as she explained to Cecil: ‘I wold fayne move the Queen to geve me so much [the lease] but that I feare she will think I goo a bought to get sum great matter from hir’. This was not true, for

105. B.L. Lansdowne MS 62 No 51 fol.123.
as the letter itself shows she was perfectly capable of pitching the tone of a suit to flatter Cecil into not opposing her.\textsuperscript{106} As it transpired it was the Earl of Essex, not Cecil, who was to be the problem: in the summer Lady Howard had to sue to Essex to obtain some of expedition profits, for 'being yesterday at the court I hard that the quene claimed all and my lo of essex it is thought will yeld his right to hir Majesti', and she was concerned that if she did not act quickly the money would be lost to them, because her husband was expecting to receive profits from Essex's share.\textsuperscript{107} Although she seems to have been nervous about acting in such an openly mercenary way, and she was anxious that her husband should not know that she was the instigator, nevertheless Lady Howard expected to direct her family's finances. She was not the only concerned woman at Court, for several of them had been backers of the expedition. As previously mentioned, even Elizabeth Bridges, one of the Maids, had extracted from her unfortunate lover Charles Lister '150li for to venture with my Lord of Essex'.\textsuperscript{108}

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It is important not to overstress the independence of action of the Court women. They did not live and work in a political vacuum; they were in regular, if not daily, contact with the queens' ministers and government servants, and often either acted in conjunction with them (as Lady Edmondes worked with the Lord Chamberlain and Lord Keeper on the Booth case to ensure that they would not oppose her suit), or through them, as in

\textsuperscript{106} H.M.C. Salisbury, VI p.205. Lady Katherine Howard to Cecil. May 1596. 41.41.
\textsuperscript{107} C/115/L2/6697 p.6. 20 October 1561; L.P.L. MS 658 No.164 fol.240. Lady Katherine Howard to Anthony Bacon. 23 August 1596.
\textsuperscript{108} SP12/269 No.10 fols.20-v. Deposition of Charles Lister against Elizabeth Bridges. 11 December 1598.
the case of the Countess of Warwick and the Secretary. The Countess' action on behalf of a wealthy London merchant Benjamin Kerwyn, who in 1596 wanted the lease of a London tenement from the Company of Mercers, demonstrates such methods. A letter was sent from the Queen to the Company which contained not only the request that the lease be granted, but also the direction that the terms were to remain the same as they had been for the previous lessee, as Kerwyn 'intendeth to bestowe some charge in reparacons & new building those Tenementes farre otherwise then now they are'. It was a bargain to pay only £12 per annum for property in Thames Street, even if the building costs are taken into account. The Countess' power is revealed by her ability to clinch such a deal for Kerwyn, but it is worth noting that she had not made a direct appeal to the Queen on this occasion, for her suit had been to the Secretary, and he had procured the Queen's consent for the letter. This does not mean that the Countess's influence on the Queen was limited solely to working through members of the formal administration, but rather that she exploited that administration to best advantage. She would have had no wish to throw her full weight behind what was, after all, a minor suit, although she may well have put in a casual word of support if appropriate, so it was far more suitable that the Secretary should present the idea in the course of his normal business with the Queen. This was where the great power of the Secretary lay; as he organised the every-day business which required the Queen's signature he was the ideal person to procure her consent in these circumstances.

Generally the women made an effort to ensure that they remained on good terms with government staff, to their mutual advantage. Most of the

109. SP12/260 Nos.21 and 22; SO3/1 fol.612v. The letters in SP12 are a copy dated 24 September and a draft dated 22 September respectively. The Signet Office Docquet Book records that the letter sent was dated 28 September, and entered into their records at the end of the month. Once drafted, the letter was probably drawn up and copied on the same day, but had to wait four days before the Signet was applied.
friction was of a minor nature, as when Thomas Windebanck was less than pleased that three Court ladies - Katherine Knyvett Lady Paget, Audrey Lady Walsingham and Mary Shelton-Scudamore - all sent deer carcasses as presents to the Signet Office clerks and he 'had not one of all theses buckes', even though this does not seem to have been their fault.\textsuperscript{110} Similarly, it was recognised that government staff endeavoured to keep the Privy Chamber staff happy: when there was a move afoot to appropriate the presidency of the Council of the North for Henry Earl of Kent, the scheme was commended to Robert Cecil by his aunt, who stressed how it would gratify the Countess of Warwick.\textsuperscript{111} No doubt this was because the Earl was both an enthusiastic Protestant and the Countess' maternal first cousin. There was very little institutional hostility between the different offices and departments in an around Court, but enmity between individuals was pandemic, the natural result of so much rivalry and potential power all concentrated in one small area. Anne Clifford recalled that immediately after Elizabeth's death excitement at Court about the possibilities of the new reign was tempered by the bitter feuding which finally came into the open.

At this time we used very much to go to Whitehall and walked much in the Garden which was frequented by Lords and Ladies. My Mother being all full of hopes every man expecting Mountains and finding Molehills, excepting Sir R. Cecil and the House of the Howards who hated my Mother and did not much love my Aunt Warwick.\textsuperscript{112}

A decade spent in each other's company at Court wielding power, even if it was of different kinds, had not engendered much affection between the Countess and the Secretary. It calls to mind the awkward relationship between Leicester and Burghley in the previous generation.

\textsuperscript{110} SP12/275 No. 17 fol. 24v. Memorandum drawn up by Windebanck in June 1600.
\textsuperscript{111} H.M.C. Salisbury, VI p.31. Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell to Cecil. 27 January 1595/6.
\textsuperscript{112} Clifford, The diaries of Lady Anne Clifford, p.22.
It should not be imagined that the women spent their time only in suits to the queens. They were in an ideal position to manipulate government administration to best effect. In 1553 Mary Kempe-Finch managed to obtain a licence for her brother-in-law and his family to travel overseas, but her half-sister's advanced state of pregnancy prevented them from going, and left him free to be 'drawen into that matche against the Prince of Spain' as its leader.  

Good advice dispensed to the importunate was not always taken, often because one of the other persons at Court had contradicted it; an unidentified man or a woman, who had fallen out of Elizabeth's favour over some misdemeanour of which he or she claimed to be innocent, wrote to Burghley that, 'seing yor lo: thinketh nott good thatt my letter shoulde be shewed by my mother to her Majesty I must needes also lyke well of it, for I wille be ordred and rulid in anie thing by yor lordshipp'. The mother may have been a member of the Privy Chamber staff, which would explain the writer's reluctance to ignore her advice. The writer was concerned that if the misconstruction went uncorrected it could be used again by enemies at a later date to even greater effect; 'I praye god theie thatt haue had procured to make her conceaue euyll make her nott remember worse when theie please'. The unfortunate person was trapped, for if protestations of innocence were made the adage 'no smoke without fire' could be invoked, but if not the lack of protestation could be used as evidence of guilt. As has been shown, there was not always a conflict of interest between the women and other Court power brokers. When some unrecorded family misfortune necessitated Katherine Paston-Newton's absence from Court she had to make the best arrangements for her clients in the time she had left before

114. SP12/175 No.58 fol.105. 1584.
her departure. She scrawled a note to Secretary Cecil excusing her failure to bid him goodbye, adding, 'At this my farwell I can not but hombly besiche you to be good to poure Varny for hom I haue bine so lonege asyeuter to her Magestie and do so muche pite his estate as I shall holde what you shall do for him as a good to my selfe'. The suit was at the stage where it was far better that it was transferrred to another's hands than be allowed to wait, and Cecil was the best person to take it on.

If the desire to acquire landed wealth was the main aim of many of the women's clients the desire to acquire reputation came a close second, and the most straightforward means to that end was to secure an office of some kind in local or national government. As these offices provided plenty of opportunities for the lining of pockets, it was widely held that two fat birds were available to men with true aim and the right stone. The initial outlay could be considerable: in 1594 rumour had it that £4,500 was going to be offered in bribes for an office worth about £800 on paper, of which £1,500 was said to have been promised to the Countess of Warwick. Another time she was brought in to suppport Fleetwood in the competion for an office, while his rival offered Sir Robert Cecil £1,000 if successful, and his wife Lady Dixie promised Lady Cecil £100 to buy 'her four coach horses'. When it was heard that the Queen had sought Lady Edmondes' advice, Cecil was asked to make sure it was favourable, 'with assured promise that Lady Edmunds shall have 1,000li if by her help it be obtained'. When acting for minor clients whose suits had only limited regional importance the Privy

115. SP12/269 No.3 fols.4-5v. Katherine Lady Newton to Sir Robert Cecil. 'From my chamber' at Court, 5 December 1598. She was a Chamberer until her husband was knighted in 1592, when she became a Lady of the Privy Chamber (see Appendix 1).


117. H.M.C. Salisbury, IV p.558. Sir Thomas Shirley to Cecil. 8 July 1594. Of the remain-der it was said that Cecil and Henry Brooke would receive £1,500 apiece.

Chamber women rarely approached the queen direct, but like their male peers addressed their efforts to the appropriate office-holder or master; they did not take a sledge-hammer to crack a nut. There is a definite correlation between how well a woman knew a client and the energy with which she prosecuted his suit; this is most apparent in the minor suits where there was a greater likelihood that the woman had never even met him. The tone of Katherine Champerson-Asteley’s letter expressing the wish that James Grene of Lincoln’s Inn become the Steward of the Earl of Rutland’s Courts in Yorkshire is typical in its bald statement of the facts (as the client saw them), without embellishment or personal touch; Grene would be suitable because he came from Yorkshire and was an ‘utter barrister’, no more.119 Helena Snakenborg Marchioness of Northampton’s strong recommendation to Burghley of a suit for the place of a Customer of the Port of London by one who ‘hath bin long known to me, and that I can assure your lordship the sayed office is the onely staye and releife that is left to his wiefe and children’, shows the other side of this coin.120

Good will did play its part in the commerce between Privy Chamberers and the people they assisted. In 1560, after Thomas Bentham had been made Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield, he rapidly became aware of his parlous financial condition, and set about obtaining relief from paying at least part of his first fruits and tenths. It is a textbook suit. Firstly, he wrote a formal plea to Elizabeth, and backed it up with a letter of explanation to Cecil, essentially a codicil to the main letter, and with a flurry of letters to anybody he knew who had influence over the administration of the tax - the Master of Requests, the Dean of St Paul’s, the Remembrancer of

120. SP12/266 No.113 fols.162-163v. Helena Marchioness of Northampton to Burghley. The Court, 24 April 1595. The suitor was George Hawes.
First Fruits - and last, but by no means least, to his friend and only Court contact.\textsuperscript{121}

As I have bene alwayes bolde with you present right worshipfull Maistres Asheley, so I have great ned of your helpe beyng absent. It is so that necessitye haith compelled me to wryte unto the Quens highnes a rud supplication whiche I beseche you helpe to deliver yf ned shall requyre or els when it is delivered to speak a good word to prosper yt for surelye yf I had known this moche beyng at London I shold hardleye have come in to this contreye, but nowe, seyng I am in the brears, I must get forthe when I may and as I may. In the mean tyme havynghe nede of all good mens helpe, I pray you speake for me when you see best occasion and most apt tyme. And although I be not able to deserve yt, yet I wyll hartely pray God to recompence yt, to whose blessed protection I commytt yor worshipe.\textsuperscript{122}

Not only did he hope that she could speed the plea itself, but he was relying on her to whip up general support for him at Court. On 2 October he was expressing his impatience, for he had had no news either way, which held up 'other great and weightye suetts I dare not attempt' in the meanwhile, but he knew the worst by 4 December, when he began the painful process of gathering in enough rents to pay his taxes. He did not regard Asteley as anything less than a true friend after this, and one must assume that she had done her best with an almost impossible cause, given Elizabeth's own financial state at the time.\textsuperscript{123}

The dispute between Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury and the Stanhope brothers, Thomas, John and Michael, which began in 1591, has been so thoroughly calendared by Wallace MacCaffrey that there is no need to rehearse it here.\textsuperscript{124} The one point which should be made, however, is the total lack of support which the Earl received from the members of the Privy Chamber. This was not just because the Stanhopes were pre-eminent amongst the male staff, but sprang from the simple fact that none of the

\textsuperscript{121} O'Day and Berlatsky, \textit{The letter-book of Bishop Thomas Bentham}, pp.134-137. Letters from Eccleshall Castle: to the Queen, Cecil and Dr Haddon, 9 September 1560; to Alexander Nowell, 10 September; to Thomas Godfrey, 17 September.

\textsuperscript{122} ibid., p.136. Thomas Bentham to Katherine Champernon-Asteley. Eccleshall Castle, 10 September 1560.

\textsuperscript{123} ibid., pp.163-4 (to Mr Marrow, 2 October), p.182 (to Sir John Savage, 4 December), and p.184 (to Ralph Egerton, 10 December).

\textsuperscript{124} MacCaffrey, 'Talbot and Stanhope'.
women of the Privy Chamber were inclined to put in a good word for him. At the very time that the Earl, 'blocked in the more or less formal channels of legal action, followed the Stanhope example and sought more private ways to further his cause', he deftly shot himself in the foot by estranging his one female relative who was at Court and might have spoken up for him, his elder brother's widow Anne Herbert Lady Talbot, by ceasing the payments due to her under the terms of her jointure.\(^{125}\) Within weeks the only woman who could have helped if she had adopted a conciliatory line, his wife Mary, weighed in with two hysterically abusive letters to Sir Thomas Stanhope, thereby destroying any credit she could have enjoyed with the Queen.\(^{126}\) The Earl was so incapable of dealing with the matter through the Court, that he resorted to violence later in the year, and embarked on the final descent towards his imprisonment in June 1595. The whole messy episode indicates that even a leading Earl could not hope to fare well in a regional power struggle if he lacked the cooperation of at least one member of the Privy Chamber.

This conclusion is borne out by events in East Anglia after the execution of the Duke of Norfolk in 1572. It has been shown that the Duke was never replaced by a single, powerful landowner, and an intense if sporadic political conflict continued throughout the remainder of Elizabeth's reign as groups of friends and colleagues vied with each other for preeminence in the county administrations.\(^{127}\) The two main groups in Norfolk centred on the Bacon family and the Heveningham family. The Bacons were well-connected with the Court, through Lord Keeper Sir

\(125\) ibid, p.77; L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.48 and 49. Anne Lady Talbot to Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury, The Court, 21 November 1592 and 19 December 1592. His treatment of his sister-in-law and its effect is not mentioned by MacCaffrey.

\(126\) Longleat Talbot MSS No.151. 10 February 1592/3; B.L. Harleian MS 7042 fol.92. 15 February 1592/3.

\(127\) See Smith, Norfolk.
Nicholas' wife Anne Cooke, while Sir Nicholas' granddaughter Elizabeth Lady Knevet, the daughter of Sir Nathaniel Bacon of Stiffkey, was a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber in the last decade of the reign, and was great-niece by marriage of Blanche Parry. The Heveningham family were also represented at Court, in their case by a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, Abigail Heveningham Lady Digby. She is first recorded at Court on 7 March 1567/8, probably as a Maid of the Privy Chamber, when Elizabeth gave her a length of orange and blue striped velvet as a present, and she remained at Court as a Gentlewoman after her marriage to George Digby in about 1578. It is known that she did her best to further her brother Sir Arthur's campaign to become the Sheriff of Norfolk in 1600, but though she 'tooke great pains for him, he missed the cansion [occasion], which put him in great chafe'. The opposition, in the form of the Gawdy family, with Philip, an Esquire of the Body, representing them at Court, triumphed by blocking Heveningham's selection yet again. It seems that Sir Arthur was not the easiest of people to represent in a good light; on one occasion, 'being inform'd of some abuse of his liberties by a sawcy insolent fellow, he vow'd and threatened such a kind of punishment presently as was not very legall; whereupon a friend of his prompted him of the danger of such unwarrantable proceeding, as the letter of the law would not beare. "Oh pox on't!" says he, "in cases of this nature we must not be so nice and scrupulous; lett's doe something by law and something by presumption". Unsurprisingly, Abigail had had to warn him on a previous occasion to moderate his behaviour towards his fellow Justices of the Peace in Norfolk or he would run the serious risk of loosing his Commission, with the implicit

128. LC2/4/4 fol.46.
129. C/115/L2/6697 p.28; B.L. Egerton MS 3052; D.N.B. John Digby first Earl of Bristol.
131. LC2/4/4 fol.47v; Smith, Norfolk, pp.147-8.
message that she would not be able to help him if he damaged his own cause in such a fashion.\textsuperscript{133} An even earlier furore had arisen over some disputed property when Heveningham backed a cousin of Mary Shelton-Scudamore and a client of the Earl of Sussex, one Thomas Shelton, against John Flowerdew, who was a client of the Earl of Leicester and a friend of the Gawdys.\textsuperscript{134} The row continued from 1580 for at least a decade, constantly revived by the perennial arguments between the Earls and their Court allies who used their country clients as pawns in their own disputes at Court.

\textsuperscript{133} N.N.R.O. Aylsham MSS Bundle 16. Lady Abigail Digby to Arthur Heveningham. Court, 7 February 1588/9.
\textsuperscript{134} Smith, \textit{Norfolk}, pp.192-198.
7. Religion and education

That there was considerable interest in religious matters amongst the Privy Chamber women cannot be doubted. Loades wrote of Elizabeth that it was ironic that 'the woman who had been hailed as the new Constantine, and cast by some as the saviour of Protestant Christendom, a queen whose reign was characterised by the most complete and successful religious settlement in Europe, presided over a court whose glittering accomplishments included scarcely a nod in the direction of exemplary piety'.

Admittedly it is difficult to imagine that many at either Court 'gave them selfes whole in all their denars and suppers to the discussing of some one dought or other in scripture' as a previous group were said to have done, but the case against Elizabeth's courtiers has certainly been overstated, just as the common idea of Mary's court as one of somber, religious atmosphere is an exaggeration. No European Court in the sixteenth century was conducive to a meditative life dedicated to God, and the tension created between the demands of public life and service and the desire for a godly retirement was one of the great themes in English literature from More to Marvell.

While few of the women who were at Mary's Court were remembered in a favourable light, some of those who frequented Elizabeth's were to be hailed as great Protestant heroines; Thomas Drue's play The Duchess of Suffolk, written for the popular stage in 1624 is an example: Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk was portrayed wielding the Bible in the cause of good and the English.

1. Loades, The Tudor Court, p.183.
2. Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fol.30v. The Chamberlain was Thomas third Lord Burgh and the Vice-chamberlain was Sir Edward Baynton.
seriously, as we have seen, even if the total effect on their behaviour was small. Not for nothing had Thomas Becon, in dedicating *The Jewel of Joy* to Elizabeth, praised ‘your graces’s most godly disposition, and hearty love toward the word of God, daily practised both in your grace’s most virtuous behaviour, and also in the godly order of your household, unto the great comfort of all true-hearted Christians’.\(^4\) It was the outward show which really mattered, for a disorderly household revealed the religious inadequacies of its head: ‘Truly the prince is bounde to kepe his awne persone pure and undefyled, his house and courte so well ruled that all that see it may have desyre to follow and do therafter, and all that heare therof may desire to see it’.\(^5\) Small wonder that first the saviour and then the Governor of the Church of England should both pay such attention to Court discipline.

External conformity was all that any monarch could hope for, of course, although it was possible to ease one’s conscience by avoiding services altogether if one was part of a large group within the Household. Edward Underhill’s oft repeated remark, that there was ‘no better place to shifte the Easter tyme in ther quene Maryes courte’, is incomplete without the qualifying clause, ‘sarvynge in the rome that I dide’.\(^6\) As one of many Gentlemen Pensioners his absence was not so likely to be remarked upon. For the Privy Chamberers it would have been much harder, if not impossible, to escape unnoticed, and Nicodemism would have been the order of the day. However, the level of personal interest paid by the queens to appointing their body servants would have ensured that far fewer dissenters were present in the Privy Chamber compared with the Court as a whole. Broadly speaking, the Privy Chamber staff reflected their mistresses’ faith,

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\(^5\) Bodl. MS Don. C 42 fol.23. ‘A briefe treatise or cronickille of the moste vertuous ladye Anne Bulleyne late quene of England’ by William Latimer.  
\(^6\) Nichols, *Narratives of the Reformation*, p.149.
although the gradations of belief were far more subtle than this generalisation allows. At the time Mary's views on religion were never in doubt, and this has been widely recognised by historians. However, in the heated discussions about what Elizabeth may, or may not, have believed in 1558, one glaring fact has been overlooked. Just before Mary's death the Count of Feria bewailed the fact that Elizabeth 'will not be well-disposed in matters of religion, for I see her inclined to govern through men who are believed to be heretics', but even worse, 'all the women around her definitely are'.

The Puritan Choir may never have existed in Parliament, but it was singing lustily in the Privy Chamber. The appointment of so many committed Protestant ladies to the Privy Chamber may have been part of a deep plot by Elizabeth to disguise her true feelings, but I find it hard to credit that in that case she would have suffered so many for so long.

The extent of true Christian belief at Court is hard to gauge. In Henry VIII's day there were the state prosecutions of the likes of the Nun of Kent and the major treason trials which furnish historians with some detail of aristocratic Protestantism, and the same kind of sources, for example the Duke of Norfolk's confessions of 1571, can be helpful in establishing the extent of Catholicism at Court in Elizabeth's reign. There is nothing from the hands of the women themselves, however, which could constitute a statement of belief, and nothing to compare with Margaret Dakins Lady Hoby's diary. That said, there are occasional clues to the religious atmosphere at Court; for example, in 1574 it was remarked that 'the Court has plenty of ladies to hear sermons'. Not all sermons went down quite as well as others, especially if the preacher dwelt too long on a subject which

9. See Meads, *The diary of Lady Hoby*.
was not popular. Bishop John Aylmer preached to the Court in about 1593, ‘and seemede to touche on the vanitie of deckinge the bodie too finely - Her Majestie tolde the Ladies, that if the Bishope helde more discorse on suche matters shee wolde fitte him for Heaven, but he shoulde walke thither withoute a staffe and leave his mantle behinde him; perchance the Bishope hathe never soughte her Highnesses wardrobe, or he shoulde have chosen another texte’. 11 Although the women at Court would have been well served in this respect, the sermons given before the queens were generally staid expositions rather than flights of inspiration. At least one fictional connoisseur was distinctly unimpressed by the Lent sermons given before Elizabeth: ‘those be of weight: but one must not mervell at for Preachers be warned of longe time before: so by that meane they be sermons premeditated’. The Court women were not restricted to attending services only at Court. In the *French schoolemaister* a London citizen and his friend play spot-the-dignitary as they take their seats to hear the a May Day sermon at Paul’s Cross:

Gossip: What Lorde is that, whiche is above in the Galerie?
Father: Doo you not know him?
Gossip: No truly
Father: It is my Lord of Bedford: and that Lady which sitteth by him, is my Lady thadmirall [Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton]: the Dutchesse of N [Elizabeth Leyburne Duchess of Norfolk]: the Countise of N [Anne Neville Countess of Northumberland]: the Marquise of N [Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton]: My Lady Tresorer [Marchioness of Winchester].

Gossip: Doo you know those gentlewemen, whiche be behinde?
Father: Yea, as mee thinketh: is it not maystris N [Margery Williams-Norris?] and maistris of N: with their two nices and coosins? Yea.12

11. Harington, *Nugae Antiquae*, II p.215. Aylmer may have had in mind the simplicity of dress which Elizabeth affected during her brother’s reign which he praised in *An harborow for faithfull and trewe subiectes* (S.T.C. 1005. London, 1559). She found it even less amusing when Bishop Anthony Rudd, preaching on the touchy subject of old age in 1596, told her that the ravages of time had ‘furrowed her face and besprinkled her hair with meal’ (Nichols, *Progresses*, III p.8).

12. Byrne, *The Elizabethan Home*, pp.29 and 31. The whole episode displays a intriguingly relaxed attitude to such events. They chat through the Cathedral service, and having got prime seats at the Cross ‘right over against the preacher, that wee may heare him better’ decide not to ‘tarie for the prese’, and push their way out before the sermon is finished, with no thought for the disruption they caused.
In the Privy Chamber itself it is possible that a practice begun by Anne Boleyn had been continued: 'she caused a deske in her chambre upon the which she commaunded an Englishe bible to be layed, wherunto every persone might have recurse to rede upon when they wolde'. Her example was definitely held up to Elizabeth by one author as the model of how to order life in the Privy Chamber. She was said to have given

straight commaundemente that all tryfels and wanton poeses shoulde be eschued upon her displeasure. After that there was a booke of prayers whiche belonged to one of her maydes of honour called Mrs Mary Shelton presented unto her highnes where in ware written certeyne ydill poeses. She wolde not be satisfied by any meanes before she understod certeynly to whome the booke perteyned. The matter was covered a whill by cause of the expresse thretyninges of her majestie, but nothing canne longe escape the percinge eyes of princes, esspecially in their awne pallacies, so that at the length the pensive gentilwoman (to whome the booke appertayned) was discovered. Wherupon the quene her majestie, calling her before her presence, wonderfull rebuked her that wold permUte suche wantone toyes in her book of prayers, whiche she termed a myrroure or glasse wherin she might learne to addresse her wandering thoughtes: and upon this occasione commaunded the mother of the maydons to have a more vigilante eye to her charge to thende that at all tymes and in the tyme of prayers esspecially they might comely and vertuously behave their selves.13

The part played by the Mother of the Maids was crucial. It was her duty to be constantly on the watch for any deviation from the true path, be it in behaviour or belief, and only with her connivance was it possible for the Maids to flout the rules completely, as is shown by the story of Anne Bromfield. She went to Court with her mother, the widow Katherine Fromonds-Bromfield, sister to Dr John Dee's second wife, who,

being a gentlewoman of very fine behaviour and having good friends, was call- led to the Court of Queen Elizabeth and made mother of the maids of hon- our, not being a Catholic as her deceased husband, but only well-minded. She then took this her daughter Anne to the Court at the age of sixteen, where for four years she gave herself wholly to the pleasures and delights of the world... But behold, against the time of a great marriage in the Court, when she supposed to have abundant pleasure and solace, suddenly all is turned quite contrary...all the pleasures of the Court were turned now into sorrows, her feasting into mourning, her tears poured forth amain whenever she could get out of company. And being once gotten alone, which was very hard to do in that place, and lamenting according to her custom...it came suddenly to her mind that she must leave the world and become a nun. She, finding this motion in her mind and not knowing how to compass the same, being as yet no Catholic, neither had notice of religious houses, notwithstanding one day she disclosed it unto a person who put her quite out of thinking upon religion. Thereupon her mother desirous to help her, seeing

her spend the night in tears as she lay by her, would give her to read a book of Catholic prayers, so that now affliction made her call to mind her old prayers.

This was the turning point in her life, which she owed completely to her mother, the woman at Court who, next to the Queen herself, was most responsible for the religious upbringing of the young women there and yet was in possession of a book of Roman Catholic prayers. Anne Bromfield was eventually converted by John Gerrard and became a nun in Louvain, while her mother retained her position at Court until the end of the reign, despite her daughter’s treasonable behaviour. This is a speaking demonstration of Elizabeth’s tolerance in certain cases.

There were some families who consistently produced staunch defenders of the Protestant faith, such as the Russells and the Dudleys. In Elizabeth’s reign both these families were still considered arrivistes. The elastic beliefs of the first Earl of Bedford had been replaced by the principles of his only son Francis, whose large family by Margaret St John was brought up in the Protestant faith. Of their three daughters the eldest, Anne, who married Ambrose Dudley Earl of Warwick in 1565, and the youngest Margaret, who married George Earl of Cumberland in 1577, were both leading lights of the more radical wing of the Church of England. Anne was probably educated by their mother, whereas Margaret was brought up under the supervision of their step-mother Bridget Hussey, another Protestant. Margaret joined her older sister at Court probably around 1572, and thereafter was in attendance regularly until the Queen’s death, although she was less in evidence in the 1580s when she was bearing children and in the 1590s when she was often in the north, doubtless seeing to her husband’s estates during his absences at sea. In contrast Anne’s ability to serve Elizabeth was uninterrupted by childbirth, and (like her husband) she seems

to have been more or less permanently in attendance from the accession, remaining at Court after her husband's death until 1603, when she retired to her estates. Anne was a particularly important patron because of her well-established position as the Queen's friend, and she procured many benefices and fellowships for her clients, even on one occasion the release of a notorious recusant from jail, but her lasting contribution to the Church was in the patronage of the written word. There is no evidence to suggest that either she or her sister composed a religious work - unlike Mary Sidney Countess of Pembroke, who completed her own translation of the Psalms in 1599 - but between them they received the dedications of some of the most important protestant literature of the Elizabethan period. That this was due to genuine interest on their part rather than the mere attraction to the authors of their surname, which their father had brought to the forefront of the Protestant cause, is clear from the absence of any religious work dedicated to their middle sister Elizabeth, who from 7 August 1583 was the wife of William Bourchier Earl of Bath. She too lived long and may even have been at Court more often than her sister Margaret, with whom she had shared their step-mother's attentions as tutor, but she clearly did not evince the same enthusiasm as her sisters. Of course it is hard to gauge just how far a patroness was engaged in the commissioning of any particular piece of literature; occasionally there are known associations before composition which make it more likely that the work was welcome, but dedications can be misleading as to the warmth of interest actually expressed by the dedicatee.

Anne received the dedication of works as diverse as *A Commentarie upon the booke of the Prouerbes of Salomon* by Peter Muffet, and Olivier de La Marche's *The Resolued gentleman* in a translation by Lewis Lewkenor, a

relative of Edward Lewkenor the puritan zealot. In 1599 *The psalms of David in meter*, *The plaine song to be sung and plaide upon the lute, orpharyon, citterne or base viol*. By R.Allison and are to be solde at his house in the Dukes place neere Alde-gate were published with a dedication to her. Richard Allison was one of the Gentlemen of the Chapel Royal and had been a contributor to *the Whole Booke of Psalms* which had been both commissioned and published by Thomas East in 1592. Allison was probably attempting to take advantage of the spectacular success of East's *Booke* which quickly ran to six editions. The Psalms were supposedly the only form of music which were acceptable as 'a christian man's melody' because they were 'the handmaid unto virtue (while) all other melody is vain and transitory, and passeth away and cometh to nought'. One hopes that this musical offering was acceptable to the countess, for it is striking that apart from this work she received no other musical dedications.

Of the sisters, Margaret Russell in particular seems to have favoured those with more radical Protestant beliefs. In 1586 she warmly encouraged Thomas Tymme to translate into English Dudley Fenner's *Sacra theologia* published as *The Sacred doctrine of Divinitie or the Truth which is according to Pietie, Described after the lawes of the onely and true methode and digested into ten bookees*. Fenner had been educated at Peterhouse, Cambridge, and was a theologian who had managed to pack a great deal of troublesome opinion into a short life. As the preacher at Cranbrook, that 'stronghold of Puritanism', during the subscription controversy in 1584 he drove Whitgift to snap that 'By my troth, Mr Fenner, you are as bad as the worst'. His ability to drive people up the wall should come as no surprise;

17. S.T.C. 2497.
19. S.T.C. 10773.5; S.T.C. 10774.
20. Collinson,*The Elizabethan Puritan Movement*, pp.254 and 266.
he had been, after all, a firm friend of Thomas Cartwright since they had been in Antwerp together in the early 1580s. The *Sacra theologia*, Fenner’s only Latin work to be published, had aimed at a wider Continental readership than his previous books, and it was appropriate that it should be made available to an unlatinate audience at home. As I can find no evidence that Margaret Russell could read Latin it is possible that in the first instance the translation was made for her own use. The translator, Tymme, was well known in ultra-reformed circles, both as rector from 1566 to 1592 of that haunt of godly preachers St Antholin’s in Budge Row, London, and also as an able translator and the author of several popular devotional works (including *A silver watchbell. The sound whereof is able to win the worldling, to become a true Christian*, and *The poore mans pater noster, with a preparativo to praiere*).

Fenner’s untimely death in 1587 deprived the reformed circle in England of the first English Calvinist to have had a chance to gain a European reputation. The man who ultimately did achieve such a position was also patronised by the Countess of Cumberland. William Perkins was one of the foremost puritan fellows of Christ’s College, Cambridge. In September 1589 he was present at, if not the instigator of, the ‘conference’ of leading presbyterians held in St John’s College, Cambridge which led to his appearance before the Star Chamber the following year. He was not prosecuted, possibly because the Countess was his patron. His noted collection of thirteen theological treatises published in 1600 as *A golden chaine: or, the description of theologie* was dedicated to Margaret, as was *A graine of musterd-seed*, another treatise first published in 1597.

24. Sta.Cha. 5 A 49/34. Perkin’s deposition.
25. S.T.C. 19646; S.T.C. 19725.
Joint dedications were also a feature of the period. In 1591 the Russell sisters shared the dedication of *A sermon upon the last three verses of the first chapter of Job* by Henry Peacham the elder. The text was singularly appropriate as Margaret's only surviving son Robert had died on 24 May 1591, when he was little more than two years old; it is possible that Peacham's choice of text was more than a mere coincidence. Margaret also shared at least two dedications with another senior Protestant attendant, Katherine Dudley Countess of Huntingdon. Katherine seems to have afforded some protection to Richard Greenham the hot-gospeller of Dry Drayton in Cambridgeshire, and the dedication of *The works of Richard Greenham examined, corrected, and published, by H.H.*, first published posthumously in 1608 by Henry Holland, was made to both women. Together they were also given Thomas Savile's less theologically sophisticated but more educational work *The raising of them that are fallen. A discourse profitable to christians dialogue wise, betwixt a knight and a gentleman,* The Countess of Huntingdon continued as a dedicatee of religious works long after the death of her husband, who usually receives most of the credit for the pious atmosphere of their household, for example Francis Bunny's *A comparison betweene the auncient fayth of the Romans, and the new Romish religion* published in 1595, and later a long religious poem composed by Thomas Collins entitled *The penitent publican, his confession of mouth.*

Here we find women who were apparently behind the production of a number of religious books, and who in their day provided encouragement to authors which was as at least as important as that given to writers of

26. 'Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord. In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly'. (A.V.)
27. S.T.C. 12312.
29. S.T.C. 4098; S.T.C. 5566.
secular works by the likes of Lucy Harington Countess of Bedford, Mary Sidney Countess of Pembroke and Penelope Devereux Lady Rich; because the secular literature is more readily accessible to our biblically illiterate age, both it and its patronesses have attracted the lion’s share of attention. Of course, as with secular literature, it is almost impossible to tell how many of the devotional works were actually read by the ladies concerned, but it is noticeable that these books were all without exception either composed in or translated into English. Ong wrote that ‘because their sex was so committed to vernacular, women could become - as Raymond Chambers and others have shown they did become - both a major audience for English literature and some of its chief patrons’.30 It is a small step to apply this generalisation to the specific example of religious literature. After all, the only major religious work that we know the Countess of Cumberland had in her possession when she died was a translation, Duplesses booke of the Sacrament of the Masse. (probably Phillipe de Mornay’s De la verite de la religion chrestienne which had been published in 1587 as A woorke concerning the trewnesse of the christian religion. Begunne to be translated by Sir P. Sidney and finished by A. Golding). This she left to her niece Anne Russell Countess of Worcester.31 The bequest was appropriate because De Mornay had been in close contact with the Countess of Worcester’s family, especially with her mother Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell. The Countess’ maternal aunt, Anne Cooke Lady Bacon, had had various dealings with de Mornay while she was still frequently at Court in the 1580s; in 1586, while he was resident French ambassador in England, he was the prime mover in arranging a complicated scheme of payments by Henry of Navarre, not only to Anthony Bacon who was then in Montaubon, but also to his mother Lady

Bacon, who was attending on the Queen.\textsuperscript{32}

The faithful of those churches or sects which held strong beliefs contrary to those of the established Church needed powerful friends at Court to help them when the inevitable conflict came. On 16 July 1591 a self-proclaimed Messiah William Hackett announced his mission from a cart in Cheapside, assisted by Coppinger as ‘a prophett of mercye’, and Henry Arthington as recording angel, sealed those revealed as elect on the forehead with his signet ring, and denouncing those of the bemused audience found wanting. They were soon ‘pulled downe’, and dealt with severely, for Hackett had said that the Queen ‘is not to raigne any longer’, and it was generally felt his ideas bore too close a resemblance for comfort to those of ‘John of Leyden who toke uppon him the kingdom of the Anabaptestes at Monster’. The repercussions were felt in a much wider circle however, for ‘the enemies to the puritauns take great advantage agaynst them hervppon for that these profetts have beeene great follower of that sort of preachers, and have in dede sollicited all those that they knew affected to theyr sect with theyr booke\& letters’, and this apparently heaven-sent opportunity to attack the main stream of ‘Puritan’ preaching was used to engineer the series of prosecutions which ultimately brought William Perkins up before the Council, as described above. The damnation by association, however, did not stretch far enough to discredit the one truly committed supporter left with enough influence to help, the Countess of Warwick, ‘who...attendeth vppon the Q. agayne & sollicited is it semeth by the preachurs to do good offices by reason of her nearenyse’. Her sister may well have asked for her help too, for Margaret knew Arthington the recording angel, and since after the incident the Cumberlands gave Arthington a pension to assist him in his new life as an author of religious works, it seems possible that at least Margaret had a

\textsuperscript{32} B.L. Cotton MS Nero B VI No.173 fol.337, No.196 fol.380, No.199 fol.383 and No.218 fol.413v.
hand in his release from prison after he had recanted.33

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One group are notable by their absence from any major involvement with the Privy Chamber staff. In the sixteenth century the higher clergy and aristocracy had returned to the relationship which obtained in England before the fifteenth century; Reginald Pole was the last of that brief phenomenon, the aristocratic churchman. In Elizabeth's generation not one single son of the sixty or so leading families joined the secular church, and so it remained for successive generations. This clearly had ramifications for the bishops' position at Court where all activity centred on kinships and affinities, and their dealings with Privy Chamber staff were very limited, concerning mainly diocesan business. The episcopacy's reduced parochial influence due to the number of advowsons in lay hands, a problem highlighted by Maria Dowling, was equally important, as it removed the key reason why Privy Chamber women at Court seeking livings for clients should work with the senior members of the Church. It was far more important to get the lay patron to agree to one's suit than to win over the bishop, so that their need for episcopal assistance was limited. Nevertheless there was some intercourse; for instance, Claire Cross has demonstrated that Katherine Pole Countess of Huntington, helped to further the career of Mathew Hutton, who during her lifetime became Archbishop of York.34 As the bishops had the power to license preachers it was useful to those women with clients who were, or who hoped to remain, preachers to cultivate good

relations, but on the whole the queens' women were far happier dealing with the secular authorities. In a very complicated divorce wrangle which lasted several years the plaintiff was a gentlewoman called Elizabeth Bourne (née Marvyn). Her mother was Lady Amy Marvyn, one of the first Extraordinary Ladies of the Privy Chamber, who contrived to have her daughter's plea brought before the Privy Council rather than before an ecclesiastical court, despite the latter being the correct place to hear such a case. Clearly Lady Marvyn felt that this way there was a better chance of a favourable outcome, and the hearing would be private rather than in open court, a powerful consideration.\footnote{LC2/4/3 fol.54.}

Women at Court were involved in the sale or lease of advowsons on a regular basis because of their general role as brokers, although women did also hold advowsons in their own right; some, like Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk had large numbers at their disposal, in her case at least fourteen separate parochial benefices in the diocese of Lincoln alone.\footnote{Foster, Lincoln episcopal records, pp.165, 168, 174, 176-7, 180-4, 187, 190-1, 193 and 243. All visited August 1576.} Her mother was Maria de Salinas Lady Willoughby, one of Katherine of Aragon's favourite attendants and a woman noted for her learning and piety. Katherine Willoughby inherited her mother's zeal, but not her faith: she adopted Protestantism, possibly as a result of her marriage in 1534 to Henry VIII's friend Charles Brandon Duke of Suffolk which introduced her at an early age to the reformed circle at Court. By the 1560s she had become the most important parishioner of the Minories in London, which, because of its ancient privileges (which included freedom from episcopal visitation) had become a centre for radical reformers. Holy Trinity church attracted preachers and congregations similar to those of St Antholin's in Budge Row, and the Duchess played a leading role in the community, and supported
Miles Coverdale when he was involved in the vestments controversy.\textsuperscript{37} Her chaplaincy included zealots like Pattenson and John Browne; it is pleasant to speculate on how they fitted in at Court if they visited it in her train.\textsuperscript{38} When Browne was called up before the Council in the Star Chamber in May 1573 for his part in the dissemination of Cartwright's \textit{Replye to an answere}, the reluctance of the bishops present at the hearing to press charges may reflect their awareness of the influence of his patroness.\textsuperscript{39} Browne was not the only man called up who had powerful connections at Court; the principal defendant, Edward Dering, the possessor of 'the sharpest of puritan tongues', was closely associated with the household of Katherine Cooke Lady Killegrew, another of Elizabeth's attendants.\textsuperscript{40}

Katherine Willoughby Duchess of Suffolk did not restrict her activities to protecting 'unspotted Lambs'. One only has to read the letters she addressed to William Cecil in the first year of Elizabeth's reign to see that she had no doubts about her competence to influence the course of events; 'How long halt ye between two opinions?' she snorted in 1559.\textsuperscript{41} There is nothing here to show any becoming modesty, nor any sense that as a woman she should not 'intermeddle so far in matters of commonwealth'.\textsuperscript{42} Nor was she alone in this. In 1595 Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell felt that it was her duty to address a lecture to her nephew the Secretary on the virtues of various bishops elect, with her recommendations on how to proceed.\textsuperscript{43}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{37} H.M.C. \textit{Ancaster}, XIII pp.459 and 468.
\item \textsuperscript{38} As a duchess she would have been allowed to bring at least one chaplain to Court (see Chapter Two p.27).
\item \textsuperscript{39} Collison, \textit{The Elizabethan Puritan Movement}, p.90; Inner Temple Library, Petyt MS538/47 fols.479-80. Pattenson was involved in the first congregational churches in London in the late 1560s.
\item \textsuperscript{40} ibid. p.135.
\item \textsuperscript{41} C.S.P. \textit{Foreign}, 1558-9 pp.101 and 160.
\item \textsuperscript{42} Collins, \textit{Letters and Memorials of State}, II p.139.
\item \textsuperscript{43} H.M.C. \textit{Salisbury}, V p.122. Elizabeth Cooke Lady Russell to Cecil. 24 February 1594/5.
\end{itemize}
Only a few of the women at Court, like Katherine Willoughby, could take one or more preachers into their personal households, for, as has been shown earlier, the queens' body-servants did not have permission to employ large numbers of servants, let alone private chaplains; the chance to imitate Lydia and invite in St Paul with the words 'If ye think...that I believe on the Lord, come into my house, and abide here' was denied them, even if they had wished to heed Becon's plea to do so. As few Privy Chamber staff held a sufficient number of advowsons to attract much attention from suitors in their own right, the main reason they were so involved in the procurement of benefices was their influence with the queen, and thus the hundreds of Crown presentations. In the mêlée that followed the Essex rebellion, when the traitors' benefices were a main prize, one hopeful purchaser was told that his suit 'will be most easily effected by a lady of the privy chamber'.

For both political and religious reasons, this advice held good for the whole period. For example, Mary Shelton-Scudamore seems to have been particularly active in placing clerics in suitable employ from the end of the 1580s, with a wide assortment of clients, ranging from a Mr William Massy who came from one of the leading Catholic families of Lancashire and was presented to an Oxfordshire parsonage, to John Mab B.A., who wanted to become a fellow of one of the consistently radical Oxford colleges, Magdalen. She did not restrict her efforts to Crown presentations, however; she warmly recommended one Peter Burrows as a personal chaplain to Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury.

44. Ayre, Thomas Becon, p.585.
46. SP12/243 No.52; SO3/1 fol.48; SO3/1 f.109v.
47. L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.56-57v. Lady Mary Scudamore to Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury. Richmond (Court), 12 March 1599/1600.
Among Elizabeth’s contemporaries Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford was something of an exception, for she had known Calvin well when she and her husband Sir William lived in Geneva after they fled the Marian persecution in 1555. When she was widowed in 1556 she and Calvin fell out over the custody of her son John, for she wanted to move to Basle to join some of the other English exiles there, but Calvin as John’s godfather refused to let her leave Geneva. She won, and spent three years in Basle. On Elizabeth’s accession, far from returning to England with her children in January 1559 as is often stated, she spent at least six months in Paris while she dealt with a lengthy and obscure law suit, battling with the French legal system without any assistance from the English resident Throckmorton. After that experience it is not surprising that she does not appear as a leading defender of the followers of Calvin on her return to England. Her clients tended to be what one might term Anglicans, like one of the Royal Chaplains, John Foxe, for whom she procured the Queen’s signature for presentation to a rectory in the diocese of Bath and Wells in 1596. She also promoted a very unusual suit, the only one moved by a Privy Chamber woman on behalf of a minor. On 19 August 1590, and at her behest, the Queen signed a letter ‘to the Warden of ye newe Colledge of Oxford and to the Warden of the Colledge of Winchester and others appoynted for election of Schollers in Winchester to admitt one Constantyne Turton into one of the roomes of a childes place that shalbe voyde there at the next election’.50

One should not assume that even the most fervent were wholly exempt from the mercenary attitude towards advowsons which then


49. SO3/1 fol. 581v.

50. SO3/1 fol.258.
prevailed, and strength of opinion did not preclude holding a contrary position when money was involved.

Mr Sutton was advised by my Lady Cumberland, not to purchase Land with Advousons, because he should pay for them in ye purchase, and might not sell them againe: He said: Indeed madam, I gaue away two presentations of late, I am sorry I kept not one of them. For whom? said my Lady. For yor Ladyship said he, you are so good a preacher. 51

Dealing with, and in, advousons was, like all contemporary land transactions, fraught with difficulties, from which even the most powerful women were not immune. Although the Countess of Warwick, aunt and guardian of Edward Earl of Bedford, warmly commended Mr Clare his sometime tutor to the lessees of the Earl's estates to be the new vicar of Tavistock, they were all out-manoeuvred by a Mr Pritchard, who, hearing of her suggestion, swiftly procured his presentation to the benefice under the Great Seal from the Lord Chancellor Sir Thomas Bromley. The ensuing dispute limped through the Court of Wards for months.52

In 1599 Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury, involved himself in a suit of his friend Sir John Byron, and met with almost as little success as with his own vendetta against the Stanhopes. Byron was in dispute with one John Chaworth over the ownership of the prebend of Oxton, and the Earl approached the Countess of Warwick asking her to promote an acquaintance between Byron and the local Archdeacon, thereby improving Byron's chances of a favourable outcome. She acquiesced at first, but then abruptly withdrew her assistance.53 One does not have to look far for the reason. John Chaworth was a kinsman, if not the brother, of Bridget Chaworth-Carr one of the Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber.54 Bridget may have persuaded the Countess to desist from helping Chaworth's rival; if so, it

52. SP12/202 No.39 fol.53. June 1587.
53. L.P.L. MS 3205 fols.54-55v. Anne Countess of Warwick to Gilbert Earl of Shrewsbury. The Court, 28 March 1599.
54. LC2/4/4 fol.46.
either demonstrates how powerful the Privy Chamber staff were, or how low the Earl's stock had fallen at Court.

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The awkwardness which could arise from inadvertently backing a dubious client is illustrated by the experience of Jane Cheyney Countess of Southampton, once senior Lady in attendance on Katherine Parr and one of Mary's attendants, who presented one Dr Leonard Bilson to the rectory of King's Worthy in 1557, when he was probably already a prebendary of Winchester (in which diocese the rectory lay).55 Unfortunately in 1561 it was discovered that in order to 'obtain the love' of the widow of Sir Richard Cotton, Bilson had used sorcery and, even worse, he had procured a Catholic priest to hallow the conjurations. History does not reveal whether Bilson had had any success with his suit.56

It is not entirely clear whether the Countess of Southampton was a Catholic, a Protestant or something in between. Her service to two queens of opposing faiths sheds no light on this. Occasionally it is debateable whether a particular woman even counts as a Christian. Gertrude Blount Marchioness of Exeter does, because although in 1533 she gave Elizabeth Barton the Nun of Kent twenty shillings because 'she had had children who lived not after their birth; and, supposing herself to be with child again, she desired Dame Elizabeth to pray to Our Lady, that she might have issue that would live', she was responding in what was a common and relatively

55. LC2/2 fol.44v; SP11/1 No.15 fol.30.
56. Kittredge, G.L., in Harvard Studies and Notes in Philology and Literature xvi (1934) p.99; his son was Thomas Bilson bishop of Winchester from 1597 (and also a Winchester prebend: P.R.O. SO3/1 f.593r June 1596).
harmless fashion to a problem that had baffled even the best families. In contrast, when Frances Meautys, one of the last Elizabethan Maids of Honour, made a bid to enjoy the attentions of her lover Robert Earl of Sussex she offered to one Mathias Evans, who was 'skillfull in magick, sorcery & nigromancy', the considerable sum of fifty pounds a year pension if he would dispose of the Countess Bridget Morrison and two others by means of witchcraft, with poison to be used as an insurance against failure. As a more prosaic contingency measure while these dark deeds were in preparation she threatened the astonished Earl that she would 'stabb, pistoll him, or cutt his throate' if he attempted a reconciliation with his wife, for which purpose 'she doth wear a stiletto'. Both Evans and the poison proved to be equally impotent against the Countess's iron constitution, and she survived to bring a case against Frances. The surprising element in the proceedings which followed was that they centred not on the undeniable adultery of the Earl but on the sorcery of his mistress. It appears that it was the Countess who chose this approach, a woman of a staunchly Protestant family and upbringing closely related to the Russells (she was a niece of the grand old ladies of the godly cause Anne and Margaret). That she should firmly believe that Evans's dubious practises posed a genuine threat should give us pause.

Keith Thomas has shown that belief in the efficacy of witchcraft was wide-spread even amongst the most Christian of the Tudor English. William Perkins, the Cambridge theologian so favoured by the Countess of Cumberland, wrote in his *Discourse of the damned Art of Witchcraft* that, although he gave no credence to the idea of the Witches' Sabbath, he firmly believed that compacts with Satan, and therefore witches, did exist, and

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58. *A.P.C.*, 1623-5 p.6; Sta. Cha. 8 245/5 and 32 and 255/23.
though their more spectacular arts - their ability to fly, to weather-monger, and to travel to 'farre countries, to meete with Herodias, Diana, and the Deuill, and such like' - were delusions, they were delusions induced by an unholy marriage with the Devil. 59 For the most part this seems to have been the attitude of most Tudor courtiers; the question was not whether occult practitioners had any real power or not, for that was a forgone conclusion, but whether one chose to make use of those powers. 60

Frances Brydges Lady Throckmorton a member of the Privy Chamber and wife of George Throckmorton, a Gentleman Pensioner, decided to confer with 'wizards' early in 1559 in a curious and ultimately fruitless attempt to obtain the 'entire and perfect love' of her errant husband by poisoning him. Despite her use of potions, her approach was the antithesis of Frances Meautys', for rather than seeking to kill her rival she hoped to alter her husband's very nature, clearly calling for altogether more sophisticated conjurations. The 'wizards' failed her. Her mother Elizabeth Grey Lady Chandos had to use all the influence available to her at Court as a senior attendant to prevent her daughter's prosecution. The whole episode may well have hastened Lady Chandos' death in December that year. 61 One might think that Elizabeth would be anxious to remove such a woman from her Privy Chamber, but actually both husband and wife continued in their Court posts for many years to come, despite the final collapse of their marriage in the 1560s.

Elizabeth's tolerance of these strange goings-on at Court was possibly an attempt to protect important families from the glare of scandal. Her reaction to the obscure case of Hugh Draper adds substance to this theory.

60. For further instance of this widespread belief see Nichols, Narratives of the Reformation, pp.172-5.
61. LC2/4/3 fols.49v and 54; SP12/7 fols.76-77v; B.L. Add. MSS 32091 fol.176.
Draper was a Bristol inn-keeper imprisoned in the Tower on 21 March 1560/1 as a result of allegations made by one John Mann (who was himself 'an astronomer'). Draper was accused of being 'suspect of a conjuror or sorcerer, and thereby to practise matter against Sir William St Lowe, and my ladie; and in his confession it aperithe, that before Time he hathe been busie and doinge with suche matters, but he denieth any matter of weight touching Sir William Sentlo, or my ladie, and alsoe affirmethe that longe since he so misliked his science, that he burned all his bookes'. Mann was well known to both Sir William St Loe and his younger brother and heir, Edward, an unpleasant young man commonly credited with having successfully poisoned at least two people by 1560. Edward, who maintained a house in Bristol just round the corner from Draper's inn, seems to have been intensely jealous of his brother and fearful that he would lose the chance to inherit the St Loe estates should William produce an heir. His solution was simple. He persuaded Draper to kill William and his new wife, Elizabeth Hardwick-Barlow-Cavendish, with sorcery when they were all staying with John Mann at his house in Red Cross Street, London, in the winter of 1560/1. As with the other examples mentioned, the conjurations were to be fortified with poison. It was alleged that Edward received help with the poisoning from two Londoners, Francis Cox and Ralph Davis, who with Draper were sent to the Tower in March 1560/1, where they all languished some months. In the event none of them were prosecuted, nor was Edward St Loe, the villain of the piece.62

This episode was lent particular significance by the Court posts the intended victims held; William St Loe was Captain of the Queen's Guard, his wife was a Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber, and his sister Elizabeth St Loe was a Maid of the Privy Chamber. They seem to have used their

62. 'The Memoires of Sir Wm St Loe' in The Retrospective Review ii (1828); Chatsworth Drawer 143(3); Archaeologia xii pp.98-9.
influence against Edward’s accomplices but not against Edward himself: the St Loes had too much to lose if the scandal got out and the family name was brought into disrepute (especially at a time when the younger Elizabeth was looking for a husband). Another possible reason for Edward’s mild treatment was because he was not the only member of the family who trod dangerous ground. Sir William was, after all, a close acquaintance of the ‘astrologer’ Mann, and the visit in 1560/1 to Mann’s house was by no means the first time that he had stayed there.\textsuperscript{63} The absence of any move against Edward St Loe may also have resulted from the timing of the incident, which came hot on the heels of the death of Amy Robsart-Dudley in September 1560 and the ensuing scandal. The last thing Elizabeth would have wanted was yet another embarrassing incident which combined poisoning and senior courtiers, this time including the man responsible for her own personal safety. I have not been able to discover what became of the prosecution that threatened Frances Brydges - it may have failed through lack of hard evidence. But it has been claimed that her case, taken with the St Loe poisoning and the Dudley scandal, was the reason for the drafting of a bill to revive the Henrician laws against witchcraft which was introduced in Elizabeth’s second parliament in the House of Commons on 18 January 1563, and was passed on 19 March.\textsuperscript{64} Whether this was so, Elizabeth cannot have been best pleased about so many incidents all within the space of eighteen months, all with bearing on such highly placed members of her Court.

Perhaps it was lucky that Elizabeth did not come to hear of the behaviour of Frances Howard Countess of Hertford II. Late in 1600 she went to visit Simon Forman, a professional astrologer popular in Court circles, in

\textsuperscript{63.} LC2/4/3 fols.54v and 53v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fols.191-2.
\textsuperscript{64.} See Kittredge, \textit{Witchcraft}. 
order to find out if she were pregnant or, if not, when she would be. Her problem was the exact opposite of Gertrude Blount's, as her marriage to Hertford, which had only just taken place, was still a secret from the Queen and from most of her peers at Court, and for a very good reason; she was a Maid of Honour, and what was more, the Queen's cousin. The couple were obviously anxious to know the worst, probably in order to give them time to engineer her discreet absence from Court at the crucial moment if this proved necessary. The Earl must have experienced a certain nervousness as he awaited Forman's prognostication for he knew only too well how spectacularly the Queen could react to secret weddings from the events which had followed his illicit marriage forty years before to another Maid of Honour and even closer royal relative, Lady Katherine Grey. He was also no stranger to the idea that his wife might wish to consult astrologers, for his second wife, the other Frances Howard, who was a Lady of the Privy Chamber from 1570 until her death early in 1600, had consulted Dr John Dee about an event that took place on 27 July 1578 at nine fifteen in the morning; circumstances point to it being a miscarriage. She had also maintained friendly contact with Dee thereafter, and she became naming godmother to Dee's daughter Frances, who was born on 1 January 1591, whom she gave as a christening present a substantial silver-gilt tankard weighing twenty-two ounces.

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Relations between Dr John Dee and courtiers are interesting, although most of the evidence comes from his own pen and therefore has to be treated carefully. His *Compendious Rehersal*, written in 1592 as an insurance claim designed to wring pity, preferment and cash from the Queen, is particularly enlightening and has the added advantage that Dee knew that it might be read by many of the people then at Court whom he cited in his favour. It is therefore unlikely that he embellished his story too much in the parts with which we are concerned.

At the start of the reign he was friendly with the Brooke family, especially with one of the Queen’s friends Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton, sister-in-law of the Gentlewoman Frances Newton-Cobham.69 After following the 1562 progress for its entire length, the Marchioness became a less frequent resident at Court, for in this year she was diagnosed as having breast cancer.70 By 1564 she was desperately seeking a cure at the hands of doctors in Antwerp without any success, and it was while she was there that she met Dee, who was supervising the publication of his new book *Monas Hieroglyphica*. He had been on the Continent for some time, but it is quite possible that they had met before at Edward VI’s Court. She may well have consulted him as medical practitioner while they were in Antwerp; he certainly ‘brought the Lady Marquess...from Andwerp by sea to Greenwich’ in November 1564.71 On 8 December of that year she made suit to the Queen for Dee to have the deanery of Gloucester which met with some approval - ‘a caveat was entred on my behalfe’ - but this is the last occasion that she was well enough to attend on the Queen. She died on 2 April 1565, and with her death died Dee’s contacts with the Brooke family. This shows

69. LC2/4/3 fol.53v; B.L. Lansdowne MS 29 No.68 fol.161.
70. B.L. Lansdowne MS 5 No.36 fol.119.
how transitory and personal were the ties which bound client and patron.\textsuperscript{72}

Among the women most frequently mentioned in the *Compendious Rehearsal* is the 'honourable Countess of Warwick', who on 9 November 1592 presented to the Queen the 'Supplication' which Dee had written asking for 'speedy and good redress' for his 'incredible inconveniences', a petition which had the desired effect; 'thereupon her Majestie immediately appointed...Mr Secretary Wolley, and Sir Thomas Gorge...to be the two Commissioners' who Dee had asked should investigate his plight, and for whom he had written the *Rehearsal* in order to make their investigation easier.\textsuperscript{73} The Countess was the natural choice of patron for Dee, for not only was she one of the most powerful women at Court, but as the widow of the Earl of Warwick she was one of the family to whom Dee had constantly turned for support since he joined the service of John Duke of Northumberland in 1551. Dee's contact with the Countess embodies the three features of Privy Chamber politics in the period: the personal influence of the patron, the family of the patron, and client-patron loyalty. As the only surviving member of the Dudley family with real influence at Court in the 1590s she was particularly active on Dee's behalf. She moved Dee's suit to be made Master of the St Cross hospital (which stood outside Winchester) at least twice. The main obstacle to success was the incumbent Dr Bennet, who Dee fervently hoped would be promoted to a bishopric to clear the way, but neither the Countess nor Burghley succeeded in this despite the favour of Archbishop Whitgift. This was not the first failure Dee had encountered in his efforts to secure St Cross; 'It is to be noted, that about twenty years agoe her Majestie had granted me the next roome after Doctor Watson:

\textsuperscript{72} ibid., p.12.

\textsuperscript{73} Dee had a good reason for asking for Gorges. He was the husband of Helena Snakenborg, who had been the third wife of the William Marquis of Northampton. It was the Marquis's second wife whom Dee had accompanied home from Antwerp, thus earning the gratitude of the family, which continued well beyond the second Marchioness's death.
whereupon I hoped to have had that living long since; but at length I found that Dr. Bennet came to it by an avowson, better speeding, than my former grant at her Majestie's hand; Mistris Blanche a Parry and Mistris Skydamore, now the Lady Skydamore, had obtained her Majesties grant to me so long since. The Queen was not prepared to ride roughshod over another's right, despite the efforts of Blanche Parry and Mary Shelton-Scudamore. The latter was also cited by Dee as a witness to his three day sojourn at Court during the appearance of the comet of 1577, and was present when the Queen 'promised unto me great security against any of her kingedome, that would, by reason of any my rare studies and philosophicall exercises, unduly seeke my overthrow'.

By Lent 1595 the renewed efforts of the Countess of Warwick met with success, and on Dee's behalf she 'did...thank her Majestie in my name and for me for her gift of the Wardenship of Manchester'. As Dee himself put it, however, 'for all that betwene a cold freend and a faint harted enemy, is small diuersity' he was lucky that the Dudley family was not his only means of access through the Privy Chamber to the Queen. His second wife Jane Fromonds had been in waiting on the then Gentlewoman Katherine Carey-Howard, and her widowed sister Katherine Fromonds-Bromfield was the Mother of the Maids from the late 1580s. In these circumstances it is not unexpected that the Queen could remember that Jane had 'some tymes served in court' twenty years before, when, after the report of Wolley and Gorges had been made to her, she 'presently sent for the Lord Admirall and his Lady [Katherine Carey-Howard]...and told them of the report...and willed the Lady Howard to write some letter of comfort unto my wife, and send

74. Crossley, Autobiographical tracts, p.16.
75. ibid., p.21.
76. Bailey, John Dee's diary. The warrant was signed on Good Friday (18 April), and the Countess passed on his thanks on 31 July, once the grant was irreversible.
77. LC2/4/4 fol.46. The fact that these women were sisters has gone unnoticed hitherto.
some friendly token besides.’ Lady Howard duly obeyed, and on 2 December 1592 Gorges delivered to Mortlake ‘the Lady Howard her letter to my wife, full of courtesie and kindnes, and in it a token of six old angells of gold’. Dee also maintained a friendly correspondence with Edward Earl of Oxford, while his daughter Elizabeth Vere Countess of Derby, who until her marriage in 1594 had been one of Katherine Fromonds-Bromfield’s charges, frequently visited Dee in Manchester.78

Another event recorded by Dee confirms that the queens’ women were not confined to duties within the Court precincts. Blanche Parry was sent to Mortlake in the early 1570s with the Queen’s ‘gracious offer…of any whatsoever ecclesiasticall dignity within her kingdome, being then or shortly becoming voyde and vacant, to make me owner: but my most humble…answer to her Majestie by the same messanger was that cura aninmarum annexa did terrifie me to deale with them’.79 That a Lady of the Bed Chamber should be sent to discuss such matters with Dee undermines the argument that the queens were reluctant to involve Privy Chamber staff in church affairs.

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With patronage of what one might term the ‘sciences’ one enters an area where it is easier to pinpoint interest by individual courtiers. Because of the potential for witchcraft prosecutions against those who pursued anything other than the strictly applied sciences - gunnery, cartography, hydrography, metallurgy - people like Dee were assiduous in keeping up

78. The Earl had corresponded with Dee in 1570 (Crossley, Autobiographical tracts, p.10); his daughter was a frequent visitor to Manchester in 1596-7, Bailey, John Dee’s diary.  
Court contacts wherever possible. The boundaries of what we may term science and magic were always blurred. Dee spent his whole life pursuing lucrative but elusive ecclesiastical posts, but one would be hard put to it to call him a conventional cleric, and although he did practise observational science he was also deeply involved in astrology and cabala. Richard Hakluyt is equally hard to pigeon-hole. He is famous for being the first true geographer in England, but he was also a gifted linguist who took Holy Orders in 1583 while he was still at Oxford, and shortly became the chaplain to the new resident ambassador to France and his wife Douglas Howard Lady Stafford. On his return to England in 1590 Hakluyt became rector of Wetheringsett, Suffolk, married, and thereafter had an unspectacular career in the Church. His relevance here is that Stafford's wife was none other than that Douglas Howard, the Queen's cousin, who had been first a Maid of Honour from 1558 and then an Extraordinary Lady of the Household. In the 1570s she was rival to the Queen for Leicester's attentions, if not his wife, but after her marriage in the 1580s to Sir Edward Stafford she kept in contact with the Court through her mother-in-law Dorothy Stafford Lady Stafford. The living which Hakluyt obtained in 1590 was in an Howard area of East Anglia, and the woman he married in 1591 was Anne Cavendish, whose sister Margaret was not only currently a Maid of Honour, but also the mistress of Robert Dudley, Douglas's bastard son by the Earl of Leicester. Hakluyt may have used Douglas's influence, or even that of her mother-in-law, to ensure that his return to England in 1590 was not too uncomfortable since the death of Walsingham had ended his position as a spy in Paris. His choice of wife confirms that he was no stranger to Douglas' circle thereafter.

80. LC2/4/3 fol.54r; B.L. Lansdowne MS 5 No.37 fol.119, MS 18 No.37 fol.73 and MS 29 No.68 fol.161; Beeching, Richard Hakluyt, pp.13-23.
81. ibid. p.21; Lee, The son of Leicester, iv.
Neither queen gave a particularly strong lead in the patronage of the sciences, nor did they display the enthusiasm of, for example, Sophia, wife of King Frederick II of Denmark, who maintained close ties with Tycho Brahe, and when widowed in 1588 retired to the country to study chemistry and astronomy while continuing to supervise the education of her younger children. Active support of men like Dee and Hakluyt was left to individual patrons, among whom one can number at least a few women. Apart from Douglas Howard-Stafford, there was Surrey’s ‘fair Geraldine’ Elizabeth Fitzgerald Lady Clinton, who was ‘immensely knowledgeable in naval affairs’, had met various cartographers including Ortelius, and took an interest in English map-makers up to her death in 1590. Mary Sidney, first a Maid of Honour and then an attendant, retained a life-long interest in what Aubrey called ‘chemistry’. It is just possible that she was taught by Dee when her brother Philip was studying with him at Mortlake, and after she married Henry Earl of Pembroke in 1577 she is said to have set up a laboratory at Wilton with Walter Ralegh’s half-brother Adrian Gilbert as her ‘laborator’. She was not the first woman in her family to show an interest; her mother Mary Dudley-Sidney had corresponded with Dee, and her grand-mother Jane Duchess of Northumberland had commissioned two major scientific treatises from Dee in 1553. Mary Sidney’s interest was not limited to Dee; she also patronised Samuel Daniel, who had been attached to the Staffords’ Paris embassy with his friend Richard Hakluyt in the 1580s, and on their return had been appointed the tutor of Lady Anne Clifford, the only surviving child of the Countess of Cumberland. Soon after he also took up the

82. _D.N.B._, Anne of Denmark.
85. Crossley, *Autobiographical tracts*, p.11; ‘The Philosophicall and Poeticall Originall occasions of the Configurations, and names of the heavenly Asterismes’ and ‘The true cause, and account (not vulgar) of Floods and Ebbs.’
position of tutor to the Herbert children. His literary skills and radical Protestantism cannot have been the only attractions, for in the 1590s he was also engaged in the composition of *Musophilus*, a philosophical discussion of man's ability to learn scientific truths from Nature in which he argued that science was just as valid a discipline as philosophy.  

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By my life, this is my lady's hand. These be her very c's, her u's, and her t's, and thus makes she her great P's. It is in contempt of question her... sweet roman hand.  

Mary Countess of Pembroke had been exceptionally well-educated under the direction of enlightened parents, but in general the education of aristocratic women in this period can at best be described as patchy, and variable in its aims as well as its successes. Although the queens, their Grey cousins, the Cooke sisters, the Sidneys and the Devereuxs were not alone in possessing intellectual ability, women received only the bare bones of an education - rudimentary literacy and a hefty dose of what today would be called home economics (needlework, stilling, preserving and food preparation), only occasionally fleshed out with something more academically demanding. It was generally felt to be important that a girl should be well equipped to fulfill her role as charming hostess and as the efficient manager of her husband's household, and the skills and social

graces which were needed could be easily passed from one generation to the
next by the women themselves. The basic education of girls could safely be
left to their mothers or female guardians; Claire Cross has established that
Katherine Pole Countess of Huntingdon, on her husband's death in June
1560, remained in charge of the education of her four unmarried daughters,
who left her care literate, although not overstuffed with learning.88 Although
Frances Newton Lady Cobham was known for her strong opinions on
children's education, exhorting her own 'that no day should pass without the
drawing of a line', hers was still essentially a limited view.89 Even in the
royal family this was the norm. Margaret Countess of Lennox had execrable
handwriting identical to her mother Margaret Tudor's, and their signatures
are virtually indistinguishable. As she never received tuition from her
mother's teachers (who had included Linacre, Grocyn and Colet but
obviously no caligrapher), it is safe to conclude that she was at least taught
her letters by her mother.90 In her turn the Countess taught her two sons to
write, and Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury taught their mutual
granddaughter Arbella Stuart.

When teaching their charges, women did not always limit their
endeavours to the three 'R's. Margaret Dakins Lady Hoby noted in the first
surviving entry of her diary on 10 August 1599, 'I went about the house, and
instructed Tomson wiffe in som principles of religion', no doubt emulating
her former mistress Katherine Countess of Huntingdon.91 She was an
exception, but there were some women who took their part in spreading
learning very seriously. Frances Sidney Countess of Sussex, the aunt of

89. H.M.C. Bath, IV p.150. Robert Tutt to the Earl of Hertford. 22 March 1581/2.
90. Buchanan, Margaret Tudor, p.11; I am indebted to Patrick Hotle who spotted the
similarity when by coincidence we called up letters by mother and daughter in the
Public Record Office on the same afternoon.
91. B.L. Egerton MS 2614 fol.1.
Mary Countess of Pembroke, founded a college in Cambridge, and Margaret Countess of Cumberland built a free grammar school in Craven, Yorkshire, although of course the benefits of both these establishments could only be enjoyed by men. 92 Most Privy Chamber women did not have the money necessary for such acts of charity, and had to make do with securing fellowships for their clients at the universities, as did the Chamberer Bridget Chaworth-Carr, who in 1591 procured a letter from the Queen ordering the Master and Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge to take one Watson as a fellow. 93

There was a very different problem to be overcome by a mother who was willing for her daughters to learn, but was herself illiterate. The sisters of Thomas and Henry Percy, Earls of Northumberland, used a sixteenth-century French copy book given to the family by James Earl of Bothwell in the 1550s. It is more than likely that their mother Eleanor Harbottle Lady Percy could not write, and this was why her acquaintance Bothwell gave them the book. 94

There is no doubt that there was a wide gulf between the actual education of girls and the ideals propounded by some of the educationalists of the period. Vives wished in vain that women would be educated as a matter of principle; ‘The woman, even as man, is a reasonable creature and hath a flexible wit both to good and evil, the which with use and counsel may be altered and turned...Shall the women, then, be excluded from the knowledge of all that is good, and the more ignorant she is, be counted better?’ 95 Although in the introduction to Margaret More-Roper’s 1524 translation of Erasmus's Precatio dominica in septem portiones distributa as

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92. SO3/1 fol.556v. 
93. SO3/1 fol.280. February 1590/1. 
A devout treatise upon the Pater noster, made first in latyn and turned in to englisshe by a yong gentylwoman Richard Hyrde made the first known defence in English of the education of women, which he addressed to Henry VIII's seven year-old niece Frances Brandon, there is no evidence that even she or her younger sister Eleanor received anything more than an elementary education.96 Vives was deeply concerned about the prejudices which led even important figures at Court to ignore the education of their daughters; 'truly if we would call the old world to remembrance, and rehearse their time, we shall find no learned woman that ever was ill: where I could bring forth an hundred good'.97 His favourite example, one which was to be harped on for the rest of the century, was that of 'untaintable Cornelia whom Princes of her time, and all men of good minds did honor ever since'.98 Thomas Becon gives the fullest account; 'Read we not, that a certain noble woman of Rome, called Cornelia, when a strange lady, which lodged in her house, shewed unto her her ornaments and jewels, yea, and those so precious and goodly as none could be found more precious nor more goodly, prolonged the talk with her until her children came home from school, and then brast out in these words, Et haec ornamenta mea sunt? That is in English: 'And these,' saith she, 'are my ornaments and jewels;' signifying by this her answer, that nothing is so precious and goodly a jewel to a discreet, wise, and sober matron, as children virtuously and learnedly brought up'.99 There is a slight difference between this, and versions where she is remembered as 'an example of all goodness and chastity, and taught her children her own self rather than send them to school, but in either case she had the edge over her would-be imitators in the sixteenth century

98. Harmer, Montaigne, ii p.2. Florio's dedicatory epistle to Elizabeth Talbot and and Mary Cecil.
99. Ayles, op. cit., p.5.
because she could speak fluent Latin, which, of course, was considered the only possible vehicle of serious education. This led to the paradox that, despite all the pious exhortations to mothers to follow Cornelia’s example, it was the practice that boys should be removed from their mothers, who could only speak English to them, and closeted in the Latin-speaking environment of a tutor or school, an avenue denied to most of their daughters, which in its turn perpetuated the system.

Some did take to heart the suggestion that ‘If tongue be a womans armes, why should you not arme you with the best choice thereof?’, but as women they did not have access to the wholly male preserves of school, college, and Inn of Court, let alone the Grand Tour. Two women at Elizabeth’s Court are known to have been educated in France, and were fluent in French. Normally girls were taught at home: one of the Sidney girls, probably Mary rather than Ambrozia, was brought up in the Cecil household for a while, whither her father sent, at Mildred Cooke-Cecil’s request, the highly recommended Johan Tassel to teach her French. It was even harder if a tutor was not available within the household. Books like Pierre Erondell’s The French garden: for English ladies and gentlewomen. Being an instruction for attayning the French tongue: thirteene dialogues in French and English. Also the historie of centurion in French verses, the first language textbook written specifically for English women, were rarities and were only in circulation at the end of Elizabeth’s reign.

There were women, for example, in Princess Elizabeth’s Privy Chamber who

100. Watson, Vives, p.50.
103. Harmer, Montaigne, p.3.
104. S.T.C. 10513. London, 1605. It was dedicated to Elizabeth Carey-Berkeley.
could speak no other language than English, but by the same token there were at least some who could speak Spanish.\textsuperscript{105}

At best an aristocratic girl, having been taught at home by women or possibly a tutor, would find a place at Court, preferably as one of the Maids. Here she might pick up some sort of scholarly accomplishment to supplement her earlier education, but as the main purpose was to find a husband there were considerable distractions, and not everyone was struck by the educational, or moral, value of the attributes thought necessary for success at Court: "nowadays they call her eloquent, that with long and vain confabulation, can entertain one, and what should a man think that she being unlearned, should talk with a young man little wiser than herself, but that, that is either foolish or filthy? And this they call the gentle entertainment of the court, that is to say, of the school, where they learn other like arts of their master the devil".\textsuperscript{106} There was a distinct feeling that girls who had been brought up at Court were lacking in certain respects. When Sir Thomas Holles married Katherine Payne, one of Katherine of Aragon's Maids of Honour, "it is to be thought that shee brought not over much good houswifry from thence".\textsuperscript{107} Erondell gives us a picture of two young aristocratic sisters, who, once their mother has scrutinised their 'worke' (embroidery rather than coarse sewing of course), run through the timetable of the day for her.

Our dauncing Maister commeth about nine a clocke: our singing Master and he that teacheth us to play on the virginalles at tenne: he that teacheth us on the Lute and the Violl de Gambo at foure a clocke in the after noone: and our French Master commeth commonly betweene seaven and eight a clocke in the morning.\textsuperscript{108}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{105} Rodriguez-Salgado and Adams, \textit{Feria's dispatch}, p.330. 10 November 1558.
\textsuperscript{106} Watson, \textit{Vives}, p.206.
\textsuperscript{107} Wood, \textit{Memorials of the Holles family}, p.30.
\textsuperscript{108} Byrne, \textit{The Elizabethan Home}, p.67.
\end{flushright}
Meanwhile their brothers labour at 'Grammer and the Latin tongue' under the direction of their tutor; the difference in expectation could not be clearer. It is interesting that two out of the four teachers mentioned were musicians. To the serious pedagogue music was only a frivolous diversion. John Aylmer was alarmed when Lady Jane Grey showed more than a passing interest, and begged his friend Henry Bullinger to 'prescribe to her the length of time she may properly devote to the study of music'.\textsuperscript{109} Anne Clifford, with her happy memories of the autumn of 1603 when 'I used to wear my Hair colour’d velvet every day & learned to sing & play on the Bass Viol of Jack Jenkins, my Aunts boy', probably represents more accurately the experience of scores of aristocratic children than Jane Grey's grimly classical education.\textsuperscript{110}

There were women at Court, apart from the queens, who had more sophisticated literary tastes and may have encouraged the young. Other than the famous ladies who at the end of the reign were part of an élite circle, there were those whose achievements are less well known; for example, Anne Cooke Lady Bacon whose translation of Jewel's 'Apologia' of 1564 earned her the accolade of 'best of all the sixteenth-century translators' from C.S.Lewis.\textsuperscript{111} Elizabeth Brooke Marchioness of Northampton, lacking Italian, pestered Thomas Hoby to 'translate into English the third booke of the Cowrtisan' for her, a book 'very necessary and profitable for yonge gentilmen and gentilwomen abiding in court, palace, or place', as the introduction to the published volume boasted, with some justification.\textsuperscript{112} Katherine Cavendish-Brooke, like her sister-in-law

\textsuperscript{110}. Clifford, \textit{The diaries of Lady Anne Clifford}, p.27. She was thirteen at the time, quite late to be taking up the viol.
\textsuperscript{112}. Powell, \textit{A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby}, p.78. He translated the third
Frances Newton-Cobham, had a reasonable collection of books, including one which her family frowned on when they noticed it was dedicated to Mary Queen of Scots.\textsuperscript{113} Emilia Bassano-Lanier, a Court musician and the mistress of a succession of senior courtiers in the 1590s, saw the errors of her dissolute life and wrote a most unusual but fluent religious poem \textit{Salve Deus Rex Iudaeorum}, redolent of a particularly muscular type of Protestantism which she must have absorbed in her formative years at Court in the care of her guardian Susan Bertie dowager Countess of Kent, the daughter of Katherine Duchess of Suffolk. Not all were quite so accomplished; Elizabeth Carey Lady Berkeley, one of Elizabeth's last attendants, who was the dedicatee of Erondelle's French textbook, translated some minor religious works herself and wrote a couple of plays and a history of Edward II which have all been described as 'juvenile'.\textsuperscript{114} However, it is tempting to think that in general the accession of two queens was of benefit to womens' education as a whole. One cannot imagine that either Mary or Elizabeth viewed female learning with the same prejudices as their successor: 'When a learned maid was presented to King James for an English rarity, because shee could speake and write pure Latine, Greek, and Hebrew, the King ask'd, -- "but can shee spin?"'\textsuperscript{115}

\textsuperscript{113} H.M.C. \textit{Salisbury}, II p.340. William Lord Cobham to Burghley. Cobham, 22 August 1580; She was one of Elizabeth Hardwick Countess of Shrewsbury's step-daughters.


\textsuperscript{115} Thoms, \textit{Anecdotes and Traditions}, p.125.
8. Conclusion

The novelty of the dominion of queens regnant was not only restricted to their exercise of power. Because most of the intimate needs of a queen could only be met by women, 1553 saw the advent of female attendants and female staff as the Privy Chamber, necessarily replacing the men who had held those positions under the Tudor kings. This change was significant because of the role the queen’s women played in addition to their official duties. In any period of history when personal rule was the norm one finds that there was always a limit to the number of those who could be a ‘meanes and continuall mediacione’ to a given ruler. Between 1553 and 1603 there were even fewer: Philip solicitiously avoided the royal consort’s traditional role as suitor; Elizabeth never married; for most of the period there was no royal family, neither dowagers, siblings nor children; when compared with the previous centuries the clerical power at Court was feeble. This vacuum was filled by those best able to do so. The importance of the male staff of the Tudor kings in national and local politics has been revealed by David Starkey and Dale Hoak. I have attempted to show that the female staff of the Tudor queens were just as powerful.

The women were well placed to take an active part in politics, since their duties necessitated their constant attendance on the queen. Between 1553 and 1603 some four hundred women attended the Court, but of this number only about one hundred were staff of the Privy Lodgings; the rest were attendants. Each woman was the queen’s personal choice, and all the women were drawn from those classes which traditionally were politically active. The staff carried out the domestic chores, which included dressing their mistress, assisting at her toilet, preparing food and drink and
performing the myriad of necessary but minor tasks, while a few trusted
women also had the keeping of the queen's jewelry and costly clothes. The
attendants officially had no such menial work, but provided the well-bred
companionship required at a renaissance Court. To the modern eye the
women led lives of unvarying tedium, for the official duties which fell to the
staff were mundane and repetitive. However life was enlivened on the one
hand by the constant fear of inadvertently incurring royal displeasure, and
on the other by proximity to the queen, which enabled both staff and
attendants to wield considerable influence. The queen's closest friends were
the most powerful, and were drawn from both staff and attendants: Mary's
friends included long-standing members of staff such as Susan Clarendieux,
Frideswide Knight-Strelly and Jane Dormer as well as senior attendants
such as Gertrude Marchioness of Exeter; Blanche Parry, Katherine Asteley,
Elizabeth Fitzgerald Countess of Lincoln and Frances Howard Countess of
Hertford I were as close to Elizabeth as Anne Russell Countess of Warwick
and the two marchionesses of Northampton. Power only came with the
queen's favour, and this favour did not depend solely on social status or the
level of the post held at Court. The only route to power was personal contact
with the sovereign.

Although they could not advise their mistresses formally, as did
members of the Council or Parliament, Privy Chamber women were able to
influence the queen informally with just as much success, and therefore
their patronage was keenly sought. Some of the women did take an active
part in high politics - especially in the complex manœuvreuring which
accompanied the marriage negotiations of both Mary and Elizabeth - but
most of the surviving evidence relates to their role as patrons of the
importunate of all sexes and classes, who looked to the women to procure
the sovereign's signature on grants of royal offices, crown lands, lucrative
monopolies and on advowsons of or presentations to benefices. It was not only awards which lay in the queen’s gift which were coveted, but those in the gift of other people or institutions. A letter from the queen in favour of a given suitor was extremely valuable, and such letters were frequently procured through the services of one of the queen’s women.

Even a fee-paying client rarely had an unlimited choice of patron, for ties of blood or political interest frequently reduced the number of options. Family considerations were also important when a patron was deciding whether to help a client; often a woman was her relatives’ most important contact at Court, and spent much of her time defending their interests against incursions by rival women furthering the ambitions of others. Women may also be found acting as free agents on their own behalf, not merely as the patrons of others, and some accrued considerable wealth in the form of land and annuities, as well as fees or bribes from clients. Nor was female education was wasted. Women like the Cookes, the Russells and the Willoughbys were at the forefront of religious life both at Court and, by their patronage, throughout the country. Naturally there were those who were less fervent, or even less Christian, and those whose interests lay in the new sciences. It is still clear, however, that many of the Privy Chamber women had no doubts about their competence or ability to play an active role in the Church of England’s affairs, both temporal and spiritual.

I cannot agree with the assertions that ‘Mary’s accession inevitably transformed the privy chamber, turning it from a centre of political power and intrigue into a glorified boudoir’, and that in 1558 Elizabeth’s ‘retreated into mere domesticity’.¹ Reports of the demise of the Privy Chamber and its influence are premature and have been greatly exaggerated, and represent a profound misunderstanding of the casual nature of so much of the Court

¹. Loades, Mary Tudor, pp.191-2; Wright, ‘A change in direction’, p.150.
organisation. Taken at face value the official duties of the women of the
Privy Chamber were wholly domestic, but their unofficial work on behalf of
complex networks of clients, and their function as gleaners of information,
were accepted by both Mary and Elizabeth, and have not been appreciated.
To describe the Privy Chamber after 1553 as a model of domestic tranquility
is inaccurate. Unfortunately, it is not yet possible to draw any conclusions
in an European context, for no similar research has been conducted into the
lives of such women at other great sixteenth-century Courts. The century
saw a remarkable number of women rulers, and several establishments are
ripe for such investigation: those of Mary of Guise in Scotland; of her
daughter Mary Queen of Scots in both France and in Scotland; of the
dowager Queen of France, Catherine de Medici; and Margaret of Parma and
the Infanta Isabella, the two Hapsburg princesses who ruled in the
Netherlands. When such studies have been made we may hope to
understand the relation, or lack of relation, between these foreign Courts
and the English Court.

* * * * * * * *

I remember in Queene Elizabeths days, my lady of Warwick, Mistresse
Blanch Parry and my lady Scudamore in little laye-matters would steale op-
portunity to serve some friends turns...because none of these [near and dear
ladies] durst intermeddle so far in matters of Commonwealthe.²

Rowland Vaughan penned his reminiscences after the accession of
James I, when the women of Anne of Denmark's Privy Chamber constituted
a power to be reckoned with, but had failed to come to terms with the
competition for suits and clients offered by their male counterparts. The

   S.T.C. 24603.
process seems to have been painful, and one of its affects was the rewriting of the recent past to fit current objections. Generation after generation of historians have fallen into the trap of taking Vaughan's statement at face value, and have not searched for the circumstances which prompted him to hold forth on the subject. This oft-quoted passage should be banished from the position it currently holds as the favoured means of summing-up of the history of the female Privy Chamber because it constitutes one of the greatest obstacles which lie in the way of a real understanding of the women who served Mary and Elizabeth.

The Privy Chamber staff did lead a stultifyingly boring life, with few moments of light relief in the form of high days, holidays and scandals. They did not sit in the Council or in Parliament, or fight wars, or run the administration of the country; yet they held the key to the greatest power in the land simply because they organised the queens' lives, and spent hours in their company every day. Not only did they hold the key, they used it in the pursuit of wealth, power and reputation for themselves, their close relatives and friends, and for any number of fee-paying clients. In taking a full and vigorous part in the daily political life of the country they show themselves to have been no different from their male forebears; in 1553 Mary and her servants had moved without any difficulty into both the actual living space in the palaces, and their proper place at the top of the country's political and social structures.

This was what was so extraordinary about the Marian and Elizabethan achievement; there was no revolution in the political life of the country. It seems very unexciting to say that it was 'business as usual' in the Tudor Privy Chamber between 1553 and 1603, but this is in fact a major departure from the received wisdom. Whether it was the revival of the separate King's and Queen's Sides in 1603, or whether it was the advent of
large numbers of Scottish courtiers, the atmosphere of the Court was so altered that Rowland Vaughan was impelled to write of the mythical, golden days of the old Elizabethan Privy Chamber when the queen's women did not aspire to power. All one can do is to point to the contemporary evidence which invariably shows just how wrong he was.
Appendix 1. Membership of the Privy Chamber

There is a great deal of confusion over the different categories in which the women were placed, which arises from the arbitrary way of accounting for them. The title of 'Maid of the Privy Chamber' is only used at Elizabeth's coronation, but at the same time these six unmarried girls were categorised as 'Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber' for accounting purposes.¹ It would seem that it was not a new idea to have unmarried girls at Court other than the Maids of Honour, for girls like Jane Dormer fit into the category exactly. For this reason I have occasionally referred to such single girls as Maids of the Privy Chamber to avoid confusing them with the married ladies and gentlewomen although they are not so called by the accountants.

There was no such position as Mistress of the Robes. Wright erroneously states that there was such an 'office of prominence', despite admitting that it is impossible to identify the occupants of such a post.² This error has been shared by other authors.³ The lack of such a post is confirmed by Lady Audrey Walsingham, who was made 'guardian and keeper of the robes' on 26 July 1603. The description of her duties makes it clear that they were identical to those of later, genuine Mistresses of the Robes; if the title had existed, surely 'Mistress of the Robes' would have been used in 1603?⁴

* * * * * * * * *

1. LC2/4/3 fol.53v; B.L.Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fol 191.
2. Wright, 'A change of direction', p.150.
3. For example, Loades, Tudor Court, p.56.
Main lists of Privy Chamber staff

Henry VIII

1540s: B.L. Cotton MS Vespasian C XIV No.108 fol.274

February 1546/7: LC2/2 fols.43v-45, 47v-49, 57v-58 and 59-60

29 September -

Mary

1 October 1553: SP11/1 No.15 fols.26-35

15 December 1553: LC5/49 fol.23

1554: Sh.R.O. Stafford Papers MS 33

26 August 1557: LC5/49 fol.103

14 December 1558: LC2/4/2

Elizabeth

17 November 1558: LC2/4/2

14 December 1558: SP12/1 No.32 fols.69-79

15 January 1558/9: LC2/4/3 fols.53v-54, 58v and 59v-63

1559: B.L. Lansdowne MS 3 No.88 fols.191-2

1574: B.L. Lansdowne MS 18 No.37 fols.73-74

1580: B.L Lansdowne MS 29 No.68 fol.161

1582: B.L. Lansdowne MS 34 No.30 fol. 76

1589: B.L. Lansdowne MS 59 No.22 fol.43

28 April 1603: LC2/2/4 fols.45-46 and 47
Periods of service of the Privy Chamber staff

The following lists are to assist the reader in finding who was at Court, when they were there and for how long. The lists are neither comprehensive nor conclusive and therefore should be used with caution. Three reigns are represented; those of Jane, Mary and Elizabeth. The women are listed alphabetically under their maiden names, but are not cross referenced under any of their married surnames or titles.

Months are given as roman numerals: hence 15 January 1558/9 is written as 15 i 1558/9.

The dates listed after each name indicate a specific time at which the woman was at Court, and by using the Date Key Reference the document from which the information was taken may be found.

Dates with a footnote number do not appear in the Date Key Reference as the document information is contained in the footnote.

All strings of dates divided by commas come under the reference of the last date in that string.

Italics indicate uncertainty.

GENERAL KEY

C Chamberer
Extra Extraordinary post
G Gentlewoman of the Privy Chamber
GoH Gentlewoman of the Household
L Lady of the Privy Chamber
LoB Lady of the Bed Chamber
LoH Lady of the Household
M Maid of the Privy Chamber
MoH Maid of Honour
MoM Mother of the Maids
m1, m2 etc. First marriage, second marriage etc.
u Unmarried (it is taken that all Maids of Honour were officially unmarried)
» Continues service into next reign
« Service continued from previous reign
## DATE REFERENCE KEY

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JANE

Ellen Jacob, 'gentill woman' 29 viii 1553 5
Elizabeth Tilney, 'gentywoman' or 'maiden' 12 ii 1553/5 6

MARY

Cecily Arundell MoH 1 i 1556/7
Elizabeth Babington 16 ix 1554, 14 xi 1554, 1555
... C 16 xii 1554 7; 26 viii 1557w
... G 23 xi 1557 8
... the elder 1 i 1556/7
... the younger 1 i 1556/7
Cecily Barnes 1 i 1556/7
Frances Baynham-(Lady) Jerningham 15 xii 1553w; 1 i 1556/7; 26 viii 1557w;
Joan Baynham 1555
... G 16 xii 1554 9
Mrs Bell Silkwoman 1 i 1556/7
Dorothy Bray-(Lady) Bridges 15 xii 1553w
Edye Brocas C 16 xii 1554 10
Dorothy Broughton 15 xii 1553w; 26 viii 1557w
... MoH 1 i 1556/7

5. Nichols, The chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, pp.25 and 56.
6. Nichols, The chronicle of Queen Jane and Queen Mary, pp.56 and 57.
Anne Browne-Tyrrell-(Lady) Petre 1557w
Eleanor Browne-(Lady) Kempe 1557w;
Mabel Browne 15 xii 1553w
Edith Brydyman C 26 viii 1557w
Avis Byllyard 1 i 1556/7
Mrs Caveley 1 i 1556/7
Susan Clarenceieux 15 xii 1553w; 16 xii 1554, 1555;
1 i 1556/7; 26 viii 1557w
Mrs Clyston 1 i 1556/7
Anne Cooke-(Lady) Bacon 15 xii 1553w; 1 i 1556/7
Margaret Cooke MoH 1 i 1556/7
Cecily Dabridgecourt-(Lady) Manxwell 15 xii 1553w; 1 i 1556/7
Mrs Danyell the elder 1 i 1556/7
Jane Dormer 1 i 1556/7; 26 viii 1557w
Bridget Foster 22 xii 1554, 1555
Mrs Frankwell 1 i 1556/7
Elizabeth Golbourne 15 xii 1553w; 20 iv 1554, 1554
Eleanor Gresley-(Lady) Strelley 26 viii 1557w;
Eleanor Hamond 15 xi 1554, 1555
Barbara Hawk 15 xii 1553w; 1 i 1556/7; 26 viii
1557w
Mrs Hemminges 1 i 1556/7
Mrs Holland 1 i 1556/7
Joan Houghton 21 i 1554/5, 1555
Mary Howard MoH 1 i 1556/7
Alice Huntercombe 30 ix 1553, 30 ix 1554, 30 xii

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<td>Frideswide Knight-Strelley</td>
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<td>1 i 1556/7</td>
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<td>Barbara ap Price</td>
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12. E351/1795 mm.6, 7, and 8.
15. E351/1795 m.23.
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<td>Jane Russell C</td>
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<td>Lady Jane Seymour MoH</td>
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<td>1 i 1556/7 «</td>
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<td>Mary Thomeo</td>
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<td>Anne Woodhouse-Shelton</td>
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20. E351/541 m.5d.
23. LC5/49 p.61 her livery delivered under a Great Wardrobe warrant dormant, also sealed on 9 June 1554.
25. E351/541 m.5d.
Mrs Zynzans 1 i 1556/7

ELIZABETH

Cordwell Anslow MoH 1597s; 1601s

Mrs Asteley 15 i 1558/9

Margaret Audley Duchess of Norfolk L 15 i 1558/9

Mrs Margaret Baptist Castilion 1 i 1567/8; 1 i 1577/8

Mrs Barley 1 i 1567/8; 1 i 1577/8

Katherine Blount-Champernon-(Lady) Berkeley LoH 15 i 1558/9

Lady Susan Bowes MoH 1576s; 1 i 1577/8

Dorothy Bradbelt-Abington C 3 i 1558/9 u; 15 i 1558/9 u; 28 x 1559 u; 1560 w u; 1560 u; 1561 u; 1562 u; 1563 u; 1564 u; 1565 u; 1566 u; 1567 s u; 1567 a u; 1567 b u; 1 i 1567/8; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 30 iii 1575; 1576; 1577 (for two quarters and 32 days)

Dorothy Brooke MoH 1567s; 1 i 1567/8

Elizabeth Brooke-(Lady)Wyatt-(Lady) Warner LoH 15 i 1558/9

Eleanor Brydges MoH 1576s; 1 i 1577/8

Lady Katherine Buckler Extra L 15 i 1558/9

Anne Carey MoH 1597s

26. She became a Lady of the Bed Chamber to Anne of Denmark.

27. LC2/4/3 fol.63.

28. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.

29. LC2/4/3 fol.54.

30. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.


33. LC2/4/3 fol.54.

34. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening. Wife of Sir Walter Buckler.
Katherine Carey-(Lady) Knollys LoB 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9 35; 1560; 1561; 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569 (only one quarter)

Katherine Carey-(Lady) Howard of Effingham Countess of Nottingham 3 i 1558/9 u; 15 i 1558/9 u 36; 1560 u; 1561 u; 1562 u; 1563 u; 1564 u; 1565 u; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1 i 1567/8; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574 (as Lady Howard hereafter); 1575; 1576; 1577; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598 (as Countess of Nottingham hereafter); 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (only two quarters)

... 'groome of the Stoole' 20 April 1598 37

Mary Cave-Weston GoH 15 i 1558/9 38

Anne Cavendish MoH 1588s

Elizabeth Lady Cawarden 15 i 1558/9 39

Katherine Champernon-Asteley LoB 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9 40; 1560; 1561; 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565 (only three quarters)

Bridget Chaworth-Carre 27 vi 1591 41

Lady Clarke Extra G 15 i 1558/9 42

Amy Clarke-Marvyn Extra G 15 i 1558/9 43

... 1 i 1567/8

Katherine Clinton-(Lady) Burgh 15 i 1558/9 44

Mrs Clyffe M 15 i 1558/9 45

35. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
36. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
38. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
39. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
40. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
41. E351/1954 fols.4, 5v,8, and 11.
42. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
43. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
44. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
45. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
Anne Cooke-(Lady) Bacon  
Mildred Cooke-(Lady) Cecil LoH  
Elizabeth de Counte  
8 ix 1560  

1580Tr; 1581Tr; 1582Tr; 1583Tr; 1584Tr; 1585Tr; 1586Tr; 1587Tr; 1588Tr; 1589Tr; 1590Tr; 1591Tr; 1592Tr; 1593Tr; 1594Tr; 1595Tr; 1596Tr; 1597Tr; 1598Tr; 1599Tr; 1600Tr; 1601Tr; 1602Tr; 1603  

Lucretia de Tadeschi alias de Counte  
22 vii 1563, 1563Tr; 1564Tr; 1565Tr; 1566Tra; 1566Trb; 1567Tr; 1568Tr; 1569Tr; 1571Tr; 1572Tr; 1573Tr; 1574Tr; 1575Tr; 1576Tr; 1578Tr (46 days)  

Lucretia de Counte  
1580Tr; 1581Tr; 1582Tr; 1583Tr; 1584Tr; 1585Tr; 1586Tr; 1587Tr; 1588Tr; 1589Tr; 1590Tr; 1591Tr; 1592Tr; 1593Tr; 1594Tr; 1595Tr; 1596Tr; 1597Tr; 1598Tr; 1599Tr; 1600Tr; 1601Tr; 1602Tr; 1603  

Mrs Croxson / Crokeson  
1 i 1577/8  

Mrs Curson GoH  
15 i 1558/9  

Mrs Dale  
1 i 1577/8  

Mrs Margaret Dane  
1 i 1567/8; 1 i 1577/8  

Lady Darcy LoH  
15 i 1558/9  

Mrs Digby  
1 i 1577/8  

Mary Dudley-(Lady) Sidney L  
15 i 1558/9  

Mrs Eglionby MoM  
1567s; 1 i 1567/8  

Anne Ferneley- (Lady) Gresham  
15 i 1558/9  

46. LC2/4/3 fol.63.  
47. LC2/4/3 fol.54.  
48. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128.  
49. For payments in James I's reign see E351/543 mm.109, 131, 152d, 172d, 188, 209d, 226, 246, and 259, for the years ending 30 ix 1604-12.  
50. For payments in James I's reign see E351/543 mm.109, 131, 152d, 172d, 188, 209d, 226, 246, and 259, for the years ending 30 ix 1604-12.  
51. LC2/4/3 fol.54.  
52. LC2/4/3 fol.54.  
53. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.  
54. LC2/4/3 fol.67v. She is included in the the warrant for her husband Thomas Gresham's scarlet.
Mary Fitton MoH 1597s

Elizabeth Fitzgerald -(Lady) Browne) -(Lady) Clinton L

Elizabeth Fitzgerald MoH 15 i 1558/9 55

Lady Fitzwilliams LoH 15 i 1558/9 56

Margaret Gamage-(Lady) Howard of Effingham L 15 i 1558/9 57; 6 xi 1558,

1560w;

Mrs Gray GoH 15 i 1558/9 58

Elizabeth Gray-(Lady) Audley L 15 i 1558/9 59

Lady Katherine Grey MoH 15 i 1558/9 60; 8 ix 1560 61

Lady Mary Grey MoH 1 i 1577/8

Mrs Harman 1 i 1577/8

Elizabeth Harington-Montague 1 i 1577/8

Jane Hawk-Brussels-Heneage 6 ii 1567/8 m1 hereafter, Tr

1568 (for two years and two quarters); 1569Tr; 1571Tr; 1572Tr; 1573Tr;

1574Tr; 1575Tr; 1576Tr; 27 vii 1577, 1577; 1578; 1 i 1577/8; 1578Tr; 1579;

1579Tr; 1580; 1580Tr; 1581; 1581Tr; 1588s; 1582a; 1582b; 1582Tr; 1583;

1583Tr; 1584; 1584Tr; 1585; 1585Tr; 1586; 1586Tr; 1587; 1587Tr; 1588;

1588Tr; 1589; 1589Tr; 1590; 1590Tr; 1591; 1591Tr; 1592; 1592Tr; 1593 m2;

1593Tr (m1); 1594 m2; 1594Tr (m1); 1595 m2; 1595Tr (m1); 1596 m2

hereafter; 1596Tr; 1597a

... C 31 x 1576 62;

Mrs Heneage Extra G 15 i 1558/9 63

... 1 i 1567/8

55. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
56. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
57. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
58. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
59. LC2/4/3 fol.63-v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening
60. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
61. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128.
62. LC5/49 p.188. Warrant dormant for livery.
63. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
Lady Heveningham LoH 15 i 1558/9 64
Ablgail Heveningham-(Lady) Digby 1 i 1567/8
... MoH 15 i 1558/9 65
Mary Hill-(Lady) Cheke Extra L 15 i 1558 66, 4 xii 1559, 1560w;
Joan Hilton Laundress 4 xii 1559 67
Douglas Howard MoH 15 i 1558/9 68
Elizabeth Howard 1 i 1577/8
Francis Howard-Seymour (Countess of Hertford) 28 xi 1568 u, 1569 u; 1570 u;
1571 u; 1572 u; 1573 u; 1574 u; 1575 u; 1576s u; 1576 u; 1577 u; 1 i
1577/8 u; 1578 u; 1579 u; 1580 u; 1581 u; 1582a u; 1582b u; 1583 u; 1584
u; 1585 u; 1586 u; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1595;
1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598
Lady Jane Howard MoH 15 i 1558/9 69
Katherine Howard MoH 1576s; 1 i 1577/8; 1588s; 26
vii 1591 70
Martha Howard MoH 1 i 1577/8
Mary Howard MoH 15 i 1558/9 71; 1567s; 1 i
1567/8
Mrs Huggins 1 i 1577/8
Mrs Huggins GoH 15 i 1558/9 72
Mrs Huggins of Hampton Court 1 i 1567/8
Mrs Huggins of Norfolk 1 i 1567/8
Mrs Hyde MoM 1576s; 1 i 1577/8

64. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
65. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
66. LC2/4/3 fols.56 and 27.
68. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
69. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
70. C66/1375 m.15. Annual pension of 100 marks.
71. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
72. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
Lucy Hyde 3 ix 1593, 1594 (two years);
1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

... C 3 ix 1593

Ipolita the Tartarian [alias Lynnet] 16 vi 1564; 1 i 1567/8
Margaret Isham-(Lady) Arnold LoH 15 i 1558/9
Mrs Jones MoM 1588s
Mrs Julio 1 i 1577/8

Anne Knollys-West (Lady Delaware) 1569Pr u [m.19 xi 1571]

... G 1 i 1577/8

Elizabeth Knollys-(Lady) Leighton 5 vi 1566 u, 1566 u; 1567 u; 1568 u; 1569 u; 1570 u; 1571 u; 1572 u; 1573 u; 1574 u; 1575 u; 1576s u; 1576 u; 1577 u; 1 i 1577/8 u; 1578 u; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

... M 15 i 1558/9 u

Lettice Knollys-Devereux (Vicountess Hereford) 3 i 1558/9 u; 1560;

Katherine Knyvet-(Lady) Paget-(Lady) Carey [m1 20 v 1567; m2 by ii 79/80]

... MoH 1567s

Anne Leche-Wingfield L 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9;
1560; 1561; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571

Katherine Lee-(Lady) Mountjoy L 15 i 1558/9

Katherine Lee MoH 1588s

Mrs Lichfield 1 i 1577/8

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74. LC5/49 p.149. Warrant dormant for livery. For a detailed list of the items to be delivered see ibid. p.339.
75. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
76. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
77. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
78. LC2/4/3 fol.63. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
79. Included in list, but deleted by later hand.
Dorothy Litcott-(Lady) Edmondes 1 i 1567/8; 5 xi 1570, 1571;
1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581;
1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592;
1593 (as Lady Edmondes hereafter); 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598;
1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

. . . Extra G 15 i 1558/9 80

Mrs Loo 1 i 1567/8

Margaret Mackwilliams MoH 1588s 81

Elizabeth Mansfield MoH 15 i 1558/9 82; 8 ix 1560 83

Elizabeth Marbury C 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9 84; 28 xi
1559 85; 1560; 1560w; 1561; 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1
i 1567/8; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571 (for one quarter); 17 i 1570/1, 1571Tr (for
three quarters); 1572Tr; 1573Tr; 1574Tr; 1575Tr; 1576Tr; 1 i 1577/8;
1578Tr; 1579Tr; 1580Tr; 1581Tr; 1582Tr; 1583Tr; 1584Tr; 1585Tr; 1586Tr;
1587Tr; 1588Tr; 1589Tr; 1590Tr; 1591Tr (two quarters only)

Elizabeth Markham-Harrington 3 i 1558/9 u; 1560 u; 1561 u;
1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572;
1573; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1578; 1579 (for three quarters)

. . . M (as Isabella) 15 i 1558/9 u 86

Mrs Morris MoM 15 i 1558/9 87

Elizabeth Neville-Haynes Extra G 15 i 1558/9 88

Mary Neville MoH 1601s;

Frances Newton-Brooke (Lady Cobham) C 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9 u 89; 28

80. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
81. Included in list, but deleted by later hand.
82. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
83. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128.
84. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
86. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
87. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
88. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
89. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
xi 1559 u 90; 1560; 1560w u; 1561; 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1574 (plus one quarter); 1575; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592

Nazareth Newton-Southwell-(Lady) Paget 27 ix 1564 u, 1565 u; 1566 m1; 1567a m1; 1567b m1; 1568 m1; 1569 (only two quarters) m1; 1570 (plus two quarters) m1; 1571 m1; 1572 m2; 1573 (only one quarter, m1 name) ... C 18 ix 1564 91;

Elizabeth Norwich -(Lady) Carew LoB 3 i 1558/9 u; 15 i 1558/9 92 u; 1560 u; 1561 u; 1562 u; 1563 u; 1564 u; 1565; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594 (three quarters only)

Mrs Nott 93 1 i 1577/8

Lady Palmer LoH 15 i 1558/9 94

Blanche Parry LoB 3 i 1558/9; 15 i 1558/9 95; 8 ix 1560 96; 1560; 1561; 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567s; 1567a; 1567b; 1 i 1567/8; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576s; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1590 (only two quarters)

Katherine Paston-(Lady) Newton 27 vii 1577 u, 1577 u; 1 i 1577/8 u; 1578 u; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593 (as Lady Newton hereafter); 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

92. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
93. Could this be Katherine Parr, wife of John Nott and daughter of Anne Bourchier Marchioness of Northampton, by either her husband the Marquis or by her lover, one Mr Hawkins?
94. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
95. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
96. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128.
Mrs Sybil Penne 'Kinge Edwards norice' 31 x 1576
Honora Pounde-(Lady) Radcliffe (if so later Countess of Sussex) LoH 15 i 1558/9
Mrs Quadrin Extra G 15 i 1558/9
Mary Radcliffe MoH 1567s; 1 i 1567/8; 1569Pr (two years and two quarters); 1576s; 1 i 1577/8
... not MoH vii 1587; 1588s; 1 xii 1589, 1590 (three years and one quarter); 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597s; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)
Margaret Radcliffe MoH 1597s;
Anne Reade -(Lady) Greville -(Lady) Fortescue -(Lady) Parry L 15 i 1558/9
Mrs Robinson 15 i 1558/9
Anne Russell MoH 1597s;
Anne St John-Dennys 15 i 1558/9
Elizabeth St Loe 3 i 1558/9; 1560; 1561; 20 vi 1562; 27 v 1563, 29 v 1566, 1569Pr;
... M 15 i 1558/9
Mrs Sackford 1 i 1577/8
Elizabeth Sandys-(Lady) Berkeley 12 vi 1560 u, 1561 u; 1562 u; 1563 u; 1564 u; 1565 u; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571;

97. LC5/49 p.188. Warrant dormant for livery.
98. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
99. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
100. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
101. B.L. RM 68
102. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
103. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
104. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
105. E351/541 m.38d.
106. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
107. It was reported as early as June 1562 that she was to marry Sir Morris Berkeley (H.M.C. Salisbury, I p.266).
1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585

... C 5 xi 1561
Agnes Seycolle-Edgerley-(Lady) Benger LoH 15 i 1558/9 m2
Lady Jane Seymour MoH « 15 i 1558/9
Amy Shelton 1 i 1567/8; 1 i 1577/8
Elizabeth Shelton 1 i 1567/8
Mary Shelton-(Lady) Scudamore 1 i 1570/1 u, 1571 u; 1572 u; 1573 u; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 16 vii 1579 112; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593 (as Lady Scudamore hereafter); 1594; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

... C 14 ii 1570/1
Bridget Skipwith-Cave 3 i 1558/9 u; 1560 u; 1561 u; 1562 u; 1563 u; 1564 u; 1565 u; 1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1 i 1567/8; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576; 1577; 1 i 1577/8; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587

... M 15 i 1558/9 u
Mrs Smallpage GoH 15 i 1558/9
Elizabeth Smithson Laundress 15 i 1558/9 116; 29 x 1560 117; 1
1 1567/8
Mrs Snowe Extra G 15 i 1558/9 118

... 1 i 1577/8
Elizabeth Southwell MoH 1601s;

109. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
110. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
111. Powell, A booke of the travaile and lief of Thomas Hoby, p.128.
112. E351/1954 fols.8 and 11.
114. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
115. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
116. LC2/4/3 fols. 56v and 27.
118. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
Dorothy Stafford-(Lady) Stafford 13 viii 1562, 1562; 1563; 1564; 1565; 1566; 1567s 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576s; 1576; 1577; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588s; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1597s; 1601s; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

Elizabeth Stafford-(Lady) Drury-Scot 18 xi 1568 u, 1569 u; 1570 u; 1571 u; 1572 u; 1573 u; 1574 (m1); 1575; 1576; 1577; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584; 1585; 1586; 1587; 1588; 1589; 1590; 1591; 1592; 1593; 1594; 1595; 1595 (m2 hereafter); 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599

... C

Jane Stanhope-Townsend 1 i 1577/8

Elizabeth Stumpe-(Lady) Knevet LoH 15 i 1558/9 120

Mrs Taylor 1 i 1577/8

... Laundress 1569Pr (two years to iii 1569)

Levina Teerlinc « 1 i 1567/8

Lady Throckmorton LoH 15 i 1558/9 121

Gresham Thynne M 1601s

Elizabeth Trentham MoH 1588s

Anne Twist Laundress 9 iv 1576122; 1 i 1577/8; 11 xii

1586 123

Margaret Vaughan-(Lady) Hawkins 10 viii 1589 u, 1589 (only three quarters) u; 1590 u; 1591 u; 1592 u; 1593 u; 1594 u; 1595; 1596; 1597a; 1597b; 1598; 1599; 1600; 1601; 1602; 1603 (three quarters only)

... C 1 iii 1588/9 124

... C of Bed Chamber 1597s; 1601s

120. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
121. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
Anne Vavasour

... C
Anne Verney-(Lady) Poyntz Extra L
Mrs Wayneham GoH
Margaret Wharton
Margery Williams-(Lady) Norris GoH
Dorothy Willoughby-(Lady) Hopton
Margaret Willoughby-(Lady) Arundell

... M
... L

10 June 1601 125; 6 v 1602 126

« 15 i 1558/9 127
15 i 1558/9 128
15 i 1558/9 129
15 i 1558/9 130
15 i 1558/9 u 131
24 iii 1563/4, 1564; 1565;
1566; 1567a; 1567b; 1568; 1569; 1570; 1571; 1572; 1573; 1574; 1575; 1576;
1577; 1578; 1579; 1580; 1581; 1582a; 1582b; 1583; 1584 (only three quarters)

Anne Windsor MoH
Elizabeth Wingfield MoM
Mrs Winter GoH
Barbara Wolf-Seymour Extra G
Mrs Ellen Wolf
Mrs Mary Yetsweirt ‘one of the quenes Majestes Women’

1567s; 1 i 1567/8
1 i 1567/8; 1 i 1577/8; 1597s
15 i 1558/9 132
15 i 1558/9 133
1 i 1567/8
15 i 1558/9 134

125. E451/1956 fols.6, 8v, 11, and 16.
127. LC2/4/3 fol.54. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
128. LC2/4/3 fol.63v.
129. LC2/4/3 fol.63v.
130. LC2/4/3 fol.63.
131. LC2/4/3 fol.53v. Livery for the coronation and the previous evening.
132. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
133. LC2/4/3 fol.54.
134. LC2/4/3 fol.63v.
THAPPOYNTEMENT of herbigage to be ordenary for all noble estates and other asfollowith aswell for Stablinge for their horses as for Lodginge & Beddes for their servantes appoynted by the Quenes Highnes in the first yere of her most noble Rayne.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folios</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Stablinge for</th>
<th>Beddes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>A DUCHES BEINGE widowe &amp; Lodgid in the court</td>
<td>xx horses</td>
<td>vij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>A DUCHES HER husband being in the Court</td>
<td>viij horses</td>
<td>ij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Marques wiffe her Husband beinge owt of the Court</td>
<td>xvij horse</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Marques wyffe her Husband beinge in the court</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>ij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Countess her husband beinge owt of the court or beinge Widowe</td>
<td>xilij horse</td>
<td>iiiij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Countesse her husband Beinge in the court</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Barrons Wyffe her husband Beinge owt of the Court or widowe</td>
<td>x horse</td>
<td>iij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Barrones her husband Beinge in the Court</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>ij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45v</td>
<td>A Knightes Wyffe her Husband Beinge in the Cort</td>
<td>iiij horse</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Knights wife her husband Beinge owt of the court</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>iij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gentlewemen beinge Lordes daughtlers their Husbands beinge in the cort</td>
<td>v horse</td>
<td>j</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Everyone of the Quenes gentlewemen Beinge lordes daughtlers &amp; widowes</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>iij</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The quenes Maydes amonges them all</td>
<td>vilj horse</td>
<td>iij</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 3. New Year's Gift Rolls

The year is given in the New Style, thus 1557 would have been 1556/7.

1557   B.L. RP 294/I
1559   John Rylands Library, Manchester, Rylands English 117
1563   C47/3/38
1564   Folger Z.d.12
1565   Folger Z.d.13 (incomplete)
1566   Corpus Christi College, Cambridge MS 105 (partial extract)
1567   B.L. Add. MS 9772
1568   Soc. Ant. MS 538
1575   Folger Z.d.14
1576   B.L. Add. MS 4827
1577   C47/3/39
1578   Soc. Ant. MS 537
1579   Folger Z.d.15
1581   Eton College MS 192
1584   B.L. Egerton MS 3052
1585   Folger Z.d.16
1588   B.L. Add. MS 8159
1589   B.L. Lansdowne Roll 17
1598   C47/3/40
1599   Folger Z.d.17
1600   B.L. RP 294/II
1603   C47/3/41

The location of three is presently unknown:

1594   J.G. Nichols sale, 1874, lot 2772
1596   Sotheby's sale, 2 June 1919, lot 201
1597   Sotheby's sale, 14 March 1967, lot 147
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  - Elizabeth SP12
  - Supplementary SP46
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  - Accounts various E101
  - Pipe Office, declared accounts E351
- **Lord Chamberlain’s Office**
  - Robes and special events LC2
  - Miscellanea LC5
- **Signet Office**
  - Docquet Book SO3

### British Library
- **Cotton MSS**
- **Arundel MSS**
- **Egerton MSS**
- **Lansdowne MSS**
- **Sloane MSS**
- **Stowe MSS**
- **RP**
- **Additional MSS**

### Bodleian Library
- **Ashmole MSS**

### Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington
- X.d.428
- Z.d.12-7

### Lambeth Palace Library
- Carew, Bacon Talbot and Shrewsbury papers

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