



8-2014

Inherited Masculinities?: Noble Fathers and Sons and Aspects of Masculinity in Early Modern England, 1530-1630

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I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Joshua Lane Durbin entitled "Inherited Masculinities?: Noble Fathers and Sons and Aspects of Masculinity in Early Modern England, 1530-1630." I have examined the final electronic copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.

Robert J. Bast, Major Professor

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Inherited Masculinities?: Noble Fathers and Sons and Aspects of Masculinity in Early Modern England, 1530-1630

**A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville**

**Joshua Lane Durbin
August 2014**

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to my wife Chris, and my family. Without their support and encouragement, this work would not have been possible. I must also dedicate this work to my loyal dog Ginger, who sat with me as I wrote this, from its very beginnings to the final page.

Acknowledgements

During the composition of this project, I have incurred many academic debts. I would especially like to thank Dr. Robert Bast, Dr. Jeri McIntosh, Dr. Lynn Sacco, Dr. Thomas Burman, and Dr. Heather Hirschfeld. I have also benefited greatly from the insights generously provided by Dr. Eric Carlson. I would also like to thank the faculty of the Department of History at the University of Tennessee for providing an intellectually stimulating environment in which to complete my doctorate.

Abstract

This study examines the political lives of the most powerful men in Elizabethan England. It explores how the careers of these politicians were influenced by the models of masculinity the courtiers followed. This study argues that there were “inherited” masculinities in early modern England that functioned as both paternal and cultural forms of inheritance. By looking at the two father-son pairs that most dominated Elizabethan politics, this study examines the generational differences in Elizabethan politics and the changes in court culture during Elizabeth’s long reign. Examining the two father-son pairs that strongly guided and helped define Elizabethan politics—William Cecil and his son Robert Cecil, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his (step) son, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex—this analysis shows how models of masculinity shaped the self-representation and political careers of the Virgin Queen’s most powerful courtiers. After explicating ideal versions of the husband, knight, and courtier in conduct and sermon literature, the study explores the distinct court cultures of the first and second Elizabethan generations. It situates each courtier’s career within the evolving context of Elizabethan politics and court culture. This dissertation reveals the ways in which aristocratic masculinity in Elizabethan England was shaped by the unique challenges of courtiers who served an unmarried queen who ruled in her own right.

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Introduction: Like Father, Like Son: Inherited Masculinities in Early Modern England

Land, estates, and titles were not the only things noblemen inherited in early modern England. The elite fathers of Elizabethan England bequeathed models of manhood, modes of political action, and styles of monarchical service. This study argues that there were “inherited” masculinities in early modern England that functioned as both paternal and cultural forms of inheritance. By looking at the two father-son pairs that most dominated Elizabethan politics, this study examines the generational differences in Elizabethan politics and the changes in court culture during Elizabeth’s long reign. Examining the two father-son pairs that strongly guided and helped define Elizabethan politics—William Cecil and his son Robert Cecil, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his (step) son, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex—this analysis shows how models of masculinity shaped the self-representation and political careers of the Virgin Queen’s most powerful courtiers. This study contributes to the growing body of work on the construction of late-Tudor and early-Stuart masculinities by exploring how perception of what constituted socially appropriate male gendered behavior—masculinity—was defined and enacted by Elizabethan fathers and sons. It considers what modes or representations of masculinity elite fathers drew on themselves and attempted to pass on to their sons. This examination of masculinities elucidates the ideal representations of masculinity (as reflected in sermonic, conduct and advice literature) as well as the actual enactment and performance of masculinities in the social and political lives of the men it examines. This gendered generational analysis reveals how models of humanist and chivalric masculinity shaped the political careers of strongest political leaders of each generation.

This project asks how each courtier's enactment of his masculinity shaped, or was shaped by, the particular demands of his career. Focusing on the connected, overlapping, but sometimes conflicting demands of civil and military service, it explores how the careers of each courtier and royal servant may be representative of the development of what David Loades termed a “service nobility,”¹ Natalie Mears has characterized as the rise of a civil aristocracy,² and Ronald Asch has portrayed as a shift in the model of aristocratic lordship more generally.³ Along with its examination of the evolution of the expression of elite masculinity, this study analyzes the associated articulation of aristocratic honor and reputation. Meanings of honor were so intimately tied to meanings of masculinity that the concepts are most fruitfully explored together, as they are throughout this study.

This study includes four chapters. After providing an overview of the historiography of early modern English masculinity in general, chapter one examines literature on masculinity and the expression of piety from the last years of Henry VIII’s reign through the reign of James I. It then analyzes major works on Henrician-Jacobean court cultures. After briefly explicating the most significant scholarship on the Cecils, Leicester, and Essex, this chapter concludes by examining historiographic representations of gender and dynastic/regime change in the period.

Chapter two elucidates the contours of the ideal father, ideal son, and ideal man in father-son advice literature, conduct literature more generally, and sermon literature. In the consideration of the influence of piety on the performance of masculinity, funeral sermons receive special attention. While Eric Carlson has convincingly demonstrated the usefulness of

¹ David Loades, *Henry VIII: Court, Church and Conflict* (Kew: The National Archives, 2007), 11.

² Natalie Mears, “*Regnum Cecilianum?*: A Cecilian Perspective of the Court,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64.

³ Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition 1550-1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London: Arnold, 2003), *passim*, esp. 78-79.

funeral sermons in revealing aspects of femininity and female piety,⁴ funerary addresses and posthumous tributes also offer an excellent point of entry into discussion of masculinity.

Observing what is acclaimed about the individuals being eulogized (and how that praise is gendered)⁵ reveals what was considered laudable, and what elements theoretically made up the “ideal” man or woman. This chapter considers how idealized masculinities provided a cultural frame of reference for the Elizabethan elite in general, and the aristocracy specifically. It considers how these models of masculinity shaped the gender paradigm that influenced the careers and representations of the Cecils, Leicester and Essex.

Chapter three examines the court culture of the first Elizabethan generation, as revealed in the careers of Burghley and Leicester. These two men were not only paragons of Elizabethan politics—they were also strong representatives of humanist and chivalric manhood. This chapter analyzes instances of actual civil and military service alongside examples of “imagined” service in literature and royal entertainments. When these instances of real and imagined service to the sovereign are held in tension with each other, they reveal alternate modes of the performance of masculinity in Elizabethan England.

Looking at Elizabeth’s reign from 1558-1588, chapter three explores the character of Elizabethan court culture in the first Elizabethan generation. During this period, the queen’s marriage was a real and ever-present possibility. Any marriage would have altered the Elizabethan political landscape profoundly, and this knowledge informed the political choices of courtiers who supported marriage to some suitors, but vehemently opposed others. The chance of the queen’s marriage also fostered a court culture—encouraged by Elizabeth herself—in

⁴ Eric Josef Carlson, “Funeral Sermons as Sources: The Example of Female Piety in Pre-1640 Sermons,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 32, no.4 (Winter, 2000): 567-597.

⁵ For an example of such gendered praise, see Richard Davies, *A Fvneral Sermon Preached [...] at the buriall of the Right Honovrable VValter Earle of Essex and Ewe, Earle Marshall of Ireland...* (London, 1577), esp. sig. E iii, r-v.

which the queen was “pursued” as a courtly love object by courtiers. For many courtiers, this courting motif had an element of self-conscious artificiality. For Robert Dudley, the lines between a courtly motif and a courtier’s personal/political ambitions blurred. As the only serious suitor who was also the sovereign’s subject, Dudley used the common trope of courting the queen for his own political and social advancement. This element of his self-presentations recurred throughout the 1560s and 1570s. In one of the most iconic examples of Elizabethan royal pageantry—the Kenilworth entertainments of 1575—Dudley presented himself both as a potential military leader and as a possible suitor.

Chapter three considers how this form of imagined monarchical service also served as an indirect performance of his of own masculinity. This is contrasted with his actual military service as leader of the queen’s forces in the Netherlands in 1586. These forms of real and imagined chivalric service are contrasted with the service of humanist bureaucrat William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley. Burghley became an indispensable bureaucrat and an administrative workhorse. In so doing, he gained an unmatched level of trust from his sovereign and accrued political power to match. As an erudite bureaucrat, Cecil performed his service to the sovereign—and his masculinity—quietly, with subtle self-presentation.⁶ But, as a careful treasurer and gifted politician, he became one of the queen’s most trusted advisors. The only royal servant who could match Burghley’s level of influence was Leicester. These men followed contrasting models of manhood, but Burghley and Leicester managed to maintain collegiality and cooperation despite occasionally having different political agendas. In the first Elizabethan

⁶ It is worth noting, however, that William Cecil and his son both devoted considerable time and resources to elaborate building projects. For examinations of the Cecil’s architectural endeavors, see Jill Hesselby and Paula Henderson, “Location, Location, Location!: Cecil House in the Strand,” *Architectural History* 45 (2002): 159-193; James M. Sutton, “The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds: Educating an Heir and Promoting a Dynasty,” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1999-2000): 33-64, and *Materializing Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House: The Cecils at Theobalds, 1564-1607*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), *passim*.

generation, the preservation of cooperation and political equilibrium contributed to a court in which these men and the models of manhood they followed had somewhat complementary roles in Elizabethan politics.

Chapter three concludes with an examination of the changes in Elizabethan court culture in the late 1580s. By then, England was involved in open war with Spain, and it was clear that the queen would probably not marry, and certainly not produce an heir to continue the Tudor dynasty. These political, military, and dynastic changes, coupled with the beginnings of a generational shift in leadership, brought a change in court culture and altered the way courtiers presented themselves to the queen and socially enacted their masculinity.

Though many of the queen's closest advisors had died by the beginning of the 1590s, government vacancies were only slowly filled as a generation of ambitious young courtiers maneuvered politically and hoped for advancement. Burghley spent the last decade of his life positioning his son Robert to succeed him as the queen's chief advisor. But, Burghley's quest to place his son in the coveted role he himself occupied was far from uncontested. Robert Devereux also hoped to succeed Burghley in that role. After the death of his stepfather, Essex did not have an advocate whose influence was comparable to Burghley's. Not surprisingly, William Cecil placed his full fatherly and political support firmly with his son Robert Cecil. However, Robert Devereux still managed to fashion himself into one of the most important military leaders—and chivalric courtiers—of his generation. Chapter four examines Essex's rise as a royal favorite, his dramatic fall—and his eventual execution as a rebel and a traitor.

This final chapter explores Devereux's use of epistolary self-fashioning for social and political advancement. Throughout most of his career, Essex presented himself as a chivalric courtier and steadfast royal servant. Devereux had a gift for showmanship at tournaments and in

royal entertainments, but the epistolary medium allowed him to flexibly—but vehemently—present himself as an embodiment of chivalric manhood. He drew on different elements of chivalric masculinity to alternately portray himself as a chivalrous soldier, a courtly lover to the queen, or whatever combinations of these components best fit his political and personal needs at a particular time. Devereux used this crafted epistolary self to maintain (or sometimes regain) the queen’s favor while he was away on several military campaigns. Although this helped the frequently absent courtier remain in the queen’s good graces most of the time, Devereux still did not triumph over Robert Cecil, who became his political rival in the late 1590s. Both men wanted the post of Secretary of State—and the informal place associated with it as Elizabeth’s chief advisor. It was Cecil who finally received this position in 1596, while Essex was leading an expedition to the Spanish city of Cadiz. Although this would be one of the greatest military victories of his career, Devereux had lost out on a position for which he had lobbied and labored.

In the late 1590s, Essex increasingly believed he was under factional attack by rivals at court led by Cecil. He resorted to epistolary self-defense with his *Apologie of the Earle of Essex*.⁷ This ostensibly private letter to Anthony Bacon was clearly meant for a larger potential audience. Part self-defense and part political manifesto, this bellicose informal tract encapsulated the idealized epistolary version of himself that Essex had crafted for years, and presented that image to a larger potential audience. It relied heavily on the chivalric tropes of self-sacrifice and service to sovereign, but it enlarged the scope of the needed sacrifice. In addition to the need for chivalric leaders like himself to venture life and fortune, Essex reminded his audience of the need for national sacrifice and austerity in service of the conflict with Spain.⁸ In this “letter” Essex utilized the tropes of chivalric manhood to present himself as knight in metaphorically

⁷ R. Devereux, *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex Against Those Which Falsly and Maliciously Taxe Him to be the Onely Hinderer of the Peace and Quiet of His Countrey*, (1598) (London, 1603).

⁸ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. E4r-v.

shining armor. This gave rhetorical force to his attempt to vindicate his bellicose political orientation and influence foreign policy. Despite the success of his rivals, Essex was still one of the leading military figures of his generation. In 1599, he was appointed as leader of an expedition to stop a rebellion in Ireland. After an unsuccessful campaign, an unauthorized truce with the rebel leader, and a return to court without the queen's permission, Essex quickly found himself politically isolated. Even in his isolation, his chivalric self-presentation remained. Though he shifted from a self-portrayal as a knightly hero to one of an honorable forlorn servant, his gendered epistolary self-presentation remained consistently chivalric and intensely dependent on royal favor for political success.

After it became clear that Essex was cut off from royal favor—and the political power that accompanied it—he and a small group of his diehard supporters staged an inept rebellion that was quickly put down. After Devereux' death in 1601, there was no clear successor to the chivalric mantle he had carried at the Elizabethan court. The factionalism that had dominated the 1590s dissipated in the last years of Elizabeth's reign largely because one of the factional leaders had been executed.

In the last years of Elizabeth's reign, Robert Cecil became one of the queen's most trusted advisors, just as his father had been. Through laborious service, royal proximity, and careful fiscal management, Cecil followed in his father's footsteps and became a humanist bureaucrat. This study concludes by briefly looking at the final years of Robert Cecil's life, years in which he became one of the most powerful and trusted advisors to James I. It also considers how Cecil's success fits into a larger trend toward a civilian aristocracy in the early modern period. In the last decade of his life, Robert Cecil had succeeded his father as one of the sovereign's most trusted advisors, first to Elizabeth, then to James. Though he did not inherit

titles from his father, he did inherit a model of humanist masculinity that shaped his self-presentation and guided his political career.

Chapter I: Historiography of Early Modern English Masculinity

I. Introduction

What did it mean to be a man in early modern England? This was a complex question, contingent upon social status, religious outlook, and occupation. Defining and proving manhood was important for laborers, yeomen, and merchants alike. But, for magnates who served monarchs as courtiers and knights, demonstration of masculinity was especially important. This study argues that the masculine identities, lives, and careers of Elizabethan and Jacobean courtiers were shaped by a complex mixture of inherited prescriptive ideals of masculinity, examples left by previous generations of courtiers, and the specific court cultures in which each courtier formed and enacted that identity. Analyzing the nature and nuances of that influential mixture is a central concern of this study. I contend that noble fathers bequeathed models of manhood. There were “inherited” masculinities in early-modern England. This work demonstrates how models of masculinity were both paternal and cultural inheritances. It contributes to the growing body of work on the construction of late-Tudor and early-Stuart masculinities by exploring how perception of what constituted socially appropriate male gendered behavior—masculinity—was defined and enacted by Elizabethan and early-Jacobean fathers and sons. It asks what modes or representations of masculinity elite fathers drew on themselves and attempted to pass on to their sons. This examination of masculinities elucidates idealized representations of masculinity (as reflected in sermonic, conduct and advice literature) as well as the actual enactments and performances of masculinities in the social and political lives of the men it examines. Offering a gendered analysis of elite fathers and sons, it examines

the transfer of power from one generation (and one regime) to the next. Looking at early modern English courtiers both as men and as fathers and sons, this study sheds new light on a subject that deserves more scholarly attention.

This opening chapter explores major contributions to the historiography of the topic. After an overview of the origins of the history of early modern English masculinity as a field, this chapter examines key articles and monographs and sketches the current state of the field. Following a sketch of the origins and evolution of the field of early modern masculinity in general, it examines key trends and contributions to the historiographies of the religio-political culture of early modern England and the aristocratic cultures of the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts. Finally, it concludes with an examination of the biographical scholarship of key figures in this study.

The political lives of two (step)father/son pairs are at the center of my analysis: William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley, his son Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his stepson Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. Drawing on Judith Butler's work demonstrating the performativity of gender, this work examines the careers of these men as gendered political careers in which each figure enacted or "performed" his masculinity. It probes the ways in which enactment of masculinity could be expressed in terms of political and personal service to a monarch and examines some of the ways in which courtiers' civil and military service could have been influenced by different aspects of early modern English masculinity.⁹

⁹ The theoretical grounding of this work can be found in the works of Judith Butler especially, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* (New York: Routledge, 1993); *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990); and "Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory," *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519-531.

This project reveals how each courtier's enactment of his masculinity shaped, and was shaped by, the particular demands of his career. Focusing on the connected, overlapping, but sometimes conflicting demands of civil and military service, it explores how the careers of each courtier and royal servant may be representative of the development of what David Loades termed a “service nobility”¹⁰ and what Natalie Mears has portrayed as the rise of a civil aristocracy.¹¹ Along with its examination of the evolution of the expression of elite masculinity, this study analyzes the associated articulation of aristocratic honor and reputation. Meanings of honor were so intimately tied to meanings of masculinity that the concepts are most fruitfully explored together, as they will be throughout this study.

II. Of Men and Manhood: Origins and Development of the Historiography of Masculinity

The meaning of social “manhood” was pondered at length by sixteenth and seventeenth-century polemicists, preachers, and politicians alike. But historical examination of the characteristics—and social importance—of manhood and the analysis of masculinity only began to receive the attention of scholars in earnest in the early 1990s. But the studies undertaken then—which have since spawned an entire scholarly subfield—were a product of the intersection of the scholarship on the early modern family, honor, and fashion with the gendered analysis of feminist historical criticism.

The topical foundations of the history of early modern English masculinity can most readily be seen in contributions to the historiography of honor and reputation influenced by

¹⁰ David Loades, *Henry VIII: Court, Church and Conflict* (Kew: The National Archives, 2007), 11.

¹¹ Natalie Mears, “*Regnum Cecilianum?*: A Cecilian Perspective of the Court,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64.

women's history studies of the late 1970s and early 1980s. One such contribution was David Underdown's path-breaking article on the perceived importance of maintaining social order by controlling female "scolds."¹² Underdown identified a fairly pronounced concern about the potential social disorder caused by domineering, shrewish, or uncontrollable wives, sometimes referred to in sixteenth-century parlance as "scolds." Underdown's analysis emphasized the potential for disruption of social order. According to Underdown, *charivari*, or the ritual of carting the accused through the village or town was common and served as a means of disciplining/punishing scolds. This emphasis on public display as a means of social control fit well within Underdown's emphasis on the concern for preservation of order. Within the context of his analysis, scolds were examined as perceived threats to social order and not to patriarchal authority *per se*. Nevertheless, scolding was often paired with charges of cuckolding and husband beating.¹³ This emphasis on cuckoldry and use of violence by women sexualized scolding and (implicitly) presented such women as emasculating. While challenges to patriarchal power were not fully explicated in Underdown's examination, works like this one facilitated later analyses that would prominently feature such issues.

Another essay in the same volume examined the relationship between honor, reputation and maintenance of social position. Contributed by Anthony Fletcher, who later became a strong voice in masculinity studies, this essay depicted the construction and maintenance of multifaceted honor and reputation as essential to personal advancement, standing within one's community, and the preservation of the hegemonic dominance of the gentry. Fletcher's treatment dealt predominantly with gentry honor and reputation. Aristocratic manhood and masculinity as

¹² D. E. Underdown, "The Taming of the Scold: The Enforcement of Patriarchal Authority in Early Modern England," in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, eds. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 116-136.

¹³ Underdown, 127-128, 130-131.

distinct from gentry honor were not extensively discussed. Nonetheless, this essay contributed to masculinity studies in two important ways: first, it examined the relationship between male social position and honor, and second, it helped bring an emphasis on crisis that would shape later masculinity studies. Like a great deal of work on the politics of the early modern English gentry and aristocracy, Fletcher's essay was influenced by the idea of an aristocracy in crisis, popularized by Lawrence Stone. In his tremendously influential work,¹⁴ originally published in 1965, Stone advanced the idea that a period of relative economic turmoil in late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth century England diminished the power of the gentry and lower aristocracy. In so doing, Stone helped inaugurate the use of a "crisis model" that would influence the historiography of early modern England, in some ways, for decades—including some early studies of masculinity. But, use of this model moved from specific instances of political and social problems and unrest to a more generalized model of an elite undergoing an overall social crisis. This appealed to some scholars because of the model's potential explanatory power. However, use of this analytical construct can unduly contribute to depiction of the aristocracy as a group without adequately considering the impact of social, financial, and political influences in the life of any given aristocrat.

The early work of Underdown and Fletcher emphasized the importance of honor and reputation in the establishment and maintenance of social position. However, neither considered the influence of gender at this early stage. Scholarship on honor and reputation (like these essays) would later contribute to scholarship on masculinity, but many of the earliest insights into early modern masculinity benefited from critiques generated by feminist scholarship and gender scholarship emerging in its own right. This emergence could be said to have begun (coincidentally) almost immediately after the volume containing these essays was released.

¹⁴ Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1965).

Joan Scott's 1986 article "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,"¹⁵ helped spark the creation of gender history as a distinct field. Scott's landmark article provided cogent articulation of the utility and intellectual possibilities of historical study of gender. Scott drew on an extensive body of theoretical and empirical scholarship from philosophy, psychology, anthropology and history to elucidate her definition of gender. Scott presents gender as both a constitutive, socially constructed way of defining identity and an important medium through which power relationships are negotiated. By demonstrating that examination of the gendered identities of historical actors can yield insight for an enormous variety of historical topics and times, Scott opened a new, and indeed quite useful, analytical category. This does not imply that excellent scholarship had not been generated in women's history; far from it. Scott built on a rich and diverse body of historical work. But she also made the vital point that examining women's history in isolation can limit and marginalize it. Gendered experience of men and women did not take place in a vacuum, and analyzing them as though they did only imposes artificial division and binary thinking. Scott's concise article was a groundbreaking piece of analytical scholarship which deserves much of the credit for the development of gender history as a distinct subfield. By forcefully demonstrating that gender was and is "a useful category of analysis," Scott's article helped *create* gender history, and—by extension—the history of masculinity.

But if gender was to function as a primary category in scholarly analyses, what exactly "gender" meant, needed explanation. In early modern Europe, the link between biological sex and social gender was largely unquestioned. Predominant assumptions of the early modern gender paradigm fundamentally linked the sexed male or female body with the social perception

¹⁵ See Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, no. 5 (December 1986): 1053-1075.

of masculinity and femininity. For most early modern thinkers, the association between the sexed body and the gendered social status was axiomatically assumed. The strength of the linkages between men and manhood, and women and womanhood helped give gender transgressions cultural importance. Accusations of effeminacy in men, for example, were socially problematic precisely because the prevailing gender ideology fundamentally linked male sexed bodies with social manhood. These essentialist assumptions often held sway among many social groups in the early modern period, but those same assumptions were often made by scholars well into the twentieth century. As gender scholarship began to emerge as a distinct field of study, many scholars questioned such definitions of gender, and many have provided compelling alternatives to essentialist frameworks. For over two decades, Judith Butler has led the way in defining, demonstrating, and explicating the performativity of gender. In a brief 1988 article which encapsulates many of her core arguments about performativity, and anticipates the refinement of those ideas in more recent works, Butler argues that gender is not equivalent to biological sex and is not an external expression or manifestation of any internal intrinsic characteristic(s). Instead, it is constitutive and performative. Moreover, Butler contends that gender is enacted, performed, or done based on a socially constructed script of what is appropriate for each gendered body. She advocates examining gender constitution and construction from a phenomenological perspective due to the performative nature of gender.¹⁶ If gender is not something essential, intrinsic, or “natural,” several questions emerge. The first and most basic (and also one of the most difficult to answer) is: what is “gender”? Is it ontologically “real”? And finally, how is it related to the body?

¹⁶ See Judith Butler, “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory,” *Theatre Journal* 40, no. 4 (December 1988): 519-531.

Although an academically satisfying answer to the question “what is gender?” could take several volumes to answer (Butler herself has devoted most of her scholarly career to answering and re-answering the question), a summation is feasible. Once biological sex (and the concomitant sexual differentiation of bodies) is disentangled from gender, the centrality of enactment and performance in the formation of gendered identity becomes clear. If one accepts the premise that biological, bodily “sex” is not inexorably/irrevocably tied to gender, a biologically essentialist definition of gender becomes untenable. Formation and maintenance of masculinity, femininity, and gender identity is grounded in acts and in praxis. Gender is not unalterably something one *is*. It is something one *does*. Furthermore, Butler argues that “[the gendered body] has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality.”¹⁷ Butler convincingly argues that the “ontological status”—the ‘reality’ of the gendered body, is fundamentally (and phenomenologically) tied to bodily acts and every day performances. In more recent work, Butler has also considered the tension between self and other as related to the social character of gender performance. In *Undoing Gender*, Butler writes: “[gender] is a practice of improvisation within a scene of constraint. Moreover, one does not ‘do’ one’s gender alone. One is always ‘doing’ with or for another, even if the other is imaginary.”¹⁸ Further, she considers the role of desire in gender constitution.¹⁹

The work of Scott and Butler launched a wide range of historical analyses of gender and masculinity. Not surprisingly, some of the earliest work on masculinity was heavily influenced

¹⁷ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 185.

¹⁸ Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1.

¹⁹ Butler, *Undoing Gender*, 2-3 and passim. As some of her previous work has provided cogent philosophical grounding and a useful theoretical framework for many historical studies, her considerations of desire and its influence on the constitution of gender may open new possibilities for analyses of desire in historical studies of gender. If so, this could be of great benefit, as sustained historical analyses of the role of emotion, desire and volition are not strongly present in early modern masculinity studies, as will be discussed later. One notable exception is the literary study by Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Aldershot, Hampshire, England, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2008). However, this excellent literary analysis does not fill the need for an historical examination.

by work on honor/reputation, and came from important scholars in those fields, like Anthony Fletcher. In “Men’s Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England 1560-1660,”²⁰ Fletcher depicted early modern masculinity as anxious masculinity wherein men felt the need to assert patriarchal authority to preserve social status and reputation. Masculinity had to be negotiated and reinforced in an early modern society which feared unruly women, cuckoldry, etc. Drawing on “prescriptive literature, satirical literature, community action and some relevant legislation and its enforcement”²¹ Fletcher showed a perceived social need to re-affirm and re-assert patriarchy within an historical context of early modern England with its shifting epistemological and medical ideas. The emphasis on honor remains present as in Fletcher’s early work, but relationships between patriarchy, privilege and power were considered here, and a greater consideration of masculinity was present. In the mid-1990s, Fletcher emerged as a leading voice in masculinity, with his summation and synthesis of early work in the field in *Gender Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800*.²² The historiographic thread emphasizing honor and reputation in masculinity studies, which Fletcher helped establish, continues to influence the field. Two of the most important examples of gender studies analyzing honor and masculinity were contributed by Cynthia Herrup. In her article and subsequent monograph on the second Earl of Castlehaven and his trial pertaining to assisting in the rape of his wife and participating in sodomy with his servants, Herrup explores the crimes—for which the Earl was executed—as both personal and social transgressions.²³ Drawing principally on legal sources, Herrup found

²⁰ Anthony Fletcher, “Men’s Dilemma: The Future of Patriarchy in England 1560-1660,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 4 (1994): 61-81.

²¹ Fletcher, “Men’s Dilemma,” 73.

²² Anthony Fletcher, *Gender Sex and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995). Despite some flaws, Fletcher offered one of the earliest attempts at a synthesis of the then emerging field of masculinity studies.

²³ Cynthia Herrup, “‘To Pluck Bright Honour from the Pale-Faced Moon’: Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 137-159; *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

that the Castlehaven case was a fascinating instance through which scholars could observe the separate strands that make up the tapestry of honor. This article was, in part a response to Mervyn James's "English Politics and the Concept of Honour 1485-1642."²⁴ James (as read by Herrup) saw two distinct concepts of honor. According to Herrup, James argued "that early modern England experienced a transition between two distinct aristocratic views of honour—a traditional version defined by lineage, competitiveness and a propensity for violence... and a second strain more meritocratic, moralistic and pacific than the first. The older view, James argued, valued autonomy and style over outcome; the newer notion replaced independence with obedience and fortuna with Christian providence."²⁵

While the trial and the associated scandal might have caused a social scandal, for the Earl, even before his conviction, the crimes undermined his social status, his honor, and his masculinity. Castlehaven had transgressed as a husband, head-of-household, and a nobleman. This three-fold betrayal of his responsibilities revealed the social consequences of both his intimate crimes, and his abject failure as patriarch.²⁶ Herrup's article and monograph made several important contributions. Herrup provided an adept analysis of the influence of gender in the presentation and consequences of the case. Moreover, she considered the interaction of the

²⁴ Mervyn James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honor* (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978).

²⁵ Herrup, "To Pluck Bright Honour...", 137; For Herrup, the Castlehaven case illustrated some of the problematic complexities of the intersections between concepts of honor and gender. According to Herrup, the multifaceted early modern conception of honor gave the Earl a platform on which to try to defend his name and honor and (unsuccessfully) attempt to rebuild and reclaim his reputation. For the countess, however, things were more complicated. The countess had to rely on defense by others, defense by proxy, since to appear in such a public forum would have undermined her feminine honor—e.g., to discuss the lurid details of the allegations would itself have called her chastity into question. While the early modern constructs of honor may have allowed the earl some room for defense, simply being involved in the matter harmed her reputation (and thereby her honor) even after the case was resolved. The countess largely disappeared from the historical record after the trial, though it is known that she spent the remainder of her life quietly in relative seclusion. Though she was the victim of several of the crimes, her reputation suffered almost as much as her husband's. In Herrup's reading, the countess was caught in a kind of double-bind—to defend herself publicly would have exposed her to even more ridicule and denouncement than she suffered. Her precarious position, as one doubly victimized—first by the crimes, then by the scandal's aftermath—damaged her reputation and her social and economic standing. See: Herrup, "To Pluck Bright Honour...", 137-159; *A House in Gross Disorder*, 111-113.

²⁶ Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder*, 63-98, and passim.

law, reputation, gender and social status throughout the monograph. She skillfully integrated analysis of gender into her consideration of the players in the Castlehaven scandal. Herrup nevertheless continued a thread of honor-historiography influenced by a preoccupation with order, disorder, and crisis.

Given the close relationship between the scholarly literature of social order, patriarchy, and gender, it is not surprising that much of the early work on gender was produced by scholars who had earlier explored the dynamics of early modern social order. In 1988, Susan Dwyer Amussen's influential monograph demonstrated the importance of the family and household as an essential socioeconomic unit which also served as the locus for dissemination of social norms and ideology. In Amussen's analysis, the ideological tenets which defined a well-ordered family and society provided a template for socio-political order on a larger scale. In early modern England, in both social ideals and in everyday behavior, a well-ordered family was considered the basis of "an ordered society," as the title of her monograph suggests.²⁷

In 1995, the same year as the publication of Fletcher's early synthesis of the field of gender history in early modern England, Amussen offered a foray into the analysis of social order and masculinity. In "'The Part of the Christian Man': The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England,"²⁸ Amussen argued for a comparatively sudden change in the articulation of masculinity from ca. 1560-1640. She contrasts a traditional and "reformed" version of masculinity.²⁹ Both emphasize demonstration of honor and preservation of social position. However, for Amussen, the traditional mode of masculinity was more likely to

²⁷ Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), passim.

²⁸ Susan Dwyer Amussen, "'The Part of the Christian Man': The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England," in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 213-233.

²⁹ Amussen, "Part of a Christian Man," 227.

emphasize martial prowess, and correspondingly, was more likely to encourage recourse to violence. Amussen couches the decline of this emphasis on violence as part of Norbert Elias's "civilizing process."³⁰ The increased recourse to law, print, and other mediums of defending one's honor and manhood is something that would be available to individuals higher in the social hierarchy. According to Amussen, those of a lower social status would be more likely to resort to traditional means of articulating manhood.

Amussen implicitly drew on a crisis model and presented early modern English men as apprehensive and confused. In her view, the ideals presented by conduct treatises did not align with the behavior of actual men. Amussen claimed that "few men, apparently, knew how to be men. The negotiation of competing, complimentary, contradictory and sometimes novel concepts of manhood was an important source of social tension in early modern England."³¹ Reinforcing the historiographic connection between social order and masculinity, Amussen emphasized the relationship between men's roles as household heads, reputation, social position, and manhood. By emphasizing the multivalent, class-dependent, and often contradictory models of masculinity in early modern England, Amussen's essay anticipated many themes that still dominate current monographs on manhood. Nevertheless, it drew on a crisis model that was overemphasized in early masculinity studies. Although this emphasis on crisis has been challenged or outright rejected in more recent work (to be discussed shortly), it dominated the early years of masculinity scholarship.

In much the same way Anthony Fletcher posited a crisis (or dilemma) in early modern patriarchy, Mark Breitenberg argued in an article and subsequent monograph that early modern

³⁰ Amussen, "Part of a Christian Man," 214. For the original analysis of "the civilizing process," see the landmark work, originally initially published in German in 1939 by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Revised Edition, trans. Edmund Jephcott, eds. Eric Dunning, et al., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

³¹ Amussen, "Part of a Christian Man," 214.

masculinity was riddled with apprehension, or was essentially “anxious.” In a 1993 article,³² Breitenberg argued that sexual jealousy in the Renaissance was both a constituent part and a reflection of patriarchy or phallogentrism. Drawing on dramatic literature (especially Shakespeare), conduct literature, and *querelles des femmes* literature, Breitenberg concluded that Renaissance men and the model of masculinity they followed were often entrenched in “a specular and interpretive economy that situates men in the position of ‘reading’ and interpreting women as ‘texts’ and... an agitated masculine subjectivity is in part engendered by those discourses that reproduce such forms of ‘knowledge.’”³³ Men felt compelled to “know” and in some cases control female behavior/sexuality due in part to widespread fear of cuckoldry. But, these attempts to control behavior and sexuality were sometimes perceived as attempts to know the unknowable and control the uncontrollable. As such, this may have served to fuel sexual jealousy and anxious masculinity. This article provided the central argument of the subsequent (1996) monograph—that anxiety was an essential, even constitutive, part of early modern English masculinity.³⁴ Moreover, the article provided the nucleus of the monograph’s concluding chapter. Breitenberg’s discussion of men’s placement in a “specular economy” became a concluding discussion of “ocular proof: sexual jealousy and the anxiety of interpretation.”³⁵ Though he drew on a much more extensive (mostly literary) source base, Breitenberg advanced a largely unmodified argument which presented early modern men as anxiety-ridden, fretful creatures struggling to exert and maintain patriarchal authority. Aside from proposing the central thesis, possibly the most noteworthy historiographic contribution of

³² Mark Breitenberg, “Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England,” *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 377-398.

³³ Breitenberg, “Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy...,” 395.

³⁴ Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1 and passim.

³⁵ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, 175.

Breitenberg's book (as opposed to his article) is his inclusion of masculine erotic desire³⁶ and the social impact of transvestism (on and off stage) into his analysis of masculinity.³⁷ Although several historical treatments of early modern dramatic and everyday transvestism had been written by the time of Breitenberg's publication,³⁸ he was one of the earliest to include that aspect of early modern culture in an analysis of masculinity.

Drawing on the crisis model of masculinity, and following in the footsteps of her dissertation advisor Anthony Fletcher, Elizabeth A. Foyster claimed that preoccupation with male honor, particularly the definition, articulation and protection of male sexual honor and family honor was a preoccupation which cut across class lines.³⁹ For Foyster, while proving manhood through sexual experience before marriage (or at least appearing to do so with one's friends and age cohort), was often accepted for men, a pronounced double standard existed. Women were expected to avoid premarital sex. Being unchaste, or the perception that they were unchaste, could adversely affect their reputation and that of their husbands.⁴⁰

Foyster emphasized that early modern English conduct literature and satire indicates that men may have had a pronounced fear of the power of female gossip to influence their sexual reputation and general honor.⁴¹ In its emphases on the potential social damage of gossip and the perceived need to control unruly women, Foyster's monograph, echoes Underdown's "Taming

³⁶ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, 124-151 and passim.

³⁷ Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity*, 151-174.

³⁸ By 1996, representative examples included: David Cressy, "Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England," *The Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 4 (October 1986): 438-465; Ursula K. Heise, "Transvestism and the Stage Controversy in Spain and England, 1580-1680," *Theatre Journal* 44, no. 3 (October 1992): 357-374; and Jean E. Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 418-440.

³⁹ Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour Sex and Marriage* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), 22, 33-34.

⁴⁰ Foyster, 28-54.

⁴¹ Foyster, 58-65.

of the Scold.” Foyster, who even entitled a chapter sub-section “Taming the Scold”⁴² clearly shows the indebtedness of her work to that of Underdown (and of course Fletcher).

Foyster maintains that in the early modern period (especially the seventeenth century, which is her main chronological focus of analysis), fear of cuckoldry was implicitly fear of sexual dishonor brought on by the assumption that the public would presume impotence or other sexual inadequacy of the male, thereby undermining his manhood and reputation. Foyster’s emphasis on sexuality and sexual behavior served as one of the stronger elements of her monograph. Moreover, such analysis and the actual inclusion of male sexual behavior in analyses of masculinity received little attention in some early masculinity scholarship. Her analysis of the impact of social manhood by numerous means was an essential contribution.⁴³

But, even if one could control one’s household and manage one’s marriage properly, elite early modern Englishmen still had to physically present themselves well. Clothing proved an essential way of demonstrating social position and masculinity, as David Kuchta demonstrates in *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850*. Kuchta’s work draws from previous scholarship on sartorial norms, effeminacy, and early modern patriarchy to offer an examination of the evolution of sartorial representations of masculinity over three centuries. In the Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods, which Kuchta refers to as “the old sartorial regime,”⁴⁴ he sees a constructed masculinity which encouraged sartorial representation of one’s station. Sartorial splendor was accepted and desirable for nobles but sartorial garb was expected to be an accurate representation of one’s social status. Magnificence and sartorial splendor was acceptable and desirable for nobles because it was to represent social splendor and rank. During

⁴² Foyster, 193-195.

⁴³ Foyster, 67-72

⁴⁴ David Kuchta, *The Three-Piece Suit and Modern Masculinity: England, 1550-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 17.

the Elizabethan period, sumptuary laws were enacted and emphasized so that an accurate semiotic relationship between signifier and signified could be maintained. During the mid-late Jacobean period and up to the Civil War, perceived excessive crown expenditure and the associated criticism was often framed in terms of sartorial excess, foppery and effeminacy.⁴⁵ The “great masculine renunciation” began in the reign of Charles II and continued as a theme throughout the period under consideration (up to 1850).⁴⁶ Kuchta located a “fashion crisis” in the seventeenth-century, fueled in part by the sociopolitical upheaval in the country during that turbulent century. That fashion crisis was only resolved in the latter part of the seventeenth-century with the development of the antecedent of the modern three-piece suit under Charles II.⁴⁷

With the monarchy and relative calm restored in England, this crisis in fashion was finally resolved. Did this “seventeenth-fashion crisis”⁴⁸ signify a corresponding crisis of masculinity? Charges of effeminacy were launched by people across the political spectrum at their political opponents. The effectiveness of this charge as a political criticism may indicate a persistent fear of the social and political consequences of having one's masculinity challenged. Perhaps a crisis in fashion was a crisis of how to appropriately represent masculinity. If this is the case, perhaps the fall of the “old sartorial regime” and the semiotic realignment associated with it reflected an even greater anxiety about the enactment and performance of gender than the controversies surrounding transvestism. While Kuchta was certainly influenced by a crisis model of masculinity, a “fashion crisis” need not necessarily indicate a gender crisis.

Various types of “crisis” were often evoked in early masculinity scholarship. However, it may be more productive, and may yield much more nuanced insights into the study of

⁴⁵ Kuchta, 17-76.

⁴⁶ Kuchta, 15 and *passim*.

⁴⁷ Kuchta, 51-76.

⁴⁸ Kuchta, 51.

masculinity to consider how a perceived need to affirm and re-affirm one's masculinity was related to the performativity of that masculinity in the early modern period. In early modern England, there was a perceived need to continually (re)affirm one's masculinity for men on several levels of the social hierarchy. From artisans to aristocrats, men in Elizabethan and Jacobean England had to demonstrate social manhood by performing their gender in accepted ways for people of their station.⁴⁹ What constituted acceptable masculinity varied both according to one's social status and according to what social group evaluated the acceptability of a gender performance. For instance, members of one's own social cohort could have dramatically different criteria by which to judge acceptable manhood compared to people of drastically different social rank.⁵⁰

The affirmation and re-affirmation of masculinity could take many forms, but tangible representations of masculinity were essential for man in many social strata. Will Fisher has offered some innovative analysis of tangible markers of masculinity in recent years. Looking at bodily characteristics (beards, and head hair) seemingly secondary to gender and common pieces of clothing and ephemera (codpieces and handkerchiefs), Fisher advances a powerful thesis about "prosthetic masculinity." Fisher argues that beards were emblematic of masculinity in the Renaissance period—men were separated from women, boys and eunuchs, in part by beards. Boys and eunuchs were, in many cases, seen as a different gender than adult, reproductively capable men. Beards were often culturally symbolic of this gender identity. In fact, beards helped give material representation to a malleable and somewhat adaptive Renaissance

⁴⁹ Chapters three and four consider the political ramifications of humanist and chivalric masculinity and gender performance for the four most powerful courtiers of Elizabeth's reign.

⁵⁰ For discussion of idealized models of masculinity, see chapter two. The models of masculinity discussed in conduct treatises and sermon literature was often aimed at elite audiences. Nevertheless, oppositional modes of masculinity existed in early modern Europe. For discussion of the literature on early modern European masculinities across geographic and confessional lines, as well as examination of the literature on oppositional masculinities, see especially chapter 2, section I.

masculinity. As Fisher argued, beards helped “materialize” an often “prosthetic” Renaissance masculinity.⁵¹

Incorporating this analysis (and an exploration of the relationship between gender and head-hair) in a subsequent monograph, Fisher also analyzed apparently banal objects like codpieces and handkerchiefs. He convincingly argued that these seemingly secondary bodily characteristics and detachable objects played a constitutive role in the formation and performance of early modern English masculinity.⁵² This imaginative, innovative, object-oriented analysis moved beyond the over-deployed crisis model and avoided the discussion of masculinity as (almost) a by-product of honor and reputation seen in some earlier scholarship.

Alongside the sartorial and object-oriented analyses of Kuchta and Fisher, monographs looking at the overall formation and articulation of masculinity in late medieval and early modern Europe have emerged. One skillful, but jargon-free example is the contribution of Ruth Mazo Karras. In her study of medieval European masculinity, Karras examined the transition from the status of youth to that of full manhood in three contexts: that of the knight, the university scholar, and the urban artisan. Men in each social role formed and articulated their masculinities differently. For example, in Karras’ reading, chivalric masculinity in general emphasized the acquisition of practical martial skill along with pursuing the attention and affection of noble ladies. In this interpretation, martial and amorous competition served as means of defining and validating status among aristocratic men. In Karras’ treatment, medieval women were largely perceived objects to be sought and won. Seeking chivalric love was less about winning a particular lady’s affection and more about winning higher status relative to other

⁵¹ Will Fisher, “The Renaissance Beard: Masculinity in Early Modern England,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 155-187.

⁵² Will Fisher, *Materializing Gender in Early Modern English Literature and Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 1-35 and passim.

men in the same social group.⁵³ Conversely, the masculinity of university students was performed in a largely homosocial environment. As such, validation through acquisition of female affection played a much less important role. Instead, the erudite masculinity of these students was (at least ideally) gauged by the perfection of their rationality.⁵⁴ Karras examines youthful and adult masculinities in medieval Western Europe, although England and English sources play a strong role. Her study serves as an excellent complement to more geographically narrow monographs which look at England exclusively, such as Derek Neal's thematically similar but geographically more focused study of medieval masculinity *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England*.⁵⁵ In one of the first sustained historical analyses of masculine subjectivity and identity formation, Neal drew on copious archival, epistolary, legal, and literary sources to explore the formation of the medieval masculine social self, while also considering the formation of interior masculine subjectivity. His nuanced and adept analysis thankfully rejects the crisis model⁵⁶ and weaves together nearly every major thread in the historiography of masculinity—honor, reputation, sartorial representation, the social role of the husband, marital and clerical masculinity, the social construction of the body, and the role of desire in the performance of masculinity.⁵⁷ Ambitious analyses like Neal's would not be possible without a rich, diverse, and growing body of scholarship which provided many of the insights Neal attempted to reject, clarify, or expand.

Neal emphasized the indebtedness of the field to and the influence on his own work of the work of Karras, Foyster, and Alexandra Shepard. In the same year that Karras published

⁵³ Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 20-66.

⁵⁴ Karras, 67-108.

⁵⁵ Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁵⁶ Neal, 6.

⁵⁷ Neal, *passim*.

From Boys to Men (2003), Shepard published what is, in my reading, one of the most important studies of early modern English masculinity.⁵⁸ In Shepard's article "Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c. 1580-1640" she concluded that the patriarchal model of masculinity advanced in conduct literature was highly idealized and did not encompass the nuanced masculinity of middling men. Shepard drew many of her conclusions from court records, using social history emphases.⁵⁹ These cogently presented arguments were insightful, but hardly field-changing. Her monograph built on these initial insights, but included several important contributions not hinted at in her earlier work. Her skillful explication of models of idealized masculinity held in tension with, and contrasted to, the performance of masculinity in actual practice made the book important.⁶⁰ Her inclusion of discussion on masculinity, honor, and reputation added to an already rich body of analysis.⁶¹ But her analysis of the impact of life stages on the performance of masculinity addressed a major deficiency in the historiography and took the monograph from important to essential for scholars of masculinity.⁶²

Despite the excellent work of scholars like Neal and Shepard, major gaps in the masculinity scholarship still persist. The impact of life-stages on masculinity is under-represented. The study of masculine desire has been undertaken in some analyses, but not brought to the forefront of an historical study of the period in a sustained, systematic way. Moreover, although examinations of the impact of emotion, sexuality, and even representations of magic on masculinity have served as central foci in recent literary studies,⁶³ these subjects are

⁵⁸ Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁵⁹ Alexandra Shepard, "Manhood, Credit and Patriarchy in Early Modern England c. 1580-1640," *Past and Present* 167 (May 2000): 75-106.

⁶⁰ Shepard, *Meanings*, passim.

⁶¹ Shepard, *Meanings*, 127-213.

⁶² Shepard, *Meanings*, 1-126; 214-253.

⁶³ See A. W. Barnes, *Post-Closet Masculinities in Early Modern England*, (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2009); Ian McAdam, *Magic and Masculinity in Early Modern English Drama*, (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne

under-analyzed by historians of early modern English masculinity. Exploration of the impact of the performance of masculinity on the political careers of aristocrats and analysis of father-son masculinity are both largely absent from the literature. My study contributes to both areas.

To examine the lives and masculinities of early modern courtiers, it is necessary to situate those men within the religious and political cultures they inhabited. To that end, a brief consideration of the scholarship on the marriage, family, and piety in early modern England follows.

III. Of Families and Funerals: Marriage and Death in Early Modern England

Several scholars have produced useful, accessible, thoroughly researched overviews of early modern marriage, based on classic social-historical and anthropological methodologies.⁶⁴ John Gillis offered an analysis of marriage norms and practices over an extremely wide chronological scope. He challenged the model embodied by Lawrence Stone's work, which implicitly championed the ascendancy of the nuclear family and companionate marriage in the early modern period. For Gillis, marriages (and the couples involved therein) had a very different place in the communities in which they lived. Gillis's study analyzes relationships from all segments of the social hierarchy.⁶⁵ Furthermore, with its use of some anthropological methodology, it anticipates David Cressy's work on the life-cycle in Tudor England.⁶⁶ While

University Press, 2009); and Jennifer C. Vaught *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature*, (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2008).

⁶⁴ See for example, Alan Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction 1300-1840*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986).

⁶⁵ John R. Gillis, *For Better, For Worse, British Marriage, 1600 to the Present* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁶⁶ David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990); "Gender Trouble and Cross-Dressing in Early Modern England," *The Journal of British Studies* 35, no. 4 (October 1986): 438-465; "Levels of Illiteracy in England, 1530-1730," *The Historical Journal* 20, no. 1 (March 1977): 1-23; "Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early

Cressy has written on a wide array of subjects, from religious change revealed through changes in the calendar in early modern England, to literacy rates in the period, his work on social norms, gender, and the life cycle stand out as accessible explications of social importance of marriage for people across the social hierarchy. Cressy reveals the social importance of major rituals of the life-cycle such as marriage and funerals. Other scholars, especially Eric J. Carlson have demonstrated their essential role in the religious life of early modern English people. Further, he reveals many of the consequences of marriage practices on personal piety and national politics.⁶⁷

Carlson examines the legal contexts and definition of early modern marriage and situates that within the context of actual marriage practices. After sketching the pre-Reformation context of marriage and establishing the often complementary relationship between canon and common law, Carlson moves to an analysis of changes to marriage brought by the English Reformation. Despite agitation on the part of evangelical reformers, on a widespread social level, Carlson does not identify a strong perceived need for marriage reform. English monarchs, as head of the English church, had a vested interest in maintaining church courts. Carlson also sees less support for clerical marriage in England compared to Continental reformers. Carlson's work deftly reveals the evolution of actual marriage practices in the early modern period.

But the evolution of marital practices took place within an evolving matrix of theologically-influenced ideals and ideologies shaped by conduct, sermon, and courtly literature. Surprisingly, the role of ideal prescribed gender roles on the actual performance of gender has received little attention. The shape of these prescribed ideals has received some

Modern England," *Past and Present* 113 (November 1986): 38-69; "Literacy in Seventeenth-Century England: More Evidence," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8, no. 1 (Summer 1977): 141-150; *Travesties and Transgressions in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁶⁷ Eric J. Carlson, *Marriage and the English Reformation* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1994).

consideration,⁶⁸ and violence and marital breakdown has been astutely analyzed, especially in the work of Laura Gowing and Frances Dolan.⁶⁹ The Castlehaven case, discussed above, an especially brutal case of moral, social, and gender transgression by a nobleman has been the subject of its own monograph.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the influence of these gendered ideals of marriage on the performance of gender (especially among erudite aristocrats) is not strongly represented.

That said, excellent work on funerary ritual, remembrance after death, and the influence of gender on commemoration has been undertaken. Notable contributions include Cressy's work on the life cycle, and the work of Ralph Houlbrooke, who provided a thorough overview of the customs, rituals, behaviors, and ideology surrounding death in early modern England.

Houlbrooke employed a copious source base to sketch the movement away from a fairly uniform

⁶⁸ See Gina Hausknecht, "'So Many Shipwracke for Want of Better Knowledge': The Imaginary Husband in Stuart Marriage Advice," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 64, no. 1/2 (2001): 81-106. Hausknecht depicts a change in the nature of marriage literature and a change in the image and constitution of a husband (and what it meant to be a husband) in seventeenth century. She presents a late sixteenth century marriage literature dominated by didactic conduct books and sermonic literature, often aimed at a relatively small literate, elite audience. She contrasts this with a pre-Civil War seventeenth century literature that offers a more secularized, less sermonic image of marriage and husbandhood which was aimed at an expanding literature customer base drawn from a wider social demographic. While the author does not disagree with the proliferation of the idea of companionate marriage often espoused in Puritan sermonic literature, she attempts to paint a more nuanced picture of the expanding marriage literature genre and the model(s) of masculinity advanced within that genre. Hausknecht draws on a few popular issues of debate and literary motifs in late-Tudor and early-Stuart marriage literature. As to the frequent debate over wife beating, the author points out that some authors believed husbands were not empowered to beat their wives, others saw husbands as empowered to do so, but that such action should be avoided. In fact, the husband that resorted to beating was sometimes depicted as a poor head of household, emasculated, or unable to manage his own wife. Moreover, men were often depicted as immature or incomplete—as having incomplete masculinity—before marriage. See also: Kristen Poole, "'The Fittest Closet for All Goodness': Authorial Struggles of Jacobean Mothers' Manuals," *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 35, no. 1 (Winter 1995): 69-88.

⁶⁹ See especially: Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London* (New York and Oxford: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1996). In this landmark book, Gowing illustrates the fundamental disparity between male and female power in early modern England. Gowing draws on ecclesiastical court records and demonstrates that women's reputations were far more explicitly tied to sexual behavior than men's reputations. She reveals how much lower/middling women in and around London were willing to pursue litigation (such as defamation suits) to repair their reputations. She powerfully and convincingly demonstrates the extent to which early modern England was a society with a gendered double standard of sexual behavior. Also see Gowing's *Common Bodies: Women, Touch and Power in Seventeenth-Century England* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003); "Women, Status and the Popular Culture of Dishonor," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 225-234, and Frances Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Presentations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550-1700* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1994); *Marriage and Violence: The Early Modern Legacy*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008) and *Whores of Babylon: Catholicism, Gender and Seventeenth-Century Print Culture*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1999).

⁷⁰ See Herrup above.

late medieval set of Catholic behaviors, through the English Reformation. During the English Reformation, the confessional diversity of the religious landscape (and the concomitant variation in death and mourning rituals) increased. Finally, by the mid-eighteenth century, Houlbrooke identified some indication of the beginning of a trend toward secularization of commemoration of death.⁷¹ Following this, the work of Eric Carlson and Patricia Phillipy on female piety and commemoration of death in funeral sermons and *ars moriendi* has illustrated the gendered dimensions of piety and memorialization.⁷²

Since this memorialization was both gendered, and intensely idealized, it illuminates the ideological framework which influenced elite perceptions of ideal femininity and masculinity. My study will show that the collection of idealized gender norms found in conduct literature and funeral sermons strongly influenced the social and political behavior of English courtiers.⁷³ In order to understand the elements of idealized gender norms, I turn finally to a discussion of the broad contours of the early modern English religious landscape.

⁷¹ Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). Also see Houlbrooke's earlier *Church Courts and the People During the English Reformation, 1520-1570*, Oxford Historical Monographs, (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), which provides an accessible and thoroughly researched overview of the church courts as a social and political institution. See also, Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

⁷² See Eric J. Carlson, "Funeral Sermons as Sources: The Example of Female Piety in Pre-1640 Sermons," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 32, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 567-597, wherein Carlson reveals a distinctly gendered component to the presentation of piety in funeral sermons. See also: Patricia Phillipy, "The Mat(t)er of Death: the Defense of Eve and the Female *Ars Moriendi*," in *Debating Gender in Early Modern England, 1500-1700*, eds. Cristina Malcomson and Mihoko Suzuki (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 141-160. Phillipy examines *ars moriendi* in general and especially Rachel Speght's *Mortalities Memorandum, with a Dreame Prefixed*, as well as Alice Sutcliffe's *Meditations of Man's Mortalitie*. Phillipy offers a gendered analysis of *ars moriendi* and suggests construction of gender identity and female authorial voices may be reconstructed (or at least represented) through these unique female-authored *ars moriendi* which recast the figure of Eve slightly. Still bearing a share of blame for the Fall, Eve is a kind of mother of death, but as the original mother, she is also indirectly a mother of life with an important role in salvific history.

⁷³ For an extended discussion of these issues, see chapter two.

IV. Of Piety and Politics: Historiographies of Elizabethan Protestantism and the Persistence of Traditional Praxis

For an earlier generation of historians, the magisterial grand narrative of Protestant ascendancy in early modern England found in A. G. Dickens *The English Reformation*⁷⁴ provided an authoritative overview of the evolution of religious belief and practice during the English Reformations. The work of numerous scholars, especially that of Patrick Collinson, have provided a much more nuanced, multifaceted view of the range of Protestantisms in early modern England.⁷⁵ Other, more revisionist historians like Christopher Haigh have demonstrated a much stronger persistence of traditional Catholic beliefs and practices than in previous narratives.⁷⁶ Finally, the field-changing works of Eamon Duffy have revealed the persistence of traditional praxis well into the 1570s, and situated this evolving religious picture within the late-Tudor political landscape.

Sympathetic to the accomplishments and skills of Mary Tudor, Duffy defends Mary's overall political ability as a ruler and Cardinal Pole's importance as an adviser and religious policy-maker. His *Fires of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* focuses heavily on Pole, and on Mary's use of the emerging print culture of the period to attempt to bring England back to the Catholic Church. Duffy presents an English Catholicism thoroughly in contact with Counter-Reformation theology. In general, Duffy sees many accomplishments in Mary's short reign, and many political and religious plans that may have been successful, had the reign endured longer.⁷⁷

⁷⁴ A. G. Dickens, *The English Reformation* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1964).

⁷⁵ Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967); *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559-1625*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982).

⁷⁶ Christopher Haigh, *English Reformations: Religion, Politics, and Society under the Tudors* (Oxford: Clarendon Press of the Oxford University Press, 1993).

⁷⁷ Eamon Duffy, *Fire of Faith: Catholic England Under Mary Tudor* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009). See also: Eamon Duffy and David Loades, eds. *The Church of Mary Tudor* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing

In *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580*, a sweeping work that explores the nature of personal piety and praxis in “traditional” (i.e., Roman Catholic) religion, drawing on a wide range of printed, manuscript, and visual evidence, Duffy argues for deeply held, relatively socially uniform religious belief system that was only changed slowly changed by the imposition of new Protestant doctrine and practice and a generational shift toward Protestant belief. For Duffy, it is only in the 1570s/1580s and thereafter that Protestantism was really inculcated in the population. Duffy sees the Marian restoration as successful, if short-lived, and only thus because of the length of Mary’s reign. Duffy rejects the perception of a divide between “popular” and elite religious belief and practice. He also sees a social environment where the burgeoning print culture of early modern England actually supported the persistence of traditional religious belief. While he reveals how lives and everyday practices of the laity changed, his analysis focuses strongly on changes in liturgical practice during the imposition of Protestant doctrine.⁷⁸ Duffy’s work has redefined the picture of religious change in early modern England for many scholars. Nevertheless, scholars like Diarmaid MacCulloch take issue with Duffy’s staunch insistence on the persistence of traditional devotional praxis well into the Elizabethan era. MacCulloch locates the beginnings of the

Company, 2006).

⁷⁸ See: Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, c. 1400-1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992) for the general analysis. For a sort of applied case study of his theses, see Duffy’s *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation and Rebellion in an English Village*, (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2001). Finally, for a closer look at personal piety, see his *Marking the Hours: English People and Their Prayers, 1240-1570*, (New Haven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 2006). For an excellent analysis of the impact of print/visual culture on popular praxis, see Tessa Watt, *Cheap Print and Popular Piety, 1550-1640* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For general studies of the emergence and impact of print culture in early modern Europe, see Elizabeth Eisenstein’s seminal work, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communication and Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); *Divine Art, Infernal Machine: The Reception of Printing in the West from First Impressions to the Sense of an Ending* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012); Jesse Lander, *Inventing Polemic: Religion, Print, and Literary Culture in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Arthur Marotti, *Manuscript, Print, and the English Renaissance Lyric* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995); *Print, Manuscript & Performance: The Changing Relations of the Media in Early Modern England* (Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 2000).

formation of English Protestant identity in the Edwardian regime. Alec Ryrie's work both elucidates the multifaceted character of late-Henrician Protestantism and demonstrates that the development of Protestant identity from 1540-1640 reshaped the devotional, emotional, and everyday lives of believers.⁷⁹

Despite the high quality of work by English Reformation scholars—and the equally high diversity of opinion and scholarly interpretation, the relationship between elite patronage, religious change, and enactment of gender has only begun to be explored. Each of the four central figures of this study were devoted Protestants with the power and position to serve as patrons for like-minded clients. How these men presented themselves, and to whom they chose to give support and patronage defined them socially and politically. William and Robert Cecil built their careers on bureaucratic service shaped by Humanist masculinity. Robert Dudley and his stepson Robert Devereux after him would fashion and present themselves as chivalric knights. But the Cecils were English *Protestant* Humanists, and both Leicester and Essex presented themselves as *Protestant* chivalric knights.⁸⁰ Granted, religious conformity was important, even essential for courtiers and servants who sought to retain royal favor. But, going beyond conformity, these men crafted Protestant self-presentations that aligned with their political goals and religious outlook. Each man enacted his masculinity and pursued his political

⁷⁹ For discussion of the development of Protestant identity and the role of theological innovations of the Edwardian regime, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Boy King: Edward VI and the Protestant Reformation* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 11-18. For an examination of the role of archbishop Cranmer's leadership in some of those theological and liturgical changes, see Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Later Reformation in England, 1547-1603*, second edition (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 11-16. For Alec Ryrie's examination of late-Henrician Protestantism, see Alec Ryrie, *The Gospel and Henry VIII: Evangelicals in the Early English Reformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), *passim*. For his more recent, wide-ranging consideration of British Protestantism and praxis, see Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

⁸⁰ Simon Adams has argued that Robert Dudley's religious outlook and clientele influenced his political choices, especially those related to his expedition to the Low Countries in the late 1580s. See Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), chapter 9 "A Puritan crusade? The composition of the Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Netherland, 1585-86," 176-195. He argues that as a religiously influenced military expedition "[Dudley's] expedition was as near to 'puritanism in arms' as the Elizabethan political system could provide," (190). Moreover, in Adam's estimation, Leicester's religious outlook also influenced his choices as a patron (225-232).

goals within an evolving Elizabethan religious milieu. The diverse conclusions and interpretations of imminent scholars such as Duffy, Collinson, MacCulloch, and Ryrice demonstrate how multifaceted (and open to scholarly interpretation) the Elizabethan religious landscape was. But the men at the center of this study not only had to define themselves religiously, they also had to find a way to thrive within early modern English court culture.

V. Of Courts and “Cults”: Historiography of Elizabethan and Jacobean Courts

Elizabethan court culture was one in which royal progresses, monarchical self-presentation, and court pageantry played a vital role in the projection of royal power and the representation of the queen. Drawing on the Burgundian-influenced court culture of her father, Henry VIII, Elizabeth used chivalric pageantry to her own political advantage, often making herself the center of courtly attention. A neo-chivalric court culture evolved during Elizabeth’s reign. Some courtiers such as Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and his stepson Robert Devereux used these motifs to frame their political objectives and shape their self-presentation. Earlier scholars such as a Francis Yates⁸¹ and Roy Strong have seen in this court culture the development of a so-called “cult” of the Virgin Queen, although this has been largely complicated or even overturned by the work of Helen Hackett.

The historiographies of chivalry and court culture are both rich and varied. One of the most directly relevant (and problematic) studies of Elizabethan chivalric court culture is Roy Strong’s *The Cult of Elizabeth*. In it, Strong argues that Elizabeth served not only as the chivalric lady-love in her court, but also served as a replacement Virgin in Protestant England,

⁸¹ Frances Yates, *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Boston: Routledge, 1975).

serving as a focal point for the collective veneration formerly directed at the Virgin Mary.⁸²

While there were certainly chivalric elements in Elizabethan court culture (and aristocratic masculinity), Strong overestimates the role of Elizabeth as chivalric lady-love in the realities of courtly life. Some of the most elaborate panegyric came from the 1590s, identified by several scholars as a time of increased factionalism at court.⁸³ Moreover, the idea of Elizabeth having a social-psychological function as a new Virgin Mary has been vehemently and effectively challenged by Helen Hackett, who argues that Marian imagery in the presentation of queens was a common medieval trope which continued in Elizabethan England. Nevertheless, despite being both Protestant and a virgin (ostensibly), she did *not* serve as a Protestant Virgin.⁸⁴

Elizabethan court culture was strongly influenced by the Burgundian court culture, with its emphasis on symbolism and ritual for the display and maintenance of power. Within the culture of the Burgundian court and those influenced by it, the sovereign's use of pageantry facilitated the display of monarchical power.⁸⁵ Elizabeth's court inherited this Burgundian flavor from the court of her father, Henry VIII. However, this Burgundian influence may be traced as far back as Edward IV.⁸⁶ The influence of the Burgundian court model made chivalric display a welcomed and politically useful method of self-presentation for Henrician and Elizabethan

⁸² Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 14-16, 116.

⁸³ See for example, *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), in general and especially Natalie Mears, "Regnum Cecilianum?: A Cecilian Perspective of the Court," 46-64; and Paul E. J. Hammer, "Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I" *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 77-97; and *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁸⁴ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Hampshire and London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1995). For her challenge of previous historiography, especially that of Roy Strong, see p. 6-11.

⁸⁵ Peter Arnade, "City, State, and Public Ritual in the Late-Medieval Burgundian Netherlands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 39, no. 2 (April 1997): 300-318.

⁸⁶ E. W. Ives, *Anne Boleyn* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 11-14.

courtiers. Court pageants and entertainments played a vital role in the representation and praise of the queen during Elizabeth's reign.

Situated within early modern concepts of femininity which held chastity as an important, and often distinctly feminine virtue, the recurrence of this motif as a way of representing (and relating to) an unmarried queen was often politically expedient and useful. However, the rhetorical and representational emphasis on chastity in Elizabethan literature often occurred in conjunction with language and symbolism of love for the queen.

Judith M. Richards explores the use just such a language of affective and reverential love in the representation of Elizabeth. She contends that the cultivation of a perception of the queen as a ruler who strongly valued both the obedience and the love of her people started early in, and continued throughout, her reign.⁸⁷ Moreover, although Elizabethan rhetoric contained as much of an expectation of obedience as that of earlier Tudors, it placed greater emphasis of love and "bonds of affective allegiance."⁸⁸ Richards convincingly depicts this as a shift in the perception of monarch-subject relationship brought on in part by a deliberate representation of the queen as a loving (and loved) monarch.⁸⁹

The evolution of royal iconography as well as this proliferation of classical imagery late in Elizabeth's reign has received considerable attention. One well-argued example is that of John N. King, "The Godly Woman in Elizabethan Iconography". King sees the iconography representing the queen as consistently drawing on the archetype of the godly (Protestant) woman as well medieval iconographic antecedents for the representation of both queens and kings. King expands this core argument in his slightly later monograph *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature*

⁸⁷ Judith M. Richards, "Love and a Female Monarch: The Case of Elizabeth Tudor," *The Journal of British Studies* 38, no. 2 (April 1999): 133-160.

⁸⁸ Richards, "Love and a Female Monarch," 158.

⁸⁹ Richards, "Love and a Female Monarch," 158-160.

*and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis.*⁹⁰ Works like that of King have offered insightful analyses of how monarchical power and authority were represented and praised. But the relationship that courtiers in Elizabeth's court had with that authority and the queen who embodied it was shaped by their masculinity. Looking at how the queen was represented (both in iconography and by other means) reveals an environment in which multifaceted royal presentations complimented and competed with one another. This body of literature also illustrates how courtiers presented themselves for political advantage and were represented by others, often in heavily gendered terms. As a growing body of literature demonstrates, self-presentation and representation were important to both sovereigns and their servants.

For Elizabeth, self-presentation and control of representation were essential elements of maintaining popularity, royal power, and control of her court. Whether she held court near London or was entertained by courtiers while on progress, the queen used self-presentation as an essential element in her governing strategy. The best analysis of the political impact of the queen's royal progresses to date is Mary Hill Cole's.

Cole argues that progresses formed a vital part of Elizabeth's governing style. Unlike her father, Elizabeth generally avoided problem areas in the realm, generally staying in the Home Counties around London. Nevertheless, within this scope, her progresses allowed her to stay in touch (relatively) with the desires of her people. Perhaps more importantly, in Cole's analysis, frequent progresses were used by the queen to maintain control. The controlled chaos of a progress allowed Elizabeth to remain the political center of attention and kept advisors and council from gaining too much power.⁹¹

⁹⁰ John N. King, "The Godly Woman in Elizabethan Iconography" *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 41-84 and his later *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

⁹¹ Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst, MA: University of

Royal progresses served as essential means of *self*-presentation by Elizabeth. But visual and literary representation of the queen by aristocrats and others was also a potential means of gaining political favor (or disfavor). The works of Louis Montrose,⁹² Susan Frye,⁹³ and Carole Levin⁹⁴ have revealed royal representation in different media was a contentious, competitive arena which evolved and changed dramatically over the course of Elizabeth's long reign.

Within the context of what Frye has called "the competition for representation," male courtiers used their own representations and interactions with the queen to shape or reflect their own self-presentation and advance their own careers. This held true to servant-bureaucrats like the Cecils and chivalric courtiers like Robert Dudley and Robert Devereux. Generations of scholars have provided excellent biographical scholarship on nearly every significant Elizabethan courtier, but none have undertaken a sustained analysis of how the enactment of their gender influenced courtiers' self-presentation and their political careers. This study fills that gap and further enriches the field of scholarship. Nevertheless, the impressive body of biographical scholarship on the principle figures in this study should be briefly examined.

Massachusetts Press, 1999).

⁹² See Louis A. Montrose, "Idols of the Queen: Policy, Gender and the Picturing of Elizabeth I" *Representations*, 68 (Autumn, 1999), 108-161; "Of Gentlemen and Shepherds: The Politics of Elizabethan Pastoral Form," *ELH* 50, no. 3 (Autumn 1983): 415-459; "Shakespeare, the Stage, and the State," *SubStance* 25, no. 2 (1996): 46-67; "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representations* 2 (Spring 1983): 61-94; "The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text," in *Literary Theory/Renaissance Texts*, eds. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 303-340; "The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery," *Representations* 33 (Winter 1991): 1-41.

⁹³ Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993). This work follows in the same vein as Louis Adrian Montrose's work. Frye provides one of the earliest highly theorized, sustained analyses of the political use of virginal imagery surrounding the Queen by Elizabeth and others. Frye offers a Foucault-influenced feminist-theory inflected analysis of the role Elizabeth played in negotiating and attempting to control her own representation, especially during three "representational crises" (1. Beginning of the reign/coronation procession 2. mid-reign c. 1575 at approximately the time of the Kenilworth pageants and 3. during the factionalism of 1590s). Also see Frye's "Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane," *Signs* 20, no. 1 (Autumn 1994): 49-78, and "The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 95-114. For a more in depth discussion of Frye's work and its analysis of representations of both the queen and her courtiers, see chapter three.

⁹⁴ Carole Levin, *"The Heart and Stomach of a King": The Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994). For a discussion of Levin's work, especially as it pertains to Elizabeth's so-called "Tilbury Speech" and its implications for courtiers' masculinities, see chapter three.

VI. Of Sovereigns, Servants, and Scholars: Biographical Scholarship of Elizabeth and Her Courtiers

Queen Elizabeth, her court, and her reign have been commemorated and critiqued since the reign of her successor James I and beyond.⁹⁵ She and her fellow queens were subjects of study for devoted antiquarians and interested scholars in the nineteenth century.⁹⁶ By the early years of the twentieth century, a rich body of analytical biographical scholarship for Elizabeth and her courtiers had developed with the work of John E. Neale and others. Neale composed the definitive biography of his generation. He offered an elegantly written, accessible, and even entertaining biography (in 1934). But Neale was clearly infatuated with his subject—his treatment of the impressive queen borders on hagiographic at times. Wallace MacCaffrey's much more recent treatment of Elizabeth follows the same tradition of thorough research, elegant writing, and impressive scholarship, without the hagiographic tint. MacCaffrey offered one of the most erudite and accessible biographies of the queen in recent years. This text thoroughly situates Elizabeth's personal biography within the political environment she helped create.⁹⁷

These and other biographies of Elizabeth reveal the importance of the queen's courtiers, but they also demonstrate the need for biographical scholarship on those courtiers. Such biographies of monarchs do contain important insights into the courtiers who served them. This

⁹⁵ Two early modern treatments of Elizabeth's reign that shaped posthumous perceptions of her court were William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth Late Queen of England* (London, 1615), ed. Wallace T. Mac Caffrey, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), and Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia, or Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth, Her Times and Her Favourites*, (London, 1641).

⁹⁶ One of most significant nineteenth-century biographies of Elizabeth was composed by antiquarian Agnes Strickland. Elizabeth is the subject of all of volume six and much of volume seven in this twelve volume collection detailing queens from the Norman Conquest onward. Strickland's Victorian prose is gorgeous, if occasionally judgmental. But, in the midst of Victorian value judgments, the reader is treated to a remarkable level of detail based on archival evidence and printed primary source material. Agnes Strickland, *Lives of the Queens of England from the Norman Conquest, with Anecdotes from Their Courts* (12 vols), (Philadelphia: Blanchard and Lea, 1852).

⁹⁷ See Wallace MacCaffrey *Elizabeth I* (New York: E. Arnold 1993), and J. E. Neale *Queen Elizabeth I: A Biography* (New York: Doubleday 1957).

is especially true for under-studied figures in Tudor-Stuart England. William Cecil was many things, but posthumously under-studied was not one of them. As one of Elizabeth's most essential advisors, it is not surprising the William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley received extended treatments. The two-volume biography of Burghley composed by Conyers Read served as the most comprehensive and definitive biography of Burghley until the more recent works of Stephen Alford.⁹⁸ William's son Robert has received far less attention, with the praiseworthy exception of the work of Pauline Croft, who depicts Robert Cecil as an adept politician who was instrumental in helping to orchestrate the smooth transition of power upon James I's accession to the throne. Croft presents a talented politician who, after serving as a trusted counselor to Queen Elizabeth in the last years of her reign, became an essential advisor to King James until Cecil's death in 1612. She also illustrates the mixed way in which Robert Cecil was remembered after death.⁹⁹ One of the most recent Cecilian treatments is a joint biography of father and son by David Loades. Loades' *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne*¹⁰⁰ provides an excellent overview of the political careers of the father and son.¹⁰¹ Loades' treatment of the two Cecils together is distinctive, and arguably, one of the strongest contributions of the joint biography aimed at more popular audiences. His discussion of Robert Cecil's role in Jacobean

⁹⁸ See Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1955); *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1960) and Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁹⁹ Pauline Croft, *King James* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48-53; "The Religion of Robert Cecil," *The Historical Journal* 34, no. 4 (December 1991), 773-796; "The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Sixth Series*, Vol. 1 (1991), 43-69.

¹⁰⁰ David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback edition, 2009). Loades also made a rare contribution to the biographical scholarship of Mary I with *Mary Tudor: A Life* (Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989). Loades offers a scholarly biography of Mary which avoids Protestant vitriol. Nevertheless, Loades sees many of the problems of her short reign springing from Mary herself. Loades sees Mary as ideologically/religiously motivated, obstinate and politically inept.

¹⁰¹ It is worth noting that William Cecil's first son Thomas Cecil has received virtually no extended monographic scholarly analysis.

regime, with its changing court culture, is also useful, even though he leaves gender out of his analysis.¹⁰²

Simon Adams has produced some of the most important analytical scholarship on Robert Dudley. Adams' collection of essays, *Leicester and the Court* presents an Elizabethan regime which was not plagued by disruptive factionalism in Leicester's lifetime. Competition for patronage and influence did exist, but not such that it thoroughly disrupted the court (as it did, by contrast, in the 1590s). In Adams' analysis, Leicester was a religiously influenced peer, sometimes favorable toward Puritans, who maintained his power by protecting his status as a royal favorite, preserving his affinity, and cultivating a regional power-base.¹⁰³ Adam's insightful analysis of numerous facets of the man and his career is drawn from years of rigorous scholarship on one of Elizabeth's most trusted and treasured counselors.

Finally, the most important work on Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex in recent years has been produced by Paul Hammer. In *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597*, Hammer offers a rehabilitation of Essex. With an impressive achievement in archival research, Hammer overturns a view of Essex as politically inept playboy. Instead, Hammer depicts an Essex who built a following based on royal favor and anticipated martial success that did not always materialize. This is an Essex preoccupied with gaining honor and prestige through meritorious and distinctly martial deeds.

¹⁰² For his discussion of Robert Cecil's role in the Jacobean regime, see Loades, *The Cecils*, 256-282. For accessible analyses of the character of Jacobean court culture, see W. B. Patterson, *King James I and VI and the Reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Linda Levy Peck, ed. *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Linda Levy Peck, *Northampton: Patronage and Policy at the Court of James I* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1982); Markku Peltonen, "Francis Bacon, The Earl of Northampton, and the Jacobean Anti-Dueling Campaign," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (March 2001): 1-28; Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake, eds. *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Roy Strong, *Henry Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986); Jenny Wormald, *Court, Kirk, and Community, Scotland 1470-1625*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981).

¹⁰³ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, passim.

Hammer also rejects the contention in previous scholarship that faction was inherently endemic in Elizabethan government. But, according to Hammer, strong factionalism did emerge in the mid-1590s with one “faction” supporting Essex and a more militaristic, Continentally-oriented policy. The rival “faction” and its aims were embodied by Burghley and Robert Cecil and emphasized service to the crown as paramount, with less emphasis on militarism. Though there were periods of cooperation between the Cecils and the Essex faction, factionalism was rampant in the mid/late 1590s. Though competition for “place and patronage” was important, Hammer sees much of the rivalry as driven by ideology and differing objectives in domestic and foreign policy among factions.¹⁰⁴ Hammer’s monograph ends before the final years of Essex’s life and career.¹⁰⁵ Alexandra Gajda’s recent treatment of Devereux devotes much of her political analysis to these final years.¹⁰⁶

Despite the outstanding quality Hammer’s and Gajda’s work, neither considers the role of Essex’s masculinity on his career. Moreover, little attention has been paid to the impact of courtiers’ sexuality on their political careers.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, no one has undertaken an analysis

¹⁰⁴ Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and “Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 65-86.

¹⁰⁵ Many of Hammer’s other contributions include analyses of Essex’s entire career. See “An Elizabethan Spy Who Came in from the Cold: The Return of Anthony Standen to England in 1593,” *Historical Research* 65 (1992): 277-295; “Essex and Europe: Evidence from Confidential Instructions by the Earl of Essex, 1595-6,” *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 441 (April 1996): 357-381; *Elizabeth’s Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); “Myth-Making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596,” *The Historical Journal* 40.3 (September 1997): 621-642; “The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601,” *The English Historical Review* 109, no. 430 (February 1994): 26-51; “Patronage at Court, Faction and the Earl of Essex,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65-86; “Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 77-97.

¹⁰⁶ Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁷ Some recent work has begun to fill this scholarly gap, but more work remains to be done. For some contributions, see Paul E. J. Hammer, “Sex and the Virgin Queen: Aristocratic Concupiscence and the Court of Elizabeth I” *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 77-97; and *Polarisation*, 352, n. 53 and 385, n. 239. See also Johanna Rickman’s welcomed monograph, *Love, Lust, and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex*

of courtiers' masculinity situated within the framework of early modern manhood seen in prescriptive literature. Such an analysis will shed new light on the building blocks of early modern masculinity. These "building blocks" and how different courtiers built their masculinities will be the subject of the next chapter.

and the Nobility (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008). For her discussion of Devereux and his affairs, see 10, 31-32, 43, 53-55, 60-62, 84, 134, 204.

Chapter II: Husband, Knight, Servant – Ideal Representations of Masculinity in Early Modern Conduct Literature

I. Introduction

The fault is in yourselves, ye noblemen's sons, and therefore ye deserve the greater blame that the meaner men's children come to be the wisest counselors and greatest doers in the weighty affairs of the realm. And why? For God will have it so of his providence because ye will have it no otherwise by your negligence.¹⁰⁸

This indictment—from Roger Ascham's 1570 educational treatise *The Schoolmaster*—implored noblemen and their sons to become worthy of assuming the positions of leadership that was their birthright. Ascham was quite familiar with the early Elizabethan court, where William Cecil—a man only two generations removed from a middling Welsh family—was emerging as one of the most powerful advisers to the queen. Cecil may have been a “meaner” man's son (or grandson),¹⁰⁹ but through education, political acumen, and diligent service, he became one of the wealthiest, most powerful men in Elizabethan England. When Ascham—who had connections to Cecil's circle¹¹⁰—wrote his educational manual in 1570, Cecil was clearly an ascendant politician. His success was a sterling example of the importance of education and erudition. To a life-long scholar like Ascham, the importance of education was obvious. To his great distress, many noblemen apparently failed to see its importance. Ascham sought to build a better nobleman through education. For Ascham, appropriate education paved the way for the elite to

¹⁰⁸ Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, (1570) ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 40.

¹⁰⁹ For a discussion of the Cecils' family history, see David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback ed. 2009), chapter 1.

¹¹⁰ Ascham praised Sir John Cheke—the brother of William Cecil's first wife Mary Cheke—as a consummate scholar of extraordinary skill. Ascham, 26.

be better nobles, better men, and better examples for “meaner men.” Not surprisingly, in *The Schoolmaster*, education is paramount. But erudition is only one of many components of the ideal nobleman in early modern conduct literature. Courtiers who looked to the idealized versions of masculinity found in conduct literature a plethora of obligations and options for their own self-definition. Whether they chose to be a scholar, an ideal husband, a chivalric knight, a devoted courtier-servant, or some combination, their choices both shaped, and were reflected in, their political careers.

In the politically charged world of the Elizabethan and Jacobean courts, “personal” behavior could have very real, intense, and lasting political consequences. A courtier not only had to make the right “public” political choices—like choosing the right allies and giving patronage to the right clients—he had to make the right “personal” choices as well. For early modern English courtiers, finding the right spouse and being perceived as good husbands and heads of household were as politically important as being a renowned military leader or dutiful administrator. In short, courtiers had to at least try to live up to the standards of the “ideal” noblemen, or they risked erosion of their all-important reputations. Harm to their reputations could quickly bring harm to their political careers. No courtier fully lived up to the standards of a “perfect” nobleman while he was actually alive (although several were presented as such posthumously). The elements that made up the “ideal” nobleman in early modern England are the primary focus of this chapter. By looking at the erudite nobleman, the ideal husband, knight, and courtier-servant in conduct literature,¹¹¹ this chapter will reveal contours of these idealized masculine archetypes.

¹¹¹ For an astute analysis of the evolution of early modern conduct literature, see Anna Bryson, *From Courtesy to Civility: Changing Codes of Conduct in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

This chapter examines the elements of the ideal husband, the facets of the ideal knight, and the components of the ideal courtier-servant. This exploration will reveal the matrix of ideal masculinities that influenced courtiers' enactment of their own masculinities. Both Anna Bryson and Ronald Asch¹¹² have examined the transition from a dominant model of "lordship" to one of "urbanity" as a mode of elite behavior. Bryson situates her analysis within the history of manners and engages with Norbert Elias's idea of the "civilizing process" in the late-medieval and early modern periods.¹¹³ Bryson traces adoption of Italian notions and behaviors associated with civility by the elite in early modern England. She offers one of the most important recent contributions to the history of manners, wherein she argues that adoption of specific behavioral codes associated with Italian courtesy could serve to demonstrate and affirm an aristocrat's social status. She includes this development in her discussion of the evolution of social norms and modes of behavior.¹¹⁴ Bryson thoroughly engages with Elias' framework of a civilizing process throughout her text.¹¹⁵ Elias favors a psychoanalytically-grounded, sociogenic model of gradually increased, internalized repression in late medieval and early modern Europe. Bryson avoids this, and identifies an evolution in behavioral norms which was more thoroughly driven by social and political change. She acknowledges the inherent problems and limitations of working with conduct and advice literature—among them, the challenge of examining changes in behavioral norms and in *actual* behavioral changes from the idealized representations in

¹¹² Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition 1550-1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London: Arnold, 2003). According to Asch, due in part to comparatively loose legal definitions of nobility in England, (as opposed to France and the Habsburg dominions), outside the peerage, the lower levels of English nobility were fairly open. But, the absence of such legal definitions of nobility made it easier for noble families at these lower levels to lose their place and social position in the event of financial downturns (passim). Asch discusses a transition from "lordship" to "urbanity" in sixteenth and seventeenth century England. While this model of "lordship" drew on earlier models of nobility emphasizing physical prowess, "urbanity" entailed an emphasis on education and cultivation (e.g., literary cultivation), (78-79).

¹¹³ See the landmark work, originally initially published in German in 1939 by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Revised Edition, trans. Edmund Jephcott, eds. Eric Dunning, et al. (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

¹¹⁴ Bryson, ch.2 (43-74, esp. 61) and chapter 4 (107-150, esp. 113-118 and 129).

¹¹⁵ Bryson, 10-11, 14, 16, 46-7, 79, 96-8, 104-107, 193-196, 212)

conduct literature. Analysis of conduct literature can reveal the contours of ideal manners—and ideal gender norms. These ideals did not always reflect lived behavior, but changes in prescribed patriarchal norms reflect changes in the matrix of available ideal behavioral norms. Moreover, the increase in production of hospitality-related conduct literature from 1580-1630 identified by Felicity Heal¹¹⁶ suggests that an increased availability of the treatises that defined these behavioral ideals. While John Gillingham has suggested that the motif of the “refined gentleman”¹¹⁷ may date back as far as the twelfth century, it is clear that by the mid-sixteenth century, ideals of courtliness and civility were influencing modes of elite masculinity.

Recent work has identified numerous masculinities in early modern Europe. These masculinities were contingent upon religious outlook, occupation, social status, and even geographical location. Several collections and monographs have examined masculinities throughout Europe. Crossing confessional and geographic boundaries, scholars have identified specific articulations of Jesuit,¹¹⁸ Huguenot,¹¹⁹ Swiss,¹²⁰ German,¹²¹ and of course, early modern

¹¹⁶ Felicity Heal, “The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England,” *Past & Present* 102 (February 1984): 66-93. Heal identifies an increased production of conduct and advice literature pertaining to hospitality across genres from “between the 1580s and 1630s” relative to the period immediately before and after (68).

¹¹⁷ John Gillingham, “From Civilitas to Civility: Codes of Manners in Medieval and Early Modern England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society Sixth Series*, vol. 12 (2002): 267-289. Gillingham engages with Norbert Elias and especially with Anna Bryson. Both Elias and Bryson locate a shift in social behavior and manners in the Renaissance and the early modern period, (i.e., “from courtesy to civility” as Bryson’s title suggests). Gillingham challenges this and contends that the basis for the “urbane gentleman” (267) can be seen in twelfth century Latin and Anglo-Norman courtesy poems.

¹¹⁸ Ulrike Strasser, “‘The First Form and Grace’: Ignatius of Loyola and the Reformation of Masculinity,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 45-70. Through an exploration of the work of Ignatius of Loyola, Ulrike Strasser identifies a clerical—specifically Jesuit—manifestation of masculinity that was affectively expressive and paternalistically oriented. With Ignatius as a paternal figure, his chaste sons embodied a Jesuit masculinity wherein they defended the Virgin like a knight might defend a noble lady.

¹¹⁹ Raymond A. Mentzer, “Masculinity and the Reformed Tradition in France,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 120-139. Mentzer reveals a French Reformed masculinity that strengthened and reinforced the importance of fathers as spiritual guides. The role of spiritual head of one’s family—reflected in things like fathers’ mandatory attendance at children’s baptisms (125)—became a key component of ideal Huguenot masculinity, (passim).

¹²⁰ For a study of masculinity in Reformation Geneva, see Karen E. Spierling “Father, Son, and Pious Christian: Concepts of Masculinity in Reformation Geneva,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 95-119. Looking at the Geneva

English masculinities.¹²² Most recently, *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* has—among its many contributions—begun to fill a significant gap in Anglophone scholarship with several chapters looking at Scandinavian gender and masculinity.¹²³ Across Protestant

consistory records from c. 1540-1560, Spierling explores how men occasionally lived up to the social ideals of moral manhood and patriarchal piety, but also often came up short. Men who fathered children out of wedlock and/or did not adequately support their offspring were failing to live up to the ideal of pious Reformed masculinity that the religious leaders of Geneva put forward (95-119). Moreover, adult men needed to obey religious authorities when raising and disciplining their children. It was both a parental and social obligation to insure that children received sufficient moral guidance and were sufficiently catechized (107-116), even when pursuit of such pious patriarchal masculinity contributed to neglect of traditional masculine pastimes like “playing at military and hunting exercises” (114). As such, Spierling demonstrates how conflicting ideals of masculinity coexisted in a religiously evolving environment. For a study of one elite man’s life in Zurich, see Helmut Puff, “The Reform of Masculinities in Sixteenth-Century Switzerland: A Case Study,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 21-44. Puff offers an examination of masculinity in sixteenth century Switzerland seen through the lens of one man’s life. By looking at the life of Werner Steiner (1492-1542), a former Catholic priest, who became a Zwinglian Protestant, Puff demonstrates how complex, multivalent, and sexually contingent early modern masculinities could be. Steiner, a well-educated man from an elite family, was well-enmeshed in the social elite. But his social and religious status was complicated and undermined by his sexual activity with other men. Using this one man as the object of his case study, Puff demonstrates the importance of considering social status, sexual perception and sexual praxis when examining early modern masculinity.

¹²¹ Scott H. Hendrix, “Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirskville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 71-91. Hendrix examines how theoretical prescriptions in German conduct literature may have shaped and/or reflected lived masculinity. Hendrix identifies a multifaceted early modern German masculinity informed by a complex—often burdensome—role as head of household. Hendrix offers an exploration of the role of men’s sexuality in the formation of early German Protestant masculinity. The “sexual vulnerability” (74) of men was an important aspect of manhood and a key justification for marriage. Nevertheless, once those marriages were undertaken, men faced a plethora of responsibilities as heads of household. That status could help early modern men demonstrate complete masculinity, (78-81) and marital relationships could prove essential for licit sexual expression (74-7). Moreover, legitimate marital sexual expression was presented as a component of manhood, even for devout pastors (77-8). He also points out that the masculinity revealed in the pastoral and conduct literature which make up his principle sources, is a patriarchal masculinity that included moral guidance, material and emotional support, and sexual expression within marriage. (86-9). For an outstanding study of the relationship between catechesis and the inculcation of patriarchal ideals across confessional lines, see Robert James Bast, *Honor Your Fathers: Catechisms and the Emergence of a Patriarchal Ideology in Germany, 1400-1600* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). For examination of the role of father and head of household, see chapter two (53-107).

¹²² For a general examination of the historiography of early modern English masculinity, see chapter 1, section II. The best overviews of early modern English masculinity are Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour Sex and Marriage* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), and Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). For examinations of medieval masculinity, two of the most outstanding works are Derek Neal, *The Masculine Self in Late Medieval England*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), and Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men: Formations of Masculinity in Late Medieval Europe* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003).

¹²³ Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo, eds. *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2013). This collection includes contributions to, and analyses of, major trends in theoretical gender scholarship. In addition, major lines of historiographical debate in subjects like religious and gender identity, gender and the law, and witchcraft scholarship are explored. This collection has an impressive geographic and chronological breadth. With chapters analyzing aspects of gender in early modern England, Germany, Romania, Russia and Scandinavia, its range is truly impressive. For the contributions pertaining to Scandinavian

confessional lines and geographic distances, certain commonalities in Protestant patriarchal masculinity become apparent. Though variations existed, the role of head of a patriarchal household—with all of that role’s social, economic, and spiritual responsibilities—was central to the formation of elite masculinity in many Protestant areas, including England.¹²⁴ For those at the very top of the social hierarchy—noblemen—before they could assume their roles as heads of household, masters of estates, and politicians, they had to be educated. Education was an essential part of making a young man into an erudite, moral, Protestant nobleman. The form and content of a young nobleman’s education did more than simply fill his program of study. It also influenced the kind of nobleman he became and the model of masculinity he followed. From its early stages, an aristocratic education shaped the ways socially elite budding nobleman saw themselves and their world. In teaching boys how to be successful noblemen, education showed them how to perform their duties and enact their gender. The enactment of socially appropriate aristocratic masculinity influenced a nobleman’s political and social success or failure at court. Moreover, the version of masculinity a nobleman favored—whether humanistic or chivalric in its inclination—shaped his self-presentation, as well as his social and political choices. How the

gender, see: Rikka Miettinen “Gendered Suicide in Early Modern Sweden and Finland” (173-190) Raisa Maria Toivo, “Male Witches and Masculinity in Early Modern Finnish Witchcraft Trials,” (137-152); Mari Välimäki, “Responsibility of a Seducer?: Men, Women, and Breach of Promise in Early Modern Swedish Legislation,” (191-204).

¹²⁴ Much of the prominent conduct literature of the early seventeenth century (such as the works of Robert Cleaver and John Dod, William Gouge, and Richard Braithwaite) were often directed at a gentry audience. However, these treatises frequently encouraged their readers to cultivate virtues such as piety, self-control, erudition, and Christian leadership. In so doing, many of the most influential treatises of the early seventeenth century echoed earlier educational treatises—aimed more explicitly at nobility—like that of Thomas Elyot and Roger Ascham. For the purposes of this study, I use “patriarchal masculinity” to indicate the ideal model of gender performance prescribed for those with the social, cultural, and political status associated with being a patriarch. The responsibilities of head of household, and the expectations of social, moral, and political leadership defined the parameters of patriarchal masculinity. On an ideal level, this model of patriarchal masculinity—with its implication of social and political leadership—applied to both the gentry and the aristocracy. Despite the different social and political expectations associated with gentry and aristocratic men, the virtues praised in association with their leadership roles were similar. Although an affluent member of the gentry might only serve as the head of a large household while an aristocrat often served as a patron and the head of a political network, the contours of idealized patriarchal masculinity for each group were much the same.

sons of noblemen were educated profoundly influenced what kind of men, and what kind of magnates, they later became.

II. Nurturing a Nobleman, Shaping a Scholar: Elite Education and Ideology in the Works of Thomas Elyot and Roger Ascham

In 1531, Sir Thomas Elyot provided one of the first comprehensive education treatises written in English, *The Book Named the Governor*. In this treatise ostensibly addressed to Henry VIII, Elyot provided an overview of a Renaissance humanist curriculum for a nobleman. This erudite nobleman, or prince, was to read Greco-Roman classics and be a physically fit knight as well. Exercises like hunting and dancing¹²⁵ were paired with copious study.¹²⁶ To Elyot, the well-rounded knight also had to have as much virtue as he had erudition. He discussed the importance of prudence—and the subtypes of prudence—at length.¹²⁷ He even held up Henry VIII's father, Henry VII as an embodiment of a type of prudence—"circumspection":

What more clere mirror or spectacle can we desire of circumspection, than kyng Henry the seuenth, of most noble memorie, father unto our mooste dradde soueraigne lord, who worthy renown, like the sonne [sun] in the middes of his sphere, shyneth and euer shall shyne in mennes remembrance?¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Thomas Elyot, *The Book Named the Governor* (1531), (London: Everyman's Library, 1907) 72-99. For a discussion of Elyot's examination of dance as a moral metaphor, see John M. Major, "The Moralization of Dance in Elyot's Governour," *Studies in the Renaissance* 5 (1958): 27-36.

¹²⁶ For excellent analysis of medieval and early modern education, see the works of Nicholas Orme, *Education in Early Tudor England: Magdalen College Oxford and Its School, 1480-1540* (Oxford: Magdalen College, 1998); *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London: Hambledon, 1989); *English Schools in the Middle Ages* (London: Methuen, 1973); *From Childhood to Chivalry: The Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy 1066-1530* (New York: Methuen, 1988).

¹²⁷ For Elyot's elucidation of the eight "branches" of prudence, see Elyot, 95-107.

¹²⁸ Elyot, 103.

In a treatise devoted to (and ostensibly directed to) Henry VIII,¹²⁹ this may have served as a gentle reminder for the son to follow his father's fiscally conservative example, and not deplete the royal coffers with expensive war efforts. Whether or not this was the case, Elyot's emphasis on erudition and restraint would be echoed nearly two generations later, by scholar Roger Ascham, who served Henry VIII's daughter Elizabeth I. Ascham was a Protestant humanist scholar, who fully devoted his life to learning. Ascham encouraged the reading of Greco-Roman classics, such as Sophocles, Julius Caesar and Cicero. Ever the scholar, he praised knowledge gained through education and reading more than knowledge gained from experience. He argued that the finest, greatest men, even among the nobility, should cultivate extensive learning. Even those who were best suited to knightly training should pursue erudition to make them the best possible men they could be. This tension between scholarly education and martial training is, on one level, a tension between educational priorities. Time spent cultivating erudition could take away from time noblemen could spend becoming martial knights. But, the implications of this conflict in priorities reached beyond educational choices. It also indicated the precedence Ascham gave to the humanist model of manhood. A humanist-influenced education did not necessarily produce a nobleman who favored humanist masculinity. But, the educational choices of schoolmasters, tutors, and the noble fathers who employed them, could—at the very least—incline young noblemen toward a model of masculinity.

In Ascham's estimation, fathers were obliged to provide a proper education for their sons for the good of the family and the realm. Framing his discussion in paternalistic terms, Ascham depicted the obligation of the elite to provide education as an obligation for political authorities and fathers:

¹²⁹ Elyot, *Proheme*, xxxi.

And euen as a faire stone requireth to be sette in the finest gold with the best workmanshyps, or else it loseth much of the Grace and price, euen so, excellencye in learning, and namely Divinity, ioined with a comely personage, is a marvelous jewel in the world. And how can a comely body be better employed than to serve the fairest exercise of God's greatest gift, and that is learning. But commonly the fairest bodies are bestowed for the foulest purposes. I would it were not so, and with examples herein I will not meddle; yet I wish that those should mind it and meddle with it which have most occasion to look to it, as good and wise fathers should do, and greatest authority to amend it, as good and wise magistrates ought to do; and yet I will not let openly to lament the unfortunate case of learning herein.¹³⁰

For Ascham, the “unfortunate case of learning” [in England] was often caused by *who* fathers sometimes chose to put toward learning. The best, fittest, most able men *should* be put to learning, but according to Ascham, this was unfortunately not always the case:

For if a father have four sons, three fair and well formed both mind and body, the fourth wretched, lame, and deformed, his choice shall be to put the worst to learning as one good enough to become a scholar. I have spent the most part of my life in the university, and therefore I can bear good witness that many fathers commonly do thus...¹³¹

In addition to a humanist curriculum, Ascham believed that gentle admonishment was the most pedagogically useful tactic, and discouraged beating, which he believed was counterproductive. For Ascham, a schoolmaster should be rigorous, but kind and gentle.¹³²

Nevertheless, elite Englishmen were in dire need of rigorous, disciplined education. Criticizing the lack of discipline and deference to parents found in young Englishmen, Ascham held up praiseworthy examples from antiquity. Discussing his perceptions of the ancient Persians, he wrote:

¹³⁰ Ascham, 28.

¹³¹ Ascham, 28.

¹³² Ascham, 20-21; 34-38.

We have lack in England of such good order as the old noble Persians so carefully used, whose children to the ages of twenty-one year were brought up in learning and exercises of labor, and that in such place where they should neither see that was uncomely nor hear that was unhonest. Yea, a young gentleman was never free to go where he would and do what he list himself, but under the keep and counsel of some grave governor, until he was either married or called to bear some office in the commonwealth.¹³³

Ascham advocated controlling young men with a disciplined, regimented daily routine until his time and energy was taken by marriage or state service. Until men were occupied with marriage and/or employment, they could not be left to their own devices—hence his praise of a young man having a “grave governor”—a trustworthy individual who could insure that young men stayed out of trouble and avoided any kind of youthful indiscretion. On the need to control young men, especially from ages 17-27, he anticipated the conduct literature of the next generation. Ascham’s presentation of young men would later be echoed in the work of Richard Braithwaite’s depiction of youth. Ascham described young men on the cusp of full manhood thusly:

Indeed from seven to seventeen young gentlemen commonly be carefully enough brought up, but from seventeen to seven-and-twenty (the most dangerous time of all a man’s life and most slippery to stay well in) they have commonly the rein of all license in their own hand, and specially such as do live in the court. And that which is most to be marveled at, commonly the wisest and also best men be found the fondest fathers in this behalf. And if some good father would seek some remedy herein, yet the mother (if the house hold of our lady) had rather, yea, and will, too, have her son cunning and bold in making him live trimly [elegantly] when he is young, than by learning and travail to be able to serve his prince and country both wisely and in peace and stoutly in war when he is old.¹³⁴

¹³³ Ascham, 38.

¹³⁴ Ascham, 40. For examination of Braithwaite, see section III below.

Young men in the prime of youth were living in the most dangerous or “slippery” time of their lives. Opportunities for licentiousness and impiety abounded. Young men of means, living at court, were living through these most dangerous years in an environment that could easily make things worse. Ideally, young noblemen were to be kept under careful supervision until they could control themselves and serve as worthy examples of nobility.¹³⁵ To Ascham, noble fathers had a responsibility to train and educate their sons to fulfill their responsibilities to the commonwealth.

The fault is in yourselves, ye noblemen’s sons, and therefore ye deserve the greater blame that the meaner men’s children come to be the wisest counselors and greatest doers in the weighty affairs of the realm. And why? For God will have it so of his providence because ye will have it no otherwise by your negligence.¹³⁶

Despite his devotion to learning, Ascham did encourage disciplined, erudite noblemen to also be well-rounded. In a manner of speaking, all work and no play could lead to a very dull nobleman:

Therefore I would wish that, beside some time, fitly appointed and constantly kept, to increase by reading the knowledge of tongues and learning, young gentlemen should use and delight in all courtly exercises and gentleman-like pastimes.¹³⁷

Although he advocated a well-rounded nobleman, Ascham was critical of certain elements of chivalry represented in medieval literature. There is a clear indication that these “gentleman-like pastimes” did not include reading “*Morte D’Arthur*.”

In our forefather’s time, when papistry as a standing pool covered and overflowed all England, few books were read in our tongue, saving certain books of chivalry, as they said, for pastime and pleasure, which, as some say, were made in monasteries by idle monks and wanton canons; as one for example, *Morte Darthur*, the whole pleasure of which book standeth in two special points—open

¹³⁵ For a discussion of youth, life-stages and early manhood, see Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, 54-58.

¹³⁶ Ascham, 40.

¹³⁷ Ascham, 52.

manslaughter and bold bawdry; in which those be counted as noblest knights that do kill most men without any quarrel and commit foulest adulteries by subtlest shifts...¹³⁸

Ascham portrayed the many components of chivalry (or at least one of its most significant literary representations) as irreligious, impious, and brutal. Far from being paragons of nobility, these characters were savage and filled with vice. How much of this can be attributed to a bookish scholar's antipathy to glorious knights is difficult to determine, but at the very least, the devout Protestant scholar paired the dramatic action of *Morte D'Arthur* with the perceived laxity of monks and perceived impiety of Catholics. According to Ascham, the noblemen of England had a responsibility to be examples of (Protestant) piety, virtue, and erudition.

For noblemen who did not measure up to Ascham's standards of education and erudition, Ascham took a double opportunity to shame his noble (male) audience while simultaneously praising Queen Elizabeth as a scholarly monarch:

It is your shame (I speak to you all, you young gentlemen of England) that one maid should go beyond you all in excellency of learning and knowledge of divers tongues. Point forth six of the best-given gentlemen of this court, and all they together show not so much good will, spend not so much time, bestow not so many hours, daily, orderly, and constantly, for the increase of learning and knowledge as doth the Queen's Majesty herself.¹³⁹

As the leaders of the realm, noblemen had a responsibility to serve as examples of piety and erudition. After all, if "one maid" could live up to these standards, (never mind that the maid in question had the education of a Renaissance monarch), then these noble *men* should meet or exceed these standards. After all, elite men—especially those with august lineage—had to serve as examples for all of England:

¹³⁸ Ascham, 68-69.

¹³⁹ Ascham, 56.

Take heed, therefore, ye great ones in the court, yea though ye be the greatest of all, take heed what ye do, take heed how ye live. For as you great ones use to do, so all mean men love to do. You be indeed makers or marrers of all men's manners within the realm.¹⁴⁰

Ascham certainly praised ancient Roman authors, and the learning of classical, elegant, Ciceronian Latin. The second book of his treatise is exclusively devoted to learning "The Latin Tongue" as a means of learning and self-improvement. Despite his love of classical Roman authors, he was far-less accepting of contemporary Italians. He discouraged travel into Italy and extensive contact with Italians because of his fear of the dangers of the "Italianated Englishmen". In this respect, Ascham anticipated William Cecil's advice to his son Robert to avoid sending sons to Italy.¹⁴¹ In *The Schoolmaster* an image of early modern Italy as a proverbial den of iniquity, filled with all manner of vice, emerged. This presentation was placed in stark contrast to the virtue of ancient Rome:

Virtue once made that country mistress over all the world. Vice now maketh that country slave to them that before were glad to serve it. All men seeth it; they themselves confess it, namely, such as be best and wisest among them. For sin, by lust and vanity, hath and doth breed up everywhere common contempt of God's word, private contention in many families, open factions in every city, and so, making themselves bound to vanity and vice at home, they are content to bear the yoke of serving strangers abroad. Italy now is not the Italy that it was wont to be and therefore now not so fit a place as some do count it for a young man to fetch either wisdom or honesty from thence. For surely it will make other but bad scholar that be so ill masters to themselves.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Ascham, 57.

¹⁴¹ See below.

¹⁴² Ascham, 61.

Just to make sure that his audience understood all the dangers of the decadent peninsula, Ascham enumerated the dangerous—potentially infectious—characteristic of the Italianated Englishmen.

He was apparently the first of his countrymen to do so.¹⁴³

If some yet do not well understand what is an Englishman Italianated, I will plainly tell him: he that by living and traveling in Italy bringeth home into England out of Italy the religion, the learning, the policy, the experience, the manners of Italy. That is to say, for the religion, papistry or worse, for learning, less, commonly, than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living.¹⁴⁴

In a treatise with a mix of proto-national pride, xenophobia, and devotion to learning, Ascham sketched a plan for educating English noblemen. Regional and national studies have revealed how national Renaissances had different cultural characteristics.¹⁴⁵ Elyot and Ascham

¹⁴³ George B. Parks provides insightful (if slightly older) analysis of the Italianate Englishmen. George B. Parks, "The First Italianate Englishmen," *Studies in the Renaissance* 8 (1961): 197-216. Parks argues that Italianate manners were strongly influential at the Italian court throughout the sixteenth century. Moreover, it was only after 1570, in the wake of the Norfolk rebellion and the queen's excommunication by the Pope that "*Italian* came to signify 'dangerous'" (199). Parks also makes the point that although Italy became associated with danger, vice, and sin, the perception of Italy as a center of refined manners remained throughout the sixteenth century (199). "We have arrived by stages at the concept of the treacherous (and papist) Italian and Italianate, as distinct from the Ascham concept of the irreligious and immoral Italianate. Yet I cannot find that Italianate thereafter carried consistently the sinister meaning. For one thing, the Duke of Norfolk, principle if half-hearted traitor [in association with the Northern Rebellion], could by no means be called Italianate; for another, the horror of the St. Bartholomew massacre in the summer of 1572 must have eclipsed any antipathy to a remote Italy. Indeed I suggest tentatively that *Italianate* reverted generally to its meaning of corrupt in manners or morals, while *Italian* kept the meaning treacherous" (214). "The first literary application of the term to persons was made by Roger Ascham in *The Schoolmaster*." (200). Though he identifies Ascham as the first "literary application" of the concept of the Italianate Englishmen, he contends that an increase in travel by noblemen's sons to Italy likely contributed to the formation of this concept in the 1570s (207-9), especially after the Northern Rebellion of 1569, (209-11).

¹⁴⁴ Ascham, 67.

¹⁴⁵ Katherine Crawford, *The Sexual Culture of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). Within the context of sixteenth-century French politics and the literary and artistic motifs of the French Renaissance, Crawford examines the overall character of the "sexual culture" of the French Renaissance. Her analysis looks as the strong cultural influence of astrology (67-108) and Neoplatonic thought (108-151) on the development of elite early modern French gender relations. She identifies a movement away from late-medieval homosocial norms to a more heterosexual and heteronormative framework during the late French Renaissance. By the reign of Henry IV, she argues that the French monarch "asserted an aggressively heterosexual masculinity" (22). See also: Katherine Crawford, "The Politics of Promiscuity: Masculinity and Heroic Representation at the Court of Henry IV," *French Historical Studies* 26, no. 2 (2003): 225-52.

offered guidelines for educating an ideal *English* nobleman. But after years of education, these men were expected to undertake another role that was essential to their social position and masculinity: the role of husband.

III. Prescribing the Perfect Patriarch: The Ideal Husband in Late-Sixteenth and Early-Seventeenth Century Conduct Literature

In early modern England, before men married, their masculinities were sometimes depicted as uncontained and their energies, both sexual and otherwise, as needing restraint. In his conduct manual, *The English Gentleman* (1630), Richard Braithwaite depicted young men as lust-filled and in need of productive distraction when he wrote:

Some give two reasons, why *Youth* is more subject to this illimited passion, than any other age. The first is, that natural heat or vigour, which is most predominant in *Youth*, provoking him to attempt the greatest difficulties, rather than suffer the repulse where hee affects. The second is, want of Employment...¹⁴⁶

Drawing on humoral medical theory, Braithwaite offered a picture of young men, quite literally, as young hot-headed boys with too little to do. Moreover, the tendency to “attempt the greatest difficulties” may suggest that Braithwaite perceived a desire on their part to prove their manhood. If so, this was problematic in Braithwaite's account. Young men might have been given to lust, “heat or vigour” but according to Braithwaite sating that lust could effeminize young men, undermining the manhood they sought to prove. Braithwaite's portrayal of the effeminizing power of lust typifies

¹⁴⁶ Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman* (1630), 27.

a concern found in conduct literature of the period that yielding to lust weakened men and undermined their manhood. Young men, whose blood literally and figuratively ran hot, were especially susceptible to this danger. According to Braithwaite, idleness only increased the chances of transgression. However, the men that “failed” to live up to the ideal of patriarchal manhood advanced by Braithwaite may have been *asserting* their masculinities. These may have been oppositional articulations of masculinity for those who had not yet achieved—or believed they might never achieve—patriarchal manhood. Young men in a variety of social positions and geographic locations defined themselves and their masculinities in stark contrast to the expectations of patriarchal masculinity.¹⁴⁷

Although these oppositional models of masculinity were very real and influential in early modern Europe, authors of conduct treatises only acknowledged these oppositional behaviors and masculinities by criticizing those who enacted them. Instead of giving into lust and pursuing illicit sex, (which may have affirmed youthful masculinity within oppositional paradigms), Braithwaite encouraged distraction from effeminizing youthful lust when he claimed “exercise draweth the mind from

¹⁴⁷ For oppositional masculinity and fears of youthful misrule, see, Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 93-126. For another example in a Protestant context, see Merry Wiesner, “‘Wandervogels’ Women: Journeymen’s Concepts of Masculinity in Early Modern Germany,” *Journal of Social History* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1991): 767-782. Wiesner offers an analysis of a distinctive mode of masculinity that was often in contrast to patriarchal masculinity. As journeymen became less likely to achieve the status of householder in the sixteenth century, journeymen developed a distinctive masculinity separate from, and in opposition to, many of the ideals of patriarchal masculinity, (passim). She identifies a high degree of cross-confessional agreement on the importance of the patriarchal household, and the opposition of journeymen’s masculinity to that patriarchal model, (776). For a discussion of oppositional masculinity in a Spanish context, see Allyson M. Poska, “A Married Man is a Woman: Negotiating Masculinity in Early Modern Northwestern Spain,” in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 3-20. Poska argues that for peasant men in northwestern Spain, masculinity and manhood was frequently defined by both geographical migration and illicit sexual activity. While sexual activity before and outside of marriage did not conform to idealized elite norms of masculinity, it served as a vital way for men of low socioeconomic status to affirm their masculinities. Poska’s analysis is confined to northwestern Spain, but they conform with the conclusions of historians looking at non-elite masculinities in earlier periods and different geographical areas.

effeminacie."¹⁴⁸ With lust cast as potentially emasculating, Braithwaite emphasized the need for employment and finding one's vocation, which he defined in a revealing passage:

The *Vocation of a Gentleman*... is either *publike* or *private*. *Publike*, when employed in affaires of State, either at home or abroad... *Private* when in domestike busnesse he is detained, as in ordering his household; or if not as yet attained to the name of *Householder*, in labouring to know such things as may ripen his understanding when he comes unto it.¹⁴⁹

Braithwaite's fairly straightforward explanation of public and private employment suggests the importance of the status of householder, or head of household. All this employment and productive work in youth was implicitly directed at acquisition of this status and equipping him with skills and knowledge that would "ripen his understanding" for that purpose. This need for "ripening" and maturation suggests a strong link between status as householder and full manhood—complete masculinity. But integral to the acquisition of the status of householder (and thus full manhood) was attainment of another status: husbandhood.¹⁵⁰

Given the link between marriage, perceptions of adulthood, and full masculinity, it is not surprising that selection of a wife receives considerable attention in substantial manuals like those of Braithwaite, Cleaver and Dod, and Gouge. It is even

¹⁴⁸ Braithwaite, 27-28.

¹⁴⁹ Braithwaite, 136.

¹⁵⁰ See Gina Hausknecht, "'So Many Shipwracke for Want of Better Knowledge': The Imaginary Husband in Stuart Marriage Advice," *The Huntington Library Quarterly* 64, no. ½ (2001): 81-106: Hausknecht depicts a change in the nature of marriage literature and a change in the image and constitution of a husband (and what it means to be a husband) in seventeenth century. The author presents a late sixteenth century marriage literature dominated by didactic conduct books and sermon literature, often aimed at a relatively small literate, elite audience. She contrasts this with a pre-Civil War seventeenth century literature that offers a more secularized, less sermon image of marriage and husbandhood which was aimed at an expanding literary customer base drawn from a wider social demographic. While the author does not disagree with the proliferation of the idea of companionate marriage often espoused in Puritan sermon literature, she attempts to paint a more nuanced picture of the expanding marriage literature genre and the model(s) of masculinity advanced within that genre. Moreover, men were often depicted as immature or incomplete—as having incomplete masculinity—before marriage.

understandable that authors such as Alexander Niccholes devote entire treatises to wife selection.¹⁵¹ But the treatment of choosing a wife in brief pieces of advice literature can also be quite revealing. Elizabethan statesman William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley penned a brief but revealing contribution to the genre which survives in manuscript in British Library Stowe 143, and was later printed in a variety of editions, under variant titles, including *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*.¹⁵² This pamphlet succinctly encapsulated many views of the Elizabethan patriarch, on topics as diverse selection of a wife, education of children, household governance, selection of political allies, preservation of honor and even the avoidance of joking.¹⁵³ David Loades dates the composition of this pamphlet in 1582,¹⁵⁴ although it was printed in 1611, thirteen years after Burghley's death. The order of Burghley's presentation is revealing. Before he discussed household government (section 3) and selection of servants (sections 6-7), he advised his son to be extremely careful when choosing a wife. Burghley wrote:

When it shall please God, to bring the [thee] to mans Estate, vse great prouidence & circumspection in the choice of thy wife: for from thence will spring all thy future good or ill. And it is an Acc[^]on [action] like to a Stratagem in warre, where man can erre but once. If thy Estate bee good, match neere home & at leasure: if weak, then farr of [off] and quickly.¹⁵⁵

Here, Burghley described marriage (and implicitly full manhood) as the time “when it shall please God to bring [thee] to *mans* estate,” (my emphasis). Burghley told his son that it was only when one began marriage that he undertook “mans estate” and fully

¹⁵¹ Alexander Niccholes, *A Discourse of Marriage and Wiving: And the Greatest Mystery therein Contained: How to Choose a Good Wife from a Bad...* (1615).

¹⁵² William Cecil, *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*. (London, 1611). This edition is printed on one sheet. I have numbered each section for easy reference.

¹⁵³ W. Cecil, *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne*, sections 2-16.

¹⁵⁴ For the dating, see David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback ed. 2009), 208. Loades cites BL Stowe MS, CXLIII, cf. 295.

¹⁵⁵ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143 f. 100v. Printed in *Counsell*, section 2.

became a man. Given the gravity of this choice, he emphasized the potentially dire, even catastrophic repercussions of choosing poorly when searching for a wife. It was this choice that provided the basis for future good fortune, and a happy life. Selecting a (theoretically) life-long companion was placed second only to a discussion of education. Burghley was a humanist bureaucrat who emphasized the importance of education for his son and chosen political heir. The value he places on education, and the overall priorities of this succinct piece of advice literature remind readers of the humanist masculinity William Cecil lived and wished to pass on to his son. As a powerful politician and close servant to Queen Elizabeth, Burghley could have filled his advice with any number of insights on statecraft. Written for his son and political successor Robert Cecil, Burghley's brief advice could have expounded at length on the intricacies of politics. While related subjects like selection of allies and maintenance of good reputation did receive attention,¹⁵⁶ choosing a wife and running a good household are given precedence, as the foundation for a well-ordered, successful life.

Given the scope of their advice manual, compared to Burghley's short tract, it is not surprising that Cleaver and Dod devoted considerably more attention to spousal selection. Generally, their emphasis was on the reputation, public image and self-

¹⁵⁶ W. Cecil, Regarding selection of allies, BL Stowe MS 143 f.102r-v:

"Let thy kindred and Allyes be welcome to thy Table, grace them with thy countenance, and further them in all their honest Actions for by that meanes thou shalt Doubl the bond of nature, so as thou shall find them so many aduocates to plead an Apology for the [thee] behind thy Backe But shake of [off] those glow Wormes, I mean those Parasites & Sycophants, who will feed on the [thee] in the Summer of thy prosperity, but in any aduerse storme, they will shelter the [thee] no more then an Arbor in winter." Regarding reputation and popularity, BL Stowe 143 MS f.103r : "Toward thy Superiors be humble yet generous with thy Equall familiar yet respectiue. Towards thy Inferiors show much Humblety & some familiarity as to bow thy bow thy Body to stretch forth thy hand & uncover they Head & such like popular Complements The first prepares way to thy advancem[^] the second makes the [thee] known for a man well bred the Third gains a good report which one [once] gotten is easily kept for high Humility takes such deep roote in y^e mines of the Multitude as they are easier one [won] by unprofitable curtesy then churlish benefits..."

presentation of a potential spouse. According to Cleaver and Dod, both men and women should consider six factors choosing a spouse:

So if the man be desirous to know a godly woman, or the woman would know a godly man, then let them obserue and marke these sixe points.

1. The report 2. The lookes. 3. The speech. 4. The apparell. 5. The companions. 6. And lastly, the education and bringing up... ¹⁵⁷

Note that “report” is given primacy, indicating the importance of a potential spouse's reputation.

For those on all social levels, marriage was a social as well as a personal union. It was more than simply the joining of man and wife—it was the joining of families and reputations. The reputation and social perception of a potential mate could be a profound social advantage, or a severe detriment. Moreover, the comportment and general self-presentation of a spouse is also emphasized. Although marriage was theoretically a private union between two people, choice of a partner had far-reaching effects on reputation and social status of men and women. Though Dod and Cleaver recognized the importance attractiveness or “the lookes” of a potential wife, other factors, like what she said in public and the company she kept were much more important. From the yeomen, to the magistrate, to the courtier, a spouse’s public behavior could have lasting social consequences for one’s social standing.

For those higher up the social ladder, choosing the right spouse could yield a financial windfall, or an advantageous political alliance. But for powerful families like the Dudleys, Devereuxs, or Cecils, the social and political alliances known as marriage could be double edged swords that cut both ways. As will be demonstrated, early modern courtiers often did not follow the sage advice of men like Braithwaite, Burghley, Dod and Cleaver. The political elite may have had even more need to select a good spouse and keep their lusts in check. For courtiers, a poor choice of spouse could lead to personal misery *and* political peril. For Robert Dudley, after

¹⁵⁷ Robert Cleaver and John Dod, *A Godlie Forme Of Householde Government*, (1598), 103.

the death of his first wife Amy Robsart, a relationship with Lady Douglas Sheffield, which may or may not have included a clandestine marriage was unapproved by Queen Elizabeth, and was never recognized by the crown.¹⁵⁸ In addition to the queen's extended anger toward Dudley, this led to Dudley's only surviving son being a bastard. Dudley's third marriage would produce another son, who would die in childhood. That marriage, to Lettice Knollys Devereux would be recognized by the crown as legitimate, but Lettice Dudley would never be welcome at court.¹⁵⁹ An ill-chosen match between Burghley's daughter Anne and Edward De Vere, Earl of Oxford led to an estranged marriage and an icy political relationship between the Cecils and De Veres.¹⁶⁰ Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex's extramarital affairs caused scandals at court and occasionally alienated him from the queen.¹⁶¹

The 3rd Earl of Essex would fair even worse. His first marriage would be dissolved on the grounds of impotence, amid a very public—and humiliating—scandal. Whatever his sexual difficulties, it appears that he may not have had the most upstanding wife, as she and her lover/second husband would be tried in connection with the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury.¹⁶²

¹⁵⁸ Adams, *Leicester and the Court*, 144.

¹⁵⁹ To be discussed in Chapter 3. For a discussion of Dudley's career in general, see: Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002). For a discussion of his marriage to Lettice Knollys marriages and their political consequences, see: Hammer, *Polarisation*, 33-35. For a recent account of the scandal surrounding the death of Dudley's first wife Amy Robsart, see the well-researched study written for popular audiences, by Chris Skidmore, *Death and the Virgin Queen: Elizabeth I and the Dark Scandal That Rocked the Throne* (New York: St. Martins, 2010).

¹⁶⁰ David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback ed. 2009), 218-222.

¹⁶¹ To be examined in Chapter 4. For a discussion of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex's marriage and extramarital affairs, see: Hammer, *Polarisation*, 54, 319-321; Loades, *The Cecils*, 236; and Johanna Rickman, *Love, Lust and License in Early Modern England: Illicit Sex and the Nobility* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 10, 27-68, esp. 31-32, 43, 53-5, 60-62, 84,204.

¹⁶² For a discussion of the Overbury murder, see: Miriam Allen DeFord, *The Overbury Affair: The Murder Trial that Rocked the Court of King James I* (Philadelphia: Chilton Company, 1960); Alastair James Bellany, *The Politics of Court Scandal in Early Modern England: News Culture and the Overbury Affair, 1603-1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). For a revisionist account of the scandal written for popular audiences, see: Anne Somerset, *Unnatural Murder: Poison at the Court of James I* (London: Phoenix, 1998). For an examination of the much less studied 3rd Earl, see: Vernon F. Snow, *Essex the Rebel: The Life of Robert Devereux, the Third Earl of Essex, 1591-1646* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1970).

Once a man attained the status of husband and householder, and the full social manhood that accompanied it, what was expected of him? What didactic, prescriptive ideals were put forward for men to measure themselves against? In short, what were the characteristics of the “ideal” husband? While there were a variety of mutual marriage duties that were presented as essential to the functioning of a good family,¹⁶³ many responsibilities and expectations were explicitly gendered. According to Thomas Gataker, “[The husband] must labour for holy wisdom and spirituall discretion, that hee may be fit and able to guide and gouverne in good manner and to good purpose.”¹⁶⁴ With his emphasis on “holy wisdom and spirituall discretion, Gataker encouraged the formation of the pious patriarchs. The religious and social aspects of this responsibility were intertwined—one of the main reasons such piety was needed was so that men could be good governors of their households. But how were these vaunted goals attained?

In the conduct books examined, obligation, responsibility, and fulfillment of duty are strongly emphasized in conduct literature. Broadly categorized, the ideal husband had several behavioral and affective obligations to his wife. The ideal husband was encouraged to be a loving protector, and a spiritual guide who encouraged virtue, while he admonished vice. He also faced corresponding prohibitions. The ideal husband—the prescribed perfect patriarch—was *not* to be stoic, affectively alienated, overly restrictive, autocratic, cruel or abusive. He was expected to maintain his benevolent authority and governorship of his household, or “little commonwealth.”¹⁶⁵ A husband who did not adequately balance the prescriptions and prohibitions, could, according to the conduct manuals that contained those ideals, lose his authority leading to familial and social chaos. As Richard Braithwaite wrote: “As every mans house is his Castle, so is his *family* a private Common-wealth, wherein if due government be not

¹⁶³ Thomas Gataker, *Marriage Dvities Briefly Covched Together...* (1620), 5.

¹⁶⁴ Gataker, 18.

¹⁶⁵ Braithwaite, 155.

observed, nothing but confusion is to be expected.”¹⁶⁶ Such “due government” was the duty of a responsible patriarch and an essential component of full masculinity. This was true of men of the middling sort whose homes were metaphorically their castles. It was true on a much grander scale—and in a much more literal sense—for courtiers whose homes often really *were* castles.

Let us now turn to examining each of the main characteristics and expectations of the ideal husband in some detail. Many of the responsibilities of the husband fall under the affective umbrella of loving his wife. This is a frequent theme in conduct manuals, but William Gouge's *Of Domesticall Duties*, is detailed and adamant in this regard. Evoking a common trope, Gouge wrote: “For as Christ loued his Church, *So* ought husbands to loue their wiues.”¹⁶⁷ Furthermore, he depicts the bond, connection, and relationship between husband and wife as the strongest bond, even stronger than between parent and child.¹⁶⁸ For Gouge, “*A wife, or an husband must be preferred before parents.*”¹⁶⁹ With the establishment of a new household, the couple formed a new social unit which had to be affectively differentiated from the husband and wife's natal family. With this differentiation and entry into marriage, the way was opened to full social adulthood for husband and wife. Marriage served as gateway and means to legitimate parenthood and was “the ordinarie means to make them *Masters and Mistresses.*”¹⁷⁰ Implicitly, marriage also served a gateway to full community membership (or, for the elite, community leadership). By serving as “ordinarie means to make them *Masters and Mistresses,*” married status made it socially acceptable for men and women to bear the authority of their position in their household and (potentially) in the larger community.

¹⁶⁶ Braithwaite, 155.

¹⁶⁷ William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties*, 76.

¹⁶⁸ Gouge, *Duties* 111.

¹⁶⁹ Gouge, *Duties*, 112. Unless otherwise note, italics are the author's.

¹⁷⁰ Gouge, *Duties*, 210.

The ideal husband was explicitly obligated to love his wife. He was encouraged to maintain and preserve emotional connection with his wife. For Gouge, good opinion of one's spouse was essential for a healthy marriage and household. But the reasons behind the need for good opinion seem to differ. While wives were expected to show deference and submission before their husbands, husbands were encouraged to maintain a good opinion so that, among other things, they can avoid marital estrangement and infidelity.¹⁷¹ Gouge couched potential male weakness in terms of poor rule, weakness, and sexual infidelity. Gouge's characterization of potential sexual transgression by men anticipated the potentially emasculating lust that Braithwaite located predominantly in youth. Gouge saw as much sexual danger—albeit in a different sense—once a man was married and achieved full social manhood.

In addition to fidelity, a good husband—and ideal man—had to actually love his wife. Toleration was not sufficient; a husband's affect was an essential component of his masculinity. He had specific obligations pertaining to his emotional behavior. A husband had to actively love his wife not only in the interests of establishing and maintaining a good, companionate relationship, but also so that he could meet his personal and political obligations:

Neither is it sufficient for an husband not to hate his wife, for euen the *want of loue*, though it be only a priuation, yet it is a great vice, and contrary also to the fornamed dutie of loue. Where this *want of loue* is, there can be not duty wel performed...¹⁷²

For Gouge, the husband's "dutie of loue" was not simply something he encouraged to foster for his readers' emotional edification. It was also about meeting one's obligations and doing one's duty. Lack of love was a personal "priuation," to one's spouse, but it was a "great vice" because it impaired a man's ability to fulfill obligations. Balanced, kind, even loving behavior toward

¹⁷¹ Gouge, *Duties*, 359-60.

¹⁷² Gouge, *Duties*, 352.

one's wife was a vital component of a healthy, stable marriage. The marital stability of the master and mistress of the household were indispensable to the health of the household itself. A healthy—even holy—household was the basis of the household's place and function within the larger community. As such, failure within the marital relationship could have a cascade effect leading to broader social failure. Failure as a husband could mean a bad relationship which led to personal, social, and (potentially) political failure.

The ideal husband should not be emotionally and affectively distant from his wife. One's wife should hold a special, elevated place in the husband's affection. While Gouge conceded that some men behaved stoically, he reminded readers that there was not Biblical justification for this. In fact, seen in conjunction with other remarks by Gouge, stoic husbands who failed to love their wives, and demonstrated this with word and action failed in their obligation to love their wives:

...contrary is the disposition of such husbands as haue no heat, or heart of affection in them: but Stoick-like delight no more in their owne wiues then in any other women, nor account them any dearer then others. A disposition no way warranted by the word.¹⁷³

Gouge also reminded his readers that good husbands should avoid autocratic behavior, and refrain from treating wives like servants. To do so would have been a violation of his obligations as a husband and her place within the household hierarchy. Gouge explicitly discouraged husbands "who hold their wiues vnder as if they were children or seruents, restraining them from doing any thing without their knowledge and particular expresse consent."¹⁷⁴

For Gouge, if a man had chosen a good and trustworthy wife, as the husband he then had to show her trust, and facilitate her role of justified authority within the household. And as,

¹⁷³ Gouge, *Duties*, 362

¹⁷⁴ Gouge, *Duties*, 368.

according to Gouge, the king needed his Privy Council with proper authority to govern well,¹⁷⁵ the husband needed the help of a wife endowed with proper authority to help govern his household. For a husband to unjustifiably undermine his wife's authority and position within the hierarchy could undermine *his* authority. That authority was granted him because of his hierarchical and patriarchal position, but within the context of this prescriptive ideal, the husband had to continually prove himself worthy. Proving their worth as husbands by performing their duties as heads of household was one way in which men could continually perform and reaffirm their own masculinity. Those who failed to prove their worth and do their duty risked losing the authority of their position and being socially emasculated. Gouge admonished his readers that husbands could not arbitrarily impose their authority without risking its loss:

Some [husbands] thinke it a glory to command what they list; and thinke that there is no prooffe of their authoritie, and of their wiues subjection, but in such things vpon their own will, without any further ground or reason, they command. If such husbands meet with confronts; if though they command much, they finde not answerable performance, they may thanke themselues, who runne the ready course to haue their authoritie contemned and euen troden vnder foot.¹⁷⁶

Gouge's ideal husbands could not be arbitrary or volatile. They had to show themselves worthy of the authority of their position by continually governing themselves and their households well. A husband who demonstrated that he was too harsh, cruel, or capricious ran the risk of losing his authority, even having it crushed or “troden vnder foot.”

An ideal husband could not brutishly impose his will. To do so could show a lack of self-control. This was problematic, since the ability to control and govern one's household required ability to control oneself. Moreover, since arbitrary, cruel actions are contrary to husbandly love,

¹⁷⁵ Gouge, *Duties*, 353.

¹⁷⁶ Gouge, *Duties*, 377-378.

they could lead to household despotism and husbandly tyranny: "Their [husbands'] place is the place of *authoritie*, which without loue will soone turne into *tyrannie*."¹⁷⁷ A tyrannical husband exercised too much authority, exercised it badly, or arbitrarily. As such, he was a social and personal failure. Having not lived up to this prescribed role, his reputation and masculinity was undermined. Moreover, he exercised authority without love, which was an essential duty of the ideal husband:

If he [a husband] abuse his authoritie, he turneth the edge and point of his sword amisse: instead of holding it ouer his wife for her protection, he turneth it into her bowels for her destruction, and so manifesteth thereby more hatred then loue.¹⁷⁸

A husband that abused his authority represented an inversion of the ideal husband put forward in prescriptive literature (like Gouge's manual). Instead of fulfilling his obligation to safeguard her and being a protective sword-bearer, Gouge wrote that one who abused authority "turneth the edge and point of his sword amisse." An overly authoritarian husband abused his power and inverted the affective expectations and obligation he had toward his wife: to love and protect her. Gouge invoked a gruesome image of potential disembowelment to make the point that although the husband was given authority over his wife by virtue of his position, abuse of that position—and the authority that goes along with it—could bring disaster. His use of this particularly violent image was used for more than dramatic rhetorical effect. Inversion of the protective sword, abuse of the "sword" of household authority, and the potentially life-threatening injuries to one's wife (i.e., disemboweling), are all images invoked by Gouge to illustrate the personal and social calamity that could come from an authoritarian—or even abusive—husband. One who abused his authority not only failed in his private, personal, and religious duty to love his

¹⁷⁷ Gouge, *Duties*, 351.

¹⁷⁸ Gouge, *Duties*, 353.

wife—he also failed in his social duty to be a good enough husband to be worthy of his authority. Being unworthy of authority of head of household could explicitly undermine social position (and masculinity), since a man unable or unworthy to rule his own house was unworthy to rule anywhere else. In the words of Robert Cleaver and John Dod: “it is impossible for a man to vnderstand to gouerne the common wealth, that doth not know to rule his owne house, or order his own person, so that he that knoweth not to gouerne, deserueth not to raigne.”¹⁷⁹

For husbands who moved from abuse of authority to outright physical abuse, Gouge had harsher criticism:

Contrary are the furious, spightfull actions of many unkind husbands (*heads too heady*), whose fauours are buffets, blowes, strokes& stripes: wherein they are worse then the venemous viper. For the viper for his mates sake casteth out his poison: and wilt thou, o husband, in respect of that neere vnion which is betwixt thee and thy wife, lay aside thy fiercenesse and cruelty?¹⁸⁰

Gouge calls these men “heads too heady.” To him, they had abused power, position, and their wives. Gouge maintained that these undisciplined, who strike at those they have a duty to love were more dangerous, and viler, than “venemous vipers”. Gouge implies that by not avoiding spousal cruelty and abuse, such husbands spread their “poison” harming their wives and themselves. With his selection of the metaphor of a poisonous viper, Gouge could be playing on diabolical associations with serpentine imagery.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁹ Robert Cleaver and John Dod, *A Godlie Forme of Householde Government*, 16.

¹⁸⁰ Gouge, *Duties*, 389.

¹⁸¹ For an excellent analysis of perceptions of legitimate and illegitimate expressions of anger, see Linda A. Pollock, “Anger and the Negotiation of Relationships in Early Modern England,” *The Historical Journal* 47, no. 3 (September, 2004): 567-590. For an overview of the literary presentation of masculine emotion, see Jennifer C. Vaught, *Masculinity and Emotion in Early Modern English Literature* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2008). For an insightful review of the literature on the history of emotion, see: Barbara H. Rosenwein, “Worrying about Emotions in History,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 821-845. Rosenwein demonstrates the need for more nuanced analyses of emotion in medieval and early modern cultures. She concludes her review with a brief discussion of the permeable, overlapping, “emotional communities” that medieval and early modern people inhabited (844-845). She further develops and explores this concept in her monograph, *Emotional Communities in the Early Middle Ages* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006), *passim*.

Earlier in his work, during his discussion of the importance of good opinion toward one's wife—to avoid alienation of affection and potential male infidelity—Gouge wrote:

This bad opinion of their wiues is a cause that their hearts are cleane remoued from their owne, and set vpon strange flesh: whereby the deuill gaineth what he desireth, that is, to put asunder such as God hath joyned together...¹⁸²

Since Gouge believed a diabolical foothold can be gained simply with alienation of affection, perhaps Gouge invoked devilish imagery to convey the danger of a cruel husband who poisons what is supposed to be his closest relationship. Whether or not the diabolical connotations were deliberately deployed, Gouge still presented such husbands as men who poisoned their spousal relationship (and implicitly their household) from within.

But, if a husband was not stoic, autocratic, cruel or abusive, and was not himself a threat to his wife and his house, he still retained a plethora of positive duties. The duty to love has already been discussed, but the ideal husband also protected his household from physical and spiritual threats. Husbands were to serve as spiritual guides, ready to admonish wives and encourage virtue. One husbandly flaw that threatened this obligation was weak-willed timidity. When discussing such negligent husbands, Gouge maintained:

contrary is a seruile and timorous mind of many husbands, who are loth to offend, and (as they thinke) to prouoke their wiues; and thereupon chuse rather to let them continue to sinne, then tell them of it. Wherein they both dishonour their place...¹⁸³

No matter how humble the ideal husband might be, he still had to be a spiritually protective, pious patriarch. Gouge revealed the perceived dangers of timid husbands who feared their wives. Such men undermined their masculinities and hurt their honor. Firstly, by being afraid of their wives, they compromised their ideal role of their wife's “head”. Because such men

¹⁸² Gouge, *Duties*, 360.

¹⁸³ Gouge, *Duties*, 379.

behaved in a servile manner, subordinating themselves to one over whom they were theoretically supposed to have authority, they were negligent in their role as spiritual guide. Moreover, such husbands were implicitly emasculated and dishonored by their “servile and timorous mind.” Excessively timid or scolded husbands could not retain the ability to effectively reproach wives’ behavior, and this was an essential responsibility of a faithful husband. Gouge maintained:

[the husband] should reprove her: for this is an especiall meanes to draw her from those sinnes, wherein otherwise shee might liue and lie, yea and die also; and so liue, lie, and die vnder Gods wrath: out of which miserie and wretchednesse to free a wife is as great token of loue, as to pull her out of the water when she is in danger of drowning , or out of the fire when she is in danger of burning.¹⁸⁴

While this is far from fire-and-brimstone preaching, Gouge reminded his readers that the responsibility of the husband as head of household included providing for the spiritual well-being of everyone in his care, especially his wife. Here Gouge implied that the husband ultimately bore some responsibility for her sin, her salvation, and the well-being of her soul. As such, he had to provide for her spiritual edification and protect her from spiritual threats:

For her [a wife's] *Soule*, meanes of spirituall edification must be provided, and those both priuate and publicke. [...] An husband as a master of a family must provide these for the good of his whole house, but as an husband, in speciall for the good of his wife: for to his wife, as well as to the whole house he is a King, a Priest, and a Prophet.¹⁸⁵

Gouge issued a tall order, though not a surprising one, given his distinctly Protestant outlook. The husband was implored to function as symbolic “King, Priest and Prophet.” This placed him in a powerful position, where appropriate (Protestant) piety was paramount.¹⁸⁶ He might have been a figurative “king, priest, and prophet” to his own “little commonwealth” but his

¹⁸⁴ Gouge, *Duties*, 379.

¹⁸⁵ Gouge, *Duties*, 397.

¹⁸⁶ For influential studies of the importance of the patriarchal household in Reformation—albeit with different emphases and conclusions—see Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983) and Lyndal Roper’s classic study: *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

metaphorical crown would be tarnished and his vestments tattered if he failed to protect his household from flesh-and-blood priests and other spiritual threats:

If she be seduced and inticed [...] by any evil instruments of the deuill, as Iesuits, Priests, Friers, profane, blasphemous, laciuious, or riotous persons; his care must be either to keepe them away that they come not at her, or to put them away from her so soone as he can: he may not suffer them to harbour in his house.¹⁸⁷

Here, Gouge both showed his Protestant religious worldview by casting Jesuits and priests as diabolical instruments, and reiterated the household's status as a privileged physical and social space. On a social level, the husband was expected to protect his wife's reputation, due in part to the fact that their reputations and social positions were intrinsically connected: "If she is vniustly slandered, he is to maintain her credit and reputation as much as his owne..."¹⁸⁸ This points yet again to the importance of men finding an appropriate wife with good reputation and defending their wives' reputations as though their lives depended on it. Men had to do this for the simple reason that their own reputations, their masculinity, and their social "lives" *did* depend on protecting their wives' reputations as much as their own. Finally, this ideal husband must be an all-around physical protector as well:

What other mischiefe soeuer is intended or practiced against her, he must be a tower of defence to protect her... and that not only against strangers without the house, but also against children and seruents in the house.¹⁸⁹

The image of the ideal husband that emerges from this examination is one who was a "tower of defence," a spiritual guide, and a governor of his household, which was a microcosm of the English commonwealth itself. Nevertheless, this ideal existed in the prescriptive literature alongside several images of men who failed as head of household and husband: the weak-willed, dominated, fearful husband, or the cruel, arbitrary, vicious man who abused his authority, or

¹⁸⁷ Gouge, *Duties*, 409.

¹⁸⁸ Gouge, *Duties*, 409.

¹⁸⁹ Gouge, *Duties*, 409.

even the emotionally detached stoic who fails in his Christian duty to love his wife. The conduct literature examined enumerated many ways to fail as a husband and head of household¹⁹⁰ along with numerous requirements just to approach the prescribed ideal. These prominent conduct books show a pronounced preoccupation with earning, deserving, maintaining, and possibly losing authority. Moreover, the status of husband and householder was essential for the demonstration and expression of idealized full manhood. The presence of such specifically articulated prescriptions, with a significant degree of commonality suggests that a cultural anxiety may be reflected in the construction of ideal masculinity. Susan Amussen may be correct in contending “the energy that went into defining proper masculinity on literary and theoretical levels in late Elizabethan and Jacobean England betrays its artificiality.”¹⁹¹ Amussen argues for a comparatively sudden change in the articulation of masculinity from ca. 1560-1640. This coincides with a period of increased production of hospitality-related conduct literature identified by Felicity Heal.¹⁹² This literature revealed the contours of ideal manners *and* ideal manhood. For those who sought to live up to the ideals of patriarchal masculinity, manners and manhood were decidedly connected—masculinity was not an intrinsic property. For socially elite early modern Englishmen, manhood was a personal and public performance of proper patriarchy. Manhood had to be demonstrated, lived, and proven, repeatedly. In order to demonstrate one’s manhood, requisite social achievements (like being a head of household) were essential. However, some adherence to ideal behavioral codes was also essential.

¹⁹⁰ For an excellent analysis of one such spectacular failure, see Cynthia B. Herrup, *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

¹⁹¹ Susan Dwyer Amussen, “‘The Part of the Christian Man’: The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern England,” in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England*, eds. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 214.

¹⁹² Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1990). Also see Heal’s “The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England,” *Past & Present* 102 (February 1984): 66-93. Heal identifies an increased production of conduct and advice literature pertaining to hospitality across genres from “between the 1580s and 1630s” relative to the period immediately before and after, (68).

This can compliment the work of scholars like Laura Gowing, who has identified pronounced anxiety about domestic and gender order revealed in court cases, and Anne-Marie Kilday, who has revealed the gendered perceptions associated with specific types of crime.¹⁹³ Finally, it may reaffirm the work of scholars like Fletcher and Breitenberg. Perhaps early modern English masculinities did have an element of endemic anxiety if anxiety can be seen even in the idealized presentations of masculinity and husbandhood. For literate men in the middle and upper echelons of Elizabethan society, the ideals of husbandhood found in conduct literature may have appealed to men who enacted different models of masculinity. Whether elite Elizabethans were more influenced by erudite humanist masculinity exemplified by William and Robert Cecil, or tended to perform their gender along more chivalric lines, they were expected to live up to the ideals of husbandhood and patriarchal head of household. As one of the broadest matrices of idealized masculinity, the model of the ideal husband both contained and reflected elements from chivalric and humanist masculinities. A good husband had to be an emotionally engaged, wise spiritual guide. At the same time, he had to maintain the safety of his household by remaining a physically and spiritually protective patriarch. Many noblemen who had to be both husbands and courtiers were influenced by the idealized model of masculinity which most strongly emphasized martial protection and prowess: the courtier-knight.

¹⁹³ See Laura Gowing *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); and “Women, Status and the Popular Culture of Dishonor,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 225-234, and Anne-Marie Kilday, “‘That Women Are But Men’s Shadows’: Examining Gender, Violence and Criminality in Early Modern Britain,” in *Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, eds. Marianna G. Muravyeva and Raisa Maria Toivo (New York: Routledge, 2013), 53-69. After an overview on the literature of female criminality in early modern Britain, Kilday concludes that women were less frequently involved in violent crime than men, (passim), with the exception of infanticide, where women were more frequently the perpetrators (59-63). Expectations of gendered behavior may have influenced this gendered disparity in violent crime. By perpetrating violent crime, these women violated both the law and norms of ideal femininity. “Early modern women could, on occasion, be independent actors in episodes of interpersonal violence. Rather than being timorous, they were capable of being aggressive, bloodthirsty, and brutal. By their actions, they were thus regularly far removed from the ideal of femininity that so many commentators envisaged” (65).

IV. For the Love of Lady and Liege: The Courtier-Knight in Conduct Literature

Chivalric nobleman like Robert Dudley and Robert Devereux used chivalric imagery and self-presentation to advance their political goals and maintain their relationship with the queen. This chivalric self-presentation—and the chivalric masculinity that undergirded it—were essential to the political careers of Dudley and Devereux. They defined and presented themselves as courtier-knights. This section examines the essential elements of the ideal knight that provided a basis for the early modern English version of chivalric masculinity, as revealed in representative treatises.

For those with knightly status, defense of personal honor was vital to maintenance of good social standing. Defense of knightly honor could take many forms, but a duel was one of the most tangible defenses available. Richard Jones's didactic manual offered rules on who could challenge whom, when, and how. Implicitly, it and manuals like it, attempted to impose an order on individual combat. Jones framed many admonitions in terms of preserving one's honor and reputation and cast such admonitions in chivalric terms.¹⁹⁴ He took great pains to make it clear that only men of very high, specific, social status could engage in honorable single combat:

¹⁹⁴ For a summation of the historiography of patriarchy, honor, and dueling in early modern England see chapter 1, section II. Especially significant works on honor are the contributions by Cynthia Herrup and Mervyn James. Cynthia Herrup, "'To Pluck Bright Honour from the Pale-Faced Moon': Gender and Honour in the Castlehaven Story," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 6 (1996): 137-159; and *A House in Gross Disorder: Sex, Law and the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Mervyn James, *English Politics and the Concept of Honor* (Oxford: Past and Present Society, 1978). For an insightful analysis of the cultural and gendered significance of dueling, see Jennifer Low, *Manhood and the Duel: Masculinity in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), and Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness, and Honour* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); and "Francis Bacon, The Earl of Northampton, and the Jacobean Anti-Dueling Campaign," *The Historical Journal* 44, no. 1 (March 2001): 1-28

Forsomuch as the triall of Armes apperteineth onelie to Gentlemen, and that Gentilitie is a degree honorable, it were not fit that anie persons of meaner condition, should thereunto be admitted.¹⁹⁵

The physical, martial defense of gentlemanly honor (and implicitly masculinity) was only available to gentlemen, men who generally corresponded to the chivalric class. Jones reiterated the exclusive nature of single combat by explicitly stating that some, such as clerics and academics could *not* engage in single combat. Such men had a variety of ways to define and affirm their masculinities—through impressive erudition or exemplary piety—but for Jones, they could not defend their honor and express their manhood through combat. Portraying single combat as an exclusive right of gentlemen, Jones emphasized its restricted character:

...so are there some that ought not be challenged of anie. The first of them is Clarkes, or Ecclesiastical persons, professing religion. The other sort is Doctors, with all Students, and such men as are onlie giuen to literature and knowledge.¹⁹⁶

Nevertheless, some possibilities of social mobility existed. Men of illegitimate birth could not challenge well-born gentlemen to combat. But Jones emphasized that exclusion of such men from single combat rested in their lack of legitimate status, not their lack of virtue:

[Bastards could not] themselues bee Gentlemen by birth, and therefore directlie must not claime such title, or enter the triall of Armes, and therefore in that respect may be repulsed, not as infamous, but as ignoble, which defect either by valorous indeuour in Armes, or vertuous studie in learning may be supplied.¹⁹⁷

Here, martial prowess and erudition were praised side-by-side. “Vertuous studie in learning” provided another means to overcome illegitimacy. For Jones, nobility of character was among the most praiseworthy traits. Nonetheless, nobility of character did not entitle a man to the rights of nobility of blood. But Jones identified a loophole of sorts when he wrote:

¹⁹⁵ Richard Jones, *The Book of Honor and Armes*, (1590), 30.

¹⁹⁶ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 34.

¹⁹⁷ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 33.

Also all such Bastards as haue long serued loyallie in their Princes Court, & that by priuiledge of their Prince are made legitimate, or hath liued orderlie among other Gentlemen, in place of reputation, may not be repulsed.¹⁹⁸

And just like that, with legitimacy conferred, such men were admitted to the august group and permitted to defend their honor and masculinity through combat. Thus, they could join the group that was literally admonished to prefer death before dishonor.¹⁹⁹ This resolution may seem a bit *deus ex machina* (or *princeps ex machina*, as the case may be), but its presence in a didactic manual demonstrates that martial defense of honor was (ideally) restricted and regulated by both custom and authority. Within this idealized matrix, a proper gentleman-knight could only issue a challenge to someone who could honorably answer the challenge. A knight in shining armor could quickly tarnish his reputation if he did not leave pious clerics and bookish scholars alone.

A gentleman-knight had to defend himself and his reputation against any harm from those in his social cohort. With death preferred to dishonor, preserving good reputation and avoiding being labeled a coward was of paramount importance. Moreover the fear of cowardice strongly informed the perceived need for such defense. This need to avoid cowardice included both the single combat of dueling in the appropriate circumstances and the group combat of military action. The individual who did not place honor above self-preservation—who did not stand and fight alone and in a group—compromised his reputation and his masculinity. Indeed, “hee who runneth away, and abandoneth the Lists or field where the fight is performed, ought to lose the victorie, and be adiudged as vanquished, and this is the most base and dishonorable sort

¹⁹⁸ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 33.

¹⁹⁹ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 22-23: “Wherfore whensoever one man doth accuse another of such a crime as meriteth death, in that case the Combat ought bee graunted. The second cause of Combat is Honor, because among persons of reputation, Honor is preferred before life.”

of vanquishment.”²⁰⁰ This “vanquishment” voided the soldier’s virtue and his virility—it undermined his social and personal masculinity.

A cowardly knight was the antithesis of chivalric masculinity. In a tangible, physical sense, his non-performance demonstrates the performativity of masculinity. Worse than performing his masculinity poorly, this hypothetical coward avoided the most direct manifestation of the performance of his knightly masculinity. In Jones’s depiction, the cowardly man showed no regard for his personal honor. This may have constituted a form of self-betrayal, but for Jones, personal, individual honor intersected with soldierly honor. A soldier who did not stay on the field of battle to stand and fight—or worse, defected to the enemy camp—did not just betray himself and suffer the “most base and dishonorable sort of vanquishment.” He also betrayed his commander and his comrades. According to Jones:

He that abandoneth the Armie of his Prince, and fleeth vnto the Enemie, or being discharged doth go vnto the Enemie in the time of Skirmish or fight, shall be reputed as infamous, and also a Traitor.²⁰¹

Here, Jones was careful to emphasize connection between the social and political consequences of defection. A defector was to be “reputed as infamous, and also a traitor.” His treason could have dire consequences to life and limb, but even if he remained physically unharmed, his reputation—the basis of his social life and well-being—was destroyed. If such a soldier was widely “reputed as infamous,” he was as good as socially dead to anyone who knew of his infamy. A soldier guilty of such treason did not simply fail to live up to an ideal. He could end up both dishonored and dead.

In didactic literature like Jones’s tract, the other side of the coin gleamed much brighter—a virtuous soldier could earn renown, improve reputation, and possibly, be socially

²⁰⁰ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 28.

²⁰¹ Jones, *Honor and Armes*, 31.

elevated. The road to such social elevation entailed demonstration of prowess and/or service to one's prince. Social elevation and the enactment of chivalric masculinity depended on service. But in Jones's manual, that service most often took the form of service as a soldier. Many of the skills of the late-medieval knight had become functionally irrelevant by the last decade of the sixteenth century, when Jones' tract was published. Common soldiers and their socially elite leaders had to adapt to new military realities of the late sixteenth century prompted by tactical and technological changes. As chivalric knights were functionally replaced by gentleman soldiers, the chivalrous ethos, and chivalric presentation of socially elite soldiers persisted. Authors and aristocrats alike portrayed soldiers with the chivalric virtue of martial prowess.²⁰² However, another facet of chivalric masculinity—the romantic service to a lady-love—also found representation in Elizabethan and Jacobean conduct literature.

Richard Jones produced a didactic manual for the martial knight turned gentleman soldier. John Ford's 1606 poetic treatment of the knight in love, *Honor Triumphant*²⁰³ served different purposes. It drew on a wealth of medieval and early modern chivalric tropes associated with love of one's lady. Further, it portrayed the chivalric knight not only as a servant, but as a willing captive and slave to his lady. Though *Honor Triumphant* is filled with lavish praise of the servile knight and the lady he served, it sometimes neared critique when it revealed the dangers to Ford's idealized chivalric lover who served a lady depicted as a goddess and an embodiment of virtue. Describing worthy ladies, Ford wrote:

²⁰² This depiction of the chivalric soldier extended beyond conduct literature authors like Jones. Robert Devereux also portrayed soldiers as holders of chivalric virtue. See chapter 4 section V.

²⁰³ John Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, (1606).

A woman? the art of nature, the liuely perfection of heauens Architecture: for
though

*Man be the little world where wonder lyess
yet Women are Saints aboue earth's Paradise.*²⁰⁴

This clearly placed ladies as a general category on a pedestal, but in so doing, cast them in a role of objects to be won by the chivalric knight-lover. If Ford's idealized knight won the lady's affection, he became her servant and entered an ostensibly desirable role of willing servitude and slavery, without which he would be miserable:

Againe, what is he then, that being free from this captiued happinesse of loue, as it were disdaining to stoope to the bondage of beautie, will not at length feele the miserie of his scorne, and be scorned in the wracke of his miserie?²⁰⁵

This passage contains a rhetorical invocation of the servitude implicit in a knight's love, the so-called "bondage of beautie." After all, this passage is taken from a section entitled "Knights in Ladies Service have no free-will."²⁰⁶ But, this rhetorical deployment of servitude actually affirms chivalric masculinity. The knight who submitted to the bondage of love had nevertheless won the object of his affection and implicitly affirmed his social position and masculinity. In Ford's framework, the fact that the knight *could* submit himself to servitude to his lady—and did so *willingly*—affirmed his patriarchal power and social prowess. Nevertheless, the reader found a cautionary note about the power of the lady to subdue the knight:

how soone, how much is his owne free rule of himself indeered to the command of a precious Goddesse, neither hath he, neither is it meet he should have any more domination ouer his own affections. *Mars* throwes downe his weapons, and *Venus* leads him captiue, the luster of her eyes, the glorie of her worth are such vnresistable a force, as the weaknesse of his manhood, or the aptnesse of his frailtie, are neither able to endure the ones reflection, or withstand the others

²⁰⁴ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B1r-v.

²⁰⁵ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B1v.

²⁰⁶ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B1r-C1r.

temptation: how then? must he yield? true: not to captiuite, but freedome; *for to bee captiued to beautie, is to bee free to vertue...*²⁰⁷

Here, Ford's knight is "freed," captivated by beauty, and serving an idealized lady who represented virtue. But what implications does this lovely servitude have for chivalric masculinity? Here, the lady subdued the knight. But in so doing, the knight undermined the martial component of his chivalric masculinity. Mars, representing war and martial prowess had thrown down his weapons and, implicitly, been disempowered. Ford depicted the lady as a glorious Goddess—glorious enough that her irresistible beauty revealed the "weakness of his manhood" and "aptness of [the knight's] frailty." In revealing the knight's weakness—being in the lady's thrall and "under her spell" so to speak—such inability to resist beauty may have shown emasculation, especially since it showed the "weakness of his manhood." Catherine Bates has identified a form of masculine subjectivity in Renaissance poetry that is strikingly similar to Ford's besotted knight. For Bates, the male subject in much Renaissance poetry runs counter to the construct of the masterly male subject. In Bates' reading, the male poet was often the suffering, but willing, slave.²⁰⁸ The similarity between Ford's enamored knight and the lovelorn poet identified by Bates reveals the overlap and plurality possible within early modern manhood. The knight could be a love-struck paramour, but he could also be paragon of martial prowess. Whatever articulation of chivalric manhood a knight pursued, the potential for problems and pitfalls remained.

Ford may have been reminding his readers that if a man submitted to love, that should be tempered with restraint. If a knight gave a lady love and service, he could be a "slave" to his

²⁰⁷ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B1v-B2r.

²⁰⁸ Catherine Bates, *Masculinity, Gender and Identity in English Renaissance Lyric* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) passim. Bates examines masculinity of English Renaissance poetry as often portraying poet's masculinity as one of suffering, abjection, lamentation, and possibly effeminization.

lady, but not to his own sexual appetites. In the text, a poem referring to the love of Cupid and Psyche followed the above passage, and suggested such a message:

*Loue hath no power ere he gaine his rest,
But to impawne, sweare, promise and protest
Alas, what is it then that men in bed
Will not vow vrge, to gaine a maidenhead:
Which being got, they euer after stand
Deuoted to their Ladies deere command.*²⁰⁹

This poem admonished Ford's readers to remember the power of chivalric love *and* sexual lust. Lovers, be they mortal knights or Roman gods, should embody virtue, but the less virtuous among them might "sweare, promise and protest" in the interest of sexual conquest of virginal ladies. But, after this conquest, Ford's poem implicitly offered a dual caution. The virtuous knight might be perpetually devoted to his lady following this consummation. But the less perfect knight might also have been willing to say and promise anything, but not willing to follow through. Although his poem praises romantic knightly virtue, it also implies that the lustier knight's devotion might have been more... temporary.

To be an ideal romantic knight—and to be loved—the knight had to deserve love, since according to Ford, "perfect seruice, and seruicable loyaltie, is seene more cleerely in deseruiug loue and maintaining it tha~[n] in attempting or laboring for it."²¹⁰ Ford's ideal knight was not showy in his demonstration of worth; he embodied chivalric virtues, and his actions grew out of that. Ostensibly, this grew out of a desire to fulfill his lady's command and augment her reputation and "worthinesse"²¹¹ Still, this pointed directly to the importance of the knight's own reputation and masculinity. By improving and augmenting the reputation of his lady, he maintained and improved his own. Although the knight's lady would typically not be his own

²⁰⁹ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B2r.

²¹⁰ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B3r.

²¹¹ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B3v.

wife, the knight's reputation was associated with that of his lady in a manner analogous to that of the connected relationship of husband and wife. The knight's reputation was tied to the lady's—the greater her worthiness and honor, the more his reputation and masculinity were affirmed. According to Ford, the knight's love for his lady could be a powerful motivation to do great deeds, as his treatise maintained that “Beautie is the Maintainer of Valour.”²¹² It drove men in a variety of occupations to pursue the goals of their profession. This was especially true of a knight and his lady:

does not the Knight errant attempt the threatening of horror? adventures of dread?
thunder of death itself? onely to rumour his fame in the eares of his ladie? Does
he not range for the succor of beautie? for the freedom of beautie? for the ioy of
beautie? ²¹³

Love of the knight's lady, who was represented as a personification of beauty was supposed to drive the knight to glorious martial accomplishments. Ford even marginally recovered the martial component of his knight's masculinity when he reminded readers that worthy knights “adorne their names by martiall feates of armes.”²¹⁴

Ford's often poetic treatise was published in 1606, early in the reign of James I (r. 1603-1625). It emphasized servitude to a high lady and invoked many classical and chivalric tropes. *Honor Triumphant* demonstrates that the chivalric tropes of courtly love deployed in Elizabethan England for political purposes were alive and well in Jacobean England. But, in Ford's treatise, martial prowess is downplayed, presented largely as an accompaniment to the more romantic elements of chivalric knighthood. Elizabethan chivalry had roots in earlier forms of chivalric

²¹² Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. C1v-D1r

²¹³ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. C3r

²¹⁴ Ford, *Honor Triumphant*, Sig. B4r.

thought, but the chivalry of the twelfth century discussed by scholars such as Georges Duby²¹⁵ was far from identical to the chivalry pursued and enacted by the courtiers serving the Virgin Queen. Articulations of chivalry are historically specific, and are periodically reconfigured, shaped by the details of historical circumstance.²¹⁶ Nevertheless, some central chivalric motifs, such as emphasis on martial prowess and service to one's lady, remain relatively consistent. However, one element was sometimes emphasized to the detriment of the other, as Ford's treatise shows. As an influential model of gendered behavior, chivalric manhood also shaped the development of early modern sexualities. Although he examines French sources and culture, Louis-Georges Tin has convincingly demonstrates the impact that chivalric tropes had on the development of "heterosexual culture."²¹⁷

Drawing on late-medieval and early modern French poetry and drama, Tin analyzes the development of heterosexual culture in French society. He traces the beginnings of heterosexual culture to the courtly love literature of the twelfth century. Although heterosexual culture would eventually become strongly entrenched, Tin contends that it represented a significant challenge to the predominantly homosocial culture of late medieval and early modern France.

Heterosexual culture may have emerged from courtly love literature, which placed increased

²¹⁵ See Duby's classic study of social norms and praxis of aristocratic marriage in eleventh and twelfth-century France. Georges Duby, *The Knight the Lady and the Priest: Making Marriage in Medieval France*, trans. Barbara Bray (New York: Pantheon, 1983).

²¹⁶ For an examination of eighteenth-century articulations of chivalry, see Michèle Cohen, "'Manners' Make the Man: Politeness, Chivalry, and the Construction of Masculinity, 1750-1830," *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 312-329. Cohen gives a short analysis of the evolution of politeness as a behavioral code in elite society, from its entrenchment in the early/mid eighteenth century, to its waning by the early nineteenth century. Politeness was likely an important component of "gentlemanly" behavior—and masculinity—in the eighteenth century. Cohen argues that the increased conflation of politeness with effeminacy in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was associated with increased popularity of contemporary articulations of chivalry. (passim, esp. 314-316). Though Cohen's analysis is chronologically beyond the scope of this study, it demonstrates how multifaceted masculinity continued to be, throughout the early modern period. Sixteenth century articulations of chivalry differed greatly from their eighteenth century counterparts. Nevertheless, there are parallels between the contentious relationship of chivalry and courtliness in the sixteenth century, and that of politeness and chivalry in the eighteenth century.

²¹⁷ Louis-Georges Tin, *The Invention of Heterosexual Culture*, trans. Michaël Roy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012). (Originally published in French as *L'invention de la culture hétérosexuelle*, 2008).

emphasis on heterosexual affective and romantic attachment. However, as a cultural mode, it was initially difficult to reconcile with the late-medieval homosocial knightly ethos.²¹⁸ The privilege placed on male-female affective attachment may have challenged the elements of male-bonding which formed an important part of knightly camaraderie, but heterosexual culture also faced some clerical opposition due to its inherent sexual component,²¹⁹ as well as opposition from medical authorities.²²⁰ Heterosexual culture and motifs were firmly established in poetry and literature by the late Renaissance.²²¹ However, Tin argues that humanist-influenced drama was one of the last reserves of homosocial culture. But, by the end of the sixteenth-century, heterosexual cultural motifs were strongly influencing French drama.²²²

The romantic elements of early modern chivalry were clearly present in works like Ford's *Honor Triumphant*, but where were the more martial chivalric virtues? According to preacher William Gouge—the same one who expounded on the domestic duties of the ideal English family—these martial, soldierly virtues were alive and well in the soldiers of London.

In 1626, clergyman William Gouge preached a sermon entitled “The Dignitie of Chivalry” before the London artillery company, a printed account of which was published the same year. In it, Gouge lauded the virtues of soldiers and the military profession as a whole. Drawing from several books of the Old Testament, Gouge argued that soldiers fighting for worthy causes protected their countries and embodied copious virtues—the service of “men of warre,” as he referred to soldiers throughout the sermon, were needed, even in peace time:

Surely preparation for Warre, Exercises thereto, Martiall discipline, Artillery tacticks, and Military trainings are matters of moment, commendable and

²¹⁸ Tin, 1-47.

²¹⁹ Tin, 51-112.

²²⁰ Tin, 113-164.

²²¹ Tin, 32-38.

²²² Tin, 38-46.

honourable, not to be reiected or neglected, but duly to be respected, and daily practised, at all times, in all places whether of perill or peace.²²³

Gouge emphasized the need to remain prepared for war, even in peace time. According to Gouge, soldiers, like those in the artillery company before which he spoke, provided an essential and honorable service. Only strong, worthy men, like the Old Testament heroes he discussed and the audience he addressed, could possess the “dignity” of chivalry. For Gouge, good soldiers possessed an impressive list of virtues which matched the martial characteristics of the chivalric knight:

Many honourable parts and endowments are requisite to make a man expert in the Artillery profession, as Soundnesse of iudgement, Sharpenesse of wit, Quicknesse of conceit, Stoutnesse and courage of minde, Vndantednesse in danger, Discretion mixed with passion, Prudence, Patience, Ability and Agility of body, and of the seuerall parts thereof, with the like: all which doe demonstrate that the function whereunto they are required, is an honourable function.²²⁴

Gouge’s characterization of the ideal soldier demanded much. He portrayed a soldier with the dignity of chivalry in an impressive and balanced manner. This soldier, as a sort of heir to chivalric heritage, possessed virtues associated with martial prowess, but the preacher also encouraged traits connected to moral and personal restraint, like patience and prudence. This soldier-knight embodied one element of a multifaceted early modern masculinity. Gouge’s sermon emphasized intelligence and self-control alongside martial prowess. Despite the long list of traits needed in a chivalric soldier-knight, any mention of service to a lady or chivalric courtly love is markedly absent in Gouge’s sermon. Certainly, that absence can be attributed in part to the Gouge’s audience. Nevertheless, the tropes associated with chivalric courtly love are glaringly absent. Gouge presented a chivalry stripped of romance and filled with martial piety

²²³ William Gouge, *The Dignitie of Chiualrie*, (London, 1626), 9.

²²⁴ Gouge, *Chiualrie*, 14-15.

and patriotic protection. But ultimately, the stripped-down, dignified chivalry of Gouge and the romantic, triumphant chivalry of Ford served as two sides of the same coin. Both strands of chivalry and chivalric masculinity coexisted and occasionally conflicted in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Together, both elements of chivalric masculinity shaped aristocratic masculinity as a whole in early modern England. Furthermore, a model of masculinity based on non-martial service and erudition, like that followed by the William and Robert Cecil, influenced a complex, sometimes contradictory elite masculinity in early modern England. It was easy to praise an idealized version of a romantic knight, and Gouge's sermon reveals how living, practicing soldiers could be praised. Gouge deployed and adjusted chivalric tropes to apply them to his non-elite soldierly audience. The selective—and admittedly skillful—invocation of these chivalric ideals demonstrates the flexibility of early modern articulations of chivalry. Soldiers of London could receive chivalric praise. However, it was early modern aristocrats like Robert Dudley and Robert Devereux who most closely socially represented these chivalric ideals. In their private correspondence and public self-presentation, they crafted chivalric self-images that they used throughout their political careers.²²⁵

This self-presentation took place *during* the lives of Robert Dudley and his stepson Robert Devereux. But, how was the masculinity of eminent nobleman like them eulogized after death? Sermons and posthumous tributes honoring several Elizabethans demonstrate that the ways in which they were remembered and praised was strongly shaped by the form of masculinity they represented. The tropes—chivalric and otherwise—used to praise ideal noblemen are quite apparent in funeral sermons and eulogies for prominent noblemen.

²²⁵ See chapters three and four for examination and analysis of the chivalric self-presentation of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex.

Eileen T. Dugan was one of the earliest scholars to use funeral sermons to deepen understanding of family history. She examines funeral sermons in Nordlingen from 1589-1712, and demonstrates the strong affective and emotional connections between spouses, parents, and children.²²⁶ Examining funeral sermons differently, but just as astutely, Eric J. Carlson demonstrates their usefulness as gendered sources.²²⁷ Continuing the use of these fruitful sources, Elizabeth Lehfelddt examines how norms of masculinity in seventeenth-century Spain were influenced by the political and economic crises that beset Spain during the period. She identifies a model of masculinity centered around male chastity and martial prowess. Fears of effeminacy, sexual immoderation, and failure to live up to patriarchal expectations influenced this model. Despite the impact of the seventeenth-century Spanish economic crisis and the confessional difference, there are notable similarities to modes of early modern English masculinity. Furthermore, Lehfelddt's source base also reveals that conduct treatises and funeral sermons of noblemen can be used as effectively in the Spanish as in the English context to demonstrate elements of aristocratic masculinity. In Spanish, German, and English contexts, funeral sermons provide insights into the emotional and gender ideals of early modern Europe—ideals that have many similarities across geographic and confessional boundaries.²²⁸

²²⁶ Eileen T. Dugan, "The Funeral Sermon as a Key to Familial Values in Early Modern Nordlingen," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 20, no. 4 (Winter 1989): 631-644.

²²⁷ See Eric J. Carlson, "Funeral Sermons as Sources: The Example of Female Piety in Pre-1640 Sermons," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 32, no. 4 (Winter 2000): 567-597, wherein Carlson reveals a distinctly gendered component to the presentation of piety in funeral sermons.

²²⁸ Elizabeth A. Lehfelddt, "Ideal Men: Masculinity and Decline in Seventeenth-Century Spain," *Renaissance Quarterly* 61, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 463-494. "For many authors the core of this seventeenth-century code of masculine moderation lay in the observance of sexual restraint, and even marital chastity. Men were urged to avoid the sins of fornication, adultery, and illicit affairs" (478).

V. Fond Farewells and Famous Fathers: Chivalric Masculinity in Tudor-Stuart Funeral Sermons

The funerary tributes commemorating Sir Francis Knollys and his son-in-law Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex held up their subjects as ideal men. In so doing, these sermons demonstrate some of the important insights which can be gleaned about the enactment and commemoration of elite masculinity. Thomas Churchyard's posthumous tribute²²⁹ lauded Knollys' copious virtues in life and emphasized the immortality of honor and reputation. Churchyard seemed to see military service and the service of a courtier as comparable and perhaps roughly equivalent ways to secure fame and reputation. Erudition and martial prowess are both mentioned in praising verse. Churchyard also emphasized the centrality of honor and reputation in a man's life:

The date of man in balance so is waide/ Life death and all on good report doth
rest/ VVhere safely from, all storms good name is staid/ Possesse with grace,
that place and ancker hold/ More woorth in price than precious pearl or gold.²³⁰

Churchyard's portrayal of "good report," or reputation as a source of security and a foundation upon which "all... doth rest" provides an example of not only how he intended to praise the departed Knollys, but also of the centrality of honor for Churchyard's projected audience. Lauding Knollys for his diverse virtues not only commemorated him. It also affirmed that Knollys had fulfilled the expectations associated with honorable aristocratic manhood. In emphasizing the importance of both martial and courtly prowess in his praise of Knollys, Churchyard demonstrated that several distinct components of early modern masculinity could coexist in the matrix of criteria by which elite men were evaluated and praised. In copiously

²²⁹ Thomas Churchyard, *A Sad and Solemne funeral of the right and honourable Sir Francis Knowles*, (London, 1596), not paginated. I have supplied the page numbers of this short tract for easy reference, beginning with the first page of the "Epistle dedicatorie" as page 1.

²³⁰ Churchyard, *A Sad and Solemne funeral*, 6th page.

lauding a deceased Knollys, Churchyard emphasized the immortality of reputation and honor. Knollys was depicted as a man in whom all manner of virtues could be found. Churchyard implied that many men—even good, productive men—“Are but a puffe, and bubble for a time”.²³¹ This would not be the case with Knollys, who Churchyard held up as a metaphorically shining example of virtuous manhood:

But yet good knight, the lamp and torch of troeth
 Sir FRANCIS KNOWLES, I can not so forget
 Thogh corse to church, and soule to heauen goeth
 And body needs, must pay the earth its det
 Good will of men, shall wait vpon thy toem
 And Fame hir self, thy funerall shall make
 And register, they name till day of doem
 In book of life, for thy great vertues sake²³²

After a life of service to the crown, one of Knollys’ successes was establishing a good “fame”. His reputation was so sterling that a poetic personification of “Fame hir self” preserve Knollys’ honorable memory. According to Churchyard, because of this achievement, his renown would last long after his death. Thus, having established himself as an honorable man with a good reputation, Knollys implicitly achieved a kind of earthly immortality.²³³

Knollys’ son-in-law, Walter Devereux received similarly lavish praise after his death. The sermon preached by Richard Davies at his funeral provides some insight into the idealized depiction of the wide variety of masculine virtues that were thought to comprise a good nobleman. Davies depicted Devereux as having been worthy and honorable from the time he was born, “euen from his mothers wombe,”²³⁴ having received these qualities as gifts from God.

²³¹ Churchyard, *A Sad and Solemne funeral*, 4th page.

²³² Churchyard, *A Sad and Solemne funeral*, 4th page.

²³³ Churchyard, *A Sad and Solemne funeral*, passim.

²³⁴ Richard Davies, *A Fyneral Sermon Preached [...] at the buriall of the Right Honovrable VValter Earle of Essex and Ewe, Earle Marshall of Ireland...* (London, 1577). sig. E i, r

He was lauded for traits as diverse as self-restraint, erudition, godliness, and especially martial prowess. But what is especially noteworthy in Davies' presentation is the *balance* with which Devereux was praised. Lauding his military service, Davies stated that “he was by nature a sonne of Mars, and by practising feates of warre and exercise aforehand, he had made himself in manner a perfect warrior.”²³⁵ Davies' praise of militaristic masculine virtues occurred in tandem with his discussion of Devereux's self-control, restraint and temperance, which Davies called “the fountayne of nobilitie...[and]...the mother of all other vertues.”²³⁶ A chivalric nobleman had to be an adept warrior and ruler, but self-control was essential to good rule, since “he is thought unworthy to rule others that can not rule himself.”²³⁷

The printed account of the funeral sermon contains a dedicatory epistle signed “E. W.,” attributed to Edward Waterhouse, a longtime servant of the Devereux family.²³⁸ In the epistle, addressed to Walter’s young son Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, who did not attend the funeral, the son was encouraged to follow his father in Christian virtue, state service, and martial prowess. At the age of eleven,²³⁹ Robert was implored to (ultimately) surpass the achievements of his father, just as (according to the epistle), Walter Devereux had surpassed the achievements of *his* father.

In many respects, Robert Devereux did follow in Walter’s footsteps, at least militarily. Some of his early military service came when he served in the Netherlands, under the command of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, who was by then his step-father.²⁴⁰ Groomed as a sort of

²³⁵ Davies, *Fvneral Sermon*, sig. E iii, r

²³⁶ Davies, *Fvneral Sermon*, sig. E iv, v

²³⁷ Davies, *Fvneral Sermon*, sig. E iv, v

²³⁸ Paul E. J. Hammer attributes this epistle to Edward Waterhouse, a servant of the Devereux family. See Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22.

²³⁹ Hammer, *Polarisation*, 21-22.

²⁴⁰ Walter’s widow and Robert’s mother Lettice Knollys Devereux, Countess of Essex married Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester in September, 1578. Adams, 145, 185-186.

successor-presumptive to a stepfather who lacked a legitimate heir, Devereux followed a similar trajectory as a martial courtier and favorite. Just as Robert Dudley was the preeminent chivalric courtier of the first Elizabethan generation, his stepson Robert Devereux was the greatest chivalric courtier of the second generation to serve Elizabeth. Chivalric masculinity and self-presentation were vital to the political personas of both courtiers. Although each earl's career was informed by chivalric masculinity, these two profoundly different men had different political styles, levels of political acumen, and relationships with their sovereign. Furthermore, father and stepson inhabited vastly different court cultures. As such, Dudley's chivalric manhood contributed to political success throughout his service to the last Tudor. By contrast, Devereux's alternate style of chivalric self-portrayal—coupled with different political realities of Elizabeth's final years—contributed to his political alienation and eventual downfall.²⁴¹

VI. To Serve the Sovereign: The Cecil Family and the Servant-Courtier Model of Masculinity

In the sixteenth century, sons following in the political (and gendered) footsteps of their father or step-father was nothing new. Essex would succeed his stepfather as a royal favorite and martial courtier. Drawing on a model of masculinity that balanced chivalric self-presentation and erudition Essex sought renown through martial service.²⁴² Other Elizabethan courtiers also very distinctly followed in their fathers' footsteps. One of the clearest examples was Robert

²⁴¹ For a discussion of Dudley's real and imagined chivalric service, in the Kenilworth entertainments of 1575 and during his leadership of English forces assisting Dutch rebels fighting Spanish forces in the Netherlands, see chapter 3 sections V and VI. For an analysis of Robert Devereux's chivalric epistolary self-presentation, see chapter 4, sections II, IV, and V.

²⁴² For an analysis of the role of education and erudition in Essex's career, see Paul E. J. Hammer, "The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601," *The English Historical Review* 109, no. 430 (February 1994): 26-51.

Cecil. Robert served in Elizabeth's government, under the tutelage of his father, William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley. Burghley was one of the most powerful figures in the Elizabethan regime, but by the mid-1590s, the aging Burghley, was clearly grooming his son as a successor. This placed Robert Cecil as a clear rival to Essex, who rose to prominence in the contentious, factional environment of the 1590s.²⁴³ Essex consistently presented himself as a chivalric, martial courtier throughout his career. Although Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux were rivals and occasionally competitors for the same state offices, they employed distinctly different models of masculinity. Essex positioned himself as a martial knight and successor to his stepfather's position as royal favorite. Sir Robert Cecil, following his father's example and advice, avoided military service. Instead he defined his position as royal servant—even royal knight—in non-martial terms. In doing so, Robert was following his father's explicit advice:

Neyther by my consent shalt thou traine them[sons] vp to Warres, for he that sets vp his rest to liue by that profession, can hardly be an honest man, or a good Christian, for euey Warre is of it selfe vniust, unless the causes make it iust Besides it is a science no longer in request then in vse, for souldyers in peace, are like to chimneys in Somer.²⁴⁴

This passage was part of a letter of advice from William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley to his second son Robert. William wrote this advice to his son in the mid-1580s, as Robert's own political career was beginning. The themes in this piece of father-son advice literature included

²⁴³ The influence of courtiers' masculinities on that factional rivalry, and the political consequences of that struggle are key themes in chapter 4.

²⁴⁴ W. Cecil, British Library Stowe MS 143, f.101v-102r. An additional contemporary manuscript copy can be found at the Folger Shakespeare Library as Folger MS V. a. 321, f. 56v-59r. This manuscript has also been printed in a facsimile edition as *A Seventeenth Century Letter Book: A Facsimile Edition of Folger MS. V.a. 321 with Transcript, Annotation, and Commentary* by A. R. Braunmuller (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 276-287. William's advice to Robert was also printed in several editions after William's death, which include *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*, (London, 1611); later published as *Certain Precepts, or Directions, for the Well-Ordering and Carriage of a Mans Life: As also Oeconomical Discipline for the Government of his House*, (London, 1617), (Edinburgh, 1618); and as *Precepts, or, Directions for the well ordering and carriage of a mans life*, (London, 1636).

choosing the appropriate wife, being a good head of household, and expressing correct hospitality, all of which would become conventions of father-son advice literature.²⁴⁵

Burghley gave succinct advice to his son about how to be a good head of household, and a virtuous man. His recommendation for moderate hospitality²⁴⁶ is in accord with the movement from late-medieval largesse to early modern forms of hospitality identified by Felicity Heal. During the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, Heal identifies a movement away from a model of hospitality close to the traditions of late-medieval largesse. In practice, there may have been a shift to a form of hospitality focused on entertaining fewer individuals more sumptuously, often in a more urban setting. Nevertheless, traditional forms of more open hospitality were still praised in conduct literature well into the seventeenth century.²⁴⁷

William Cecil may have wished to make his son a good head of household, but his advice was meant for more. This advice was meant for a son that Lord Burghley was grooming as a

²⁴⁵ Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, "Gifts and Favors: Informal Support in Early Modern England," *The Journal of Modern History* 72, no. 2 (June 2000): 295-338. Ben-Amos offers a brief overview on the major scholarship on family and kinship in early modern England. She also challenges a common conception in that body of scholarship that kinship ties with family lessened during the early modern period (305-6). Ben-Amos argues that these ties were maintained through the seventeenth century, in both the immediate and extended family (304-7). The "informal" support that Ben-Amos discusses could take the form of material and emotional support throughout the lives of parents and children. Moreover, larger kinship networks were maintained by customs of gift giving and perceptions of reciprocal obligation. She examines the function of household networks of gift-giving and exchange (310-14) and looks at the social function of hospitality among people across many social strata (314-20).

The arguments in this article are more fully articulated in her monograph: Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Also on gift-giving and hospitality, see: Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England* (New York and Oxford: Clarendon Press of Oxford University Press, 1990). Heal developed some of the central arguments of her monograph in "The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England," *Past & Present* 102 (February 1984): 66-93.

Heal identifies an increased production of conduct and advice literature pertaining to hospitality across genres from "between the 1580s and 1630s" relative to the period immediately before and after. (68). "In contrast at the extremes of our periodization, before the 1520s and after the Civil War, the paucity of direct comment on hospitality makes it difficult to draw effectively on literary sources and argument has to be constructed *ex silencio*." (68). Heal identifies social, customary, and Scriptural emphases on the importance of good being a good host for people from a variety of social classes (68-75). Heal points out that hospitality was considered a virtue, and an important part of being a householder, but it should not be conflated with the status of householder more generally (75).

However, criticism of such forms of hospitality "are found in several late Elizabethan sources" (87).

For Heal, critique of traditional modes of lordship and movement to refined courtly manners was part of Elias's civilizing process (87).

²⁴⁶ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143, f.101r.

²⁴⁷ Heal, "The Idea of Hospitality in Early Modern England," 81-83.

political successor. While William was advising Robert on how to raise a son, one of his first warnings was not to have him trained as a soldier since “he that sets vp his rest to liue by that profession, can hardly be an honest man, or a good Christian.” This is ironic advice from a man whose firstborn son, Thomas Cecil, would devote years to military service. It is also revealing—it shows the Cecils’ model of masculinity, which can be demonstrated by examining the careers and correspondence of these men. William Cecil wrote lengthy pieces of advice literature to both of his sons. Both of these very different advice letters show a model of manhood based on personal piety coupled with political service that William wanted his sons to emulate.

In his advice to both his sons, and in surviving correspondence, William Cecil followed a political paradigm and a model of masculinity based on service to state and monarch. Although William and his sons were knights, William and Robert always served without swords. For decades, William Cecil was preoccupied with pressing the issue of Elizabeth having an heir, but he had two sons, and heirs, of his own. His firstborn, Thomas, would become a soldier, while his brother Robert (who was 21 years his junior) would become an administrator. While Thomas would serve as a soldier and reach a relatively important government post as President of the Council of the North (in 1605), it was Thomas’s much younger, and more intellectually inclined brother Robert that William Cecil would groom as a successor. In 1561, the same year he composed his letter of advice to Thomas, William conceded to a colleague that he lacked ‘any fatherly fancy to him but in teaching and correcting.’²⁴⁸ Whether it was from lack of affection for Thomas, or simply because he was a stern taskmaster, is uncertain. However, it was clearly Robert that William would later prepare as a political heir.

²⁴⁸ *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, 1561-2*, ed. Joseph Stevenson (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1866), 105.

If William hoped that Robert's political career would match his own, that was tall order. William's career of public service began during the reign of Edward VI, but it was during Elizabeth's long reign that he would become one of the most powerful men in England. By the middle of Elizabeth's reign Cecil had established himself as one of her most capable bureaucrats and trusted advisers. By the time he became 1st Baron Burghley in 1571 and Lord Treasurer in 1572 he was quite adept at navigating the labyrinth of Elizabethan court politics.

As Lord Treasurer, Burghley was well aware of how to fund Elizabeth's military endeavors, but martial activity never figured prominently into his aspirations, his career, or his self-presentation. But William Cecil and his sons worked, and ultimately thrived within Elizabethan and Jacobean court cultures in which courtiers' honor and social position had to be continually demonstrated, proven, affirmed, and reaffirmed. For chivalric courtiers like Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney, and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, participation in tournaments and actual military service could affirm and demonstrate a chivalric model of masculinity. But how could men like William and Robert Cecil, who pursued lives of service without swords, preserve their honor, prove their masculinity, and demonstrate their social prestige? Building several of the grandest estates in early modern England and playing host to the monarch certainly didn't hurt,²⁴⁹ but for William and Robert, the primary means of demonstrating prestige, power, and patriarchal masculinity, was making themselves indispensable servants and administrators.

Burghley also managed to maintain relative cooperation with more chivalric figures, including the royal favorite Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and his stepson. Burghley and Leicester were two pillars of Elizabethan politics and patronage who each embodied different

²⁴⁹ For a recent analysis of Cecilian building projects and their impact, see James M. Sutton, *Materializing Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House: The Cecils at Theobalds 1564-1607* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

methods of advancement and modes of masculinity. Although sometimes at odds over policy, they usually found ways to cooperate and avoid factionalism. This would not be the case with the next generation of Elizabethan courtiers. Two of the men most directly embroiled in the factional conflict of the 1590s were Leicester's step-son, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and Burghley's son, Robert Cecil. But, before the factional strife of the 1590s, Burghley and Leicester worked together from the earliest years of Elizabeth's reign.

While William built his own political career across reigns and regimes, he also had to groom an heir. He composed advice tracts to both of his sons Thomas, and Robert. Written decades apart, at very different points in William's life, they were directed at very different sons. As such, some difference in the documents might be expected. William's advice treatises to each son are profoundly different in tone and purpose. His "memorial" to Thomas served as little more than a stern warning not to get into sinful trouble and thereby shame himself and his family.²⁵⁰ His advice to Robert, which appears in manuscript simply as "The L[ord] Tre[a]s[urer] B[urghley] to his Sonne" in British Library Stowe MS 143, and was later printed under varying titles, offers a guide to personal and political life that succinctly encapsulated many views of the Elizabethan patriarch and the model of manhood that he followed. Burghley offered an introduction before the first precept extolling the quality of Cecil's son's education, and offering the benefit of advice based on years of experience.

The first precept was devoted largely to advice on how to choose a good wife. Cecil discouraged choosing based on beauty, but encouraged his son to select a wife with good genteel lineage, and a financially secure family. While lineage and gentility were desirable, good

²⁵⁰ William's advice to Thomas survives in W. Cecil, BL Harleian MS 3638 f. 106r-v

It is worth noting that William's advice to Robert was printed under various titles in several early modern editions, while his advice to Thomas survived only in manuscript until the 20th century, when it was printed as "A Memorial for Thomas Cecil" in *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962), 3-6.

financial standing was essential. Moreover, Cecil implored his son to show moderate hospitality within his means. This emphasis on financially moderate hospitality contrasted with a more chivalric emphasis on largess and generosity.

Burghley's second precept pertained to the education of children. When finishing a son's education, William discouraged foreign travel "passe the Alps"²⁵¹ with the implication that sons traveling to the Italian peninsula might pick up vices and unwanted behavior. This may well be an echo, or even a remembrance, of William's concerns that shaped his advice and admonishment to Thomas before his grand tour. Here, Burghley's admonition bears a striking resemblance to Elyot's fear of the "Italianated Englishmen." Burghley also discouraged training sons in the arts of war, as mentioned previously.

Burghley's discouragement of martial pursuits would likely have been anathema to chivalric courtiers like Robert Dudley Earl of Leicester and his stepson, Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, but to William Cecil and his son Robert, service to state and sovereign by other means was more desirable. Military service may have served as essential avenues to political advancement, increased fame, and personal glory to Dudley, and Devereux. But Burghley, along with his son and successor, enacted their masculinities and built their reputations as courtiers and political servants, not martial knights.²⁵²

In his brief advice to his political heir, themes of giving and receiving service dominate. William advised Robert on how to be a good lord, courtier, servant, and man. For Burghley, the success of his son was based on surrounding himself with the right people, from choosing the

²⁵¹ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143 f. 101v

²⁵² For an overview of biographical scholarship on the Cecils, see chapter one, section VII. See especially, Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback ed. 2009); and Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1955); *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London: Cape, 1960).

right servants, to building the right alliances. Robert Cecil would not be a martial knight, but with his father's advice and the model of manhood he lived by, he would become a trusted servant to two monarchs.

Burghley emphasized the importance of reputation, deference, and good manners. He encouraged his son to be humble to superiors, respectful to equals, and to show politeness and humility to social inferiors. Robert was encouraged to cultivate and maintain good reputation and popularity. This was certainly apt advice for a budding bureaucrat who would have to navigate life at court. In the 1580s, when Burghley composed the tract, father advised son not to make himself vulnerable by trusting "thy credit or estate"²⁵³ to another man, who may become an enemy. Perhaps this is advice Robert remembered when he managed to survive and thrive in the factional environment of the Elizabethan court in the 1590s. After offering these proverbial pearls of wisdom, it is only when he concluded his miniature treatise that we see echoes of the stern father revealed in the memorial to Thomas. Burghley concluded his advice to Robert by reminding his son to be careful in conversation or joking, as ill-considered jokes and quips might alienate friends and harm reputation.²⁵⁴ Whether Robert took all this advice to heart, he and his father were a political duo that dominated court politics, to the frustration of the Earl of Essex and his clients. After Robert Cecil's appointment to secretary of state in 1596, Lady Anne Bacon summarized a belief widely held at court that "the father and son are affectionate join'd in power and policy."²⁵⁵

²⁵³ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143 f. 104r

²⁵⁴ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143 f. 104r

Apparently, Martin Luther had very different perception of the role of joking and humor, especially in marriage. Susan C. Karant-Nunn, "The Masculinity of Martin Luther: Theory, Practicality and Humor" in *Masculinity in the Reformation Era*, eds. Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn (Kirksville, MO: Truman State University Press, 2008), 167-189. Karant-Nunn demonstrates how central the role of husband was to Martin Luther's own post-reform masculinity—and not surprisingly—to sixteenth-century Lutheran masculinity more generally. Furthermore, Karant-Nunn reveals the centrality of both sexuality and humor in Luther's own marriage. (passim, esp. 185-186).

²⁵⁵ *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (2 vols.) ed. Thomas Birch, (London, 1754), II, 61.

After his father's death in 1598, Robert retained his power and continued to serve Elizabeth until her death in 1603. With the accession of James, the character of royal court culture changed, but it remained factionalized and subject to the influence of dashing royal favorites. Robert was neither dashing, nor a favorite. But he thrived, by becoming an indispensable servant and bureaucrat. At the same time that his brother Thomas became Earl of Exeter, Robert was elevated to the peerage when he was created Earl of Salisbury in 1605, and would remain an invaluable statesman until his death in 1612.

The emphasis on service which dominated William's advice to Robert can be found in Robert's own writings. In his *The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie of Estates Place, with the Care and Perill Thereof*,²⁵⁶ which includes Salisbury's summary of the role of a secretary, the principle responsibilities, skills needed, and dangers of the role, Cecil depicted the secretary as one who could protect the realm in a variety of (non-martial) ways, but whose success depended almost entirely on the prince's trust and good will. The role of secretary was a difficult and often precarious one. According to Salisbury:

All strange princes hate Secretarie's, all Aspirers, and all Conspirers, because they either kill those monsters in their Cradles or else tract them out where no man else can discern the print of their footing. Furthermore this is manifest that all men of warre do malign them except they will be at their desires.²⁵⁷

Note this separation between secretaries and military men in Salisbury's estimation. This separation may have been a manifestation of a conflict between civil and military aristocracy,²⁵⁸ or an indication of what Ronald G. Asch has characterized as a shift from quasi-chivalric

²⁵⁶ Robert Cecil, *The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie of Estates Place, with the Care and Perill Thereof* (London, 1642).

²⁵⁷ R. Cecil, *The State and Dignitie of a Secretarie*, 2.

²⁵⁸ See Natalie Mears, "Regnum Cecilianum?: A Cecilian Perspective of the Court," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64.

“lordship” to a cultivated “urbanity,”²⁵⁹ in the early modern period, but it also reflects competition between contrasting modes of masculinity. William and Robert pursued careers and masculinities based on service, with no hint of military aspirations. Together, they formed one of the most powerful political pairs in Elizabethan England. Robert was William’s undisputed political heir, but not his first-born. Robert’s much older brother from Burghley’s first marriage would also serve two monarchs. During James’s reign, Thomas would be created Earl of Exeter after a long career of military service. Thomas is likely the “Generall Cecyll” who wrote the short treatise entitled “The Dutie of a Priuate Soldier” (which survives in manuscript),²⁶⁰ on how best to select, outfit, and equip English soldiers. Like his father and his brother, Thomas would become a knight before reaching higher rank. He was probably the only knight in his family *with* armor.

In a letter to Robert written by his ailing father shortly before William’s death, Lord Burghley framed a life of service as a political and religious obligation. In one of his final letters to Robert, William told his son to “serve God by serving of the Queen, for all other service is indeed bondage to the Devil.”²⁶¹ Burghley was not angling for political favor or trying to manipulate a fellow courtier. He was a very ill statesman advising his son and political heir. Looking back on a life of political service which had taken him and his family from a middling family to the heights of political power, some of Cecil’s final words to his son encapsulated the political paradigm and model of masculinity by which Burghley lived.

²⁵⁹ Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition 1550-1700; Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London: Arnold, 2003), 78.

²⁶⁰ T. Cecil, BL Harleian MS 3638 f. 155r-159v.

²⁶¹ John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and the Establishment of Religion and other Various Occurrences in the Church of England [...]* (4 vols.), 1725-1731, v. IV, 343. Volumes I-III were published in 1725. Volume IV was published in 1731 as *Brief Annals of the Church and State under the Reign of Queen Elizabeth Being a Continuation of The Annals of the Church of England and the Religion there Established [...]*.

These words were not about power or political calculation. They were about *service*. The emphasis on royal service—and the model of masculinity that it represented—shaped Burghley's career and guided his successor.

VII. Conclusion

The ideal husband, courtier-knight, and courtier servant provided models of masculinity for elite men in early modern England. For generations of Elizabethan and Jacobean courtiers, these matrices of ideal representations of masculinity influenced the way aristocrats socially presented themselves. These models served as forms of cultural inheritance. They helped define what it meant to be an honorable man socially, and personally. These idealized masculinities helped mold the gender paradigm and frame of reference of early modern courtiers. As such, these ideals influenced the personal and political choices of generations of English aristocrats. Elite masculinity in early modern England was religiously, occupationally, and socially contingent. For aristocrats, who were expected to be paragons of patriarchal masculinity, the way they presented themselves and enacted their masculinities had profound effects on their social position and political careers.

In an analysis of changes in modes of masculinity in the early modern period, Alexandra Shepard maintains that, although early modern English manhood was multifaceted, and could be defined in a variety of ways, the matrix of available means of defining manhood remained relatively consistent during this period. Nevertheless, she does identify “an increasing plurality of and fluidity to male identities” in the period.²⁶² I generally agree with Shepard's assessment,

²⁶² Alexandra Shepard, “From Anxious Patriarchs to Refined Gentlemen? Manhood in Britain, circa 1500-1700,” *Journal of British Studies* 44, no. 2 (April 2005): 281-295. Shepard succinctly summarizes when she writes: “It will

which echoes many of the arguments in her earlier monograph. But, it is that very “plurality” and “fluidity” within a matrix of masculinity that concerns this study. This chapter has discussed several strands of ideal masculinity in prescriptive literature. The collection of available ideal masculinities may have remained somewhat stable and consistent in the period, but a variety of models of manhood could be pursued and performed to shape a courtier’s social and personal life. Within the transition from “lordship to urbanity” identified by both Bryson and Asch, the next chapter will examine how both chivalric and urbane masculinities were deployed by the first generation of Elizabethan courtiers.

be argued here that despite the semblance of a transformation in concepts of manhood, the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were marked as much by continuity as by change. Although there was an increasing plurality of and fluidity to male identities between 1500 and 1700, they remained focused—if variously reconfigured—around many of the same fixed points. Most of the terms used to identify both normative and deviant manhood remained current throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The most profound change witnessed during the early modern period was, therefore, not in the available repertoire of male identities themselves but in different men’s access to and claims on them as the benefits of patriarchy became subtly redistributed,” (281-2).

Chapter III: Masculinity at the Court of the Unmarried Queen: Chivalric and Humanist Masculinities in the First Elizabethan Generation

I. Introduction: A Queen's Lament: Loss of the Possibility of Marriage in the Poetry of Elizabeth I

I grieve and dare not show my discontent;
I love and yet am forced to seem to hate;
I do, yet dare not say I ever meant;
I seem stark mute, but inwardly do prate.
I am, and not; I freeze and yet am burned,
Since from myself another self I turned.

My care is like my shadow in the sun—
Follows me flying, flies when I pursue it,
Stands, and lies by me, doth what I have done;
His too familiar care doth make me rue it.
No means I find to him from my breast,
Til by the end of things I am suppressed.

Some gentler passion slide into my mind,
For I am soft and made of melting snow;
Or be more cruel, Love and so be kind.
Let me float or sink, be high or low;
Or let me live with some more sweet content,
Or die, and so forget what love e'er meant.²⁶³

The poem above can be read as many things. It was likely written by Elizabeth I after 1582 when Francis, Duke of Alençon, and the queen's final serious marital suitor concluded a visit to England.²⁶⁴ This piece from the queen's body of under-studied²⁶⁵ poetry can be seen as a

²⁶³ Elizabeth I, "On Monsieur's Departure" (c. 1582) in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 302-303.

²⁶⁴ For an adept analysis of all of Elizabeth's major suitors and courtships, and the political ramifications of each, see Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London and New York: Routledge,

rumination on lost opportunity to marry. It can be read as a reflection by the queen on her own personal sadness at the departure of a man for whom she had developed genuine affection. This reading seems problematic given Elizabeth's initial reservations to the match, especially the significant age-difference between Elizabeth and Francis, and the fact that his older brother Henry (later Henry III of France) had been a previous suitor.²⁶⁶ But, Elizabeth's reservations may have diminished over the years that passed between the initiation of the courtship and its conclusion. More than a royal rumination or personal reflection, the poem represents Elizabeth's realization that marriage to Alençon—or any marriage—was increasingly unlikely. Helen Hackett has convincingly argued that the second phase of the long courtship (c. 1578-1582) “marked Elizabeth's conclusive transition into perpetual virginity.”²⁶⁷ The realization suggested in the queen's poetry—that her final realistic chance at matrimony had departed—paralleled a growing suspicion in the 1580s among the Elizabethan elite that the queen would likely remain unmarried and without an heir. As such a belief spread among Elizabeth's courtiers, many of them had to contend with the removal of a constant in court life: the possibility that the queen might marry at any time.

For the first two decades of the queen's reign, the possibility of her marriage loomed large on the minds of elite aristocrats. It frequently influenced the policies they supported and

1996). For the courtship and suggested marriage between Henry of Anjou (Henry III), see p. 73-98. For the evolution of the courtship between Elizabeth and Alençon, that ensued after it became clear that the match between Elizabeth and Henry would not take place, see 130-194. Peter Iver Kaufman makes the innovative and intriguing suggestion that in the late 1570s and early 1580s, maintaining a courtship with Alençon was politically pragmatic for the queen. As the French duke began supporting Dutch rebels, Kaufman argues that it ensured that Spanish energies were directed at rebels and French supporters, not at Elizabeth's England. See Peter Iver Kaufman, “Queen Elizabeth's Leadership Abroad: The Netherlands in the 1570s” in *Leadership in Elizabethan Culture*, ed. Peter Iver Kaufman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 73-88.

²⁶⁵ For a rare exception to this lack of analysis of the queen's poetry, see Ilona Bell, *Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 151-159.

²⁶⁶ See Elizabeth I, “Queen Elizabeth to Sir Francis Walsingham, Ambassador to France, July 23, 1572,” in *Elizabeth I, Collected Works*, 205-209.

²⁶⁷ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Macmillan: Hampshire and London, 1995), 93. For Hackett's analysis of the later phase of the courtship with Francis Duke of Alençon, see 93-96.

the way they interacted with their sovereign. That interaction, between queen and courtiers, shaped the character of Elizabethan court culture and the contours of policy. This chapter examines how courtiers presented themselves and enacted their masculinity when their service was to an unmarried queen regnant who could marry at any time. Looking at humanist and chivalric service—both real and imagined—it examines the ways in which the first generation of the queen’s servants adjusted their self-presentation and gender performance to suit their own political needs.

After a sketch of the historiography of royal and courtier self-representation during Elizabeth’s reign, this chapter examines the relationship between modes of self-presentation and models of masculinity for the first generation of Elizabethan courtiers. Using the idea of real and imagined service, it considers how the humanist masculinity of William Cecil shaped his career and presentation to the queen, alongside an analysis of the real and imagined chivalric service of Robert Dudley. This chapter shows how Cecil thrived as an erudite humanist (not to mention indispensable bureaucrat) and coexisted with equally successful aristocrats like the Earl of Leicester. It evaluates how the realization that the queen would not marry changed both the political realities and the panegyric presentations of both queen and courtiers. It concludes by looking at one of the most iconic (and analyzed) pieces of Elizabethan rhetoric—the so-called “Tilbury speech,” in a new way: I will argue that the speech not only represented the queen’s own use of malleable, multivalent gendered imagery, it also revealed the difficult political position of the sovereign *and* her servants as England was embroiled in war with Spain.

The issue of whether and with whom the queen might marry often dominated court politics. The removal of realistic chances of marriage and an heir changed the way courtiers approached the queen to achieve their political goals. It marked a change in the way queen and

courtiers presented themselves and were represented. In a very real sense, “Monsieur’s” (Alençon’s) departure marked the beginning of an increasing possibility that the queen would remain unmarried and be the last Tudor monarch. Alongside the generational shift precipitated by the deaths of many of Elizabeth’s closest advisors in the late 1580s and early 1590s, post-Armada England began to look like a dramatically different Elizabethan world. But, for the first Elizabethan generation, the possibility of the queen’s marriage, and the political changes that could bring were ever-present realities. Courtiers tailored their own self-presentation, including their performance of gender, to address political circumstances. Whether it was the humanist masculinity of William Cecil, or the more martial, chivalric masculinity of Robert Dudley, his nephew Philip Sidney, or his stepson Robert Devereux, the popular perceptions and political careers of prominent Elizabethan courtiers were shaped by the models of masculinity they followed and enacted.

II. The Queen and Her Servants: Historiography of Queenship, Gender, and Representation in Elizabethan England

Analysis of the representation of the queen and her courtiers adds an important element to a diverse body of literature on the Elizabethan political and cultural landscape. One of the most adroit examinations of the political consequences of representation is Carole Levin’s study, *The Heart and Stomach of a King”: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*, which examines Elizabeth’s self-presentation in conjunction with the elite and popular representations of her.²⁶⁸ Levin’s historical study demonstrates an interdisciplinary bent, with influences from

²⁶⁸ Carole Levin, *“The Heart and Stomach of a King”: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

anthropology and literary scholarship. The monograph elucidates representations of the queen in terms of traditions of sacred royal symbolism, the so-called “cult” of the Virgin Queen late in the reign, and popular rumors of the queen’s ravenous sexuality and numerous illegitimate children.²⁶⁹ Though such rumors often strained credulity, Levin suggests that they reflected dynastic anxiety during the queen’s reign. As the title of her monograph—taken from Elizabeth’s Tilbury speech—suggests, Elizabeth used a malleable gendered self-presentation to address different needs at different points in her reign. But, in addition to representing herself, Elizabeth was frequently represented by subjects of high and low status, with varying results. As Susan Frye has deftly demonstrated, there was indeed an intense “competition for representation”²⁷⁰ of the last Tudor, a competition in which the queen herself was intensely involved, and often tried to control.

The way the queen presented herself—and was represented by others—shaped the cultural milieu Elizabethan courtiers inhabited. In turn, it built their arena of political competition and shaped the way they presented themselves and allowed themselves to be represented by others. The malleable, often-changing gendered presentation of the queen—with its political ramifications—shaped the masculinities of her most powerful courtiers.

Those courtiers had to find ways to “fashion”²⁷¹ themselves, and enact their masculinities in ways that augmented their social status and advanced their political careers. The ways in

²⁶⁹ For royal symbolism, and the political uses of the Virgin Queen persona, see Levin, 10-38. For rumors about the queen’s sexuality and their political ramifications, see Levin, 67-90.

²⁷⁰ Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) passim.

²⁷¹ Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning from More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), passim. In this now classic, and influential, work of New-Historicist scholarship, Greenblatt provides an examination of an Elizabethan culture which influenced and was influenced by the literature it produced. In the culture and its literature, the self was a flexible construct that could be “fashioned” as the title suggests. As a literary scholar, much of Greenblatt’s argument is built on analysis of several key early modern authors like More, Tyndale, Spenser and (of course) Shakespeare. For additional analysis of theatricality and court culture by Greenblatt, see *Sir Walter Raleigh: The Renaissance Man and His Roles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), passim. Greenblatt

which courtiers presented themselves, or even “fashioned” themselves was strongly informed by how courtiers’ self-presentation might reflect on the queen. Chivalric and humanist courtiers had to find a way to present themselves that flattered the queen and—at least as importantly—did not undermine her authority. One scholar who has contributed admirably to the study of representation of regal authority is A. N. McLaren. In one of her several contributions to the scholarship on Elizabethan femininity and queenship, she situates the representation of Elizabeth within the context of the contested Elizabethan succession question. She contends that the depiction of Elizabeth as a distinctly Protestant queen was fueled by the need to paint Elizabeth in stark contrast to Mary Stuart, who had a strong claim to the English throne and was especially dangerous to Elizabeth after she gave birth to a healthy male heir. Elizabeth was associated with Deborah, and the Woman Clothed in the Sun, and—at least in McLaren’s reading—depicted as a “surrogate Virgin Mary.”²⁷² Though McLaren’s analysis follows a long tradition of scholarship by arguing that Elizabeth filled a quasi-Marian role, Helen Hackett’s argument that Elizabeth’s representation was less that of a substitute Queen of Heaven and more a continuation of long-standing tropes of royal representation is quite convincing. Nevertheless, McLaren’s analysis of the dimensions of Elizabeth’s queenship rendered problematic by the early modern notions of the body politic are quite astute. In this concept, the body politic was to be headed (ideally) by a male figure. As such, having a queen as head of the body politic presented a gender paradox.

situates Raleigh’s life, career, and literary production within the context of Elizabethan court and culture. That court and the larger culture it inhabited was, in Greenblatt’s reading, theatrical. In that respect, his study of Raleigh anticipates *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*. Greenblatt builds on both these works with *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), a collection of related New Historicist essays which explore the relationship between artistic production and political/court culture. Moreover, it looks at the relationship between the theatricality of the stage and the theatricality of court politics. In Greenblatt’s analysis, theatre both reflects and shapes cultural norms and motifs.

²⁷² A. N. McLaren, “Gender, Religion and Early Modern Nationalism: Elizabeth I, Mary Queen of Scots, and the Genesis of English Anti-Catholicism,” *The American Historical Review* 107, no. 3 (June 2002): 766.

Many courtiers assumed (and hoped) that such problems would be resolved by the queen's marriage.²⁷³

According to McLaren, when such a solution was not actualized, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, royal favorite and one of the queen's most trusted advisers, served a surrogate husband and king figure. But, this solution to the problem of perceived need for masculine headship only survived as long as Dudley. Finally McLaren contends that the desire for a masculine head of the body politic continued to color political rhetoric and discourse in Jacobean England.²⁷⁴

In McLaren's analysis, it appears that at the same time Elizabeth I was functioning as a "surrogate Virgin Mary," she also, paradoxically, had a symbolic husband in the person of Robert Dudley. McLaren's arguments reveal a malleable, multivalent femininity for the queen that was displayed and deployed to achieve a variety of political goals. Wherever one comes to rest on the degree to which Elizabeth was presented as a substitute Mary figure, the queen was presented and represented in a diverse and multivalent array of ways. Such a multifaceted (and useful) representation of the queen, both as a person and a persona was able to emerge from the confluence of Renaissance gender ambiguities and contested ideas about the nature of early modern queenship.²⁷⁵

But what do early modern depictions of queenship in general and representations of Elizabeth in particular reveal about Elizabethan court culture? Was Elizabeth depicted as a "surrogate Virgin Mary"²⁷⁶ as McLaren (and others) have claimed? Helen Hackett staunchly

²⁷³ A. N. McLaren, "The Quest for a King: Gender, Marriage, and Succession in Elizabethan England," *The Journal of British Studies* 41, no. 3 (July 2002): 259-290.

²⁷⁴ McLaren, "Quest for a King," 289-290.

²⁷⁵ For an excellent collection bringing together recent scholarship on Marian and Elizabethan queenship, see *Tudor Queenship: The Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth*, eds. Anne Whitelock and Alice Hunt (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

²⁷⁶ McLaren, "Gender, Religion, and Early Modern Nationalism," 766.

rejects the idea that the multifaceted representation of Elizabeth indicates that the queen filled some psychological or social need for a substitute Virgin Mary. This transposition of Virgin Queen for Virgin Mary that has been read by other scholars is problematic—for Hackett, diverse representations of the queen in iconography, portraiture, literature and drama must be thoroughly contextualized. To take any such representation out of context is to underestimate the influence of the historical moment in which that representation arose. Furthermore, Hackett interprets much of the imagery which has previously been interpreted as specifically Marian as more generally typological in nature. Associating an unmarried queen with a virginal archetype could serve different political objectives at different points in Elizabeth's forty-five year reign, but that does not imply that the queen was a representational substitute for the Virgin Mary. Instead, it demonstrates how a malleable and multifaceted iconography which developed over four decades could be deployed to address the political needs of a given moment.

Regarding the specifically Marian imagery from 1560-78 Hackett claims that “the identification of Elizabeth with the Protestant Church and State resulted in aggressive Protestant appropriations of scriptural types like the Woman Clothed with the Sun.”²⁷⁷ Conversely, the strongly Marian imagery of the last decade is attributed to “a secular Catholic revival,” wherein the symbolism was easily understood, but divested of much of its earlier religious antagonism. Hackett also points out that the Marian imagery evoked late in the reign occurred along with a proliferation of classical imagery which would last until the queen's death.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁷ Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Macmillan: Hampshire and London, 1995), 92.

²⁷⁸ Hackett, 160-234. The evolution of royal iconography as well as this proliferation of classical imagery late in Elizabeth's reign has received considerable attention. Two well-argued examples are those of John N. King, “The Godly Woman in Elizabethan Iconography,” *Renaissance Quarterly* 38, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 41-84 and his later *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

Ultimately, Hackett rejects the idea of the Virgin Queen as a substitute for the Virgin Mary, but she does not deny the presence of numerous multivalent representations of virginity associated with Elizabeth. She simply reminds readers that those representations were generated within a complex web of social and political motivations and given diverse meanings. In its myriad forms, the presence of an evolving virginal motif in royal representation throughout Elizabeth's reign is undeniable.

In a court climate where Elizabeth's own self-presentation and representation by others were replete with potential political implications, courtiers presented themselves carefully. Self-presentation that pleased the queen could get or maintain royal favor. Conversely, courtiers who presented themselves poorly—whether pursuing royal patronage or presenting an entertainment for the queen—could find themselves alienated from royal favor, patronage, and political support. Segments of the population may have hoped Robert Dudley would fill the role of either a surrogate or actual husband, but Dudley was usually careful to present himself as a chivalric—but subservient—servant, even when he implicitly presented himself as a potential consort.²⁷⁹ Dudley knew better than most courtiers how to present himself personally and politically to the queen. This was knowledge that every successful courtier-politician had to acquire, either through hard-won experience at court, or through advice from others.

²⁷⁹ See Elizabeth Goldring, "Portraiture, Patronage, and the Progresses: Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the Kenilworth Festivities of 1575," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, eds. Jayne Elisabeth Archer et.al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 163-188.

III. “We may not forget her place & the nature of it as our sovereign”: Advice on How to Approach the Queen

Whether a courtier presented himself as an exemplar of erudition or a paragon of prowess, he had to maintain good reputation at court and find the most advantageous way to present himself as a man to his monarch. Surviving correspondence between family and ostensible friends at court can reveal both idealized models of self-presentation and realistic candid advice on how to lead one’s life at court. This included advice on how to approach the symbolic center of court life: the queen herself. Advice like William Cecil’s guidance to his sons²⁸⁰ was shaped by fatherly and political aspirations for his family. But, correspondence between courtiers sometimes contains equally pragmatic, and much more candid, advice on how one should approach the queen and appear to serve the sovereign. One unusually candid missive from Sir Edward Dyer to Sir Christopher Hatton reveals some of the challenges aspiring courtiers faced from a queen who—if one believes Dyer’s depiction—had to be approached with the utmost care. Writing to Hatton in October 1572, Dyer revealed his views (and likely that of many others at court) about how to approach the queen. Couching his presentation in a motif of epistolary self-effacement, Dyer began his letter by assuring Hatton (who was an up-and-coming courtier) that he knew Hatton did not need any advice.²⁸¹ He then proceeded to give just such advice about how to approach the queen for maximum advantage:

²⁸⁰ For discussion of these pieces of advice, see chapter 2 section VI, and chapter 3 section IV (below).

²⁸¹ BL Stowe MS 143 fol. 115r.

First of all you must consider with whom you have to deal & what we be towards her who though she do descend very much in Sex as a... Woman yet we may not forget her Place & the nature of it as our Sovereign. Now if a Man of secret cause known to himself might in common reason challenge it yet if the Queen mislike thereof the World followeth the sway of her Inclination.²⁸²

Dyer's advice demonstrated how the queen was at the center of court life. He framed that centrality, and the way men at court had to approach their queen in explicitly gendered terms. He clearly acknowledged the perceived inferiority of her gender (and implicitly her physical body). But, imbued with the power of place, she had the power of a sovereign monarch. Perhaps the perceived inferiority of her gendered body natural was trumped by the transcendent power of her body politic.²⁸³ In Dyer's depiction, as a man and a potential magnate, whatever his own preferences, he had to decipher the queen's preferences. Going against those—even with good reason—was dangerous to one's career. The most powerful leaders, usually those who retained royal favor, followed those preferences assiduously. In Dyer's words, "the world followeth the sway of her inclination." Presenting oneself in a way that the queen would not "mislike" was essential, but retaining royal favor by itself was not sufficient. The successful courtier had to find political self-presentation and gender performance that kept the queen's favor *and* allowed that maintenance to be well known. On a social level, this was associated with the maintenance of good reputation and honor. From a more pragmatic political

²⁸² BL Stowe MS 143 fol. 115r-v. I have modernized spelling and completed abbreviated words for readability in the main text. See below for original spelling: "First of all you must consider wth whom you have to deal & what wee be towards her who though she do descend very much in Sex as a Woman... yet wee may not fogett her Place & y^e nature of it as our Sou^raigne. Now if a Man of secret cause knowne to himself might in common reason challenge it yet if the Qu^e mislike thereof y^e World followeth the sway of her Inclination."

²⁸³ For the classic study on the origins of the idea of the king's (or monarch's) two bodies, see Ernst H. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957). For an important elaboration of this concept in drama, see Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies: Drama and the Elizabethan Succession* (London: Swift Printers Ltd., 1977), passim. Axton applies Kantorowicz's concept of the king's two bodies to Tudor dramatic literature and performance and argues that dramatic literature functioned as an arena to question the construct of a monarch's natural and political bodies. For a more recent gendered analysis of the concept, see Cynthia Herrup, "The King's Two Genders," *The Journal of British Studies* 45, no. 3 (July 2006): 493-510.

perspective, ambitious courtiers could not afford to be associated with someone out of Elizabeth's good graces. Dyer argued that a friendship or perceived alliance with someone with the taint of disfavor could poison the political fortune of one's friends:

For it is not good for any man straightly to weigh a general disallowance of her doings[.] That the Queen will mislike of such a course this is my reason. She will imagine that you go about to imprison her fancy & to wrap her grace within your disposition & that will breed despite [spite] & hatred in her towards you[.] And so you may be cast forth to the malice of every envious person flatterer & enemy of yours out of which you shall never recover yourself cheerly neither your Friends long as they show themselves your Friends.²⁸⁴

A picture emerges of an easily irritated, potentially spiteful queen who jealously guarded her authority. In a court filled with servants currying favor, as an astute politician, Elizabeth likely understood very well how much the perceived "defect" of her gender could potentially undermine her princely authority. She had to contend with a court peopled with many who thought that she did "descend much in sex as a woman." She continuously engaged in a delicate dance to maintain her authority. Courtiers were engaged in the same dance, albeit on the other side. They had to find ways to enact their masculinity that kept the monarch's favor and allowed them to provide counsel, but did not even hint at undermining her authority. Dyer's advice seems informed by anxiety about how best to approach the queen. Whether early modern English masculinity was filled with anxiety (as Mark Breitenberg has argued),²⁸⁵ based on

²⁸⁴ BL Stowe MS 143 fols. 115v-116r. As I have modernized spelling and completed abbreviated words, see below for original spelling: "For it is not good for any man straightly to weigh a general disallowance of her doings That the Qu. will mislike of such a course this is my reason She will imagine yⁱ you go about to imprison her ffancy & to wrapp her grace wthin your disposic[^]on & yⁱ will breed despite [spite] & hatred in her towards you And so you may be cast forth to the malice of euery enuious person flatterer & enemy of yours out of w^{ch} you shall neuer recouer recouer yourself cheerly neyther your Freinds long as they shew themselues your Freinds."

²⁸⁵ See Mark Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), passim, and "Anxious Masculinity: Sexual Jealousy in Early Modern England," *Feminist Studies* 19, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 377-398. Unlike Breitenberg, my analysis is less focused on specifically sexual anxiety and more concerned with the impact social and cultural anxiety may have had on courtiers' political lives.

Dyer's advice, it seems that anxiety was endemic to court life. This advice was offered in the early 1570s, a period of relative stability, when the queen's marriage—and an heir—was still a real possibility. It did not arise from the 1580s, when the threat of war with Spain weighed on the minds of queen and courtiers. It was not a product of the faction-ridden 1590s.

Nevertheless, the need to avoid the queen's ire still influenced the ways courtiers presented themselves and enacted their gender. This was one characteristic of Elizabethan court culture that shaped the political lives of chivalric and humanist courtiers alike. One humanist courtier who managed—with rare exceptions during his decades of royal service—to avoid the queen's anger was William Cecil.

IV. Humanist Service, Real and Imagined: William Cecil and His Sons

William Cecil was not from a prominent family with an ancient lineage. He did not inherit a place in the peerage. But, he did become one of the most important, powerful, and trusted advisors to the last Tudor monarch. After studying at Cambridge and Gray's Inn, William's lifetime of public service began in earnest during the reign of Edward VI.²⁸⁶ For Stephen Alford, who offers one of the most recent—and insightful—biographical studies of the Elizabethan giant, his rise to preeminence in the Elizabethan regime was partly built on many hard lessons learned early in his life. Cecil did not become an energetic bureaucrat and astute politician overnight. Following his years at Cambridge and Gray's Inn, during which he discovered the pleasures of scholarship, he entered government service in the Edwardian regime. Following Edward's death, Cecil avoided political and personal ruin, despite being associated

²⁸⁶ Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 12-32.

with those tied to the coup that placed Lady Jane Grey (briefly) on the throne. More surprisingly, he managed to stay politically engaged and connected during Mary's reign (1553-1558), without a formal position in the government. In Alford's adept analysis, Cecil found ways to survive politically and prosper in quickly shifting circumstances.²⁸⁷ The man with "the best political mind of his generation,"²⁸⁸ learned valuable lessons about forming the right political connections and alliances at the right time. These lessons would serve him in good stead when he became one of Elizabeth's most trusted counselors.

By the time he became 1st Baron Burghley in 1571 and Lord Treasurer in 1572, he was an indispensable counselor to the "Virgin Queen," whom he served until his death in 1598. He built a career as a bureaucrat and an administrator. Throughout his career, he maintained cooperative working relationships which courtiers like Robert Dudley, despite the differing models of humanist and chivalric masculinity that each followed.

His eldest son, Thomas Cecil, *did* inherit a place in the peerage (as 2nd Baron Burghley), although Thomas was clearly not his father's political heir. That inheritance was reserved for the second son, Robert. Robert was clearly the favored son whom William groomed and cultivated as a successor. Surviving evidence suggests that William may have had far less interest in preparing Thomas to follow in his political footsteps—and possibly far less interest in Thomas—than he did in his younger brother. When William himself was willing to admit that regarding Thomas he did not have 'any fatherly fancy to him but in teaching and correcting,'²⁸⁹ this suggests a relationship that was lukewarm at best. During these early years, while William Cecil was establishing his position as an essential counselor, he also wanted to groom an heir. Until 1563, his firstborn Thomas was his only option. If William's letter of advice to Thomas is any

²⁸⁷ Alford, *Burghley*, 33-82.

²⁸⁸ Alford, *Burghley*, 12.

²⁸⁹ *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, 1561-2*, 105.

indication, William did not hold out high hopes. Written in 1561 just before Thomas embarked on a grand tour of Europe, it functioned as a warning to stay out of trouble. Thomas was sternly admonished to remain virtuous and follow a strict regimen of daily prayers. His father showed extreme concern about Thomas not behaving like the man William wanted him to be. This letter entitled “A Memorial for Thomas Cecil” is less a guide to political success and more a warning to avoid personal excess. Furthermore, William ended the advice with a stern warning about how possible moral, sexual, or religious transgressions could influence William’s perception of his son:

If you offend in forgetting of God by leaving your ordinary prayers or suchlike, if you offend in any surfeiting by eating or drinking too much, if you offend any other waies by attending and minding any lewd and filthye tales or enticements of lightness or wantonness of body, you must at evening bringe both your thoughts and deeds as you put of [off] your garments, to lay down and cast away those and all suchlike that by the devil are devised to overwhelm your soul and so to burden it by daily lainge on filth after filth that when you would be delivered thereof you shall find the burden thereof too waightye. And soe, ending this matter, I commend you to the tuition of the Almighty God, having in this behalf discharged myself of the care committed to me by God, being your earthlie and corruptible father, remitting you again by education of you from childhood to this state wherein you are and from ignorance to knowledge to the hands of God from whom I received you as His gift, and if you shall please Him and serve Him in fear, I shall take comfort of you; otherwise I shall take you as no blessing of God but a burden of grief and decay of my age.²⁹⁰

This demonstrates the tone of warning and implicit fear of Thomas’s misbehavior and potential embarrassment to his family. Furthermore, William implied that if Thomas did not represent himself and family well, by demonstrating piety and mature manhood, the father might wash his hands of the son. Thomas was about to embark on an early version of the Grand Tour, an exercise in finishing and cultivation. But Burghley did not devote space to great places to see,

²⁹⁰ W. Cecil, BL Harleian MS 3638 f. 106v

cities to visit, or ways to make useful social connections. Instead, his advice was dominated by admonishments to avoid sinful (and of course, embarrassing) behavior like “any lewd and filthy tales or enticements of lightness or wantonness of body” that Thomas might encounter. William did not seem to possess an over-abundance of faith in young Thomas’s restraint. His son’s send-off was filled with warnings to stay out of trouble and avoid damage to his (and his family’s) reputation, and capped with a statement that if Thomas should fail in this, his father would “take [him] as no blessing of God but a burden of grief and decay of [William’s] age.” William’s harsh admonishments, and his overall tone, suggest that the best he hoped for from his son and this exercise was that Thomas would not embarrass him. Part of this apparent anxiety, or even antipathy, surrounding Thomas’s trip may be due to William’s own limited travel. The eldest Cecil did not travel extensively, even before he began a decades-long career of government service.²⁹¹

Nevertheless, William’s hopes for his son likely did not increase when Thomas devoted time and energy to military service. Thomas’s military service in the Netherlands, as part of Robert Dudley’s expedition, would prompt rare expressions of fatherly concern from Cecil. As Thomas became part of the expedition, Burghley essentially asked Leicester to look after the well-being of his son, and commended his son to the earl’s protection.²⁹² Moreover, once the expedition was underway, Burghley showed more concern. In a postscript to a letter from Burghley to the Earl of Leicester, dated 12 January 1585/6, Burghley wrote: “After I had written this letter thus far, I have hard [heard] of the taking of a hoye of Holland, wherin [sic] ten or

²⁹¹ Alford, *Burghley*, 72.

²⁹² “Lord Burghley to the Earl of Leycester, 27th December, 1585,” Letter XVIII in *Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, During His Government of the Low Countries, in the Years 1585 and 1586*, ed. John Bruce (London: Printed for the Camden Society by J.B. Nichols and Son, 1844), 44-45. William Cecil implored Robert Dudley as follows: “First, I am so assured, and my sonn [sic] also, of your lordships honorable good will towards hym, more than the common sort, as I forbear to wryte any more, but, breffly, to recommend hym to your protection, and to wish [him] Godes grace to do as well as I am sure your lordship will wish hym”(44).

twelve horses of my sons [son's]. God send better luck for his own passage.”²⁹³ Given the possibility that his eldest son may have been injured or killed, the elder statesman was clearly concerned. However, it is noteworthy that it took the threat of mortal danger to prompt such uncharacteristic anxiety. He apparently did not place high value on martial service—William would later advise his son and successor Robert to avoid both extensive travel “passe the Alps”²⁹⁴ and military service, since for one’s children, “souldyers in peace, are like to chimneys in Somer.”²⁹⁵ William did not use martial activity or self-presentation to advance his own political career. He was a humanist bureaucrat who placed his second son and successor on the same career trajectory. Cecil composed pieces of father-son advice literature to both his sons. His stern, even harsh advice to Thomas survives in manuscript and would not be printed until the twentieth century. By contrast, his advice to Robert, whom he groomed to follow him, enjoyed several early modern printings, the first of which was even in Robert Cecil’s lifetime.²⁹⁶

Perhaps Cecil’s own words best indicate the different fatherly feeling he had for each son. While he feared that Thomas might be a “burden of grief and decay of [his] age,” he composed a more diverse piece of advice literature that in many ways simply seems *nicer*, for Robert. He began this tract by stating that he wrote his advice to Robert because “I thinke it fit & agreeable to the affection I bear thee, to help thee with such aduertisements & rules for the

²⁹³ “Lord Burghley to the Earl of Leycester, 12th January 1585/6,” Letter XXI in *Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, 56.

²⁹⁴ W. Cecil, BL Stowe MS 143 f. 101v

²⁹⁵ W. Cecil, British Library Stowe MS 143, f.101v-102r. For an extended analysis of William’s advice to Robert, see chapter two.

²⁹⁶ William’s advice to Thomas survives in W. Cecil, BL Harleian MS 3638 f. 106r-v. It is worth noting that William’s advice to Robert was printed under various titles in several early modern additions, while his advice to Thomas survived only in manuscript until the 20th century, when it was printed as “A Memorial for Thomas Cecil” in *Advice to a Son: Precepts of Lord Burghley, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Francis Osborne*, ed. Louis B. Wright (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1962) 3-6. William’s advice to Robert was also printed in several editions after William’s death, which include *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death* (London, 1611); later published as *Certain Precepts, or Directions, for the Well-Ordering and Carriage of a Mans Life: As also Oeconomical Discipline for the Government of his House*. (London, 1617), and (Edinburgh, 1618) and as *Precepts, or, Directions for the well ordering and carriage of a mans life*, (London, 1636).

squaring of thy life, as are gayned rather by long experience, then much reading.”²⁹⁷ Here, William started his letter of advice by revealing that he not only *had* affection for his second son, but that it was a motivating factor in the composition of the document that gives succinct advice on nearly every major aspect of an elite gentleman’s life.²⁹⁸ In the midst of his declaration of fatherly affection, William also emphasized the importance of piety and education in leading a good, successful life. His advice to Robert encapsulated the ideals and axioms of his humanist masculinity, and was directed specifically at Robert. I contend that it was constructed and directed in this way because William believed Robert could live up to the political ambitions *and* the model of masculinity that William had lived and left for his sons.

One of the earliest printings of this tract (the only one published during Robert Cecil’s lifetime) was published under the title *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*.²⁹⁹ This would be the first of several seventeenth-century printings, but in some ways, it may be the most aptly titled. The tract does contain a legacy from William to Robert that goes beyond the legacy of the document itself and its proliferation in print. It summarizes Cecil’s model of humanist masculinity—based on erudition, piety, and

²⁹⁷ BL Stowe MS 143, f. 100r. For the entire preamble, see below: “Sonne Robert y^e The vertuous inclination of thy matchlesse Mother, by whose tender and godly care thy Infancy was gouerned, together with thy late education vnder soe zealous & excellent a Tutor, puts me rather in assurance then hope, y^t thou art not Ignorant of that [Sum[^]rr] (rendered summary) bond, which is only able to make the[thee] happy, as well in thy death as life. I mean the true knowledge and worship of thy Creator and Redeemer, without w^{ch} all things are vain & miserable. So that thy youth being guided by so all sufficient a Tutor I make no Doubt but he will furnish thy life both with Diuine & moral docum.^{ts} [documents;] yet y^t I may not cease of the care beseeming a Parent towards his child, or that thou shouldest haue cause, to deriue thy whole felicity & wellfare rather from others, then from whom thou receiuedst thy birth & being, I thinke it fit & agreeable to the affecc[^]on [affection] I bear thee, to help thee with such aduertisements & rules for the squaring of thy life, as are gayned rather by long experience, then much reading, to the end, that thou entring in/to this exorbitant age maist be the better prepared to shun those cautelous courses, whereunto this world, and thy lacke of experience may draw there. And because I would not confound thy memory, I haue reduced them into ten parts and next unto Moses his Tables, if thou imprint them in thy mind, thou shalt reape the benefite, and I the contentment. And these are they.” BL Stowe MS 143, f. 100r-v.

²⁹⁸ For an in-depth analysis of William’s advice to Robert see chapter 2 and its discussion of ideals of masculinity in printed conduct literature. Note that although his advice to Thomas is mentioned in that section, it is not treated extensively because it, unlike the advice to Robert, was not printed in the early modern period.

²⁹⁹ William Cecil, *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*, (London, 1611).

service—that was clearly the preferred model of gender performance for William Cecil and his younger son. The degree to which intellect and erudition was privileged in the Cecil family is suggested in a letter from Thomas to Robert. In this letter from the early days of the reign of James I (r. 1603-1625), Thomas acknowledged his younger brother’s intellectual skill and political superiority. All the while Thomas assured Robert that he was not jealous of Robert’s success. Whether Thomas protested too much in that regard or not, the way he tried to assure Robert of his affection is revealing. When he wrote: “Let this letter be kept as a witness against me if you shall not find in me towards you a love void of envy or mistrust, and as glad of your honour and merit as a dear brother ought to be. For I am not partial, but confess that God hath bestowed rarer gifts of mind upon you than on me.”³⁰⁰ Thomas acknowledged Robert’s intellectual acumen. But his words also suggested how much more privileged these “rarer gifts of mind” were in Thomas’s estimation. Certainly, Thomas’s motivations could have been influenced by desire to curry political favor with his more influential brother, or something as quotidian as a desire to maintain good family relations. However, this assurance of affection and praise was framed in a way that valued intellectual adroitness above other unspecified “gifts.” Coming from a nobleman-soldier like Thomas, these other abilities and gifts were likely of the martial variety.

Thomas and Robert grew up under the stern tutelage of the same Elizabethan patriarch. But, while Robert was (at least rhetorically) assured of his father’s affection, William himself admitted his lack of feeling for his firstborn.³⁰¹ Perhaps Thomas gave primacy to intellectual ability because he was raised in a family in which humanist erudition—and the model of

³⁰⁰ Thomas Cecil to Robert Cecil, June 13, 1603, in *Historical Manuscripts Commission. A Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honorable Marquis of Salisbury, KG & c, Preserved at Hatfield House, Hertfordshire* (24 vols., London, 1883-1976), vol. 15, 132-133. Hereafter, *HMC Salisbury*.

³⁰¹ *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, 1561-2*, 105.

manhood that went along with it—was prized. Thomas could have lauded Robert’s “rarer gifts of mind” precisely because the firstborn did not live up to the model of masculinity espoused by his father. William Cecil’s self-presentation, like his mode of masculinity, was based on his service to his sovereign. Burghley’s gender performance lacked the dramatic flair of his chivalric counterparts—it was instead based on the tireless service of a workhorse administrator and humanist courtier.³⁰² William Cecil passed that model of gender performance—and that impressive work ethic—to his younger son. As the career of the second Cecil would demonstrate, that model of manhood itself functioned as a legacy from one generation to the next.³⁰³

V. Chivalric Service, Real and Imagined: Robert Dudley’s Entertainments at Kenilworth and Praise of Walter Devereux’s Service in Ireland

Like its humanist counterpart, chivalric manhood constituted one aspect of a larger, multifaceted early modern elite masculinity that was represented and used for a variety of political and polemic purposes. For the courtiers in the Dudley and Devereux families, identification as chivalric soldier-knights became essential to their political careers and masculinities. Chivalric masculinity was generally equated with either service to an idealized lady, or military service to a monarch. Looking at two very different incidents in 1575—an entertainment that presented potential service by Robert Dudley, and Elizabeth’s praise of Walter

³⁰² For an adept analysis that reveals William Cecil’s skill as a Ciceronian-influenced courtier and embodiment of *sprezzatura*, see Mary Partridge, “Lord Burghley and *Il Cortegiano*: Civil and Martial Models of Courtliness in Elizabethan England,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 19 (December 2009): 95-116.

³⁰³ For a discussion of Robert Cecil’s career, see chapter 4, section III, and the study’s Conclusion.

Devereux's actual service in Ireland—this section examines the consequences to courtiers' masculinities when the ideals of imagined service and the realities of actual service do not align.

In 1575, as part of one of her frequent royal progresses—which were often long and lavish, especially in the 1570s—Elizabeth I visited Kenilworth Castle. While the queen was at an estate of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester and one of her former suitors, an elaborate entertainment was staged for her.³⁰⁴ The Kenilworth entertainments and Elizabeth's praise of Devereux were two roughly contemporary events. One was ostensibly a light-hearted performance for a visiting sovereign and the other an attempt by that sovereign to reassure an aristocrat-soldier of the value and appreciation felt for his laborious service in Ireland. Both sources were intensely political in nature and quite revealing about different aspects of chivalric masculinity.

The Kenilworth entertainments reveal a variety of chivalric tropes employing classical and Arthurian imagery. The entertainments began with a "prophecy." After all, how better to begin a presentation to a queen than by foretelling the future? An oracle proclaimed:

Euen so shall vertue more and more,
augment your years withal
The rage of warre bound fast in chaines,
shal neuer stirre ne moue:
But peace shal gouerne all your daies,
increasing Subjects loue.
You shalbe called the Prince of peace,
and peace shalbe your shield,
So that your eyes shal neuer see
the broyles of bloody field.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁴ The most important monograph on Elizabeth's progresses is Mary Hill Cole's *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999). Her study deftly demonstrates both the way the queen used progresses as a political tool and the reciprocal political nature of the relationship between sovereign and host. For the Kenilworth pageants, see esp. 128-130. For a more recent contribution to the literature on progresses, see *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, eds. Jayne Elisabeth Archer et al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

³⁰⁵ George Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, in *The Whole Works of George Gascoigne* (London, 1587), sig. Ai, r. The printed text runs from Sig. Ai, r-C viii, r. Ai-Aiiii, B-Biiii, and Ci-Ciiii are labeled. I have silently supplied

This passage employed several images of peace. With the queen portrayed as a preserver of peace, and with the use of the phrase “Prince of peace,” the passage suggests a quasi-salvific role for the idealized queen. It suggested that the queen’s reign would be free of violence and bloodshed, with war chained up and peace remaining a shield. Overlooking the redundancy of peace as a shield preserving itself, this passage suggested that as long as Elizabeth ruled, peace would reign. This is ironic as part of an entertainment hosted by Robert Dudley. The Earl of Leicester’s status at court and his political career were built on his position as one of the queen’s favorites and his role as a chivalric courtier. At the entertainment that he sponsored as host to the queen on progress, Dudley had an invaluable opportunity to present himself. Mary Hill Cole has demonstrated how effectively Elizabeth used progresses as a way to project her power and maintain her rule,³⁰⁶ but courtiers like Dudley also used their position as host to present themselves directly and indirectly. In the Kenilworth pageants, the Earl of Leicester was able to depict himself as a chivalric courtier. Elizabeth Goldring has recently demonstrated how effectively Dudley used portraiture to literally represent himself, his potential as a royal consort, and his political subservience to his sovereign, during the 1575 Kenilworth visit.³⁰⁷ But, his indirect literary representations were just as political. Dudley was implicitly portrayed as a chivalric courtier who could provide military service to the queen. The above passage reminds the audience of the need for military leadership, wrapped in an assurance that the queen would keep peace. But the assurance that the queen’s eyes “shall never see the broyles of bloody field”

signature numbers with parenthetical notation for reference where appropriate.

³⁰⁶ See Cole, *The Portable Queen*, passim., and “Monarchy in Motion: An Overview of Elizabethan Progresses” in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, eds. Jayne Elisabeth Archer et.al (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 27-45. This anthology chapter succinctly encapsulates many of the central arguments of Cole’s earlier monograph.

³⁰⁷ See Goldring, “Portraiture, Patronage, and Progresses,” 163-188. For Dudley’s hints at marriage via portraiture and assurance that he would remain subordinate, see esp. 174-176.

subtly affirmed the need for martial aristocrats—like Dudley—who were willing and able to lead forces onto bloody fields if the need arose.

As the entertainments progressed, the Arthurian imagery began, and the Lady of the Lake approached Elizabeth and depicted her as Arthur's heir. Alluding to Elizabeth's previous visits to Kenilworth as she said:

I am the Lady of this pleasant lake,
who since the time of great king Arthures reigne
That here with royal Court abode did make,
have led a lowring life in restles paine.
Til now that this your third arriuall here
doth cause me to come abroad and boldly thus appeare.³⁰⁸

The Lady of the Lake continued, saying that Elizabeth's arrival made her feel safe, and provided a peaceful environment in which the Lady could appear. The mythical Lady did not have any such feelings of safety in the period of Saxon sieges, Danish domination, the Norman Conquest, or in more recent English history, of course, until Elizabeth.³⁰⁹ This placed Elizabeth in an august position, while affirming Dudley's own prominence and importance by reminding both audience and sovereign of previous visits. The lavish praise placed the queen symbolically alongside Arthur, but it served a dual purpose. It made the queen the center of attention in a lavish entertainment, but it reminded all present that Dudley had the means and the privileged position to make such a spectacle possible. Elizabeth had already been portrayed as a powerful prince and a preserver of peace, but shortly after the visitation by the Lady, the focus shifted as Elizabeth was met by the wild, savage man in the woods.

As part of one of the entertainments, a savage male protagonist submitted himself to the service and implicit civilizing influence of the queen.³¹⁰ Here, his service, and his will were

³⁰⁸ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. Aii, v.

³⁰⁹ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. Aii, v-Aiii, r.

³¹⁰ For a classic (and much discussed) sociological analysis of the evolution of aristocratic behavioral norms and

subjected to her own, as though he were submitting himself to a chivalric lady-love. After falling to his knees, he exclaimed:

O Queéne I must confesse,
it is not without cause:
These ciuile people so reioice,
that you should giue them lawes.
Since I, which liue at large,
a wilde and sauage man:
And haue ronned out a wilfull race
since first my lyfe began.
Doe here submit my selfe,
beseeching you to serue:
And that you take in worth my will,
which can but deserue.³¹¹

Here, the queen's virtues were depicted as soothing the proverbial savage beast, literally taming the wild man and evoking the trope of the chivalric lady worthy of service. Before he submitted himself and his will to the queen's service, this "one clad like a sauage man... quarrelling with Iupiter"³¹² entered a dialogue with Echo, asking why such festivities were being held:

But wherefore doe they so reioice?
is it for King or Queéne?
Queéne? what the Queéne of heauen?
they knewe hir long agoone
No sure some Queene on earth,
whose like was neuer none.
O then, it seemes the Queéne,
of England for to be:
Whose graces make the Gods to grudge,
me thinks it should be shee.³¹³

their relationship to centralization of power, monopolization of force, and movement from martial chivalry toward gentlemanly civility in European history see the original analysis of "the civilizing process," see the landmark work, originally published German in 1939 by Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Revised Edition, trans. Edmund Jephcott, eds. Eric Dunning, et al., (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2000).

³¹¹ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. (A vi, v).

³¹² Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. A iii, r.

³¹³ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. (A iii, v-A v, r).

This panegyric passage was clearly elaborate in its praise, portraying Elizabeth as a monarch with boundless virtues and qualities to make even the gods jealous. Showing the porous nature of the boundaries between performance, pageant, and progress, this entertainment emphasized the rejoicing of characters and audiences. The rejoicing was due to the presence of the queen of *England*. Evoking proto-national pride, this portrayal of a queen virtuous enough to draw the envy of the gods and serve as heir to Arthur himself may have set the proverbial (and literal) stage for one of the more political passages in this part of the entertainment. The as-yet-untamed savage man continued talking to Echo, and asked about tokens and gifts presented to the queen:

Gifts? what? sent from the Gods?
as presents from aboue?
Or pleasures of prouision,
as tokens of true loue?
And who gaue all those gifts?
I pray thee (Eccho) say?
Was it not he? who (but of late)
this building did here lay
O Dudley, so me thought: he gaue him selfe and all,
A worthy gift to be receiued.
and so I trust it shall.³¹⁴

Superficially, this suggests that Robert Dudley was at the queen's service. For Gascoigne, who wrote the verses, this was likely the intended meaning. However, Dudley, who was in attendance,³¹⁵ could have had some influence regarding the content of the entertainment. Thus, a more politically charged reading of the passage becomes possible. Dudley may have been motivated to hold the entertainment to stay in Elizabeth's good graces. But regardless of the impetus for the entertainment, the verse portrays Dudley as a loyal and giving servant. Given

³¹⁴ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. (A vi, r).

³¹⁵ Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2002), 324.

the surrounding context, the mention of “tokens of true loue” and the presentation of Dudley as a “worthie gift to be receiued,” Dudley was portrayed overtly as a chivalric servant and—possibly—more subtly as a potential consort. Here, the gift presented was more than the entertainment staged. The entertainment provided a means for Dudley to implicitly present himself as a worthy gift and potential suitor. Moreover, it was only shortly thereafter in the entertainment in which a savage was tamed and submitted his will and service to the queen. This may have reinforced the idea of Dudley’s submission. Whatever degree of contrition Gascoigne implied for Dudley, this verse only hinted at the sore subject of the queen’s marriage, even though Dudley had been suggested as a potential suitor years earlier. The queen’s status as a virginal sovereign and subject of her marriage was only implied in many of the entertainments.³¹⁶

But that same subject had a more central role in a play written as part of the Kenilworth entertainments—a play that was never performed. Gascoigne attributed the non-performance to bad weather.³¹⁷ I suspect the implications of this play were too politically fraught to be performed for the queen. The queen likely did not want an entertainment that was too overt in suggesting Dudley—or anyone else—as a suitor. Susan Frye reads these entertainments as one example of “competition for representation” that she identifies across Elizabeth’s reign. The picture of Dudley that emerges in her analysis is one of a grasping favorite who sought to make himself the center of attention during these lavish entertainments.³¹⁸ While Dudley pushed the envelope occasionally and sometimes crossed the line between self-presentation and self-

³¹⁶ For excellent analysis of the political impact of Elizabeth’s marriage negotiations, see the works of Susan Doran, especially *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), which contains a slightly modified version of her earlier article, “Juno vs. Diana: The Treatment of Elizabeth I’s Marriage in Plays and Entertainments, 1561-1581,” *The Historical Journal* 38, no. 2 (June 1995): 257-274.

³¹⁷ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. C ii, v.

³¹⁸ Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation*, 56-96.

aggrandizement, the Earl of Leicester was usually astute in his personal and political dealings with the queen. The (sovereign) power rested firmly in Elizabeth's hands. By the time of the Kenilworth pageants in the 1570s, Elizabeth had mastered the art of being a queen on progress. As center of attention and holder of power, the queen could stop any entertainment that displeased her. Ultimately, Dudley had to maintain his position as a favorite or harm his political career. His greatness—his social and political power—was rooted in his status as a treasured favorite. Deep as those roots might run, the earl—a rank to which Elizabeth had raised him—had to stay in the queen's good graces to succeed politically.

The entertainments concluded with a farewell³¹⁹ (which, unlike Gascoigne's play, was presented). This farewell, composed by Gascoigne at Dudley's command,³²⁰ included a speech from the god of the woods that described how "Zabeta's" sundry suitors had been transformed into various plants because of Zabeta's rejection. This may suggest that the queen was being nudged to find a worthy suitor. This is highly possible since continuity of the Tudor dynasty was becoming increasingly questionable at the time of the entertainment, with the queen already in her early forties. But this farewell composed at Dudley's command likely reiterated how much the queen's rejection of him as a courtier and favorite would hurt Dudley personally and politically. Perhaps the farewell also served as a *mea culpa* for the content of the play that was stopped by "bad weather." The entertainments—both those performed and not—show how far the ambitious Earl of Leicester was willing to push the envelope to make a point and advance a suit. But they also demonstrate how adroitly he could retreat when necessary. Dudley's success and that of other chivalric courtiers like him depended on presenting themselves in ways that balanced the grandeur of (imagined) chivalric service to the sovereign with the essential

³¹⁹ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. C ii, v- (C viii, v).

³²⁰ Gascoigne, *Princely Pleasures*, sig. C ii, v.

deference to that same monarch. This was a delicate balance to strike in the service of a queen who may have enjoyed lavish entertainments, but who carefully watched for any infringement on her princely authority.

The splendor of the Kenilworth entertainments has become an iconic example of court pageantry and aristocratic entertainment of the queen. But, correspondence shows that actual military and quasi-chivalric service to the queen had far less splendor. In the same year as the Kenilworth entertainments, the queen endeavored to make certain that another nobleman in her service felt none of the rejection that Dudley might have feared. While attempting to pacify a rebellion in Ulster on the queen's orders, Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, received lavish praise from her, most likely intended to reassure him and provide encouragement. Elizabeth's epistolary praise was framed specifically in terms of honor and masculinity. In a letter to Essex dated April 11, 1575, she wrote:

[...]by all your actions, your wise behaviour and constancy in them, your pains and travails sustained by yourself bodily, the great charge that you have been at in your private expenses, and consuming of your revenues and patrimony in our service, and for the attaining of honor by virtue and travail, we have great cause to think you a rare treasure of our realm, and a principle ornament of our nobility; we wish daily unto God we had many such; and are sorry that in any thing you should be discouraged, or have any suspicion that we should have any sinister interpretation of your doings, which we confess to have been hitherto bold and courageous, full of virtue and manliness and for your years of experience as wise and discreet as ever any noble man was.³²¹

Here, Walter Devereux was portrayed as an ideal nobleman. But this lavish praise is most instructive not because of what it might reveal about Essex, but what it reveals about the ways in which soldierly and chivalric masculinities were praised. Essex was an "ornament" to Elizabeth's nobility because he was full of courage and manliness balanced with discretion. This

³²¹ Elizabeth I, "The Queen to Essex" in *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex*. (2 vols) by Walter Bouchier Devereux, Adamant Media Corporation, 2002, v. I, 99. This is a facsimile reprint of the original edition published (London: John Murray, 1853).

praise was offered not only to encourage Devereux during a campaign which was not going well, but also to convey that the queen understood how important Devereux's reputation was to him and assure him that she shared such concerns.

This concern for the preservation of honor can be found in Walter Devereux's correspondence. In a letter to the Privy Council dated June 1, 1575, Essex implored members of the council to "be careful of that which I weigh above all worldly wealth, which is my credit."³²² Here, Devereux expressed connected concerns for his social reputation and his financial well-being. For a chivalric nobleman like him, the "credit" he wished preserved included perception of proper gender performance and maintenance of financial prosperity. The queen's praise may have soothed Essex, but it did not reduce his concern for his "credit," reputation, or honor. Essex's actions may have been "full of virtue and manliness," but that very manliness could be drastically undermined if Devereux suffered damage to his reputation either through eroded chivalric honor or financial hardship. Elizabeth acknowledged the importance of preserving good reputation. In a letter to Essex, while referring to the 1575 effort to pacify Ulster, she indicated that she had commanded the Lord Deputy of Ireland "to seek by all the means he may to repair the decay of your [Devereux's] reputation and credit, that lately hath ensued by his hasty and violent breaking of said enterprize."³²³

In another letter from August or September 1575 Elizabeth praised his difficult service, along with his physical and financial sacrifice as she wrote:

And though perhaps you may think that it hath been a dear conquest unto you in respect of the great care of mind, toil of body, and the intolerable changes you have sustained to the consumption of some good portion of your patrimony, yet if the great reputation that you have gained thereby be weighed in the balance of just value, or tried at the touchstone of true desert, it shall then appear that neither

³²² Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, "Essex to Privy Council," in W. Devereux, *Lives and Letters* v. I, 107.

³²³ Elizabeth I, "The Queen to Essex" in W. Devereux, *Lives and Letters* v. I, 101.

your mind's care, your body's toil, nor purse's charge was unprofitably employed. For by the decay of those things that are subject to corruption and mortality you have, as it were invested yourself with immortal renown, the true mark every honorable mind ought to shoot at.³²⁴

The queen likely sought to assure Devereux that his service, and many sacrifices—which included heavy financial investment on the part of the earl of “some good portion of [his] patrimony” would be worthwhile. She also used martial imagery to reinforce the good Devereux was doing for his queen and his reputation, reminding him that he had hit “the true mark” for which others should aim. Despite his alleged mental and moral marksmanship, Devereux would not enjoy the fruits of the reputation he had built. Perhaps Devereux hoped that his reputation—his renown—would be immortal. But, Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex was dead within about a year. Suffering a severe attack of dysentery, his life came to an ignominious end in September of 1576.³²⁵

These two instances of service—Dudley's imagined service presented in a lavish entertainment to a queen on progress, and Devereux's actual service, with its financial devastation and ignominious end—are in stark contrast to each other, but they are chronologically contemporary examples of different aspects of chivalric and soldierly service. Both represent vital components of service for military aristocrats. When it became clear that the queen was likely to support Dutch rebels with English forces, Dudley wanted to serve in a position of leadership. As he made clear in a letter to Burghley, Leicester eagerly anticipated the opportunity to risk his life for queen and country.³²⁶ This provided the earl of Leicester with

³²⁴ Elizabeth I, “Elizabeth to Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex, August or September 1575” in *Queen Elizabeth I, Selected Works*, ed. Steven W. May (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004), 145-146.

³²⁵ Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters* v.1, 139-140.

³²⁶ “The Earl of Leicester to Lord Burghley” (August 28, 1585) printed in *HMC Salisbury*, vol. 3, 108: “I perceive by your letters and Mr. Secretary's that her Majesty is now in good inclination to help the Low Countries, and you both think her Majesty will employ me. Surely, my Lord, for mine own part, I am most ready to serves her, specially in any service where I may set my life in hazard for her safety. My only wish is, not only for myself but

ample chance to make real the imagined service he had presented previously. Situated within the political realities of serving an unmarried queen and the military realities of early modern warfare, these forms of service were instances of different kinds of performance of chivalric masculinity. But the connection between these two manifestations of gender performance—that is, the connection between the ideal representation of chivalric masculinity and the actual performance of aristocratic soldiers—was often tenuous. The contentious intersection of real and imagined service of a chivalric soldier can be seen in the ordinances issued in Dudley’s name when he became commander of English forces in the Low Countries.

VI. Ideals and Realities of Chivalric Service: Robert Dudley’s Service in the Low Countries

Dangers of disease and death did not dissuade many martial men—common soldiers and noble courtiers alike—from seeking military service. Long after he hosted the Kenilworth entertainments, Robert Dudley still sought the opportunity to serve the queen in a position of military leadership. This was an opportunity he finally got when he was chosen to lead English forces aiding Dutch rebels in the Low Countries in 1585. Dudley was no longer realistically a viable suitor in 1575, at the time of the Kenilworth pageants, and even less so once he married Lettice Knowles Devereux, widow of Walter Devereux, in 1578. But, he was still a strong contender for positions of military leadership. Once Elizabeth committed to supporting Dutch rebel forces with English troops, Dudley was appointed Lieutenant General of the queen’s forces in the Netherlands.

for the whole, as well those that shall go to serve as they that remain, that her Majesty will take this matter, (if she will deal withal) even to the heart, as a cause that doth concern both her life and State.”

Dudley became the commander of an under-funded and probably ill-disciplined English force. Restoring discipline and good order among common soldiers and officers were high priorities for Leicester, as an ill-disciplined force could not achieve the goals set by the queen and her lieutenant. The success of that force was vital not only for Elizabethan foreign policy, but for Dudley himself.³²⁷ Military success could have brought him great political and personal success. As such, a disciplined force was vital. The need for—and probable lack of—discipline among English forces is revealed by the ordinances issued in Dudley’s name. These ordinances were issued to help keep order in military camps. As such, many of the rules are not surprising. For example, soldiers were not to gamble, use profane language, or consort with prostitutes. In fact the only women officially allowed in camp were legal wives, nurses and laundresses.³²⁸ Soldiers were reminded that “it often happenth, that by permitting of many vagrant and idle women in an armie, sundry disorders and horrible abuses are committed.”³²⁹ The ordinances’ introductory admonition couched the need for discipline in religious and faintly chivalric terms as it reminded soldiers:

martiall discipline aboue all thinges (proper to men of warre) is by us at this time most to be followed, aswell for the aduanement of Gods glorie, as honourable to gouerne the Armie in good order...³³⁰

This may have served to motivate soldiers. But the impetus behind the issuance of this set of ordinances was to have a camp filled with disciplined, reasonably well-behaved soldiers. Furthermore, the common listing of death as the punishment for a variety of offenses probably

³²⁷ The importance of restoring order and removing any corruption are revealed in “The Earl of Leycester’s Instructions,” Letter VI in in *Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, 12-15, esp. 12-13. For a discussion of the under-funded, exhausted, and ill-disciplined state of English forces see Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544-1604* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 121-153, esp. 125-132.

³²⁸ Robert Dudley, *Lawes and Ordianances set downe by Robert Earle of Leycester, the Queenes Maiesties Lieutenant and Captaine Generall of her Armie and Forces in the lowe Countries...* (London, 1586), p. 2-3.

³²⁹ Dudley, *Lawes and Ordinances*, 3.

³³⁰ Dudley, *Lawes and Ordinances*, 1.

provided a much more tangible and efficacious motivation to soldiers to remain on relatively good behavior. Nonetheless, there were hints of chivalric undertones in the ordinances.

Although the rules do reveal a concern about illicit sexuality, there seemed to be a much more pronounced concern about potential violence against women. The rule prohibiting such behavior had distinct chivalric undertones:

And insomuch as clemencie amongst men of warre in some respectes is a singular vertue: It is ordained that no man in any parte of this seruice that he shall doe, shal lay violent hands vpon any woman with childe, or lying in childebed, olde persones, widowes, young virgins, or babes, without especiall order from the Magistrate, vpon paine of death.³³¹

Here, the need for peace in camp, and desire for decent behavior and good order in camp intersected with ideals of chivalric behavior toward women in these ordinances. Chivalric ideals and practical realities coexisted well here, but this was not always the case. The ideals of Elizabethan chivalry and the realities of early modern military service often had uneasy coexistence for soldiers... and their commander.

When Dudley accepted the title of absolute governor of the Netherlands—against Elizabeth’s explicit orders—he would receive an epistolary dressing down from an angry queen. In February of 1586, Elizabeth sent a letter to Sir Thomas Heneage, her emissary to Dudley that was filled with disbelief and anger at his actions. She instructed Heneage:

You shall let the earl understand how highly upon just cause we are offended with his last late acceptation of the government of those provinces, being done contrary to our commandment [...]which we do repute to be very great and strange contempt least looked for at his hands, being he is a creature of our own.³³²

³³¹ Dudley, *Lawes and Ordinances*, 3.

³³² Elizabeth I, “Queen Elizabeth to Sir Thomas Heneage, Her Emissary to the Earl of Leicester in the Netherlands, February 10, 1586” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 269.

The queen emphasized the Dudley had risen high... but had done so due to her favor. His prominence as a chivalric courtier was not just based service, but on service *to her*, as “a creature of [her] own.” A courtier and favorite who did not obey the commands of his sovereign undermined the authority of that monarch—especially a female monarch absent from the battlefield. In a letter to Dudley, she railed against his actions that undermined her princely honor, proclaiming:

We could never have imagined [...] that a man raised up by ourself and extraordinarily favored by us, above any other subject in this land, would have in so contemptible a sort broken our commandment in a cause that so greatly toucheth our honor.³³³

The queen made it clear that she had put Dudley where he was, and she expected his obedience. After all, reputation and honor were as important to sovereign as to servant. This was especially true for a queen regnant who, being absent from the battlefield, had to delegate her authority to her trusted representative. When one of her most trusted and most favored courtiers defied her orders, that action compromised her political position and authority. Ultimate authority—and power to make decisions about military actions, and policy—rested with her as sovereign queen. She was ostensibly a military leader, but she was a military leader *in absentia* who delegated authority as military commander to her trusted subordinates. But this delegation carried with it the assumption that one of her most valued counselors turned lieutenants would *obey* her orders and follow her directives.

In defying his orders, Leicester placed the queen in a difficult political and military position. Due to both concern for the safety of the royal person and the gender norms of the period, Elizabeth would not lead her troops on the battlefield in person. As such, it was essential

³³³ Elizabeth I, “Queen Elizabeth to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, by Sir Thomas Heneage, February 10, 1586” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 273. Here, Heneage acted as messenger for the Queen’s irate message.

that her trusted lieutenant, the man whom she had elevated to great prominence and “favored above any other subject” perform his job as expected. Whatever the grandeur of his chivalric self-presentation, his actual military service to his sovereign had to include proper deference and obedience to the lady who was also his liege. As her lieutenant, Leicester represented the queen and the realm. That role was especially important since the queen was physically absent. In transgressing, Dudley misrepresented Elizabeth and the interests of England (at least as embodied in the objectives of the queen). Her response demonstrated more than the anger of an irate queen. It reminded the earl that though his sovereign might be far away, his own greatness was a direct result of the gifts she had bestowed upon him.

The queen’s anger would eventually abate, and Dudley’s position would ultimately remain secure, in spite of his disobedience. In fact, Dudley had voices speaking in his favor trying to persuade Elizabeth that his actions had been warranted. Much of that support came from William Cecil, of all people. Once intervention became likely, Burghley framed the conflict in religious terms, as an implicit defense of Protestantism. Despite the different models of manhood they followed, these men managed to maintain a productive working relationship for decades. Moreover once English intervention the Low Countries was imminent, Burghley promised Leicester his support.³³⁴ Furthermore, once Dudley accepted the governorship of the Netherlands and provoked his sovereign’s anger, Burghley assured the earl that with time and persistence, he would do his best to convince the queen that what Leicester’s actions were

³³⁴ Once avoidance of direct engagement in the conflict was no longer a realistic option, Burghley portrayed intervention as a righteous cause that would defend true faith and English interests as he wrote: “I do assure yow, no less a portion of my care and travell [travail] for many respects to the furtherance of your own honor than if I war [were] a most neare kinsman in bloode; and for the advancement [sic] of the action, if I should not with all the powers of my hart continually both wish and work advancement [sic] therunto [sic] I war [were] to be an accursed person in the sight of God; considering the endes of this action tend to the glory of God, to the savety of the queens person, to the preservation of this realme, in a perpetuall quietnes, [sic] wherein for my particular interest, both for my self and my posterite, I have as much interest as any of my degree.” “Lord Burghley to the Earl of Leycester, 6th December 1585” Letter XII in in *Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, 24-25.

warranted.³³⁵ This exemplified the recurrent cooperation between these two giants of the first Elizabethan generation. This degree of political cooperation, which flourished in spite of the often contrasting models of manhood followed by each magnate, provided the queen with different viewpoints, counsel, and advice, without engendering destructive factional divisions at court.

The second Elizabethan generation would not be so fortunate. Burghley's son, Robert Cecil, and Leicester's stepson, Robert Devereux would become de facto leaders of rival factions in the last years of Elizabeth's reign. The leaders of this new generation did not have the long-standing, productive working relationship that Burghley and Leicester had enjoyed. It was a relationship of coexistence and cooperation between colleagues, fostered by years of (usually) overlapping political agendas. Their successors may have inherited their models of masculinity, but the court this next generation inhabited had a different character. As the regime transitioned to a full war-footing in the late 1580s and 1590s, conflicts emerged over political priorities and policy decisions. The second generation of courtiers to serve the queen often enacted contrasting models of masculinity, which informed their political choices. But the contrast in models of gender performance was not mitigated by cooperation between court leaders. The relative cooperation that characterized the first Elizabethan generation was founded on a shared sense of service to the monarch that transcended alternate political agendas and different models of masculinity. Despite differing ideas on how best to serve the queen, providing good service—

³³⁵ When Elizabeth's anger at Leicester's transgression was at its height, Burghley assured Dudley that he would speak to the queen on the earl's behalf and attempt to ameliorate the situation as he wrote: "But to be playn with your lordship, in a few words, I, and other of your lordships poore frends, find hir majesty so discontent with your acceptation of the government ther [sic, there, i.e., the Netherlands] befor you had advertised and had hir majestys opinion, that, althovgh I, for my own part, judg this action both honorable and profitable, yet hir majesty will not endure to heare any speche in defence therof. Nevertheless, I hope a small tyme shall alter this hard concept in hir majesty, whereunto I have allredy and shall not desist to oppose myself, with good and sound reasons to move hir majesty to alter her hard opinion." "Lord Burghley to the Earl of Leycester, 7th February 1585-6," Letter XXXVII in *Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, 103-105, qut. 104.

and implicitly obedience—to one's sovereign was a component of both chivalric and humanist masculinities. The queen needed—and expected—the obedience of all of her servants, whether they were chivalric soldiers or humanist bureaucrats. But obedience of those charged with military leadership far away from court was especially imperative.

As a war leader *in absentia* Elizabeth relied on the obedience of her subordinates and the compliance of the Earl of Leicester, one of her most trusted counselors. Leicester served as the queen's lieutenant until he was recalled to court in 1587. In a letter that expressed how glad he was to have the chance to return to court and the queen's presence, Dudley presented himself as servant who eagerly anticipated the chance to once again serve and protect the queen directly. After assuring the queen that he rejoiced at the chance serve the queen more closely, he alluded to the perceived threat of Spanish invasion.³³⁶ While his advice about preparing for the threat of Spanish incursion proved apt, Dudley's epistolary self-presentation reveals a gendered component of the relationship between this subject and his sovereign. Perhaps it was laudable for him to portray himself as a loyal subject prepared to render service. But the suggestion that the queen might *need* Dudley's protection functioned as a reminder of how precarious the queen's position as a military leader could be. Elizabeth was rarely able to directly present herself as a military leader, but as the conflict with Spain continued, one such uncommon—and ultimately iconic—occasion arose: the queen's address to the troops at Tilbury in 1588. As the

³³⁶ "The Earl of Leicester to the Queen" (November 21, 1587) in *HMC Salisbury*, vol. III, 297-298. After mentioning his impending return to court, after Lord Willoughby's appointment as Elizabeth's Lieutenant in the Netherlands, Dudley assured the queen how much he was looking forward to return to court. He then suggested the possibility of a Spanish incursion under the leadership of the Duke of Parma. He advised the queen to avoid any peace treaty and "prepare every way for the worst," (298). He concluded the letter thusly: "The world was never so dangerous, nor never so full of treasons and treacheries as at this day. God, for his mercy sake, preserve and keep you from them all! And it is one great part of my greatest comfort in coming home, near your presence, that if these attempts fall out against your Majesty, that I shall be in place to do you a day's service. And two things your Majesty is presently to do: the first, to set out a very strong navy to keep the seas forthwith; the next, to provide your subjects whose case it is to have store of money, which is the sinew to hold all by. If the Duke send any forces towards Scotland, then is it a plain argument of some secret treason here among some of the chief dealers, whereof at my coming to your Majesty I will say more," (298).

threat of the Spanish Armada and potential invasion loomed, the queen gave one of the most memorable pieces of rhetoric in Tudor history. This oratorical masterstroke has been the subject of copious analysis for what it demonstrates about the queen and her own self-fashioning. I contend that it can be reveal new insights about the masculinity of chivalric courtiers. In this way, one of the most analyzed pieces of rhetoric in Elizabethan England is an untapped resource.

VII. “Your General, Judge, and Rewarder of Your Virtue in the Field”: The Tilbury Speech and Chivalric Masculinity

My loving people, I have been persuaded by some that are careful of my safety to take heed how I committed myself to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery. But I tell you that I would not desire to live to distrust my faithful and loving people. Let tyrants fear: I have so behaved myself that under God I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and goodwill of my subjects. Wherefore I am come among you at this but for my recreation and pleasure, being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live and die amongst you all, to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and for my people mine honor and my blood even in the dust. I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too—and take foul scorn that Parma or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm. To the which rather than any dishonor shall grow by me, I myself will venter my royal blood; I myself will be your general, judge, and rewarder of your virtue in the field.³³⁷

In this iconic address, Elizabeth engaged in a masterful rhetorical self-construction. The queen’s visit to the troops at Tilbury and the speech she gave has been the subject of scholarly analysis since the early twentieth century.³³⁸ Some scholars, like Susan Frye, have

³³⁷ Elizabeth I, “Queen Elizabeth’s Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 325-326.

³³⁸ See for example, Miller Christy, “Queen Elizabeth’s Visit to Tilbury in 1588,” *The English Historical Review* 34, no. 133 (January, 1919): 43-61. For Miller’s inconclusive discussion of the speech’s content and authenticity, see p. 55, and A. J. Collins, “The Progress of Queen Elizabeth at the Camp at Tilbury, 1588,” *The British Museum Quarterly* 10, no. 4 (June 1936): 164-167.

pointed out the difficulty of determining details like what the queen wore that day, the most likely wording of the address, where she might have delivered the address, or even whether the address took place.³³⁹ Despite the reservations voiced by some, I agree with the assessment of Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose, among others, who believe the versions of the speech which survive represent an accurate portrayal of an address that likely took place.³⁴⁰ This speech matches the queen's overall rhetorical style and willingness to flexibly deploy images of princely power found in letters and parliamentary addresses.

As a layered, multivalent piece of oratory, this speech has become a useful component of Elizabethan myth-making and an iconic representation of a Virgin Queen facing down the greatest military power in early modern Western Europe.³⁴¹ Although the principle danger of a Spanish invasion had passed by the time Elizabeth likely gave this address, it has come to represent a determined sovereign who stood with her troops in anticipation of a great victory.³⁴² It has even provided the title of Carole Levin's insightful monograph which provides deft analyses of gendered representations of the queen.³⁴³ But this address was more than a masterful example of the queen's self-portrayal.

In the address, Elizabeth depicted herself as devoted ruler who trusted the love, loyalty, and service of her people. She presented herself as someone willing to suffer and bleed in

³³⁹ Frye, *Competition for Representation*, 3-4. Also see Frye's "The Myth of Elizabeth at Tilbury," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 23, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 95-114, and "Of Chastity and Violence: Elizabeth I and Edmund Spenser in the House of Busirane," *Signs* 20, no. 1 (Autumn 1994): 49-78.

³⁴⁰ See for example *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 325, n. 1, and Janet M. Green, "'I My Self': Queen Elizabeth I's Oration at Tilbury Camp," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 28, no. 2 (Summer 1997): 421-445.

³⁴¹ For a discussion of Elizabeth's rhetorical presentation of herself and her authority in her speeches, see Mary Beth Rose, "The Gendering of Authority in the Public Speeches of Elizabeth I," *PMLA* 115, no. 5 (October 2000): 1077-1082.

³⁴² *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 325, n. 1. For an excellent analysis of the Armada itself which integrates both historical analyses and archeological findings, see Colin Martin and Geoffrey Parker, *The Spanish Armada*, revised edition, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002). For a discussion of the iconic conflict with the Armada situated within the context of the larger conflict with Spain, see Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, 121-153.

³⁴³ Carole Levin, *"The Heart and Stomach of a King": The Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994).

defense of her realm. But the distinctly military terms she used near the end of the address reveal her precarious position as a war leader. The words of this sovereign with the body of “a weak and feeble woman” allowed her to invoke her princely qualities. In this particular instance, she moved beyond her princely power and position, which she could use in a rhetorically multivalent way. Here, she deployed specifically kingly imagery, by telling her audience that she had “the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too.” In a deft oratorical turn, Elizabeth used distinctly bodily imagery. While her physical, female body natural might allegedly be weak, she turned that imagery around and reminded her audience of troops and martial men that her power as sovereign—rooted in her body politic—was as powerful as any king.

The Armada was potentially at England’s doorstep. The queen’s speech suggested that when it truly counted, she had all the fortitude and power necessary, or “the heart and stomach of a king.” This was a brilliant piece of oratorical self-fashioning. It allowed the rhetorically adroit queen to present herself in a complex and layered manner that reinforced her authority (to a group of soldiers and martial servants) while alluding to the reciprocal love between sovereign and subjects. It may well have rallied the troops, but more than that, it sheds light on the gendered political landscape of late Elizabethan England. Moving beyond what it meant for the queen’s own rhetorical construction and self-presentation, I propose to look at this from a different analytical angle. Mary Beth Rose has made the astute point that the queen “constructs her authority as a dialogue, involving reciprocity between her subjects and her.”³⁴⁴ Accepting this prompts an important question: what did this flash of oratorical brilliance mean for the queen’s courtiers? What did serving a monarch with such a complex, shifting, and complicated definition of herself and her authority mean for courtiers’ masculinities? Elizabeth’s promise

³⁴⁴ Mary Beth Rose, “The Gendering of Authority in the Public Speeches of Elizabeth I,” 1081.

that she would defend her honor and that of her realm showed the level of anticipated threat England faced. Her promise to be the “general, judge, and rewarder” of her soldiers and servants if necessary, is revealing on several levels. The queen symbolically and rhetorically placed herself in the midst of her soldiers, in a position of absolute authority as both “general” and “judge.” Despite Elizabeth’s imaginative and innovative rhetorical deployments, she was a queen constrained by the gender expectations of the time. Situating herself symbolically among her soldiers was likely inspiring. But the inversion of convention that gave that portion of her address its rhetorical weight also illustrated her precarious position as a war leader. Moreover, it made Leicester’s position as her proxy and representative all the more essential. Her own oratorical choices suggest that she was keenly aware of her delicate position as leader-by-proxy.

After assuring her audience of sometimes ill-paid soldiers for whom the rewards of real service sometimes remained imagined,³⁴⁵ she ended her address with a nod of confidence toward the Earl of Leicester. Following promises of great rewards for virtuous service, Dudley’s importance *and* role as her proxy was reaffirmed:

In the meantime, my lieutenant general shall be in my stead, than whom never prince commanded a more noble or worthy subject. Not doubting but by your concord in the camp and valor in the field and your obedience to myself and my general we shall shortly have a famous victory over these enemies of God and my kingdom.³⁴⁶

Here, Elizabeth praised Leicester and conveyed to her audience that the person leading them in her name and in her “stead” was a capable and virtuous leader. This may have inspired great confidence in the earl, but it also presented any obedience to him as obedience to *her*. The queen described the obedience of the assembled soldiers as obedience to “myself and my general.”

³⁴⁵ Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars*, 125-132.

³⁴⁶ Elizabeth I, “Queen Elizabeth’s Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588” in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 326.

This reiterated the queen's ability to rhetorically situate herself among her troops, despite her actual absence. She placed herself symbolically amidst her troops. Instead of employing a removed or aloof tone, Elizabeth presented the image of one invested in the action of the conflict as a person and a prince. It is intriguing that the queen consistently avoided use of the royal "we" in this address. She pledged to give "mine honor and my blood" for God and country. She conveyed a sense of ownership and investment in the outcome of the battle and the larger conflict. She deployed visceral, bodily imagery and suggested a level of direct engagement that was profoundly unlikely.

This address framed any authority Elizabeth exercised as direct authority, even though the actual battle would be conducted by her proxy and subordinates. Her rhetorical construction allowed her to remind her audience—and perhaps the earl himself—that any authority he used was *her* authority, only delegated to him. As a chivalric aristocrat and soldier, Dudley was in a much better position to directly earn the respect and loyalty of the soldiers serving under him. His prominence was based on chivalric self-presentation, actual military service, and a long-standing, close personal relationship with the queen. Natalie Mears has convincingly argued that Elizabeth and her closest advisors, including William Cecil and Robert Dudley, were all involved in what she calls "the politics of intimacy"³⁴⁷—a nexus of interconnected, overlapping, personal and political relationships that had a profound influence on the character of Elizabethan court culture. In the case of the earl of Leicester, his political position was tied to the chivalric model of masculinity he enacted. The imagined chivalry of entertainments he hosted was nearly as important to his political career as the real chivalric service he provided as Elizabeth's lieutenant general in the Low Countries.

³⁴⁷ See Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 33-72, esp. 71-72.

The queen was quite familiar with presentations of imagined chivalry in tournaments and pageants. She even served as a central figure in some of these, as she had in the iconic Kenilworth entertainments. She was thoroughly enmeshed in the symbolic economy of imagined chivalry. But for her to actually lead soldiers onto the battlefield would have defied a plethora of early modern gendered expectations about warfare, even for the sovereign. Elizabeth's role of war leader *in absentia* gave Dudley more room to politically maneuver while away from court, and to a limited extent, to enact a chivalric manhood less associated with his status relative to the queen. Though he maneuvered well beyond the bounds of his position in accepting the title of absolute governor, for most of his career, Dudley balanced real and imagined chivalry and served the queen without appearing to infringe upon her authority. He found ways to enact chivalric manhood within the gendered dynamics of a distinct court culture. Serving an unmarried queen regnant influenced the gender performance of many of the sovereign's closest advisors. But, in comparison to humanist bureaucrats like the Cecils, chivalric courtiers like Dudley were in a more problematic position. Dudley and others like him had to delicately balance the militarism associated with chivalric masculinity and deference to a queen who carefully guarded her own authority, and was often averse to costly military engagements, despite her rhetorical gifts when rallying an assembly of troops. The Tilbury speech demonstrates how the queen was able to use multivalent gendered self-presentation to respond to a particular audience and the political needs of the moment. But, serving a queen whose own self-presentation was that complex and dynamic meant that Dudley, and chivalric courtiers more generally, had to be just as adaptive in their self-presentation and gender performance. Militaristic self-presentation—at court and on the battlefield—for social and political purposes had to be balanced with deference to an unmarried queen regnant.

By the time of Tilbury speech in 1588, England was embroiled in a costly war with Spain, and it was clear that Elizabeth was highly unlikely to marry and produce an heir. The removal of those events as realistic possibilities, coupled with the strains of a war with one of the most powerful militaries in early modern Europe contributed to a change in court culture. As it became increasingly clear that Elizabeth would be the last Tudor, many of her most trusted advisors—men in whom she had placed her trust for decades—began to die off. With the deaths of figures like Philip Sydney (1586), Robert Dudley (1588), and Sir Francis Walsingham (1590), some of the strongest chivalric and humanist political voices of the Elizabeth's reign were removed. The late 1580s and 1590s saw a shift as a new generation slowly gained political positions. In an environment of competition for the favor of the aging queen, factionalism and in-fighting dominated late-Elizabethan politics. But as the real queen was an aging figure who was losing the advisors she had trusted throughout her reign, praise of the imagined queen—a multifaceted idealized version of the queen—flourished in the final Tudor years. There was a profound disjunction between the political realities of a faction-filled court and the idealized praise of the queen. The anxieties of the second Elizabethan generation began to emerge in the 1580s. A revealing example of such anxiety can be found in an unlikely place: the queen's poetry.

**VIII. Conclusion: A Queen's Lament, Reprise: The End of the First Elizabethan
Generation and the Change in Court Culture.**

When I was fair and young, and favor graced me,
Of many was I sought their mistress for to be.
But I did scorn them all, and answered them therefore,
 "Go, go, go seek some otherwhere,
 Importune me no more."

How many weeping eyes I made to pine with woe;
How many sighing hearts I have no skill to show.
Yet I the prouder grew, and answered them therefore,
 "Go, go, go seek some otherwhere,
 Importune me no more."

Then spake fair Venus' son, that proud victorious boy,
And said: 'Fine dame, since that you be so coy,
I will pluck your plumes that you shall say no more
 'Go, go, go seek some otherwhere,
 Importune me know more."

When he had spake these words, such change grew in my breast
That neither night nor day since that, I could take any rest.
Then lo, I did repent that I had said before,
 Go, go, go seek some otherwhere,
 Importune me no more.³⁴⁸

Pursuing the "love" of the queen was used as a political tool to advance political careers of many courtiers. Seeking the "love" and political favor of a queen that might marry and carry on her own dynasty was a different endeavor than praising a queen who was unlikely to marry and clearly would not bear a child. The poem above encapsulates more than the queen's personal sadness. It points to a perception of both the sovereign and her closest subjects that the queen was neither fair nor young. For that matter, neither were the most powerful courtiers who served her. As a generation of courtiers began to die and only slowly be replaced by another, the character of Elizabethan court culture changed. The relative cooperation of a court dominated by

³⁴⁸ Elizabeth I, "When I Was Fair and Young" [version 2 of 2] (c. 1580s) in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 304-305.

Burghley and Leicester was replaced by one shaped by factions led by Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux. This new generation of Elizabethan courtiers was influenced by the same contrasting models of elite masculinity that had shaped the careers of their predecessors, but for reasons that will occupy the next chapter, they were unable, or unwilling, to maintain the comparatively faction-free mode of operations which characterized the first Elizabethan generation.

By the 1590s, an aging queen was surrounded by a generation of young, ambitious courtiers, many of whom eagerly anticipated the succession. In the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, conflicting ideas about domestic and foreign policy priorities contributed to a factionalized environment. The de facto leaders of the two factions at court were also the most emblematic examples of humanist and chivalric masculinity: Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex. As these two men came in direct competition for the same position within the queen's government, the days of cooperation and peaceful coexistence that characterized the working relationship between their father and stepfather were long gone. The final chapter of this study analyzes the conflict of the 1590s both as a product of different political agendas and a contest between models of manhood.

Chapter IV: The Epistolary Essex: Chivalric Masculinity in the Letters and Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex

I. Introduction: “Serve God by Serving of the Queen”: Elizabethan Masculinity and Monarchial Service

In one of his final letters to his son Robert, William Cecil cautioned his son that he should “serve God by serving of the Queen, for all other service is indeed bondage to the Devil.”³⁴⁹ Robert was the second son—and obvious political successor—of William Cecil, 1st Baron Burghley. Burghley had devoted his life to monarchial service, mostly during the Elizabethan regime. During a career informed by the quiet, erudite, humanist model of manhood he followed, William Cecil had made himself into one of the most indispensable—and powerful—bureaucrats in Elizabethan England. Through hard work and political acumen he had made himself into one of the greatest politicians of his era. But in some of his final advice to his second son and successor, he emphasized the importance of monarchial service. Before his death in 1598, he had transferred many of his administrative and day-to-day responsibilities—and many of the services he provided to his sovereign—to his son.

Burghley had laid the groundwork for his son’s success by placing some of the tasks of the everyday business of government in Robert’s hands. As Robert was being groomed as a successor to his aging father, the stepson and successor to another Elizabethan giant also hoped to become the preeminent advisor to the queen. Robert Devereux, 2nd earl of Essex—and stepson of the deceased Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester—defined himself as a chivalric courtier

³⁴⁹ John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation* (4 vols.) IV, 343.

from the very beginnings of his career. In 1596, when Essex was away on one of several military campaigns, Robert Cecil was appointed to the position that he and Devereux had both coveted, that of Elizabeth's Secretary of State. This appointment augmented Robert Cecil's political position, while clearly signifying that Burghley intended his son to succeed him as one of the queen's most trusted advisors. The form of monarchial service that the Cecils provided was influenced by the non-martial, humanist model of masculinity they followed. As Robert Cecil became an essential administrator in the 1590s, Robert Devereux succeeded his stepfather, to become one of the leading military figures of his generation, and the queen's last, great favorite. He would also become one of the greatest representatives of chivalric manhood in the second Elizabethan generation. The Elizabethan court during its first generation had been dominated by the influence of Burghley and Leicester. These two political paragons of their generation followed contrasting models of masculinity. Leicester was ever the consummate chivalric courtier, while Burghley remained the hard-working humanist bureaucrat. With different styles of self-presentation and contrasting models of masculinity, these men maintained relative political cooperation and gave voice to different political priorities and clienteles. Their ability to cooperate and pursue common political goals gave their different political styles and contrasting modes of gender performance an almost complementary function in the first three decades of Elizabeth's reign. Their successors did not enjoy such prolonged cooperation.

In a court strained by years of war with Spain, the different means of service provided by Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux would come into conflict. Robert Cecil's increasing administrative duties kept him at court, while Devereux was frequently away on one ambitious military campaign after another. The bureaucrat maintained proximity to the queen and earned her trust. The soldier—and later general—suffered as many expensive defeats as he enjoyed

impressive victories. Moreover, even when he held the queen's favor, and enjoyed the rewards of that favor, he occasionally drew the wrath of his sovereign by disobeying her orders. After an unauthorized truce with an Irish rebel and return to court in 1599, Essex found himself politically alienated. His access to the queen, and the influence over government policy that went along with it, was removed. This suggested a dark political future both for Devereux himself, and for the allies and clients at court that had formerly looked to the earl for patronage and political protection. After prolonged exile from court, and political disempowerment, Robert Devereux and a small group his supporters staged a poorly planned, badly executed rebellion, with the hope of displacing Essex's rivals at court and re-establishing the preeminent place he had once enjoyed. What the ramshackle rebellion actually earned the Earl of Essex, was execution in 1601.³⁵⁰

This chapter examines how Robert Devereux succeeded his stepfather as one of the leading military figures of the final years of the Elizabethan regime, and became the queen's final favorite. It explores Essex as a courtier with a talent for rhetorical representation and a gift for showmanship, who became the preeminent chivalric courtier of his day. Using his own rhetoric and epistolary self-representation, it reveals how he presented himself as a chivalric courtier. It also examines how changes in his rhetorical persona reflect the ways in which his position at court, and his career, were undermined by a combination of political miscalculation, military misfortune, and disobedience to his monarch.

³⁵⁰ For the most insightful recent analysis Essex's last years, his rebellion, and its cultural consequences, see Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), *passim*.

II. Son and Servant: Robert Devereux as Heir to Chivalric Masculinity in Elizabethan England

Upon the death of his father, Walter Devereux, 1st Earl of Essex, Robert Devereux was encouraged to surpass the chivalric nobility and moral virtue of his father, and reach new heights of honor and greatness. Though this encouragement was likely a rhetorical device constructed by a Devereux family servant, it was still a daunting task for a new earl still in his boyhood.³⁵¹ But, chances of personal and family greatness markedly increased when Robert's mother Lettice Knollys Devereux married Robert Dudley and became Countess of Leicester. Robert quickly became both stepson and protégé to Leicester. When he embarked on the road to a political career, he followed in the professional footsteps of both his father and stepfather. But, before he served with the Earl of Leicester's force in the Netherlands in the late 1580s, Robert Devereux presented himself as a dutiful and devoted son. Long before he served as Chief Mourner at the funeral of his stepfather,³⁵² and became his obvious political and chivalric heir, Devereux showed a talent for epistolary self-fashioning. One of the earliest examples of this rhetorical gift—couched in a declaration of ostensible filial devotion—can be found in a letter to his mother from 1585. Fearing that he had offended her, he asked for forgiveness (a skill he would hone to near perfection with the queen years later):

The name of undutifullnes as a sonne I utterly abhorre, my purposed course to do
wwell I hope shall deliuer me from the suspicion of carelessness of mine owne

³⁵¹ See Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 22. Hammer argues that the epistle dedicatory which accompanied the printed version of Walter Devereux's funeral sermon, signed "E.W." was composed by Edward Waterhouse. The funeral sermon itself was preached by Richard Davies. See Richard Davies, *A Fvneral Sermon Preached [...] at the buriall of the Right Honovrable VValter Earle of Essex and Ewe, Earle Marshall of Ireland...* (London, 1577), which is analyzed in chapter 2, section V.

³⁵² *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-1561, 1584-1586*, ed. Simon Adams Camden Fifth Series, Vol. 6 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 449.

estate and if in your Ladyship's wise censure I be thought inconsiderate I pleade as a younge man pardon for that fault whereto of all others our age is most subiect. And yf ether by sorrow for that which is duty hereafter, I may repaire that which your ladyship may think by desert is imporest [importanttest, sic], I shall thinke my self (as much as for any thinge in this world) most happy!³⁵³

Before his career as a courtier began in earnest, Essex already showed a skill for rhetorical supplication. His proclamations of "dutifulness" may have been born of genuine familial affection, but whether they were based on actual sadness at the thought of maternal anger or a more calculated desire to stay in Lettice's good graces to further his own budding ambitions, Devereux showed the rhetorical skill of a young courtier in this letter to his mother. While work analyzing Essex's role as a courtier, strategist, leader of an intelligence network, and of course, a frustrated rebel, spans decades of scholarship, little work on Essex as a son exists.³⁵⁴ Having lost his father Walter at young age, Devereux fairly quickly became a political protégé of his stepfather.

³⁵³ BL Additional MS 32092 f. 48r, Robert Devereux 2nd Earl of Essex to Lettice Knowles, Countess of Leicester, 12 April 1585. In the above passage, I have silently completed abbreviated words. For the full context of the passage and original spelling, see below: "My very good La. and mother As I finde by your La^{ps} displeasure concerned that I am thought in sorte to have offended, so I desire deliver myself ether wholly or in some parte from the same fault. The w^{ch} some will hardly term undutifullnes to your La^p, [...] others carlesnes of mine owne good, and many think me inconsiderate, in not making your La^p more acquainted wth my determinacions. The name of undutifullnes as a sonne I utterly abhorre, my purposed course to do wwell I hope shall deliuer me from the suspicion of carelessness of mine owne estate and if in your La^{ps} wise censure I be thought inconsiderate I pleade as a younge man pardon for that fault whereto of all others our age is most subiect. And yf ether by sorrow for that w^{ch} is duty hereafter, I may repaire that w^{ch} your la^p may think by desert is imporest [importanttest, sic], I shall thinke my self (as much as for any thinge in this world) most happy! Thus humbly crauinge your Laps [Ladyship's] blessing I dayly pray for your La^{ps} most honorable and happy estate. Lanfrey this xij of Aprill 1585. Your most obedient Sonne R. Essex"

³⁵⁴ In a now vintage article, Ray Heffner argued that Essex was both an embodiment of the Elizabethan articulation of courtliness and a literary inspiration for Edmund Spenser. Ray Heffner, "Essex, The Ideal Courtier," *ELH* 1, no. 1, (April, 1934): 7-36. L. W. Henry strongly defended Essex's skill as a military leader late in his career, L. W. Henry, "The Earl of Essex as Strategist and Military Organizer (1596-7)," *English Historical Review* 68, no. 268 (July 1953): 363-393. Paul Hammer's more recent *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex 1585-1597* offers a convincing and meticulously researched general re-evaluation and rehabilitation of Essex's political ability. Moreover, he also defends Devereux's ability as the head of an intelligence network in "Essex and Europe: Evidence from Confidential Instructions by the Earl of Essex, 1595-6," *The English Historical Review* 111, no. 441 (April, 1996): 357-381, esp. 373-374. For an insightful examination of the Essex rebellion which launches a larger exploration of the late-Elizabethan political and cultural milieu, see Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture*, 27-66.

He may have been socially made in the image of his father and stepfather, but, it is in correspondence with his mother that it becomes clear that Essex had a pronounced skill for epistolary *self*-fashioning. In this letter, he combined pleading, self-deprecation, and an appeal to his youthful inexperience to achieve his desired reaction from his (maternal) audience. He based his request for pardon on the inexperience and flaws of youth, telling his mother “I pleade as a younge man pardon for that fault whereto of all others our age is most subiect.” This showed knowledge and consideration of social and cultural assumptions surrounding youth which he was clearly willing to use to his advantage. When this letter was written, Essex was a budding nobleman with familial and political connections that gave him the potential to be one of the leading figures of his generation.

He would later actualize much of this potential, but in 1585, he was in his early twenties—in the midst of life stage that some conduct theorists identified as the most potentially perilous, morally dangerous period in a man’s life. This was depicted by moralists as a time when men were prone to an array of moral and personal failings, from intemperance to idleness and effeminacy, when most had yet to learn moderation and self-control.³⁵⁵ Essex deployed this cultural assumption to implicitly excuse any “undutiful” or inconsiderate behavior. In so doing, he revealed his knowledge of widespread cultural assumptions reflected in conduct literature. Moreover, he suggested some of his own assumptions about age and masculinity. Essex demonstrated a belief—widely held among the Elizabethan elite—that youth was a time in which men were prone to errors of morality and decorum. Here, Essex asked for forgiveness not as a

³⁵⁵ See for example: Roger Ascham, *The Schoolmaster*, (1570) ed. Lawrence V. Ryan (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1967), 28-40, and Richard Braithwaite, *The English Gentleman* (1630), 27-28, 136. Both Ascham and Braithwaite offered similar depictions of young men as frequently immoderate, intemperate, lustful, potentially effeminate hot-heads. Ascham’s work preceded Braithwaite’s by fifty years, but the similarity and consistency between these authors in this respect is revealing. Moreover, many of those years were the time in which the late-Elizabethan cultural milieu—and Robert Devereux’s frame of reference—took shape. For an extended discussion, see chapter 2, sections II and III.

misguided youth in general, but as a “young *man*” (emphasis added) specifically. Essex used this common conception of young masculinity to appease his mother and garner her forgiveness. This is one of the early examples of Essex using epistolary self-fashioning to define himself and his masculinity in ways that he found advantageous. Essex apparently found an effective means of presenting himself as a dutiful son—years later in 1589 when he was away on one of his early military campaigns to Portugal, his mother sent an anxious missive asking for news, signed “Your mother that more affectionately loveth you.”³⁵⁶

When he joined an expedition to Portugal under the leadership of Sir John Norris and Sir Francis Drake in 1589, Essex was firmly on the path to a career—and a self-definition—as a chivalric soldier. Leaders of this expedition hoped to seize portions of Phillip II’s treasure fleet and install a pretender on the Portuguese throne that Phillip II claimed. If successful, this would have reduced the Spanish king’s power base and revenue.³⁵⁷ For Essex, this endeavor offered the chance to weaken Spain while achieving martial glory that could translate into political success. But, this was a best-case scenario. Robert Devereux portrayed his engagement in this expedition as a dangerous chance he was taking with his political and financial fortunes. In a letter to Thomas Heneage lamenting his hardship and the risks he was taking, Essex portrayed himself as a dutiful soldier who risked everything for queen and country. He wrote to the Vice Chamberlain:

³⁵⁶ “Letitia, Countess of Leicester, to the Earl of Essex,” in *HMC Salisbury*, III, 458. “Your poor friends here, my dear son, are in great longing to know how you fare, to which purpose we have addressed this bearer to bring us true word thereof. For although our ears are fed with many flying reports, yet we believe nothing, but what we receive from the oracle of truth, wherefore relieve us, if it please you, with some of your occurrents. [sic] Your mother that more than affectionately loveth you.” Note, both forms the Countess of Leicester’s name—Lettice and Letitia—appear in historical records and in scholarship. When discussing her, I have retained the common, conventional form in scholarly literature—Lettice—unless citing a source that uses the alternate form.

³⁵⁷ For discussions of the Elizabethan relations with—and occasional support of—the pretender to the Portuguese throne and its place within Elizabethan politics, see Gordon K. McBride, “Elizabethan Foreign Policy in Microcosm: The Portuguese Pretender, 1580-89,” *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 5 no. 3 (Autumn 1973): 193-210. For discussion of Essex’s role in the 1589 expedition, see Hammer, *Elizabeth’s Wars*, 154-161, and Hammer, *Polarisation*, 80.

Her Majesty's goodness has been so great as I could not ask for more of her; no way left to repair myself but my own adventure, which I had much rather undertake than offend her Majesty with suits, as I have done heretofore. If I speed well, I will adventure to be rich; if not, I will not live to see th' end of my poverty.³⁵⁸

With an almost fatalistic bravado, Essex portrayed himself as a loyal servant to a generous queen, a servant who, in risking everything, would find glory or death. The expedition left Devereux neither destitute nor dead. However, the way he framed his (potential) sacrifice of livelihood and life made an epistolary Essex who would sacrifice everything in service to the queen. Intriguingly, Essex's self-presentation is reminiscent of the queen's own portrayal of Robert's father Walter. Both were epistolary constructions built around chivalric masculinity and service to the sovereign. When Elizabeth portrayed the father (in a letter to the same) as a chivalrous, self-sacrificing servant who risked his own wealth and well-being, she was praising a dejected soldier.³⁵⁹ This was likely undertaken in the hopes of continued and improved performance of Walter's duties. When his son complained of the fiscal and physical hardships of his chosen career, he did so while presenting himself as a similarly self-sacrificing soldier. Despite the similarities in rhetorical representations of father and son, Walter, who died when his son was still a boy, was not a political mentor. That role went instead to his

³⁵⁸ "Robert, Earl of Essex to Vice Chamberlain [Heneage]" *HMC Salisbury*, III, 459. Lamenting to Heneage, Devereux described his condition as "my revenue no greater than it was when I sued for my livery, my debts at the least two or three and twenty thousand pounds. Her Majesty's goodness has been so great as I could not ask for more of her; no way left to repair myself but my own adventure, which I had much rather undertake than offend her Majesty with suits, as I have done heretofore. If I speed well, I will adventure to be rich; if not, I will not live to see th' end of my poverty. And so, wishing that this letter, which I have left for you, may come into your hands, I commit you to God's good protection."

³⁵⁹ See Elizabeth I, "The Queen to Essex" in *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex*. (2 vols) by Walter Bouchier Devereux, Adamant Media Corporation, 2002, v. I, 99, and "Elizabeth to Walter Devereux, first earl of Essex, August or September 1575" in *Queen Elizabeth I, Selected Works*, ed. Steven W. May (New York: Washington Square Press, 2004), 145-146. For an extended discussion of these letters in the contexts of chivalric masculinity and English engagement in Ireland in the 1570s, see chapter 3, section V.

stepfather, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Leicester served as a political mentor for his stepson, but that mentorship was cut short by Dudley's death in 1588. By then, Leicester had managed to place his Devereux firmly at court on the path to royal favor and concomitant political success. However, Dudley's death removed a major political advocate for Essex. Robert Cecil's strongest political (and paternal) supporter remained alive and very influential for a decade longer than the earl of Leicester. From Robert Cecil's perspective, those were key years well-employed. Burghley spent the last decade of his life grooming his son to be his clear political successor.

III. Son and Successor: The Grooming of Robert Cecil as a Humanist Courtier and Political Heir

William Cecil's choice of his son Robert to follow in his political, social, and gendered footsteps was not about lineage. It was not about accruing more power for himself. And, it certainly was not about primogeniture. William chose his *second* son as his political heir. His first son Thomas would inherit a title and lands from William. Thomas would serve ably as a soldier and rise to prominence as a military figure in the late-Elizabethan and Jacobean periods. But, it was Robert who William Cecil crafted in his own image. It was this second son—with a brilliant mind and a work-ethic that would match his father's—that William wanted to assume his political mantle as a humanist bureaucrat and indispensable administrator. William encouraged both of his sons to pursue education and piety, but it was his advice to Robert that read like a succinct guide to social and political success.³⁶⁰

³⁶⁰ See W. Cecil, British Library Stowe MS 143, f.100r-104v. An additional contemporary manuscript copy can be found at the Folger Shakespeare Library as Folger MS V. a. 321, f. 56v-59r. This manuscript has also been printed

For William, emphasizing the importance of education, erudition, and political maneuvering were important steps. But *presenting* Robert as his successor was also a needed step on the road to Robert's future political success. Burghley used an entertainment staged for the queen when she visited his estate at Theobalds to do just that. Mary Hill Cole has demonstrated how Burghley used his power as the queen's host for political and social purposes with this entertainment. She points out that Burghley used his position as host to shape the entertainment, define the performance, and depict Robert as his political heir.³⁶¹ Expanding beyond this, I argue that an examination of the content of the entertainment itself reveals that Burghley was presenting his son as an embodiment of humanist masculinity. By having his son portray a hermit who could function as an external observer, William allowed Robert to speak about himself. The Hermit character provided a means to depict the actual Robert Cecil as a worthy humanist successor. Moreover, the construct of the ancient hermit was used as a vehicle to flatter the queen before the implicit portrayal of Robert as a pious, erudite humanist began. Before the Hermit extolled the virtues of father and son, the character's age provided a means by which both Cecils could praise the queen before asking for her favor. This old hermit was explicitly held in contrast to Elizabeth as a near-miraculous sovereign who had vanquished all enemies that stood before her, while remaining an unchanging, timeless, Virgin Queen:

in a facsimile edition as *A Seventeenth Century Letter Book: A Facsimile Edition of Folger MS. V.a. 321 with Transcript, Annotation, and Commentary* by A. R. Braunmuller (Newark, NJ: University of Delaware Press, 1983), 276-287. William's advice to Robert was also printed in several editions after William's death, which include *The Counsell of a Father to his Sonne in ten Seuerall Precpts. Left as a Legacy at his death*, (London, 1611); later published as *Certain Precepts, or Directions, for the Well-Ordering and Carriage of a Mans Life: As also Oeconomical Discipline for the Government of his House*, (London, 1617); (Edinburgh, 1618); and as *Precepts, or, Directions for the well ordering and carriage of a mans life*, (London, 1636). For a discussion of William's advice to Robert, see Chapter 2, section VI. For discussion of William's advice to Thomas, see Chapter 3, section IV.

³⁶¹ Mary Hill Cole, *The Portable Queen: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Ceremony* (Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 1999), 79-80.

And surely I am of opinion I shall not flatter myself, yf I thinke my prayers have not been fruitlesse (though millions have joined in the like), that, since my restitution, not only all your actions have miraculously prospered, and all your enemies been defeated; but that which most amazeth me, to whose long experience can seem strange, with theis [sic] eyes doe I behold you the self-same Queene, in the same esteate of person, strength, and beautie, in which soe many yeares past I beheld yow, finding noe alteration but in admiration, in soe much as I am perswaded, when I looke about me on your trayne, that Time, which catcheth everye body, leaves only you untouched.³⁶²

After evoking the trope of Elizabeth's timeless and unchanging beauty—which was well-established by the early 1590s—the Hermit began to praise the virtues of father and son in earnest. The character was again used as a convenient device when he relayed what he had heard in rumor and suggestion about some changes in the level of responsibility granted Robert Cecil:

And therefore, seeing I heare of all the Countrey folke I meet with, that your Majestie douth use him in your service, as in former tyme you have done his Father my Founder; and that although his experience and judgment be noe way comparable; yett, [sic] as the report goeth, he hath something in him like the Child of such a Parent. I beseech your Majestie to take order, that heis gray haire may be assurances for my aboade, that, howsoever I live obscure, I may be quiet and secure, not to be driven to seeke my grave which thought it may be every where, yet I desire it to be here. This may be done, if you will enjoyne him for your pleasure, whose will is to him a law, not to denye me the favor formerlie procured of his Father at the motion of the Goddess of whom he holdes himself a second creature.³⁶³

Here, the Hermit—whose words conveniently emerged from Robert Cecil's own lips—suggested that the son was a mature (even gray-haired) and worthy successor to his father. Having this character speak these words allowed Robert Cecil to retain an appearance of humility while pointing out a very real transfer of responsibility from

³⁶² John Nichols, *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*, 3 vols. (London: John Nichols and Son, 1823), III, 243.

³⁶³ Nichols, *Progresses*, III, 244.

father to son that had already begun.³⁶⁴ In this oration, character, performer, and implicitly, host, suggested to their queen that that transfer should continue and intensify as the aged and occasionally ill Burghley tried to go into what amounted to semi-retirement. By this point in the Hermit's oration, the queen had already been praised as a changeless goddess. It was only after the sovereign had been lauded and flattered in explicitly gendered terms that the Hermit was used to portray Robert as a successor to his father's workload, his place at court, and his model of manhood. This oration concluded with the presentation of three carefully chosen gifts for the queen that helped depict Robert Cecil as a pious, erudite, faithful courtier who was at his queen's service. When the queen was presented with a bell, book, and candle, the line between character and performing courtier—that had been blurred throughout the oration—began to evaporate:

And for all your Majesties favor, I can but continue my vowed prayers for you, and, in token of my poor affection, present you on my knees theis [sic] poore trifles, agreeable to my profession, by use whereof and by constant faith I live free from all temptation. The first is a bell, not bigg, but of gold; the second is a booke of good prayers, garnished with the same mettall; the third is a candle of virgin's wax, meete for a Virgin Queene.³⁶⁵

When Elizabeth received the gifts, they were presented to by a character being portrayed by a courtier who was fast becoming a trusted administrator. These tokens, which were "poore trifles, agreeable to [the Hermit's] profession" evoked an image of a pious and erudite servant. This was also image Cecil presented of himself. Furthermore, it was a self-presentation that was strongly informed by the model of humanist manhood by which his father had lived and served. This mode of self-presentation and model of manhood allowed Cecil to depict both self and character as humble servants. But,

³⁶⁴ See *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. (2 vols.) ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1754), I, 155.

³⁶⁵ Nichols, *Progresses*, III, 245.

reminding Elizabeth of his father's decades of service allowed the younger Cecil to suggest how indispensable a servant he could be, given the chance.

The giving of a bell could function as a simple, but beautifully gold-clad gift, or it could also suggest that Robert could be a servant at the queen's beck and call. The presentation of a book of prayers reminded the queen of Cecil's piety and erudition. The situation of the candle as the Hermit's final gift provided another opportunity to praise the Virgin Queen with an item composed of "virgin wax". This functioned as far more than simple dramatic punctuation. It demonstrated that Robert Cecil was keenly aware of the court in which he lived. Robert Cecil was a brilliant bureaucrat, who was afflicted with a hunched back, and was ill-disposed to displays of physical prowess. He could not compete with figures like Essex, who was a chivalric, dashing handsome courtier who played the courtly lover skillfully. Instead, Cecil presented himself as a pious servant ready to assume the laborious mantle of humanist administrator that his father had held for decades.

As Cecil began establishing himself as a skilled administrator at court in the early 1590s, he and Robert Devereux seemed relatively friendly, or at least cordial. When Devereux was away from court in 1594, Essex even thanked Cecil for his previous well-wishes and assured Cecil that the administrator's "offers of kindness and profession of affection is of me most willingly embraced, and shall be justly requited."³⁶⁶ But relations between the two cooled when they began competing for the same coveted position of

³⁶⁶ "The Earl of Essex to Sir Robert Cecil," May 3, 1594, in *HMC Salisbury*, IV, 524. "It becomes me not to censure the resolution of Her Majesty and her Council, but I am glad I was not so much as present at it. If it do succeed well, I am glad of it, but both now and hereafter I will be free from suing to go, or wishing for employment, til Her Majesty do command me, and thing it best for her service. My absence is both forced by my own business, and warranted by Her Majesty's leave. Your offers of kindness and profession of affection is of me most willingly embraced, and shall be justly requited."

Elizabeth's Secretary of State. Two months before Elizabeth finally awarded the position to Cecil, Essex lamented to his rival. In a letter in which he portrayed himself as a beleaguered, self-sacrificing public servant, he suggested that any colleague who did not defend Essex's interests to the queen betrayed the earl. Further, he opined that his only fault was "to strive to do her Majesty more service than she cares for."³⁶⁷ He even went so far as to suggest that the queen was honor-bound to be "protectress of [him] against all the world but mine own actions." Two months later, when Cecil was awarded the position both men wanted, it affirmed the queen's confidence in the administrator. After this, Essex increasingly believed he and his interests were besieged by enemies at court.

Certainly, both Burghley and Cecil continued augmenting Sir Robert's political position. Regardless of the degree to which Devereux was actually besieged by rivals, his belief that he was contributed to the factionalism of the Elizabeth's last decade. In the factional conflict that crystalized in the late-1590s, Robert Cecil was clearly the overall victor. The death of Leicester meant that Essex did not have an advocate of comparable political weight to Lord Burghley. To the very end of his life, Burghley was attempting to secure and improve his son's political future. This was true to such a degree that in

³⁶⁷ "The Earl of Essex to Sir Robert Cecil," May 7, 1596 in *HMC Salisbury VI*, 172: "I am myself, I protest, engaged more than my state is worth; my friends, servants, and followers have also set up their restes; my care to bring a chaos into order and to govern every man's particular unquiet humours possesseth my time, both of recreation and of rest sometimes. And yet am I so far from receiving thanks as her Majesty keepeth the same form with me as she would do with him that through his fault or misfortune had lost her troops. I receive no word of comfort or favour by letter, message, or any means whatsoever. When I look out of myself upon all the world I see no man thus dealt withal; and when I look into myself and examine what capital fault should be that I had committed I find nothing, except it be a fault to strive to do her Majesty more service than she cares for. Well, I will neither amise [sic] her nor justify myself; but to you that are my fellows I will say that as I leave and cast off all care of myself to care for her Majesty's state and public service, so you do wrong me and betray her service if you do not put her Majesty in mind how much she is bound in honour and justice to be protectress of me against all the world but mine own actions; in which, whatsoever come, I will never ask pardon for want of faith, nor, if I be not entangled by new directions, or scanted of the means allotted to us, plead excuse for want of fortune. But if they come to use that are behind, and every man join to do his best, I will answer the success with my life; for I know our cause is good, our means sufficient, and our way certain."

1597, the queen briefly grew annoyed at Cecil's political ambition. But this was apparently short-lived. In a letter discussing the queen's abated ire, Cecil assured his father that he would rather die than be a bad son or servant to his sovereign. He also affirmed that he knew very well just how tied his father's advocacy was to his political fortunes.³⁶⁸

The success of Cecil can be attributed to several factors, but Burghley's colossal influence, coupled with Robert Cecil's genuine political skill, definitely helped the younger bureaucrat. Cecil's rival was also socially and politically skilled. For all his lamentation and mercurial disposition, Robert Devereux was also a reasonably adept politician and a charismatic courtier—although Sir Robert had more political acumen. But Burghley's model of manhood, his paradigm of political self-presentation, and his courtly advocacy helped Robert Cecil consolidate a strong social and political position at court—well before Essex's own actions led to the earl's alienation and elimination as a Robert's rival.

³⁶⁸ "Robert Cecil to Lord Burghley," August 25, 1597 in *HMC Salisbury*, III, 276. "Wherefore, although I am sorry she [queen Elizabeth] did mistrust so much my natural duty to your lordship, as to think that either I could have the thought to dream of the use of it during your lordship's time, otherwise than with your permission, or else that her Majesty doubted so much my discretion, as that I should not plainly perceive how soon either this or greater good befalling me would be obscured by the great want of your lordship, on whom dependeth the whole stay of my good fortune, yet am I both quieted in mind to see by your lordship's own answer the conceit you had of my dutiful thoughts, and also account myself most bound to your lordship for your sound advice and fatherly discretion, both how I should discharge my bond to the Earl and therein inclusively yield her Majesty satisfaction in that for which she not without cause misliked me, until she was assuredly persuaded of our full consent and approbation. I have followed it to my best, and have sent it herewith to your lordship either to be reformed or else delivered by your commandment to my Lord of Essex, who, I presume, will acquaint her Majesty with the particularities thereof. And so desiring God to give me no longer breath than while I carry an obedient heart to your lordship, craving your daily blessing, I most humbly take my leave."

IV. Fashioning a Favorite: Aspects of Robert Devereux's Chivalric Masculinity in the Hulton Letters

Essex utilized numerous means of figurative and literal and self-presentation and representation, but the epistolary self-fashioning evident in his letters to the queen and her courtiers is one of the most fertile areas for gendered analysis. Among the other means by which Essex presented himself to queen and court were participation in tournaments and sitting for numerous portraits. Accession Day tilts, commemorating the anniversary of Elizabeth coming to the throne, have been shown to be symbolically rich and politically useful venues utilized by courtiers across the reign, including Essex³⁶⁹ in the classic work of Frances Yates. More recent works by Gabriel Heaton and Linda Shenk have demonstrated how Devereux used royal entertainments to present himself to his sovereign and his social circle. Moreover, Roy Strong has argued that Essex used portraiture, both due to his vanity, and to bolster his political position in the factional conflict that developed between him and the Cecils in the late 1590s. However, it is Essex's epistolary self-fashioning that is most revealing of both Devereux's rhetorical skill and the earl's construction of his masculinity in the courtier's relationship with his monarch.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁹ See the classic study of the Elizabethan courtly milieu as reflected in Accession Day tilts, by Frances A. Yates, "Elizabethan Chivalry: The Romance of the Accession Day Tilts," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 20, no. ½ (January-June 1957): 4-25.

³⁷⁰ For analyses of Essex political goals and engagement as seen in the entertainment *Of Love and Self-Love* see the works of Gabriel Heaton and Linda Shenk: Gabriel Heaton, *Reading and Writing Royal Entertainments: From George Gascoigne to Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 76-89; and Linda Shenk, *Learned Queen: the Image of Elizabeth I in Politics and Poetry* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan), 159-188. Heaton argues that the entertainment offered factional critiques of the queen (79-84). In the fifth chapter of *Learned Queen* entitled "A Loving Scholar of His Queen's Wisdom: The Earl of Essex, Anglo-French Affairs, and *Of Love and Self Love* (1595)," Shenk argues that *Of Love and Self Love* was predominantly about the queen, and was used by Essex to further his own political goals. Although the entertainment is traditionally ascribed fully to Francis Bacon, Shenk argues that Essex exerted authorial influence, if not full authorial participation. Paul Hammer has also demonstrated Essex's propensity for political showmanship and willingness to use that to advance his political agenda. See Paul E. J. Hammer, "Upstaging the Queen: The Earl of Essex, Francis Bacon, and the Accession Day Tilts of 1595," in *The Politics of the Early Stuart Court Masque*, eds. David Bevington and Peter Holbrook (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41-66. For a study of Essex's political uses of portraiture, see Roy Strong, "Faces of a

After Dudley's death in 1588, Robert Devereux would succeed his stepfather both as one of the preeminent leaders of his generation, and as a royal favorite. Throughout his career as a courtier, his political status—and the success or failure that accompanied it—depended largely on royal favor. The variations in his political, military, and courtly status are revealed through Essex's own epistolary self-fashioning. The "Hulton Letters," a collection of letters, mostly from Essex to the queen, keenly reveal this. This cache of documents show the rhetorical skill, mercurial tone, and occasional political indelicacy that would be the hallmarks of his personal and political style for much of the 1590s.

The so-called "Hulton Letters," informally named for the family that held the collection for centuries, is a small treasure-trove of correspondence which sheds light on Robert Devereux's career. This revealing cache of documents, now preserved as British Library Additional Manuscript 74286, offers valuable insight into the earl's rhetorical style and political career. The cache has been examined as simultaneously public and private documents by Grace Ioppolo, who offers an adept analysis of the earl's depiction of himself and his queen. Ioppolo's examination is filled with Habermasian inflections as she considers Essex's letters which, though ostensibly private, had a much larger, more public potential audience.³⁷¹ Though Ioppolo deftly

favourite: Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, and the uses of portraiture," *The British Art Journal* 5, no. 2 (Autumn 2004): 80-90. Strong devotes his article to the ways in which Essex used portraiture for political purposes, and a form of political self-presentation. For a brief discussion of Essex's alleged vanity, see 89-90. Strong points out that Robert Cecil did not use portraiture in the same way as Essex. But, James Sutton has convincingly demonstrated that both William and Robert Cecil used the renovation and decoration of the Theobalds estate to show political power and prestige. See James M. Sutton, "The Decorative Program at Elizabethan Theobalds: Educating an Heir and Promoting a Dynasty," *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 7, no. 1 (Fall-Winter 1999-2000): 33-64, and *Materializing Space at an Early Modern Prodigy House: The Cecils at Theobalds, 1564-1607*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), passim.

³⁷¹ See Grace Ioppolo, "'Your Majesties most humble faythfullest and most affectionate seruant': The Earl of Essex constructs himself and his Queen in the Hulton Letters," in *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing*, eds. Peter Beal and Grace Ioppolo (London: The British Library, 2007), 43-70. For the classic and influential study of the development of the public sphere in eighteenth century Europe, see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), passim. The insightful anthology *The Politics of a Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, eds. Peter Lake and Steven Pincus (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), offers

examines some aspects of Devereux's self-presentation, she leaves the gendered aspects of Essex's self-fashioning largely unexplored. This collection reveals more than the vacillations in the earl's relationship with the queen. It contains vividly illustrative examples of Essex fashioning an epistolary self which drew from diverse aspects of chivalric masculinity. Moreover, even Essex's most florid declarations of courtly love for Elizabeth were political choices. In letters in which he asked the queen's permission to eschew political and military topics—and instead lavished the queen with praise—he was still politically presenting himself. Depicting himself as an ideal courtly lover allowed Essex to deploy an element of chivalric manhood that might preserve the queen's favor even while the sometimes-charming courtier was absent. Such instances were more than demonstrations of the earl's epistolary elegance. They were often careful choices by the courtier to remind the queen of some of the reasons she favored Devereux, even when military success eluded him.

The Hulton letters contain documents spanning much of the 1590s, but those written by Essex around the time of Rouen expedition of 1591 are especially revealing. During this enterprise, Essex took part in an English campaign to support Henry IV of France in a fight against Spain. Shortly after leaving the queen's side to embark on the campaign, Essex wrote a letter in which he cast himself as a lovelorn servant who missed a cherished sovereign and mistress, and treasured any letters from her, especially if she wrote them herself, in her own hand. But, in the midst of these declarations of affection and forlorn absence, a more important reason for the letter emerged—the preservation of favor.

several possibilities for the existence of a public sphere in early modern England. Moreover, Natalie Mears has argued that an Elizabethan public sphere was very real, although it was fundamentally different than the bourgeois Habermasian public sphere. See Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 183-216, esp. 215-216.

Essex knew that his political future was fundamentally tied to his staying one of her most favored courtiers. Essex assured his queen that his own wealth and safety meant nothing to him—he affirmed his willingness to risk his life and fortune, as long as he held “a first place in [her] favor.”³⁷² Here, Essex rhetorically presented himself as a loving, devoted servant, who only cared about the love and favor of his lady and queen. This is only one of many instances where Essex used courtly love motifs in the hopes of getting reassurance that his place of favor with Elizabeth was secure, and, despite his promise that “if any man will venture his lyfe to persuade your Maties of his fayth I will loose [lose] mine to prove my constancy,” this is by no means the most elaborate declaration of courtly love in the Hulton letters. It is, however, the letter of a young, ambitious politician who understood how much his political career depended on being a highly valued favorite. His social and political standing was built on his self-presentation as a chivalric servant. Following the death of Sir Philip Sydney and Devereux’s stepfather, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Essex took up the chivalric mantle of the Elizabethan court.

He was the obvious successor to the social and political role that Leicester had played for so many years. But, with England in the midst of a costly war with Spain, the actual performance of soldierly chivalric service often necessitated his absence from court and queen. If a campaign went well, it could give wealth (i.e., plunder), political capital at court among potential allies and followers, and a happy sovereign whose political objectives had been met.

³⁷² BL Add. MS 74286 f. 93r, Robert Devereux to Queen Elizabeth, 16 Oct undated year (1591). For the context and full passage, see below: Most deere La. my absence wold [would] be too unpleasant if I did not entertayne myself wh thinking of perfections wh mine eyes ioyed so l lately to behold and to make me meditate wth more comfort. I wish never cease to importune yr Matie thatt I may by some handwriting from yr sacred self be assured thatt I do nott decrease in yr Maties favor. I care for no increase of fortune so long as I find yr Matie careth for me. nether [neither] can any thing make me happy when I do not hold a first place in yr favor. If any man will venture his lyfe to persuade yr Maties of his fayth I will loose [lose] mine to prove my constancy. I wish yr Matie to be the greatest and happiest prince. the kindest and constantest Matie that ever was and I will be ever yr Maties most humble, affectionate, and devoted servant R. Essex Dover this 16th of Octob.”

However, even this best possible outcome meant that he was frequently away from the queen, the court, and the center of power. So, as one aspect of his chivalric masculinity and self-definition mandated absence, Essex used another aspect of that same chivalric self-fashioning to bolster his political status. While the chivalric soldier was away, Essex often deployed the rhetorical position of a courtly lover to retain political favor. The foundation of that favor was fundamentally personal. This made the maintenance of the bonds of personal affection all the more necessary for the dashing courtier.

During this campaign, Essex alternated between discussing the status of English forces and devoting his letters to praising the queen as a lady-love. Whether he was pleading for continued assistance with men and money for the campaign, or lamenting his absence from the queen, the centrality and importance of her favor to his life is a consistent theme in the letters and a hallmark of his rhetorical approaches to his sovereign. Even in letters in which he asked for continued assistance for his valiant men, such as when he assured his sovereign that “in no one place in Christendom ther can be chosen a company of more resolute valiant gentlemen for ther [their] number then are here,”³⁷³ he often concluded letters with frequent reminders of how necessary her love was to his very life. This allowed him to reiterate that his political well-being and social standing was intrinsically tied to the queen’s pleasure.³⁷⁴

One of the ways Essex retained that favor throughout much of his career was epistolary self-presentation as a courtly lover besotted with his queen. There was a degree of self-conscious artificiality in the florid praise the young courtier lavished on the queen decades his

³⁷³ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 42r-v

³⁷⁴ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 39r-v. Essex concluded a letter updating the queen on conditions of the expedition thusly: “I am not so ambitious of the wining [winning] of France as I am of yr Maties deerest favour to which I have dedicated my lyfe and wh [with] wh [which] I prefer to end it. I wish yr Matie all sweete perfect and happynioyes [happiness] and vow to be ever yr Maties servant wh most deerly, humbly, and faythfully loves, reverenceth, and serves yr Matie To the Q. most sacred Matie R. Essex”

senior, who had ruled long before he was born. Nevertheless, Essex's use of courtly love motifs was far more than a (theoretically) pleasant rhetorical game. Such engagement in epistolary courtly love games may have flattered the aging queen, but for Essex, they served different, politically necessary functions.

Essex used such letters to remind the queen that he maintained the dual chivalric roles of nobleman-soldier and courtly lover. His self-depiction as a devoted courtly lover, enamored with his lady may have been fictive and artificial. However, performance of that aspect of chivalric masculinity (whether actual or epistolary) could temporarily deflect the queen's attention from campaigns that did not go smoothly, or help lessen the queen's consternation if the earl did not achieve his assigned objectives. When Essex wrote to his sovereign that "at my departure I had a restless desire honestly to disengage myself from this French action,"³⁷⁵ he claimed that this was rooted in a desire to remain at the queen's side. Nevertheless, this epistolary version of Essex undertook all the difficulties and tribulations that come along with a military expedition because "in my absence I conceive [conceived] an absurd hope to do something that shall make me worthy of the name of your servant."³⁷⁶ This epistolary Essex was a rhetorical construction built on the chivalric trope of the valiant knight charging off on a quest to commit meritorious deeds for the glory of his lady. By simultaneously emphasizing the chivalric conventions of lovelorn suitor and valiant questing knight components of his chivalric masculinity, Essex attempted to steer communication away from topics that could erode his place in Elizabeth's favor—like the actual details of the campaign, its supplies, and funding. Essex claimed that upon his (theoretically victorious) return, he hoped "that your Majestie will free me

³⁷⁵ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 33r, Robert Devereux to Elizabeth I, October 18 [year undated] (1591).

³⁷⁶ BL Add..MS 74286 f. 33r.

from writing to you on any matter of business.”³⁷⁷ Playing the lovesick knight nearly to the level of melodrama, he assured her that he wanted her privy chamber to be his entire world:

att my returne I will humbly beseech your Majestie thatt no cause butt a great action of your owne may draw me of your sight. for the 2 windowes of your privy chamber shallbe the poles of my sphere. where as long as your Majestie will please to have me, I am fixed and unmovable: when you thinke thatt heaven to [too] good for me, I will nott fall like a starr, butt be consumed like a vapor by the same sun thatt drew me up to such a height. While your Majestie geves [gives] me leave to say I love you my fortune is as my affection unmatchable.³⁷⁸

He concluded this love-letter—or attempt to avoid less pleasant topics—by assuring Elizabeth that she could never dissuade him from loving her, and that his “constancy” was unshakable. In a letter brimming with lavish praise of the queen as a courtly love object, Essex still deployed gendered rhetoric which revealed how important chivalric masculinity was to his gender performance and preservation of his personal political power. After affirming that he would love the magnificent queen no matter what she did, Essex asked that “for the honor of your sex, show yourself constant in kindness, for all your other vertues are confest [confessed] to

³⁷⁷ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 33r.

³⁷⁸ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 33r. For full context, original spelling and preserved abbreviations, see below, f. 33r-v: “Most fayre, most deere, and most excellent sovuerayne, the first sute that I make unto yr Matie upon my arrival is that yr Matie will free me from writing to yu on any matter of business. My duty shallbe otherwise performed by advertising my LL of yr Maties counsaile of all things here and yet my affection nott wronged wh tells me that zealous fayth and humble kindness are argumt enough for a better at my departure I had a restless desire honestly to disengage myself from this French action. in my absence I conceive [conceived] an absurd hope to do something thatt shall make me worthy of the name of yr servant att my returne I will humbly beseech yr Matie thatt no cause butt a great action of yr owne may draw me of yr sight. for the 2 windowes of yr privy chamber shallbe the poles of my sphere. wher as long as yr Matie will please to have me, I am fixed and unmovable: when yu thinke thatt heaven to [too] good for me, I will nott fall like a starr, butt be consumed like a vapor by the same sun thatt drew me up to such a height. While yr Matie geves [gives] me leave to say I love yu my fortune is as my affection unmatchable. yf ever yu deny me thatt liberty yu may end my lyfe, butt never shake my constancy. for were the sweetness of yr nature turned into the greatest bitterness that cold [could] be it yt is not in yr power (as greatt a Q. as yu are) to Make me love yu lesse. Therefore for the honor of yr sex, show yrself constant in kindness, for all yr other vertues are confest [confessed] to be perfecte and so I beseech yr Maties receive all wishes of perfect happines from yr Maties most humble Faythfull and affectionate servante, R. Essex”

be perfecte and so I beseech your Majesties receive all wishes of perfect happines yr Majesties most humble Faythfull and affectionate servant.”³⁷⁹

Although this was superficially a rhetorical device to conclude a lavish letter, it demonstrates how willing—and able—Essex was to use early modern assumptions about Elizabeth’s potential feminine weakness and inconstancy to evoke his desired response. Presumably, Essex believed this closing would bring about the continued kindness he wanted from the queen. This “kindness” would include continued royal favor and support for his military endeavors. To facilitate this continued kindness, Essex used a two-pronged approach. He conveyed his belief that he could be assured of the constancy of his virtuous, courtly mistress. Simultaneously, he implied that if her kindness did not continue to flow, she would undermine the honor of both her sex and herself. Whether he was asking for military funding, men, supplies, or the treasured love of his chivalric lady, Elizabeth’s continued favor and support were essential to his political well-being.

Letters in which he praised the queen and longed for her private chamber to be his world were just as politically valuable—and as politically calculated—as letters wherein he praised the valor of the men serving under him (and then asked for more money). The chivalric masculinity that Essex performed—with its aspects of the nobleman soldier, and the enamored courtier-knight—was a key component of his personal and political self-presentation.

It was this epistolary medium that allowed him a venue in which he could combine or alternate between depictions of himself as faithful servant, courtly lover, or chivalric soldier-knight. While he was frequently away from court, he could mitigate the potential damage to his political standing brought by being away by portraying himself as a loyal servant *in absentia*, whose mode of service compelled his absence. But simultaneously, he could mold a rhetorical

³⁷⁹ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 33v.

self that willingly endured painful separation from his beloved queen precisely because he was resolutely devoted to her service. It was via letters—and the Hulton letters especially—that Essex rhetorically deployed different aspects of the chivalric masculinity that he actually performed in soldierly service and courtly entertainments. Moreover, it was in this epistolary medium that he could depict himself as someone on the cusp of being a conquering hero—provided his campaign went well. Unfortunately for Essex, campaigns did not always go well. When he returned from France and did not receive a warm welcome, the declarations of love fell away, although the veneer of deference remained:

I see your Majestie is content to ruine me. I do humbly and patiently yeald to your Majesties will. I appeale to all men that saw my parting from France or the maner of my coming hither whether I deserved such a wellcom or nott. To be full of wordes when a man is in affliction is for him that is not resolved whatt to do with himself.³⁸⁰

When Essex did not receive the heroic welcome he believed he deserved, the earl became convinced that his sovereign was “content to ruine” him. This was just one instance where service that Essex perceived as virtuous was not justly rewarded. In Essex’s estimation, he had risked life, limb, and livelihood, and was not given his just recompense.

In the mid-1590s, Essex would lead several military expeditions, with varying levels of success, and become one of the leading military figures in England. He clearly sought a place as a prominent statesman, and he likely hoped to succeed the aging William Cecil as the queen’s chief advisor upon Burghley’s death. But, in the same years that Essex established himself as a military leader, it became clear that Burghley had succession plans of his own for his son Robert.

³⁸⁰ BL Add. MS 74286 f. 30r. For original spelling and preserved abbreviations, see below: “I see yr Matie is content to ruine me. I do humbly and patiently yeald to yr Maties will. I appeale to all men that saw my parting from France or the man^{er} of my coming hither whether I deserved such a wellcom or nott. To be full of wordes when a man is in affliction is for him that is not resolved whatt to do wth himself. Yr Maties humble servant R. Essex.”

In 1596, Essex led an expedition in which the Spanish city of Cadiz was captured and burned. While Devereux was away on what would be one of the greatest victories of his military career,³⁸¹ Robert Cecil was appointed Elizabeth's Secretary of State. The conferral of this position—which both men had sought for years—upon Cecil suggested to Essex that he was besieged by rivals at court.

By 1596, Essex had become a military leader, accomplished political advisor, and prominent patron. Simon Adams has convincingly shown that in the late 1590s, patronage had become a competitively used political tool in a contentious factionalized environment. Furthermore, the work of Paul Hammer and Natalie Mears, has revealed the crystallization of factional divisions after 1596 along civil and military (or Cecilian and Essexian) lines.³⁸² Essex and many of his supporters began to believe a sentiment about the Cecils encapsulated by Lady Anne Bacon, that “the father and son are affectionate join'd in power and policy.”³⁸³ Certainly, Burghley's long history of service and position of political power augmented Robert's own political position. After Burghley's death in 1598, Essex did not succeed the prominent patriarch as Elizabeth's chief advisor. Robert Cecil would not rise to the level of prominence his father had enjoyed in the regime in the final years of Elizabeth's reign, but Sir Robert was Secretary of State and one of a few trusted advisors.

³⁸¹ For a discussion of the political uses to which Essex put his victory at Cadiz, see Paul E. J. Hammer, “Myth-Making: Politics, Propaganda and the Capture of Cadiz in 1596,” *The Historical Journal* 40, no. 3 (September 1997): 621-642

³⁸² See Simon Adams, “The patronage of the crown in Elizabethan politics: The 1590s in perspective,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 20-45; Natalie Mears, “*Regnum Cecilianum?* A Cecilian perspective on the Court,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64; and Paul E. J. Hammer, “Patronage at Court, faction and the earl of Essex,” in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 65-86.

³⁸³ *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. (2 vols.) ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1754), II, 61

V. Political Self-Defense and Chivalric Masculinity in Robert Devereux's *Apologie of the Earl of Essex*

When Devereux did not significantly benefit from the redistribution of offices (and power) after Burghley's death, Essex seems to have felt besieged by rivals and a rival faction, centered around Robert Cecil, which advocated a less bellicose foreign policy. True to form, Essex undertook an epistolary self-defense. But the "letter" that he crafted to Anthony Bacon was only a letter in the barest sense—it was aimed at a greater potential audience, and crafted as a much more public self-defense. Consistent with the epistolary self-fashioning of his early career, martial and chivalric tropes informed his self-presentation and written self-defense. In his *Apologie of the Earl of Essex*,³⁸⁴ written in 1598, but published in 1600 and again in 1603, Devereux implored his audience (ostensibly Anthony Bacon, but clearly oriented to a larger potential readership), to continue waging war against Spain.³⁸⁵ Essex believed that misguided attempts of his rivals at court to pursue a less aggressive war—or even make peace with Spain—would lead to England's ruin. In his *Apologie*, he constructed a rhetorical self that was coming to the defense of a virtuous nation.

In writing this letter/political tract, Essex showed a two-fold overall purpose. This tract served as a defense of his personal reputation and an impassioned piece of pro-war propaganda imploring his audience to continue fighting Spain. Nevertheless, he began the piece by responding to alleged charges that he was a warmonger. He emphatically denied such charges as he wrote:

³⁸⁴ R. Devereux, *An Apologie of the Earle of Essex Against Those Which Falsly and Maliciously Taxe Him to be the Onely Hinderer of the Peace and Quiet of His Countrey*, (1598) (London, 1603).

³⁸⁵ For an astute examination of the place of *The Apologie* in late Elizabethan politics, see Gajda, *The Earl of Essex*, 97-104. Gajda provides an excellent analysis of the final years of Devereux's career and of the political context of his "letter." Her discussion of the fears of Essex and like-minded courtiers that England might make peace with Spain after France and Spain had concluded a separate peace is especially insightful. But, she leaves the wealth of gendered rhetoric nearly unexamined. The impact of Essex's masculinity, and the connections between his political and gender performance, are largely unexplored.

The reputation of a most faithful subject and zealous Patriot (which, with hazard of my life and decay of my estate I haue sought to purchase) must not suffer this ougly and odious aspersion, *that my actions haue caused, mainteined, or increased the warres, or had euer any such scope or intent.*³⁸⁶

This early passage established the importance of reputation—a theme which ran throughout the tract. On one level, this served as a very personal defense. However, Essex appealed to national well-being and national reputation throughout the tract as well. After vehemently proclaiming his love of peace, Essex spent much of the remainder of the text proclaiming the need to continue war with Spain, and thus gave the impression of possibly protesting too much. Essex framed many of these appeals for continued conflict in terms of patriotism, national protection, and valor. By invoking both soldierly and national valor, Essex offered a passionate plea to defend national safety by appealing to national pride and masculinity.

Essex's *Apologie* provides an informative counterpoint to Leicester's *Lawes and Ordinances*.³⁸⁷ While the latter was a utilitarian, largely impersonal document, the former was an intensely personal defense of the military profession, Essex's own reputation, and the validity of his decisions during military service. However, both focus extensively on the life of a soldier in camp. The picture of camp life painted by Essex was one of virtuous comradeship shared by brothers in arms. Like a knight lauding his fellows (which was likely how Essex saw himself), he wrote:

I do cofesse I do entirely loue them... I love them for their vertues sake & for their greatnesse of mind...I love them for their affections: for self-louing men loue ease, pleasure and profit but they that loue paines, danger and fame, shewe

³⁸⁶ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, sig. A2v

³⁸⁷ See chapter 3, section VI for discussion of the *Lawes and Ordinances*. It is worth noting that these *Lawes* followed a common formula for orders issued to soldiers in early modern England. Orders issued by Essex and Lord Admiral Howard in 1596 had similar prohibitions against brawling and swearing as those found in the *Lawes*. Moreover, Essex's orders required twice daily prayers. *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic 1595-1597*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869), 208-209.

that they love public profit more then themselves. I love them for my Countries sake: for they are Englands best Armour of defence, and weapons of offence. If we may haue peace, they have purchased it: If we must have warre, they must manage it.³⁸⁸

Here, Essex made it clear that chivalric military men (like himself) were not only the most virtuous men, filled with valor. They were also the ones who should make the decisions that preserved the safety of the country. For Devereux, he was the highest man among just the type of military men that should manage the war with Spain. In Devereux's depiction of chivalric valor, he also placed a jab against his rivals. Essex presented them as "self-loving" men who enjoyed "ease, pleasure and profit" back at court away from the dangers of the battlefield. Clearly, bureaucrats (like his rivals) should not make military decisions. The earl believed that only valiant men like him could make the difficult choices that would lead to English victory.

Depicted as England's defense, as her "best Armour," Essex cast the soldiers' duty in knightly, chivalric terms. For Essex, the soldiers with whom he served were filling the role of chivalric knights ready to be the sword, shield, and armor pursuing the wars and protecting the peace of England. This grandiose language may in part be rhetorical flourish, but that flourish still revealed that for Essex, the soldier was a chivalric knight with the greatest of responsibilities; and the soldier-knight was the manliest of men. Self-sacrifice and public good figured into the soldier's motivations, but drawing on chivalric tropes, Essex also emphasized that these knightly soldiers loved "paines, danger, and fame." Such service could provide a chance to improve one's reputation or "fame," whether the soldier in question was a common foot soldier or an earl who feared the political schemes and potential foreign policies of courtly rivals. With the establishment and preservation of good reputation essential to the enactment of honorable masculinity, service as a soldier (at least in Essex's telling) served as a way to affirm

³⁸⁸ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, sig. C1r-v.

masculinity publicly. These men could serve as England's armor, but there was no reason that armor could not shine for all to see. Similarly, Essex used this "private" letter to present a picture of himself as a leader of self-sacrificing soldiers. By extension, as their leader, Essex was able to implicitly portray himself as the man with the nobility of blood and character to lead England to victory.

In his *Apologie*, Essex presented an idealized picture of a soldier's life in camp. In addition to serving queen and country, good soldiers in an orderly camp were engaged in a praiseworthy and pious profession. Essex freely proclaimed that he preferred the company of soldiers when he referred to "my friendship with the chief men of action, and fauour generally to the men of war."³⁸⁹ But life in camp in the company of soldiers constituted more than his preferred pastime. It could also cultivate virtue. Lauding life in camp, Essex wrote:

I knowe, that great scandall lyes vpon the profession of Armes, as if it were a schoole of dissolutenesse: but that growes by comaund and charge giuen to dissolute chiefes; and it is a falt in the professors, and not in the profession. For a Campe ought to bee (and so is, if it be well gouerned) the best schoole to make Religion truely felt, and pietie and honestie daily practised.³⁹⁰

According to Essex, the fault in a badly run camp lay with the leader, not the led. Disciplined life in a well-ordered camp could make one a better soldier, a better Christian, and a better man, not to mention improving his reputation.³⁹¹

The masculinity of the individual soldier depicted by Essex contained numerous chivalric elements, including self-sacrifice, martial prowess, national protection and personal piety. Essex's ideal individual soldier had all these qualities, but he applied these traits collectively to the country as a whole to strengthen his pro-war propaganda. Having lauded the role of soldiers

³⁸⁹ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. C1r.

³⁹⁰ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. C1v-C2r.

as England's protective armor, Essex then implored his audience to be as self-sacrificing in an effort to finance and continue war with Spain when he wrote:

Yea, and though her Maiesties treasure bee drawne depe into, and the poore husbandman by these late hard yeares past hath now scant means to liue: yet, if our sumptuous buildings, our surfetting dyet, our prodigality in garments, our infinite plate and costly furniture of our houses bee well considered, England can not be thought poore. Can wee exceede all Nations in Christendome in wastfull vanities? and can we not arme ourselves against one Nation (which wee haue euer beaten) for our neccessarie defence? Was *Rome* so braue a State, as that the very Ladies, to supply the common treasure and to maintaine the warres spoyled themselves of their Iewels and rich ornaments? and is England so base a State, as that the people therein will not bestow some part of their superflous expences to keepe themselves frome conquest and slavery? Did the godly Kings and religious people, which wee reade of in the old Testament, to maintaine the warres against the enemies of God, sell the ornaments of the Temple and things consecrated to holy vses? and shall wee, that haue as holy a warre, spare those things that wee haue dedicated to our idle and sensuall pleasures? Could our owne Nation, in those gallant former ages, when our countrie was farre poorer than now it is, leaue armies, maintaine warres, atchieue great conquests in France, and make our powerful Armes knowne as far as the Holy Land? and is this such a degenerate Age, as wee shall not bee able to defend England? No: there is yet left some seede of that auncient vertue.³⁹²

This passage is replete with Biblical and Classical references to indicate the capacities and potential greatness of England. Alluding to the the bravery, greatness and imperial power of Rome, Essex reminded his readers how Roman women gave up their unnecessary jewels to support a war effort. This implicitly appealed to the readers' perceptions of national masculinity—if wealthy Roman ladies could forgo decadence to support the war effort, could not the English do the same? If the nation did not support the effort, the passage suggested, they were decadent, unpatriotic, effeminate, and unmanly.

Essex acknowledged that war could deplete treasuries and bring hardship to hardworking Englishmen, but, for him, the need to keep fighting surpassed any desire to avoid hardship. After mentioning the affluence reflected in clothing, material objects, and architecture, and implying

³⁹² R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. E4r-v

that England should follow Rome's example, he called upon the perceived heroism of the crusading knight involved in just and holy war. By conjuring the image of a country that "made our powerful armes knowne as far as the Holy Land," he painted a picture of the war with Spain as a crusade. He portrayed the soldiers who fought in that war as knightly men on crusade and the country that supported them as supporting a holy war in which God was on their side. To Essex, England's army inspired fear in its opponents. The army and the nation engaged in a worthy cause that Essex implicitly likened to a trial by ordeal when he wrote, "Terroure accompanies the powerfullnesse of her Armies: feare possesseth the harts of her enemies: & God himself, by her successe, hath judged her cause."³⁹³

For Devereux, the nation and the soldiers who fought for it faced a trial—one in which they had enjoyed previous victories, which indicated that God favored them. But in order to remain victorious and retain that favor, he suggested that they must keep fighting. They had to demonstrate that "seede of that auncient vertue"³⁹⁴ that remained within them by displaying soldierly valor. The martial components of chivalric masculinity, especially the emphasis on self-sacrifice and prowess, strongly informed Essex's presentation of soldierly valor and national virtue.

Despite the feelings of political alienation that contributed to the construction of his impassioned epistolary self-defense Essex was still one of the leading military noblemen of his generation, and was the clear choice to lead a force to put down rebellion a year after he wrote his *Apologie*. After he was appointed Elizabeth's lord lieutenant in Ireland, Essex was tasked with stopping an Irish insurrection led by Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone.³⁹⁵ After his arrival in Ireland, he sent the queen a letter in which he gave an overview of how he thought English

³⁹³ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. F1v

³⁹⁴ R. Devereux, *Apologie*, Sig. E4v

³⁹⁵ For a discussion of Essex's involvement in the Irish campaign, see Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars*, 211-216.

forces could secure a victory. Based on his appraisal, he envisioned a prolonged, costly, and brutal conflict. But, after an examination of how difficult he thought the Irish campaign would be to win, he closed the letter with a passage that suggests that he was more concerned about the erosion of his political power due to his absence and the machinations of his factional rivals:

But why do I talk of victory or success? Is it not known that from England I receive nothing but discomforts and soul's wounds? Is it not spoken in the army that your Majesty's favor is diverted from men, and that already you do bode ill both to me and it? Is it not believed by the rebels that those whom you favor most, do more hate me out of faction, than them out of duty and conscience? Is it not lamented of your Majesty's faithfulest subjects, both there and here, that a Cobham or a Raleigh—I will forbear others for their places' sakes—should have such credit and favor with your Majesty when they wish the ill-success of your Majesty's most important action, the decay of your greatest strength, and the destruction of your faithfulest servants?³⁹⁶

Here, an epistolary Essex emerged that showed his sense of political alienation and disillusionment. The hopeful gallantry of some of the Hulton letters (and even the more publicly oriented *Apologie*) had fallen away. But, even in the midst of his angst-ridden alienation and factional fear, he still presented himself as the virtuous chivalric soldier. The difference was that instead of a courtly lover enduring absence from his beloved, or a valiant knight on the verge of victory, Essex instead cast himself as a self-sacrificing soldier abroad while his rivals gave ruinous advice at home. He called out Sir Walter Raleigh and Lord Cobham by name, but implicitly directed his critique at those did not name, “for their places’ sake.” This was a distinct stab at Cecil and those who Essex perceived to be in his supposed faction. To further illustrate and reiterate the difference between himself—the queen’s most true and faithful servant—and those who might try to poison the queen against him from the safety of court, he followed the

³⁹⁶ “Essex to the Queen” (25 June 1599) in *Lives and Letters* v. II, 40-41.

petulant passage above with a declaration of his willingness to sacrifice himself in the queen's service:

Yes, yes, I see both my own destiny and your Majesty's decree, and do willingly embrace the one and obey the other. Let me honestly and zealously end a wearisome life. Let others live in deceitful and inconstant pleasures. Let me bear the brunt and die meritoriously. Let others achieve and finish the work, and live to erect trophies. But my prayer shall be that, when my sovereign loseth me, her army may not lose courage, or this kingdom want physic, or her dearest self miss Essex, and then I can never go in a better time nor in a fairer way.³⁹⁷

Ever the dramatic rhetorician, as a soldier mired in a difficult campaign, and politician in a precarious position, Essex fell back on a strategy that had worked in the past. He attempted to present the image of a long-suffering soldier and servant who was committed to his sovereign's service. In his telling, he was willing to suffer and die for the good of queen and country. Conversely, his opponents were filled with decadence and deceit. Here, he constructed an image of himself as a true knight who did not even care about martial glory—this epistolary (and imaginary) Essex only cared about the queen and country he would leave behind after his valiant death. In practice, Essex was likely using these rhetorical devices—filled with the tropes of chivalrous knighthood and the traits of chivalric masculinity—to evoke a response in the queen that would bring sympathy and support. Ideally, it would also remind Elizabeth not to listen to Essex's opponents at court.

Whether they were filled with deceit or not, Essex's political adversaries did not need to lie or deceive to politically undermine him after the Irish expedition. After Essex concluded an unauthorized truce with Tyrone, he returned to court without permission. He had disobeyed orders, failed to accomplish assigned objectives, and undermined the queen's authority. Upon his return, his access to the queen was quickly revoked, and he was exiled from court. After his

³⁹⁷ *Lives and Letters*, II, 41.

return from Ireland, as it became increasingly clear that his political career was likely over, Francis Bacon compared his former patron to Icarus, metaphorically suggesting that Essex's political and military actions had burned him and led to his downfall.³⁹⁸ Essex again represented himself as a loyal and wounded servant who depended on his queen's favor when he replied:

I never flew with other wings than desire of merit, and confidence in my sovereign's favor: and when one of these wings failed me, I would light no where but at my sovereign's feet, tho' she suffered me to be bruised with my fall.³⁹⁹

By late 1600, Robert Devereux's political power, his position as patron, and his patriarchal masculinity were all undermined. This was political alienation his charm and rhetorical skill could not repair. Coupled with massive debt, this was the actual ruination that Essex had feared and hyperbolically lamented years before. It was in this environment that he and a small group of his followers staged an abortive rebellion, ostensibly to restore Essex's access to the queen and oust his rivals at court. After this haphazard rising, Essex was convicted of treason. He would go to his execution as a penitent and remorseful sinner. But even to the last, when his fate was sealed, he used a carefully crafted rhetorical self-presentation. Even at the end of his life, Essex presented himself as a sorrow-filled servant who swore he never meant to harm his sovereign.⁴⁰⁰

On February 25, 1601, the queen's last great favorite was executed. This was not only the end of his political career and his life. It was also the end of the man who was an emblem of

³⁹⁸ Francis Bacon to Robert Devereux, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. (2 vols.) ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1754), II, 457.

³⁹⁹ Robert Devereux to Francis Bacon, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth*. (2 vols.) ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1754), II, 457.

⁴⁰⁰ For several accounts of Devereux execution, see *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, 1598-1601*, ed. Mary Anne Everett Green (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1869), 592-596. Beach Langston argued that Essex's final hours before execution, including his speeches and actions, closely conformed to conventions found in Elizabethan advice literature on the art of dying. For Langston, these Elizabethan articulations of the art of dying served as the successors to earlier *ars moriendi*. See Beach Langston, "Essex and the Art of Dying," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (February 1950): 109-129.

chivalric masculinity in his generation. With one of its strongest leaders dead, the factional conflict that had plagued the 1590s was functionally over. The political conflict of the previous decade had been fueled by different political objectives and agendas in an England strained by years of war. During the first Elizabethan generation, the different modes of military and bureaucratic monarchical service—and the associated models of chivalric and humanist masculinity that went along with them—had led to a somewhat complementary, cooperative working relationship between Burghley and Leicester. When their successors took the reins of power, different political circumstances and different enactments of those models of gender performance, contributed to the political strife of the last Elizabethan decade. Robert Cecil continued the model embodied by his father of a humanist masculinity based on royal service (with a healthy dose of political calculation). For Robert Devereux, political success was tied to royal favor, just as his political identity was tied to defending England against Spain. Essex's self-definition and identity at court was tied far more fundamentally to martial defense than Leicester's had been. When Devereux lost royal favor and political function, he became a desperate rebel and a traitor. His execution removed Robert Cecil's primary political rival, but it also cast a pall over the court in Elizabeth's last years. Even in her so-called "Golden Speech," where the queen rhetorically basked in the love of her people, the memory of Essex loomed.

VI. Conclusion: Monarchical Service and Gender in Elizabeth's "Golden Speech"

To be a king and wear a crown is a thing more glorious to them that see it than it is pleasant to them that bear it. For myself, I was never so much enticed with the glorious name of a king or royal authority of a queen as delighted that God hath made me His instrument to maintain His truth and glory, and to defend this kingdom (as I said) from peril, dishonor, tyranny, and oppression. There will never be a queen sit in my seat with more zeal to my country, care to my subjects, and that will sooner with willingness venture her life for your good and safety than myself. For it is not my desire to live nor reign longer than my life and reign

shall be for your good. And though you had had and may have many princes more mighty and wise sitting in this seat, yet you never had or shall have any that will be more careful and loving. Shall I ascribe anything to my sexly weakness? I were not worthy to live then, and of all most unworthy of the mercies I have had from God, who hath ever given me a heart which never feared any foreign or home enemy.⁴⁰¹

Although this speech was not Elizabeth's last speech to her parliament, it seems almost like a fond farewell to her people by an aging queen. Here, Elizabeth presented herself, for almost the last time, as a defender, preserver, and protector of her people. Using the deft rhetorical skill she had honed over decades of rule, debate, and royal decree, she presented herself as a loving and loved sovereign with kingly might and queenly moderation.⁴⁰² She forced her audience to contemplate her age and mortality with references to her desire to live only as long as was good for her kingdom. She reminded those listening of her alleged "sexly weakness," only to immediately disavow any such weakness. She echoed the declaration to the troops at Tilbury when fears of the Spanish Armada loomed, that asserted that she had "the heart and stomach of a king."⁴⁰³ In her so-called "Golden Speech" thirteen years later, she affirmed that God "hath ever given me a heart which never feared any foreign or home enemy." The execution of her final favorite had taken place mere months before, and was surely still fresh in the minds and memories of both the queen and her audience. Devereux was an energetic, charismatic courtier who won the love and loyalty of many of Elizabeth's highest servants, only to lose those bonds in the course of his rebellion, treason, and execution.

⁴⁰¹ Elizabeth I, "Elizabeth's Golden Speech" (November 30, 1601) (version 1) in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, eds. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 339-340.

⁴⁰² For an analysis of Elizabeth's rhetorical identity, its character and development in the course of her reign, as seen in her parliamentary addresses, see Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I: Parliamentary Rhetoric and the Exercise of Power," *Signs* 1, no. 1 (Autumn, 1975): 31-55.

⁴⁰³ Elizabeth I, "Queen Elizabeth's Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury, August 9, 1588" in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, 326.

Essex built a chivalric persona in courtly entertainments, military service, and epistolary self-fashioning. That persona was intrinsically tied to the model of masculinity that contributed to Robert Devereux's self-definition and self-presentation. Before his career began, during his meteoric rise to prominence, and finally in his political decline and fall, Essex deployed different elements of the chivalric masculinity he performed to achieve his political ends, or at least defend his failures and express his sorrow. After his final alienation and rebellion, his sovereign was left with little choice other than to execute him. In her Golden Speech, Elizabeth implicitly presented herself as a protector and defender of her people and realm, even if the enemies of that realm had turned out to be some of those closest, and dearest to her.

After the death of Devereux, there was no clear successor to the chivalric mantle he had upheld. Following the political alienation, rebellion, and execution, of Essex, Robert Cecil consolidated a political position of unquestioned power as a bureaucrat and administrator. For Robert Cecil and Robert Devereux, the contrasting models of masculinity they followed helped crystallize an array of different political priorities and alternate approaches to royal service. For two of the greatest figures of the second Elizabethan generation, these models of manhood were forms of cultural inheritance from their forebears and paternal inheritances from their fathers. The contrasting study of the impact of these models of masculinity in the two Elizabethan generations reveal what different influences the same gender paradigms had when enacted by very different men in different social and political circumstances. Modes of monarchical service and models of masculinity that complemented each other in first Elizabethan generation contributed to factional conflict based on opposing political priorities in the second.

Conclusion: Models of Masculinity and Cultural Inheritance in Early Modern England

The reign of Elizabeth I encompassed two generations, each of which had two very different court cultures. In the first generation, court culture was characterized by cooperation among chivalric and bureaucratic figures. Both kinds of courtier—most emblematically represented by Burghley and Leicester—provided the queen with different perspectives and advice. But, they managed to cooperate more often than not, and could be reined in by an energetic and politically adept queen when necessary. The alternate political viewpoints they provided—informed by contrasting models of gender performance—gave Elizabeth an array of opinions and options on her domestic and foreign policy decisions. These contrasting models of manhood and the men who embodied them had a complementary function in the first Elizabethan generation.

The courtiers that would emerge as leaders in the last decade of Elizabeth's reign lived in a different political and courtly world. They led a country and a court strained by the financial and military costs of war with Spain. And although Robert Cecil would prove every bit as capable as his father, Robert Devereux often lacked the political delicacy (and skill) of his stepfather. Models of manhood that had contributed to complementarity and cooperation in the first Elizabethan generation fueled factional conflict in the second generation because of the different men who embodied them and the different political environment they inhabited. Where Leicester and Burghley had managed cooperation, Essex saw rivalry. Robert Cecil may not have begun this factional fight, but even before the political alienation of Essex after the Irish campaign of 1599, Cecil was clearly the victor. Part of that victory can be attributed to

proximity to the monarch and Cecil's own assiduous service, hard work, and political skill. But, Cecil's success also serves as an illustrative instance of a larger trend identified by scholars like Natalie Mears and Ronald Asch, of a movement toward political dominance by civilian nobility.⁴⁰⁴

After the execution of the earl of Essex in 1601—the queen's final favorite and the last great chivalric courtier of the Elizabethan era—the regime entered its twilight years. Many courtiers anxiously anticipated the seismic shift that could accompany the accession of a new monarch. James VI of Scotland—son of Mary Stuart, queen of Scots—was the clear heir presumptive, despite Elizabeth's reluctance to name a successor. Awaiting the likely accession of a monarch who was both male and Scottish, many courtiers questioned their own political futures. Robert Cecil, who had weathered the financial strain and factional strife of the 1590s, only to see his rival executed because of Essex's own rebellion, did not wait for his political future to unfold. After corresponding with James during the last years of Elizabeth's life, Robert Cecil helped orchestrate the smooth transition of power (and dynasty) on James' accession. Despite the prominence of Scottish nobility at James's English court, and the political influence of handsome favorites over the king, Robert Cecil became James' most essential bureaucrat, and one of his closest advisors.⁴⁰⁵ James would make him earl of Salisbury, and entrust him with the positions of Secretary of State, Master of the Court of Wards, and Lord Treasurer. This was a daunting concentration of labor—and an impressive consolidation of power—in the hands of one man. By continuing his role as a hard-working humanist bureaucrat for a second sovereign,

⁴⁰⁴ See Natalie Mears, "Regnum Cecilianum?: A Cecilian Perspective of the Court," in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 46-64; Ronald G. Asch, *Nobilities in Transition 1550-1700: Courtiers and Rebels in Britain and Europe* (London: Arnold, 2003), passim, esp. 78-79.

⁴⁰⁵ For an examination of the changing nature of Jacobean patronage—in contrast to that of the previous regime—see Linda Levy Peck, "'For a King Not to be Bountiful Were a Fault': Perspectives on Court Patronage in Early Stuart England," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 1 (January 1996): 31-61.

Salisbury succeeded in securing a position of preeminent political power. He would maintain that position until his death in 1612.⁴⁰⁶

Though the Jacobean court was influenced by favoritism, the chivalric/bureaucratic divide that characterized the late-Elizabethan years did not strongly recur. After his installment as Prince of Wales in 1610, James' son Prince Henry did begin to present himself as a chivalric figure. But, his death in 1612 precluded significant development of the prince's household as a de facto second court and locus of power. It also ended the possibility that the prince himself could serve as an alternate model of gendered kingship, in contradistinction to his father.⁴⁰⁷

Henry would not succeed his father, but Robert Cecil had certainly succeeded his. At his death, Salisbury held the offices—and the position of unparalleled political power—that Burghley had held. He had not inherited these offices. Instead, he had served at the pleasure of two sovereigns according to a model of manhood and a political paradigm that he *had* inherited from his father. The model of the ideal humanist bureaucrat was a cultural inheritance that

⁴⁰⁶ For a man of his importance and preeminence in two regimes in early modern England, Robert Cecil has not received the level of study one might expect. Cecil has received little sustained scholarly attention, with the laudable exception of the work of Paline Croft. See Paline Croft, *King James* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48-53; "The Religion of Robert Cecil," *The Historical Journal* 34, no. 4 (December 1991): 773-796; "The Reputation of Robert Cecil: Libels, Political Opinion and Popular Awareness in the Early Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 1 (1991): 43-69; "Robert Cecil and the Early Jacobean Court," in *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court*, ed. Linda Levy Peck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 134-147. One of the earliest biographies of Robert Cecil was essentially a work of family devotion by one of his descendants. See Algernon Cecil, *A Life of Robert Cecil First Earl of Salisbury* (1915) (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971). David Loades has also completed a dual biography of William and Robert Cecil aimed at both scholarly and popular audiences. See David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power Behind the Throne* (Kew: The National Archives 2007, paperback ed. 2009). Alan Haynes has also penned a biography for more popular audiences. See Alan Haynes, *Robert Cecil, 1st Earl of Salisbury: Servant of Two Sovereigns* (London: Owen, 1989). For a more narrowly focused study of Cecil's involvement in privateering enterprises, see K. R. Andrews, "Sir Robert Cecil and Mediterranean Plunder," *The English Historical Review* 87, no. 344 (July 1972): 513-532. For an examination of the final years of Cecil's life that asserts his maintenance of political preeminence, see Eric N. Lindquist, "The Last Years of the First Earl of Salisbury, 1610-1612," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1996): 23-41. For an analysis of Cecil as a musical patron, and his social and political use of that form of patronage, see Lynn Hulse, "The Musical Patronage of Robert Cecil, First Earl of Salisbury (1563-1612)," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 116, no. 1 (1991): 24-40.

⁴⁰⁷ For an analysis of the life of this prince, that portrays him as a budding bellicose leader and patron of the arts, see Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1986), *passim*.

William Cecil drew upon, in his own career and passed on to his son. For Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, the model of manhood he lived by was both paternal inheritance and a cultural inheritance.

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