QUEENSHIP AND POWER

Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes

Power, Representation, and Diplomacy in the Reign of the Queen, 1558–1588

Estelle Paranque

Queenship and Power

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Estelle Paranque
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For my parents, Bernard and Joëlle Paranque,
for their unconditional love and support.
With all my love and gratitude.

A Note on Translation

Translating is a very difficult task. I have done my best to translate sixteenth century French sources into modern English. Yet some passages remain problematic (as the source is also). I have sometimes opted for literal translations and sometimes I have taken some liberties to make it more comprehensible to an English language audience. This is why I have decided to keep all French in footnotes to be as transparent as possible. Any errors are mine.

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For my mother who has encouraged my love and passion for history since my childhood. For my mother who has converted me to color-coding and meticulous organization when writing. For my mother who has taught me never to give up: no matter how tired you feel, get up and do the job! For my father who is my warrior of light and, in many ways, has shaped my approach to life. For my father who would always kindle my curiosity with topics as diverse as politics and astronomy. For my father who has literally held my hand in difficult times when I felt that I could not carry on. For my parents for their tremendous generosity with their emotional and financial support throughout the years. For my parents who have always believed in me no matter what and who have done everything in their power to ensure that I would make my dream come true. For my parents because I could not have hoped for better ones, with all my love.

Contents

Abbreviations

BL	British Library
BNF	Bibliothèque Nationale de France
Correspondence diplomatique	*Correspondence diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, ambassadeur de France en Angleterre, de 1568 à 1575*
LCM	*Lettres de Catherine de Médicis* publiées par M. Le Cte Hector de la Ferrière
MS Fr	Manuscript Français
ODNB	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography
SP	State Papers
TNA	The National Archives

CHAPTER 1

Introduction: In Valois Eyes

On September 7, 1533, Elizabeth Tudor was born. Her parents had married just months before, generating shock and disapproval all around Europe. In his dispatch to Francis I of France, Jean de Dinteville, the French ambassador to the English court, reported the June 1 coronation of "Anne de Boulen" and Henry VIII's displeasure on learning that many courtiers were gossiping about it.[1] The relationship between Elizabeth's parents swiftly deteriorated, and in 1536 Anne Boleyn was accused of high treason for incestuous and promiscuous relationships with several men, including her brother George. On May 19, she was beheaded. Soon after, Elizabeth was declared bastard and illegitimate, precipitating more than a decade of tumult for the young princess. She was third in line to the throne, after her half-brother Edward and her half-sister Mary. During their respective reigns, Elizabeth survived countless false accusations and even imprisonment in the Tower of London.

Events in England, France, and Spain were usually locked together. The Italian wars that ravaged Europe from 1494 to 1559 had a profound impact on diplomatic relations between the three countries.[2] Francis I of

[1] Jean de Dinteville to Francis I, king of France, June 10, 1533, BNF MS. Fr. 15,971, fol. 5.

[2] See Albert Guérard, *France: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1959); Bert S. Hall, *Weapons and Warfaire in Renaissance Europe: Gunpowder, Technology, and Tactics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997); Robert J. Knecht, *Renaissance Warrior and Patron: The Reign of Francis I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Angus Konstam, *Pavia 1525: The Climax of the Italian Wars* (Oxford: Osprey Publishing, 1996); John Julius Norwich, *A History of Venice* (New York: Vintage Books,

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France (and before him Charles VIII and Louis XII) and Charles V of Spain had been fighting over the duchy of Milan and the kingdom of Naples in an atmosphere of seemingly irreconcilable tension between the two royal houses.[3] In 1522, Henry VIII of England had chosen to join the league formed by the Pope Leo X and Charles V of Spain against France. Following a military catastrophe at Pavia in 1525, in January of the following year Francis was forced to sign the Treaty of Madrid, by which he renounced his claims to Italy, Flanders, and Burgundy.[4] However, Clement VII, who had succeeded to the papacy in 1523, did not wish to see Charles V's empire grow any further. Another alliance was formed, this time with France and England ranged against Spain, but it collapsed and Charles V surrounded the papal states.[5]

Francis I died on March 31, 1547. Four years later, his son, Henry II, declared war on Spain in a bid to regain some glory and the Italian territories. In 1556, Charles V abdicated, leaving his imperial title to his brother Ferdinand and his Spanish crown to his son Philip II. The latter was married to Mary I of England, which paved the way for a political and military alliance. Two years later, the French invaded and regained control of Calais, which had been under English jurisdiction since 1347. In 1559, the Peace of Cateau-Cambrésis brought the Italian wars to an end by forcing Henry II to renounce his Italian claims. But Calais remained French.

Mary I had died on November 17, 1558, whereupon, to many people's surprise, Elizabeth had become Queen of England. The loss of Calais during her sister's reign was a profound national disgrace, and Elizabeth was determined to reclaim it.[6] In 1562, ostensibly to help the Huguenots in their struggles against French Catholics, she sent 6000 troops to Newhaven (Le Havre), and expressed the hope that "the English occupation of Le

1989) and Michael Mallet and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars: 1494–1559* (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2012).

[3] Rhea Marsh Smith, *Spain: A Modern History* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1965), 145.

[4] Michael Mallet and Christine Shaw, *The Italian Wars: 1494–1559*, 155.

[5] Mallet and Shaw, *The Italian Wars: 1494–1559*, 160–4.

[6] Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland*, 1587, vol. 4 England, ed. Sir H. Ellis (London: J. Johnson, 1808), 952. Cyndia Susan Clegg examines how this work was seen as propaganda and ended up being censored by the English government; see the discussion in Cyndia Susan Clegg, "Censorship and Propaganda," in *The Elizabethan World*, eds. Susan Doran and Norman Jones (Oxford: Routledge, 2011), 167–71.

Havre could be treated for the return of Calais."[7] However, the English expedition ended in failure as the French forces united against Elizabeth's troops and Calais was lost forever.[8] Despite the 1572 Treaty of Blois, which stated that England and France would form an alliance against Spain, relations between the two courts continued to be characterized by mistrust.[9]

Representations of Elizabeth: Power, Persuasion, and Perpetual Youth

This book focuses on how Elizabeth was perceived by the French royal family and their ambassadors from 1558 to 1588. It also examines the dynamics of Anglo-French relations at that time and argues that, contrary to assumptions based on the fact that France was a Catholic country while England was officially Protestant, the representations of Elizabeth in French diplomatic correspondence were not entirely negative. Indeed, the general traffic of diplomatic correspondence offers a wide range of perspectives on the English queen.

These representations of the English queen have fascinated scholars for centuries. Interestingly, her contemporaries in France—Charles IX and Henry III—have not attracted nearly as much attention, and the French historiography covering their reigns does not engage so intensively with their representations.[10] From the portrayals of Elizabeth as the Virgin Queen and Deborah the Israelite judge who freed her people from oppression, the image of a Protestant heroine who managed to rule effectively amid a horde of Catholic enemies has been extensively studied

[7] Paul E. J. Hammer, "The Catholic Threat and the Military Response," in *The Elizabethan World*, 629.

[8] Hammer, "The Catholic Threat and the Military Response," 630. See also Paul E. J. Hammer, *Elizabeth's Wars: War, Government and Society in Tudor England, 1544–1604* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 48–53 and 62–66.

[9] See Lynn A. Martin, "Papal Policy and the European Conflict, 1559–1572," in *Sixteenth Century Journal*, vol. 11, 2 (1980): 35–48.

[10] On Charles IX of France, see Pierre Champion, *Charles IX, la France et le contrôle de l'Espagne: Tome I, Avant la Saint-Barthélémy et Tome II: Après la Saint-Barthélémy* (Paris: Bernard Grasset, 1939); Denis Crouzet, "Charles IX ou le roi sanglant malgré lui?" in *Bulletin-Société de l'histoire de protestantisme français* vol. 141, (1995). On Henry III, see Jacqueline Boucher, *La cour de Henri III* (Rennes: Ouest-France, 1986); Nicolas Le Roux, *Un régicide au nom de Dieu* (Paris: Gallimard, 2006) and Robert J. Knecht, *Hero or Tyrant: Henry III, King of France, 1574–1589* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2014).

and developed, notably by Sir John Neale and Roy Strong.[11] But this image is a complex one,[12] not least because her depiction as Protestant heroine was as much imposed upon Elizabeth as it was generated by the actions and proclamations of the queen herself.[13] Indeed, in many ways, she was a reluctant heroine of the Reformation, because, while she could not ignore the struggles of continental Protestants, she had no desire to go to war against her neighbors in order to defend her coreligionists.[14]

Another image of Elizabeth that has been explored in depth is "mother of her country."[15] Her gender has been studied as a significant part of her queenship, and a number of scholars, such as Maria Petty and Ilona Bell, have attempted to problematize the gendered representations of the

[11] On the Protestant champion, see the works of John Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (London, 1934) and Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Pimlico, 1999). On Deborah, see Carol Blessing, "Elizabeth I as Deborah the Judge: exceptional women of power," in *Goddesses and Queens: The Iconography of Elizabeth I*, eds. Annaliese Connolly & Lisa Hopkins (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 19–30.

[12] Elizabeth's religious belief has influenced scholars and their representations of her as a Protestant champion or a defender of the Protestant faith, see the works of Sir John E. Neale, "The via media in politics," *Elizabethan Essays* (London: Jonathan Cape Thirty Bedford Square, 1958), 114–5; Shenk, *Learned Queen*, 23 and 44 and Susan Doran, *Elizabeth I and Religion, 1558–1603* (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), 6–7. On a more negative image of Elizabeth due to her politics, see Peter Lake, *Bad Queen Bess? Libels, Secret Histories, and the Politics of Publicity in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth I* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016).

[13] Thomas S. Freeman and Susan Doran, "Introduction," in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, eds. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 6.

[14] On Elizabeth's Protestant saviour image developed in John Foxe's *Acts and* Monuments and in the *Bishop's* Bible, see John N. King, *Tudor Royal Iconography: Literature and Art in an Age of Religious Crisis* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 105–6, 153–4 and 234–5. And on Elizabeth as a Deborah, see the works of Anne McLaren, "Elizabeth I as Deborah: Biblical typology, prophecy and political power," *Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe*, eds. Jessica Munns and Penny Richards (London: Longman, 2003), 90–107 and Alexandra Walsham, "'A Very Deborah?' The Myth of Elizabeth I as a Providential Monarch," in *The Myth of Elizabeth*, eds. Susan Doran and Thomas S. Freeman (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 143–70.

[15] See Christine Coch, "'Mother of my Contreye': Elizabeth I and Tudor Constructions of Motherhood," *English Literary Renaissance*, 26.3 (1996): 423–50 and Helen Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (GB: Palgrave Macmillan, 1994). Other works have also paid attention to Elizabeth's gender and how it influenced her representations; see e.g. Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London and New York: Longman, 1988).

queen.[16] In *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power*, Carole Levin evolves a more complex image of Elizabeth.[17] Though Levin does not dismiss the importance of Elizabeth's sex, she rightly explains that, as she remained single, she was both Queen and King of England, which played an important role in her self-representation.[18] This duality—a male and female representation of the Tudor queen—is also examined by Kevin Sharpe, for example in his analysis of the famous 1588 Tilbury speech.[19] Many other historians have similarly explored Elizabeth's image in the context of her warlike rhetoric.[20] This dual representation of Elizabeth as both King and Queen of England was echoed in French writings, too—demonstrating that her reign was perceived as unusual both inside and outside the borders of her realm.

Elizabeth's portraits have also drawn the attention of numerous scholars.[21] For instance, Anna Riehl Bertolet focuses on the English queen's

[16] On Elizabeth's writings, see Maria Perry, *The word of a prince* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990). Also see Ilona Bell, *Elizabeth I: The Voice of a Monarch* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). For the queen's speeches, as previously mentioned, see Allison Heisch, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Persistence of Patriarchy" and Frances Teagues, "Queen Elizabeth in her speeches," in *Gloriana's Face: Women, Public and Private, in the English Renaissance*, eds. S.P. Cerasano and Marion Wynne-Davies (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1992), 63–78. On Elizabeth's writing in general, see Donatella Montini and Iolanda Plescia (eds.), *Elizabeth I in Writing: Language, Power and Representation in Early Modern England* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

[17] Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994, 2nd edition 2013).

[18] Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, 4 and 148.

[19] Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth Century England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 458.

[20] See Anna Whitelock, "'Woman, Warrior, Queen?': Rethinking Mary and Elizabeth," in *Tudor Queenship: the Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth*, eds. Alice Hunt and Anna Whitelock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 173–89; Ben Spiller, "Warlike Mates? Queen Elizabeth and Joan La Pucelle in 1 Henry VI," in *Goddesses and Queens: the Iconography of Elizabeth I*, eds. Annaliese Connolly and Lisa Hopkins (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007), 34–44 and Estelle Paranque, "The representations and ambiguities of the warlike female kingship of Elizabeth I of England," in *Medieval and Early Modern Representations of Authority in Scotland and Great Britain*, eds. Katherine Buchanan and Lucinda Dean (London: Routledge, 2016), 163–76.

[21] The most famous works remain Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* and Roy Strong, *Gloriana: Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987); also see Catherine Loomis, "'Bear your Body More Seeming': Open-Kneed Portraits of Elizabeth I," in *The Emblematic Queen: Extra-Literary Representations of Early Modern Queenship*, ed. Debra Barrett-Graves (New York: Palgrave

face and its importance in both written accounts and portraiture.[22] Meanwhile, Frances Yates explores Elizabeth's representation as Astraea, the Greek goddess of innocence, in literary works and links this depiction to the queen's faith.[23] More recently, Mary Villeponteaux and others have examined how the English viewed their queen and shaped some of her images.[24] These works have established that Elizabeth's reputation and representation were multi-layered in England, and I argue that this was also the case within the French court.

In this study, I suggest a series of fresh and complementary approaches on these issues by looking at the French royal family and their ambassadors' letters and official reports. Close examination of these royal and diplomatic sources has revealed that some familiar images, such as Elizabeth as Protestant champion, were not reported by the Valois, while other, often rather different, images and perceptions of Elizabeth did emerge in their correspondence.

Monarchs tended to use familial tropes when engaging with one another and to maintain alliances. While this is hardly surprising, the way in which they shaped fictional familial relationships is intriguing.[25] The following chapters investigate the important categorization of Elizabeth as

Macmillan, 2013), 53–68; Janet Arnold, *The Queen's Wardrobe Unlock'd* (Leeds: Maney Publishing, 1988); Susan Frye, *Elizabeth I: The Competition for Representation* (Oxford: Oxford: University Press, 1996); Louis Montrose, *The Subject of Elizabeth: Authority, Gender, and Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006) and Kevin Sharpe and his chapter on "The portrait and picture of the Queen's Majesty," in Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth Century England*, 358–412.

[22] Anna Riehl Bertolet, *The Face of Queenship, Early modern Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[23] Frances A. Yates, *Astraea* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999, first published in 1975), 29–87.

[24] Mary Villeponteaux, *The Queen's Mercy: Gender and Judgment in Representations of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014). And see Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy*, 451–5. Paul Strauss focuses on the Tudor queen's image as a nurse of the Church of England in court sermons, see Paul Strauss, "The Virgin Queen as Nurse of the Church: Manipulating an Image of Elizabeth I in Court Sermons," in *Scholars and Poets Talk about Queens*, eds. Carole Levin and Christine Stewart-Nunez (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 185–202.

[25] Lena Orlin examines the sibling relationship of Elizabeth with her counterparts, in Lena Orlin "The Fictional Families of Elizabeth I," in *Political Rhetoric, Power and Renaissance Women*, eds. Carole Levin and Patricia A. Sullivan (Albany: Suny Press, 1995), 85–110.

a member of the French royal family and trace the significant changes in the terms that were chosen to accompany this image. Furthermore, the French rulers and their ambassadors developed many other representations of the Tudor monarch—from pirate queen to benevolent ruler—largely in response to the state of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In some respects, this book's approach is similar to those of two significant works that have touched on foreign perceptions of the Tudor queen. In his essay on the Venetians and Elizabeth, John Watkins looks at their diplomatic relations with a view to establishing how the city state's ambassadors perceived not only Elizabeth but England as a whole.[26] However, the main aim of his article is to explain Spanish influence in Venice in the 1580s, so it lacks a thorough analysis of the ambassadors' written appraisals of Elizabeth. Indeed, Watkins acknowledges that more work needs to be done on this subject.[27]

Nabil Matar's chapter in *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* is perhaps the closest to this study in terms of sources as he explores the diplomatic relations between Elizabeth and Mulay Ahmad al Mansur through detailed analysis of ambassadors' and royal letters. Moreover, he demonstrates that her Gloriana reputation, which stemmed from her victory over the Spanish Armada in 1588, did not reach Morocco.[28] However, his work covers only a short period of time and does not offer a comprehensive analysis of how Elizabeth was perceived by her Moroccan counterpart.

Despite their shortcomings, these two articles show that new facets of Elizabeth's representations and reputations, and therefore a more multifaceted portrait of this most famous English monarch, may emerge through close examination of foreign sources. This study follows their lead and attempts to challenge and counterbalance Anglocentric views of Elizabeth by offering a more analytical exploration of her representations in the correspondence of French rulers and their ambassadors.

[26] Watkins, "Elizabeth Through Venetian Eyes," in *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, vol. 30, 1 (Summer 2004): 121–38, 122–3.

[27] Watkins, "Elizabeth Through Venetian Eyes," 126–8. At the end of his essay, Watkins offers an interesting passage on "Elizabeth's place in the Venetian imagination," 131.

[28] Matar, "Elizabeth through Moroccan Eyes," in *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I*, ed. Charles Beem (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 145–68, 145–6.

Anglo-French Relations: Amity, Influence, and Rivalry

France and England have a long history of influencing each other. In *Good Newes from Fraunce*, Lisa Ferraro Parmelee explains her interest in the reception and "influence of French ideas on late Elizabethan political thought."[29] Her work provides fascinating French primary sources published in England for both political and religious reasons. It also shows how the two courts exerted significant influence on each other. For instance, we learn that Lord Burghley intervened in contemporary political debates on several crucial occasions through the medium of anonymously authored pamphlets as well as, famously, the royal proclamation of October 18, 1591.[30] Major French thinkers, such as Jean Bodin, were published in English, with the effect that they fashioned and challenged the authorities of both the state and the monarch.[31] In both countries, the monarch's authority and, to some extent, legitimacy were challenged by pamphlets, libels, and books written by both religious and political actors—if it is possible to differentiate between these two groups during the Renaissance period.[32] By focusing on how the French royal family viewed Elizabeth, this study reveals the dynamics of the relationship between the English queen and the French kings, but it also examines how a foreign court perceived England's monarch. Despite the political and religious framework that surrounded their exchanges, Elizabeth and the Valois kings found a way to pursue a relatively positive diplomatic alliance.

[29] Lisa Ferraro Parmelee, *Good Newes from Fraunce: French Anti-League Propaganda in Late Elizabethan England* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 1996), 2.

[30] Parmelee, *Good Newes from Fraunce*, 27. On Burghley's use of a printer, see Elizabeth Evenden, "The Michael Wood Mystery: William Cecil and the Lincolnshire Printing of John Day," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35 (2004): 383–94.

[31] See Parmelee, *Good Newes from Fraunce* 1, 56–7 and 97.

[32] Rob Content has studied how the royal image was controlled and how the public used "images to criticize Queen Elizabeth," see Rob Content, "*Fair is Fowle*: Interpreting Anti-Elizabethan Composite Portraiture," in *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, ed. Julia M. Walker (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1998), 229–51, 229. On French monarchical representations, Annie Duprat has examined how pamphlets and libels affected Henry III of France's reputation among his fellowmen, see Annie Duprat, *Les rois de papier, la caricature de Henry III à Louis XVI* (Paris: Belin, 2002). On the use of pamphlets in the public sphere, see Joad Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). On propaganda and how it affected monarchs' authority and representation, see John Cooper, *Propaganda and the Tudor State Political Culture in the Westcountry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Historians have long demonstrated a strong interest in Elizabeth's foreign diplomacy, albeit primarily in terms of her relationships and correspondence with Catherine de Medici[33] the first Bourbon king of France, Henry IV. This study attempts to redress the balance by focusing on her relations with his predecessors—the last two Valois kings of France, Charles IX and Henry III.[34] Nate Probasco has explored the Tudor queen's reaction after the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre,[35] but his essay does not deal in depth with the diplomatic relationship between Charles IX and Elizabeth. Rather, it focuses on the latter's reaction to the massacre and the personal involvement of the French king in the atrocity. Moreover, Probasco cites only English sources, so the French side of the story remains untold.

A handful of scholars have investigated Elizabeth's correspondence with Francis, Duke of Anjou. For instance, Jonathan Gibson and Guillaume

[33] On Catherine de Medici and Elizabeth, see: Susan Doran, "Elizabeth I and Catherine de Medici," in *"The Contending of Kingdoms," France and England 1420–1700*, ed. Glenn Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 117–32; Elaine Kruse, "The Virgin and the Widow: The political finesse of Elizabeth I and Catherine de Médici," in *Queens and Power in Medieval and Early Modern England*, eds. Carole Levin and Robert Bucholz (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 126–40 and Rayne Allinson, *A Monarchy in Letters: Royal Correspondence and English Diplomacy in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

[34] Guillaume Coatalen acknowledges the importance of Elizabeth's French correspondence but does not engage with her letters exchanged with the Valois kings, see Guillaume Coatalen, "'Ma plume vous pourra exprimer,' Elizabeth's French Correspondence," in *Representations of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Culture*, eds. Alessandra Petrina and Laura Tosi (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 83–104. Even in the collection of essays entitled *Tudor England and its Neighbours*, these two important relationships are left out, see Susan Doran and Glenn Richardson (eds.), *Tudor England and Its Neighbours* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005). In a chapter, Glenn Richardson analyses the relations of Elizabeth I of England with Henry III and Henry IV of France. He explains how Elizabeth and Henry III used each other in order to defy Spain's domination, and he claims that the death of Anjou is precisely what brought Henry III and Elizabeth together, against Philip II. Even before his death, the two monarchs had developed a friendly rhetoric during the marriage negotiations between Anjou and Elizabeth as well as a shared goal of protecting at all cost their alliance after the death of the king's brother. However, in Richardson's chapter, the focus is more on Elizabeth's relations with Henry IV of France—diminishing somehow Henry III's political importance to the English queen. See Glenn Richardson, "'Your most assured sister': Elizabeth I and the Kings of France," in *Tudor Queenship: the reigns of Mary and Elizabeth*, eds. Alice Hunt and Anna Whitelock (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 191–208, 194.

[35] Nate Probasco, Queen Elizabeth's reaction to the St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre," in *The Foreign Relation of Elizabeth I*, ed. Charles Beem (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 77–100.

Coatalen have explored the exchange of letters between the queen and the duke during their protracted marriage negotiations.[36] However, they are rather dismissive of what was, in effect, high-level diplomacy. This represents a missed opportunity, because thorough analysis of the communiqués that Charles IX, Henry III, their mother Catherine, the wider French royal family and their ambassadors sent to the English court reveals a series of fascinating perceptions and representations of the final Tudor queen.

Two important works highlight what one might call "the diplomacy of fear." In *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair*, John Bossy focuses on the distrust that existed between France and England from 1582 to Mary Stuart's death. In brief, in the process of trying to identify Walsingham's informant, "Henry Fagot," Bossy reveals a number of complex espionage networks. Although I disagree with some of his conclusions, he amply demonstrates the seriousness of the so-called "Throckmorton conspiracy" and the extent to which the French Embassy in London became a center of sedition.[37] His second work, published ten years later, revisits Walsingham's spy networks in mind-twisting detail, and in particular the flow of information in and out of the French Embassy.[38] Here, also, there are *obiter dicta* about the balance of forces in the Elizabethan polity and the maneuvering of Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière, Thomas Morgan, Throckmorton, Mauvissière's secretary Courcelles, and the English ambassador at the French court, Edward Stafford.[39] Yet, all of this distrust is just one part of the story. This study examines the importance for both France and England of maintaining reasonable—if not good—diplomatic relations.

[36] See: Jonathan Gibson, "'Dedans la plié de mon fidelle affection': Familiarity and Materiality in Elizabeth's Letters to Anjou," in *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, eds. Carlo M. Bajetta, Guillaume Coatalen and Jonathan Gibson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 63–92 and Guillaume Coatalen and Jonathan Gibson, "Six Holographs Letters in French from Queen Elizabeth I to the Duke of Anjou: Texts and Analysis," in *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric, and Politics*, eds. Carlo M. Bajetta, Guillaume Coatalen and Jonathan Gibson (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 27–62. On Elizabeth and Anjou, also see: Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony, the Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London New York: Routledge, 1996).

[37] John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven and London: Yale Nota Bene and Yale University Press, 2002, first published 1991), 9 and 54.

[38] John Bossy, *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 13–15 and 107–10.

[39] This will be discussed further in Chap. 6.

Of course, the great princely families at the French court played pivotal roles in this relationship, and none more so than the Guises. As much as any English historian, Stuart Carroll has traced the ways in which the prominence of this family started to threaten the hard-won peace between France and England.[40] On the basis of this recent scholarship, I examine the two courts' diplomacy and reveal how Elizabeth was perceived by the French royal family and their ambassadors.

The French Ambassadors: A Who's Who

The French ambassadors to England played a critical role in how the French royal family understood and perceived Elizabeth. While it is often difficult to tease out the precise motivation and agenda of individual diplomats in this period, it helps to have some understanding of their background. In Chap. 2, I concentrate on three diplomats. The first was Gilles de Noailles, the son of Louis de Noailles and the brother of several other diplomats, notably Antoine de Noailles (1504–1562), who resided at the English court from 1552 to 1556.[41] Gilles was sent to the English court as France's official ambassador from 1559 to 1560, and thereafter he continued to play an important political role both inside and outside the French realm.[42] His successor, Michel de Seure (also known as Sèvre), was a knight of St. John of Jerusalem arrived at the English court in February 1560. He had previously traveled extensively to Algiers, Malta, and the Ottoman Empire, and had been ambassador to Portugal in 1557.[43] De Seure returned to France due to ill health in 1562, whereupon he was replaced by Paul de Foix, who served as French ambassador until July 1566. Born in 1528, the latter was the son of Jean de Foix, Comte de Carmain. A prelate as well as a diplomat, he had studied Greek and Roman literature in Paris and he was on intimate terms with the French royal family, most notably Catherine de Medici.

[40] Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs & Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), v–viii. Carroll explains that the Guises were enemies of the English crown and of the French royal family, see 232–3 and 242–3. For the Guise network, see Chap. 6 below.

[41] *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, rédigées par feu M. L'Abbé de Vertot, Tome 1 (Leyden: Dessaint & Saillant Libraires, 1763), 9–10.

[42] *Ambassades de Messieurs de Noailles en Angleterre*, 12–22.

[43] David Potter (ed.), *A Knight of Malta at the Court of Elizabeth I: The Correspondence of Michel de Seure, French Ambassador, 1560–1561* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Camden Series, 2014), 6–9, 13.

He arrived in England as a special envoy in 1561 before acceding to the ambassadorship the following year. He was posted to Italy in 1566 and died in Rome eighteen years later.[44]

De Foix was succeeded as French ambassador to the English court by Jacques Bochetel de La Forest, who in turn was superseded two years later by Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon. The latter was born in Périgord in 1523, the seventh child of Hélie de Salignac and Catherine de Ségur Théobon.[45] However, his parents soon placed him under the protection of a cousin, Jean de Gontaut, who raised Bertrand alongside his own son, Armand. The de Gontauts were an important noble family, and Jean served as special envoy at the courts of Charles V of Spain between 1547 and 1548 and John III of Portugal between 1548 and 1549.[46] Bertrand accompanied his guardian on these missions and gained a good education in the art of diplomacy from him. When Jean died in 1557, Bertrand moved closer to another cousin, Jean Ebrard, Baron de Saint-Sulpice, who held a number of important positions at the French court.

From 1559 to 1561, La Mothe Fénélon was a representative of the nobility in the General Estates. He then served under Michel de Seure at the English court for a year before becoming Ebrard's secretary at the Spanish court, where he garnered high praise from his cousin.[47] Thereafter, he was sent to Scotland in 1566 and the Netherlands a year later. All of this high-level diplomatic experience made La Mothe Fénélon the perfect choice in the eyes of the French royal family when they sought a replacement for Bochetel de La Forest in 1568. The new ambassador did not disappoint: during his embassy, he enjoyed easy access to the queen's councillors and intimate audiences with Elizabeth herself.[48]

[44] *Annales Ecclésiastiques du Diocèse de Toulouse*, par un prêtre du diocese (Toulouse: Imprimerie de Bellegarrigue, 1825), 99, 101.

[45] Bertrand de Salignac's biography can be found in the introduction of *Correspondence diplomatique de Bertrand de Salignac de la Mothe Fénélon, ambassadeur de France en Angleterre, de 1568 à 1575*, Tome I (Archives du Royaume: Paris et Londres, 1838) and in Matthieu Gellard, *Une Reine Epistolaire, Lettres et Pouvoir au temps de Catherine de Médicis* (Paris: Classiques Garnier, 2014), 356–9.

[46] For de Gontaut's family, see Francis-Alexandre de La Chenaye-Aubert, *Dictionnaire de la Noblesse*, vol. VII (Paris, 1774).

[47] Gellard, *Une Reine Epistolaire*, 357–8.

[48] Gellard, *Une Reine Epistolaire*, 376–7. And on La Mothe Fénélon's closeness to the queen, see Estelle Paranque, "Queen Elizabeth I and the Elizabethan Court in the French Ambassador's Eyes," in *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies*, ed. Anna Riehl-Bertolet (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 267–86.

Although he was no "Catholic zealot," La Mothe Fénélon's successor certainly had close connections to and relations within the French Catholic League.[49] Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière, was born in 1520. One of nine children, his parents, Jean de Castelnau and Jeanne Dumesnil, had high hopes for Michel, whom they saw as something of a prodigy. He received an excellent education, having been sent to study in Milan and Naples.[50] A military career followed, during which he forged a friendship with Francis II of Lorraine, duke of Guise, and therefore enjoyed the protection of the Guise family.[51] Later, he became a knight of Malta[52] and played an important role in the Cateau-Cambrésis negotiations of 1559, which earned him the respect and trust of both King Henry II and the Guises.[53]

Mauvissière was sent to Rome during Francis II's reign, then, following Francis's death in 1560, he became France's resident ambassador at the Scottish court, where he acted as mediator between Mary Stuart and her cousin, Elizabeth of England. On returning to France in 1562, he fought with the Guises in the religious wars.[54] More than a decade later, in 1575, Henry III appointed him ambassador to the English court. Over the next ten years, he seemingly made full use of his high-level connections and diplomatic skills in the service of numerous plots and intrigues against the English crown.[55]

Unfortunately, the sources provide scant information on Mauvissière's successor, Guillaume de L'Aubespine, Baron de Chasteauneuf. However, we know that he was the son of a lawyer, Claude de L'Aubespine, and Jeanne Bochetel (Jacques Bochetel de La Forest's sister), and that he followed in his father's footsteps to become a state councillor.[56] In 1572, he was sent as ambassador to the Spanish court with instructions to ascertain

[49] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 9.

[50] *Mémoires de Messire Michel de Castelnau, Seigneur de Mauvissière et de Concressaut, Baron de Jonville*, par M. Petitot (Paris: Foucault Librairie, 1823), 3.

[51] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 13–15.

[52] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 4.

[53] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 6.

[54] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, 8–9.

[55] Bossy challenges Mauvissière's implication in the Throckmorton plot, see: Bossy, *Under The Molehill*, 107–10.

[56] *Histoire des Chancelliers et des Gardes des Sceaux de France dinstingués par les règnes de nos Monarques depuis Clovis Premer Roy Chrétien jusques à Louis Le Grand XIVe du nom, heureusement régnant*, by Francis du Chesne (Paris: Chez l'auteur avec privilège du roy, 1680), 799–800.