

Educating a Princess: Elizabeth I's Commonplace Book

by

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**Abstract**

Elizabeth I (1558-1603) received an exceptional humanist education in a time when female learning primarily meant moral and domestic training. Elizabeth's instruction combined elements of both the privately oriented domestic education of women and the more public rhetorical training reserved primarily for men. Her educational model is most clearly shown in the commonplace book associated with her, which constituted a vital component and indispensable tool in her training. In 1563 a commonplace book, entitled *Precationes Priuate, Regiae E[lizabethae]. R[eginae]* (STC 7576.7) was published under Elizabeth's name by the London printer Thomas Purfoot. Aside from *Precationes*, or private prayers, the composite volume also includes two other works: *Sententiae*, a collection of sayings, and *Regna Quibus Imperat Elizabetha Regina Angliae*, a detailed description of the administrative bodies of her realm. Not only are these elements typically found in both male and female commonplace books, but they also reveal her unique princely education shaped by both feminine and masculine rhetorical instruction. The same gendered duality that is present in her commonplace book is also detectable in her speeches. In fact, Elizabeth applied the same compositional techniques associated with her commonplace book in her speeches written for both her subjects and parliament.

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<b>Table of Contents</b>	<b>Page</b>
Title Page .....	1
Abstract.....	2
Acknowledgements .....	3
Table of Contents .....	5
Introduction .....	6
Chapter I: The Education of Princesses in Tudor England .....	13
The History of Female Education.....	13
The Education of Princess Mary .....	21
The Education of Princess Elizabeth.....	26
Chapter II: Elizabeth I's Commonplace Book ( <i>Precationes Private</i> ) .....	32
History and Theory of Commonplace Books.....	32
Princess Mary's Commonplace Book: <i>Satellitium sive Symbola</i> .....	39
Elizabeth I's Commonplace Book: <i>Precationes Private</i> .....	41
Elizabeth's Commonplace Book: <i>Regna Quibus Imperat</i> .....	46
Chapter III: Elizabeth I's Commonplace Book: <i>Sententiae</i> .....	49
Chapter IV: The Commonplace Book Method in Elizabeth I's Speeches .....	63
Conclusion .....	78
Bibliography .....	80

## Introduction

As young princesses, both Mary I (1516-1558) and Elizabeth I (1533-1603) received an exceptional humanist education at a time when female learning meant primarily moral and domestic training (Reeves and Cohen 12). Mary's and Elizabeth's education focused on the composition of three traditional, seemingly unthreatening, genres of feminine learning: the familial letter, the prayer, and the translation (Pollnitz 240-244). Religious translation in particular was a literary genre that enabled elite women to depict their own feminine virtue and personal piety (Pollnitz 244; Ellis 157). While Mary contributed to the translation of *The Gospell of St. John* (1522-4), which was part of Erasmus of Rotterdam's *Paraphrase of the New Testament*, Elizabeth translated French devotional works, most famously Marguerite de Navarre's *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse* (Mirror of the sinful soul) (1544), and several classical Latin works, including Seneca's *Epistulae morales* (Moral epistles) (1567) and Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares* (Letters to friends) (1579) (Ellis 157; Pollnitz 233). Elizabeth also rendered Henry VIII's last queen, Katherine Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* (1545) into French, Italian, and Latin. Although Elizabeth's juvenile translations were all contemporary religious texts, the translations she produced later in her reign were predominantly from classical Latin and Greek writers (Ellis 159).

Although both princesses were educated by prominent humanist scholars, their instruction was fundamentally different (Cousins 217; Hull 142; Kelso 142-143; Weikel). Mary's privately oriented domestic education was specifically tailored to noblewomen of the period, while Elizabeth's instruction was the public rhetorical training reserved primarily for princes. As Thomas W. Baldwin has examined in his seminal work *William*

*Shakespeare's Small Latine & Lesse Greek* (1944), Mary's education was directed to moral instruction, the reading of the Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, works of classical moral philosophy, but no medieval romances, as they were considered immoral (Baldwin 188-189; Edwards 10; Weikel). On the other hand, Elizabeth received a princely education that entailed the masculine art of rhetoric and prepared her for public service. Her reading list comprised the orations of Cicero, Demosthenes, and Isocrates, unlike her older half-sister's more restrictive education (Baldwin 257; Collinson; Loades 9; Crane, "Video et Taceo" 4; Heisch 35; Ong 112-141; Vuorinen 1). Nevertheless, in *Princely Education in Early Modern Britain* (2015), Aysha Pollnitz argues that Mary's translation of Erasmus' *Paraphrases* helped her advance her rhetorical skills and establish a reputation for being a wise and learned prince (Pollnitz 237). She proposes that Mary's 1554 Guildhall speech was not fashioned in a day and that it demonstrates Mary's great rhetorical sophistication (Pollnitz 237). Pollnitz also demonstrates that prior to her accession to the throne in 1553, Mary's translations were concordant with the female tradition of writing (the familial letter, prayer, and translation); however, following her coronation as queen, she capitalized on the opportunities of governance to advance her command of rhetoric, especially in her Guildhall speech (Pollnitz 240). Pollnitz, furthermore, asserts that Elizabeth's schooling more closely resembled Mary's than Edward's, and mirrored that of her half-sister's with its focus on morality (Pollnitz 202; 241). She believes that history is too hasty to declare that Elizabeth enjoyed the same education as her brother Edward VI (Pollnitz 241), and she states that Elizabeth produced only familial letters and translations of prayers and other devotional works (Pollnitz 243), as attested by her translation of *Miroir de l'âme pécheresse*, a prime example of her feminine scholarship (Pollnitz 244). Consequently,

Pollnitz concludes that the main difference between Elizabeth's and Edward's education was the former's feminine self-representation in her religious translations (Pollnitz 250). However, dealing exclusively with Elizabeth's early translations, Pollnitz's study excludes her later translations of classical works, such as Seneca's *Epistulae morales* (1567), Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares* (1579), Plutarch's *De curiositate* (1598), and Horace's *De arte poetica* (1598), which were staple texts in rhetorical training and thus formed part of the humanist program of study designed for man. In contrast to Pollnitz, in "Schooling Shrews and Grooming Queens in the Tudor Classroom" (2010), Elizabeth Mazzola asserts that Elizabeth was instructed as a prince, instead of a princess. This conscious redirection of her education, Mazzola notes, is manifested in several of Elizabeth's speeches in which she uses rhetorical strategies to overcome her feminine weakness and clearly proclaims her own masculine authority (7). Thus Mazzola, like Baldwin, characterizes Elizabeth's education as masculine, resembling more that of her half-brother, Edward; while Pollnitz has considered it feminine, like that of her half-sister, Mary. As I will argue in this thesis, unlike Mary's humanist education, specifically tailored towards noblewomen of the period, Elizabeth's combined elements of a privately oriented domestic education of women and the more public rhetorical education reserved primarily for princes.

In order to assess Mary's and Elizabeth's education and curricula, scholars tended to focus on their early translations, as well as their tutors' treatises and correspondence, particularly in their respective biographies (Winifred Roll, 1980, David Starkey, 2000, David Loades, 2003, Judith M. Richards, 2008 and 2012, Linda Porter, 2009, and John Edwards, 2011). However, the princesses' divergent educational models are also clearly revealed in the commonplace books associated with them. Commonplace books were



notebooks in which students would record important quotations and paraphrases from both classical and ecclesiastical authorities under different topics or headings as they read. These topic headings were referred to as “cells and receptacles” in which the student placed memorable sentences and in which selections from the student’s readings and lectures were written down for future use (Lechner 70). Thus, students drew upon these collected sayings in their compositions to demonstrate the great range and quality of their readings. Students were expected to cover a large body of literature commencing with classical authors and medieval writers, and ending with contemporary humanist thinkers (Beal 132). As such, commonplace books are particularly revealing about the rhetorical strategies students acquired either in class or through private instruction. Most extant commonplace books were created by men as they were an integral part of their rhetorical training. Some of the best surviving examples from the early Tudor period are the notebooks of London merchants Richard Hill (Balliol College MS 354) and John Colyn (British Library MS Harley 2252), which held business matters, chronicles, taxes and statistics, religious verses and prayers, literary content, home remedies, and recipes (Parker 50-101). However, some women’s commonplace books, such as poet Anne Southwell’s (*Folger MS V b 198*) also survive, containing personal prayers, scriptural commentary, poems, letters, recipes, and receipts (Klene xi). These notebooks offer a rare glimpse into early modern women’s education.

Yet, despite the fact that they constituted a vital component of both Mary’s and Elizabeth’s training, only a handful of studies treat the commonplace books associated with the Tudor princesses and they do so only cursorily. Mary’s tutor, the Spanish humanist Juan Luis Vives (1493-1540), created a collection of Latin commonplaces, entitled

*Satellitium sive Symbola* which he published as a part of his *Introductio ad Sapientiam* (Introduction to Wisdom, Leuven, 1524), alongside *Ratione Studii Puerilis* (Plan of Girls' Studies). It was intended, for Mary to commit to memory, to use in her own compositions, and to direct her conduct (Pollnitz 231). *Satellitium* contains two hundred and thirty nine *sententiae*, or maxims, which are subdivided into fifteen subheadings (Watson 152). These subsequent topics and choice of *sententiae* are domestic in nature, covering subjects such as the body, sleep, and the consumption of food, mirroring Mary's domestic training. It is accorded with early modern women's education which primarily meant to prepare young girls for marriage. As Foster Watson explains in his critical edition of *Satellitium*, Vives regarded the mottos of princes and nobles as the body guards of the soul and found them particularly beneficial as educational tools (*Vives and the Renaissance Education of Women*, 154).

The unique copy of the printed commonplace book *Precationes Priuate, Regiae E[izabethae]. R[eginae]*, attributed to Queen Elizabeth and published by Thomas Purfoot in London in 1563 (STC 7576.7), however, reveals an even more complex educational and political purpose than *Satellitium*. Published under her name in order to secure her rule and cultivate her image as a learned queen, *Sententiae* "declared to the educated elite, both in England and abroad, that Elizabeth, still relatively new to her throne, was learned, God-fearing monarch, receptive to wise counsel and dedicated to her realm's well-being" (Mueller and Scodel 332). This sextodecimo volume, gathered in eighths, is written entirely in Latin and holds collections of scriptural verses and prayers with classical adages. Aside from *Precationes Priuate* (Aii r-Fi v), or private prayers, the composite volume also

includes two other works: *Sententiae* (Fii r-Kvi r), a collection of sayings, and *Regna Quibus Imperat Elizabetha Regina Angliae* (Kvii r-Mvii v), a detailed description of the administrative bodies of her realm. While *Precationes* is typical of female commonplace books, *Quibus Imperat Elizabetha Regina Angliae* is more similar to the chronicles often kept by men. Similarly, *Sententiae*, with its subheadings related to governance and quotations from classical and religious texts, is most comparable to the masculine tradition of commonplaces. There has been some doubt about Elizabeth's authorship of both *Precationes* and *Sententiae*, as there are no extant autograph copies of these works, except for the single printed version housed at Cambridge University Library (Gibson 41; Guy 369; Hammer 196; Wayne 273). John Guy remarks that the prayers are particularly difficult to attribute to Elizabeth as "a significant portion" of her extant prayers "were written in the queen's name or on her behalf by William Cecil or other privy councillors, religious publicists, or ghost writers" (Guy 638-639). In fact, in *Elizabeth I: Collected Works*, only eight prayers survive in Elizabeth's handwriting, while twenty-five prayers were published under her name (Guy 639).

Furthermore, in critical editions of Elizabeth I's works, the three works constituting the composite volume of *Precationes* have not been considered as a coherent commonplace book and a single typographical unit. Although *Precationes Private* was edited in Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose's *Elizabeth I: Collected Works* (2000) and *Sententiae* was included in Janel Mueller's and Joshua Scodel's edition of *Elizabeth I: Translations 1544-1589* (2007), these editions omit *Regna Quibus Imperat Elizabetha Regina Angliae*. Moreover, in *Precationes*, Marcus et al. only present Elizabeth's own personal prayers and do not include the excerpts from the Psalms which precede each of her

prayers in the printed copy. Marcus et al. also consciously place only *Sententiae* within the commonplace book tradition even though all three works contain sententious excerpts by persons of authority, organized under thematic headings.

In this thesis, I will, however, examine the works published under the title of *Precationes* as a single commonplace book in order to assess how contemporary gender roles, religion, and class define Elizabeth's princely training. I will demonstrate that *Precationes* was deliberately constructed as an example of an Erasmian *speculum principis*, or mirror for princes, in order to depict Elizabeth as a wise, just, and merciful ruler. Furthermore, I will propose that Elizabeth continued to apply the commonplace book method of reading and note-taking techniques she acquired in her early education during her reign. In fact, the long lasting effects of her training are most evident in her orations. Characterized by the same gendered duality that is present in *Precationes*, Elizabeth's speeches cleverly manipulate the representation of her gender by presenting the queen using both feminine and masculine rhetoric. Following the lead of several critics, who have theorized that Elizabeth played the role of man and woman, king and queen, and embodied a male body politic in concept and a female body in practice (Fredlund 28; Levin, *Heart and Stomach* 119; Mueller, "Virtue and Virtuality" 223; Marcus, "Shakespeare's Comic Heroines" 137), I will explore the constant tension throughout Elizabeth's speeches between her performance of masculine and feminine gender roles which, as I will argue, is deeply rooted in her early education. With my research, I hope to contribute to the study of early modern queens' writings, specifically Elizabeth's speeches, and enhance the knowledge of women's education in sixteenth-century England. More broadly, my work

will shed light on issues of gender and education and their manifestations in early modern princely literature.

## **Chapter I: The Education of Princesses in Tudor England**

### **The History of Female Education**

Throughout their respective reigns, both Mary and Elizabeth cultivated their image as learned queens not only through their translations, but also their epistles and orations. Although their education was guided by the leading humanists of the early modern period, their training was influenced by the late medieval ideals associated with learned ladies. Significantly, both Mary's and Elizabeth's education was shaped by the educated women in their family, including their great-grandmother, Lady Margaret Beaufort (1441/3-1509); Mary's grandmother, Isabella of Castile (1451-1504) and her mother, Catherine of Aragon (1485-1536); and Elizabeth's own mother, Anne Boleyn (c.1500-1536). When the two young princesses were united under the same household in 1543, it was headed by their step-mother Katherine Parr (1512-1548), who also had a reputation as a learned lady and was intimately engaged with Mary's and Elizabeth's education. The importance of domestic training within the family is emphasized in Ruth Kelso's classic study, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (1956). Kelso argues that the educational reform of the Renaissance had little effect on the traditionally held views of women. Although early modern men were encouraged to become educated, women were reduced to their roles as daughters, wives, and mothers. Similarly, in *Chaste, Silent, and Obedient: English Books for Women, 1475-1640* (1982), Suzanne W. Hull points out that the many guidebooks designed for young women, instructed them mainly to be chaste, silent, and obedient, and

fulfill their female roles and duties, as shown in the stories of exemplary women. In “Equal Opportunity? The Education of Aristocratic Women 1450–1540” (1999), however, Sharon D. Michalove calls for a reappraisal of the role of domestic education in the aristocratic household due to the significance of the household in early modern society. Domestic education, as she notes, often consisted of instruction in vernacular languages, household chores, such as needlework, music and dance, and managing household staff, which have often been disregarded and coded as oppressive for women. Michalove concludes that the status of educated women, who ruled their homes, must be re-assessed as aristocratic households served an important social and political function. The households run by Elizabeth’s and Mary’s mothers and grandmothers certainly confirm that their courts were an important focal point of the princesses’ early education.

Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond and Derby, was the first significant devotee of female learning in England and personified the ideals of the late-medieval tradition that would later influence the education of her great-granddaughters. Margaret Beaufort conducted the affairs of her household in the best customs of the period—by managing servants, writing letters, learning vernacular languages, creating fine needlework, and concocting homemade medical remedies—while also being involved in affairs of the public good of the nation at large (Hull 31; Rex 5; Watson 2). She knew French, achieving considerable success as a translator, and became the first to render the popular Christian devotional work, *Imitation of Christ* (1503) by Thomas à Kempis, into English; she also translated the fifteenth-century Latin treatise *The Mirror of Gold for the Sinful Soul* (1506) from a French intermediary, and was known to have amassed a considerable library of English and French books. In contrast, she knew little Latin, but was proficient enough to

say mass (Gibson 35; Jones and Underwood 181-184; Watson 3). Furthermore, Margaret Beaufort actively patronised educational institutions. In 1497, she established professorships at Cambridge to be filled by prominent humanists, among them the leading scholar of the northern Renaissance, Erasmus. Her principal educational beneficence was the foundation of Christ's College (1505) and St. John's College, Cambridge (1508), where she reserved rooms for herself (Rex 6-7; Watson 3). Before Margaret Beaufort, no English woman had shown such enthusiasm for education; however, it should be noted that she did not take an interest in furthering women's instruction and advanced exclusively that of men.

Similarly, Princess Mary's grandmother, Isabella of Castile, was taught within the domestic tradition set for women in the late Middle Ages. Isabella acquired an exceptional education for the time and was well acquainted with several modern languages, including Spanish and French, and wrote with great precision and elegance (Davies and Edwards; Watson 6). Like Margaret Beaufort, Isabella found herself deficient in Latin, but unlike Margaret Beaufort, she learned Latin as an adult (Davies and Edwards; Watson 6-7). Also, like Margaret Beaufort, Isabella created rich specimens of embroidery for the adornment of churches, collected books, founded a library of manuscripts at a convent in Toledo in 1477, and her collection of books ended up in the royal Library of the Escorial. She also established a school for the youth of nobility, where the renowned theologian Pietro Martire Vermigli was instructed (Davies and Edwards; Watson 6). Moreover, unlike Margaret Beaufort, Isabella actively promoted the education of women, and transferred her passion and aptitude for learning to her daughter Catherine of Aragon.

Like her mother, Catherine had a talent in the vernacular languages—Spanish and French—as well as Latin. Her readiness for Latin writing can be seen in her personal letters (Davies and Edwards; Watson 9). Furthermore, she was a patron of a number of humanists, including Vives, Erasmus, and Thomas More. Erasmus claimed that Catherine “loved literature,” and was educated beyond the point of being merely “a miracle of her sex, nor is she less to be revered for her piety than for her erudition” (Watson 10). Catherine’s greatest achievement in female education was her commissioning of Vives to compose a handbook on the education of Christian women entitled *De Institutione Feminae Christianae* (1524), which would not only guide her daughter’s studies, but would become the most popular treatise on female instruction in the sixteenth century. The reign of Catherine of Aragon thus represents a fundamental shift in the education of women in England from the late-medieval period to the early modern period. At the time, the predominant belief was that women were intellectually inferior. However, early modern humanists associated with Henry’s and Catherine’s court, for example, Vives, More, Erasmus, and Richard Hyrde (*d.* 1528), argued that young women were equally intelligent to young men and, thus, deserved to be educated like them, although they upheld that their curricula should differ from those of men.

More was the first English humanist to promote actively female education in England. He offered a powerful model, as attested by his daughters’ education, which “boasted distinguished tutors, and a curriculum that was rare enough for Tudor boys and exceedingly rare for girls” (Bowker). The school of More’s children was renowned. In an undated letter to the German theologian, John Faber, Erasmus compares More’s household to Plato’s Academy; yet Erasmus was afraid that he does the house injustice by likening it



to Plato's Academy. Instead, he "should rather call it a school, or university, of Christian religion. For there is none therein who does not study the branches of a liberal education. Their special care is piety and virtue" (Watson 175). It is known that More himself oversaw his children's education and decided what they should study and why (McCutcheon 255). Nevertheless, More did not write a treatise on the education of women; as a result the only information on his daughters' education can be found in his correspondence with their tutor William Gunnell and his daughter, Lady Margaret Roper. For example, in a letter to Gunnell, More (1478-1535) esteems learning joined with virtue more than all the treasures of kings:

especially in a woman, whom men will be ready the more willingly to assail for their learning, because it is a hard matter, and argueth a reproach to the sluggishness of a man, who will not stick to lay the fault of their natural malice upon the quality of learning, supposing that their own unskilfulness by comparing it with the vices of those that are learned, shall be accounted for virtue: but if any woman on the contrary part (as I hope and wish by your instruction and teaching all mine will do) shall join many virtues of the mind with a little skill of learning. (More 177)

In the same letter to Gunnell, More praises Margaret's personal piety and her embracement of virtue and true goodness (More 178). For More, the preservation of virtue was not inextricably linked to chastity. Unlike most Renaissance educators, such as Erasmus and Vives, More was not concerned with feminine modesty — often characterized by silence, chastity, and obedience — but instead he focused on the development of integrity, good conscience, and strength of character that remained unmoved by praise or scorn (McCutcheon 256).

More was also the first English humanist to argue that women required a rhetorical education and his daughter Margaret Roper's translations and orations offer a powerful model of his views. More's education for his daughters was much more liberal than the programs later outlined for women by Vives—particularly because of its emphasis on rhetoric and disputation, skills that were often denied entirely to the female student (McCutcheon 258). In a letter to Margaret, More notes that in his absence she takes great care to please him with her diligence in her studies and composes declamations, verses, and logic exercises just as well as if she were in his presence (More 186). In the same letter, More remarks that Margaret and her sisters are experts in all kind of sciences. He goes on to say that “for what author can be more grateful to those desirous minds of most goodly things, such as you and the muses your sisters are, whom a divine hear of spirit, to the admiration and a new example of this our age, hath driven into the sea of learning so far, and so happily, that they see no learnings to be above their reach, no disputation of philosophy above their capacity” (More 187). Thus, in addition to studying Latin and Greek and reading the Church Fathers, Margaret in particular was educated in astronomy, philosophy, theology, geometry, and arithmetic in order to become even more pious, humble, and above all virtuous (Bowker). In another letter to Margaret, More also recounts when he had sat with the learned John Voysey, Bishop of Exeter, and shown him some of Margaret's letters; her handwriting greatly pleased Voysey, so much so, that as he perceived that it was composed by a woman, he would not have believed that she was the author if More had not seriously affirmed it (More 190). In the same letter, More reports that Voysey said to him that Margaret's work was “so pure a style, so good Latin, so eloquent, so full of sweet affections,” that he was marvellously ravished with it (More 190).

In addition, More recounts how he had also brought forth one of Margaret's orations and several of her verses and Voysey similarly approved of them. The bishop was so impressed with the matter that his very countenance and gesture, free from flattery and deceit, betrayed him, and all he could mutter was great praise as he gave her a gold coin which was enclosed in the letter (More 191). Watson posits that the oration that Voysey found both eloquent and witty was likely the speech that Margaret composed to answer Quintilian's story, in which he defends a rich man who was accused of poisoning a poor man's bees with venomous flowers in his garden (Watson 191). As a result of the systematic training devised by More, Margaret translated *Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster* (1523), which formed part of Erasmus' commentary of the Lord's Prayer, and rendered a translation of Eusebius from Greek to Latin, which was, however, never printed, because John Christopherson, the bishop of Chinchester, at that time had already published his translation (McCutcheon 260; Watson 191-192; Wright).

Unlike More, Erasmus viewed the preservation of virginity as an essential aspect of learning to be virtuous. In a letter to the French scholar Guillaume Budé (1521), Erasmus admits that he had not always believed that female instruction was imperative to virtue and the good reputation of women. Although More convinced him of the need to educate women, Erasmus maintained the primacy of virtue as the ultimate purpose of instruction:

Two things are of the greatest peril to the virtue of young women, idleness and lascivious games, and the love of letters prevents both. Nothing else better protects a spotless reputation and unsullied morals: for they are more securely chaste who are chaste from conscious choice. I do not necessarily reject the advice of those who would provide for their daughter's virtue through handiwork. Yet there is nothing that more occupies the attention of a young girl than study. Hence this is the occupation that best protects the

mind from dangerous idleness, from which the best precepts are derived, the mind trained and attracted to virtue. (Sowards 83)

For Erasmus, the purpose of female instruction is to protect the young women's chastity. Similarly, in his *Christiani Matrimonii Institutio* (1526), concerning the marriage of girls and women, Erasmus observes that girls should be "instructed in letters, as nothing is more conducive to a good mind or more useful for the preservation of virtue" (Sowards 86). However, Erasmus never identifies which texts should be read by young girls; instead, the entirety of the passage focuses on the question of chastity and preservation of virtue (Sowards 86). Erasmus provides three reasons why young women must receive a moral education: once violated the previous treasury of virginity is irrecoverable; to keep themselves clear of every stain of dishonour—as perspective suitors who know of this vice will never marry them; to avoid idleness, which, according to Erasmus, is the most dangerous plague of all good morals (Sowards 87).

According to Erasmus, young women's education should commence with a tutor or governess and continue following her marriage under the tutelage of her husband. He concludes that "since the pleasure and durability of a marriage depend more on the pleasure of minds than the love of bodies, they are bound by much stronger chains who are linked in the devotion of their minds" (Sowards 83). In a letter to Budé (1521), Erasmus argues that "husbands should fear that their wives would be less obedient if they are learned, unless they are such as would require of their wives what should not be required of proper women" (Sowards 83). Similarly to many educators of the period, Erasmus was mainly concerned with maintaining young girls' chastity and instilling good morals in order to become good wives (Sowards 87). Thus, women's education was not only responsible for

instilling good morals, religious devoutness, and the protection of virtue, but also for preparing young women for marriage. In the same vein, in his preface to *Devout Treatise upon the Pater Noster*, the English humanist Richard Hyrde praised Margaret Roper's education in the ensuing manner:

she hath taken and taketh no little occasion of her learnings, besides her other manifold and great commodities, taken of the same; among which commodities, this is not the least, that with the virtuous, worshipful, wise and well learned husband, she hath by the occasion of her learning and his delight therein, such especial comfort, pleasure and pastime, as were not well possible for one unlearned couple, either to take together, or to conceive in their minds, what pleasure is therein. (Hyrde 168)

Like Erasmus, Hyrde remarks that many young ladies were educated in order to be good companions and partners in conversation to their learned husbands; this was for the mutual benefit of both husband and wife so that they might take pleasure in each other's company. Despite the humanists' valiant defense of women's education, they were mainly concerned with educating women in order to prepare them for marriage.

### **The Education of Princess Mary**

The program of domestic education proposed by Hyrde, Erasmus, and More is closely aligned with Princess Mary's curriculum, outlined in Vives's *De Institutione*. Mary's education commenced with her mother, Catherine of Aragon. This training included learning to read and write in English and Latin, playing the lute, virginals, singing, dancing, and riding (Weikel). In 1525, when Henry VIII established a household for her at Ludlow, Richard Fetherston, the archdeacon of St. David's in Brecknock, South Wales, was appointed as her tutor (Pollnitz 233; Weikel). Despite having been educated at Cambridge

and Oxford and earning a Master's degree, Fetherston had no previous experience as a schoolmaster and was consequently replaced by the English scholar and educator, Thomas Linacre (Nutton; Pollnitz 233). Linacre dedicated a textbook of Latin grammar, *Rudimenta Grammatices* (Rudiments of Latin Grammar, 1523), to Mary, while her French tutor, Giles Duwes, offered a similar work in French, *An Introductorie for to Lerne to Reade, to Pronounce, and to Speake Frenche Trewly* (1533) (Baldwin 185; Edwards 8; Weikel). In addition, in 1523, Vives was commissioned by Catherine of Aragon, to outline a program of studies for Mary in *De Institutione*, *De Ratione* and *Satellitium*. Although Vives, like Erasmus and Hyrde, advocated women's education, the main purpose of his recommended curriculum was shaping Mary as prospective bride by teaching her to be chaste, silent, and obedient (Cohen and Reeves 14; Cousins 217; Hull 142; Kelso; Weikel).

As one of the most influential conduct guides for women in the sixteenth century, Vives's *De Institutione* was ground-breaking because prior to its appearance no one had conceptualized or defined what a future regnant queen should learn (Watson 21; Kelso 71-74; Travitsky 164; Porter 27). Although Vives' views on women may "very well disappoint contemporary champions of feminism and equal rights[,]...in the first half of the sixteenth century his position was indeed a revolutionary break with the views of medieval education" (Norena 194). In his Latin preface, Hyrde praised Vives's *De Institutione* for "the planting and nursing of good virtues in every kind of women, virgins, wives and widows" (Hyrde 31). However, many modern critics, such as Betty S. Travitsky, Carlos G. Norena, and Linda Porter have noted that Vives often holds contradictory views of women. Like More and Erasmus, Vives believed in gender equality. Yet, he did not think that young women should be taught the same rhetorical content as their male peers (Norena 195).

Despite his belief that women were not intellectually inferior to men—a concept against which he fought with fervor—it is evident that, in his view, they were more vulnerable physically and morally. Vives, in fact, claimed that “women are rational animals like men, but they have changeable disposition which bends easily under pressure” (Norena 195). To justify his argument, Vives employed the biblical commonplace, Eve’s betrayal of Adam, as an example of women’s changeable disposition and corruptible nature:

since woman is a weak creature and of uncertain judgment and is easily received (as Eve, the first parent of mankind, demonstrated, whom the devil deluded with such slight pretext), she should not teach, lest when she has convinced herself of some false opinion, she transmit it to her listeners in her role as a teacher and easily drag others into her error, since pupils unwillingly follow their teacher. (Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman* 72)

Furthermore, Vives argued, “it is not proper for a woman to be in charge of schools, to socialize with strange men, to speak in public, or to teach at the risk of jeopardizing their own chastity” (Norena 195). Similarly, Vives reiterated 1 Timothy 2:12 when he asserted that he gives “no such license to a woman to be a teacher, not to have authority of the man, but to be in silence” (Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman* 72). In public meetings, women should keep their eyes down, be silent and modest, seen but not heard (Norena 195). In addition, Vives advised that special care should be taken to prevent women from studying rhetoric because they were to remain quiet as “silence is the embellishment of matrons” (Norena 195). The practical result of this belief was the intense supervision of female education, particularly literary training, as the training of women had to be specifically directed toward moral ends (Norena 196).

Although Vives was writing within the humanist tradition, his priority with regards to the education of both young men and women was piety and practical moral training.

Consequently, he was suspicious of literature that he viewed as a potentially corrupting influence on youth (Potter 365). However, Vives thought that boys had a greater natural devoutness compared to girls; as a result, there was greater rigor in moral education for girls (Watson 20-21). Thus, due to girls' easily corruptible nature, he only allowed them to read certain pagan poets and playwrights. He explains that the young woman must begin

the reading of the heathen, as though entering upon poisonous fields, armed with an antidote, with the consciousness that men are united to God by means of the reverence which has been given them by Him; that what men think out for themselves is full of errors; that whatever is opposed to piety, has sprung from man's emptiness and the deceits of his most crafty enemy, the devil; this will be generally sufficient without further explanation. Let the scholar remember that he is wandering amongst the heathen, that is, amongst thorns, poisons, aconite, and most threatening pestilences, that he is to take from them only what is useful, and to throw aside the rest, all of which they are neither to carefully examine themselves nor is the teacher to attempt to explain that which is hurtful to them (Baldwin 192; Vives, *Instruction of a Woman* 125).

According to Vives, women should not follow their own judgment, as they are not able to differentiate between good and bad, and they interpret false as true, hurtful as wholesome, and foolish and peevish as learned and wise (Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman* 78). In case of girls, Vives was not concerned with rhetoric and poetic training as much as moral education (Baldwin 192). In fact, many of the selected readings were to be taught from a single point of view: female student should learn only moralized classics with clear Christian messages (Baldwin 198).

The works that young women are to read (first in the vernacular then in Latin) should cultivate appropriate language skills and right living—thus, texts should be both excellent examples of writing and provide a moral lesson (Vives, *Plan of Girls' Studies*



146-147). Vives believed that girls' training should commence with reading the Bible, with special attention to the Gospels and the Acts and Epistles of the Apostles, and selections from the Old Testament. He also recommended the reading of Church Fathers, particularly Jerome, Cyprian, Augustine, Ambrose, Hilary, and Gregory, and the Christian poets Prudentius, Sidonius, Paulinus, Arator, Proper, and Juvenius (Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman* 78). He considered the Church Father and Christian poets, above all others, to have the most elegant verses to teach Latin (Baldwin 188-189; Watson 147). However, Vives held that some classical Latin authors were equally appropriate for teaching moral philosophy, such as Cicero, Seneca, Lucian, Plutarch; he also recommended certain selections from Horace's poetry and translations of some Plato's dialogues, specifically those which examine the governing of the republic. Additionally, young women should read Aristotle in order to learn about domestic economics (Baldwin 187; Norena 196; Porter 27). They could also easily learn history from Justin, L. Florus, and Valerius Maximus (Baldwin 187). With regard to contemporary writers, in Vives's opinion, they should read Erasmus' *Institutiones principis Christiani* (Education of a Christian Prince), *Enchiridion militis Christiani* (Handbook of the Christian Soldier), and *Paraphrases of the New Testament*, and works similarly useful for piety, such as Thomas More's *Utopia* (Baldwin 187; Vives, *Plan of Girls' Studies* 146-147).

On the other hand, Vives discouraged women from reading the works of Hesiod, Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Terence, and Plautus, as he considered them amoral (Vives, *The Education of a Christian Woman* 78). For the education of both girls and boys, Vives believed that Terence and Plautus were particularly inappropriate due to the exposition of sexual and other carnal vices in their plays; instead he desired to replace their works with

Christian authors with sound moral messages (Potter 368-369). Similarly, Mary was not permitted to read romances because, like the plays of Terence and Plautus, they depict immoral people and can lead her astray (Baldwin 195; Norena 196; Edwards 10; Weikel). These romances include, but are not limited to: the Spanish *Amadis*, *Florisand*, *Tristan of Lyons* and *Celestina the Bawd*; the French *Lancelot du Lac*, *Paris and Vienne*, *Ponthus and Sidonia*, and *Melusine*; the Flemish *Florice and Blanchefleur*, *Leonella and Canamorus*, *Pyramis and Thisbe*; and the English *Parthenope*, *Genarides*, *Hippomadon*, *William and Melyour*, *Libius and Arthur*, *Guy*, and *Bevis* (Vives, *The Education of a Chrisitan Woman* 74-75). According to Vives, these books were written by idle unlearned men, set upon filth and viciousness: “learning is not to be expected from authors who never saw even a shadow of learning. As for their storytelling, what pleasure is to be derived from the things they invent, full of lies and stupidity?” (Vives, *The Education of a Chrisitan Woman* 75). Vives was not the only humanist to oppose women’s reading of romances and singing of vulgar songs—popular literature which often passed beyond the boundaries of modesty and revelled in acts of slaughter and sex—Erasmus and Ascham too discouraged the reading of these texts (Watson 23-24). Despite his relatively extensive reading list, Vives was not prepared to recognize women in any other role than their domestic functions and took special care to prevent them from studying rhetoric (Norena 196).

### **The Education of Princess Elizabeth**

Similarly, Elizabeth’s early education, when she was removed from succession in May 1536, resembled Mary’s domestic training. It started with her first governess, Lady

Bryan, who was responsible for providing her charge with regular hours, plain food, and garments that fit (Pollnitz 241). Following Bryan, Katherine Astley, née Champernowne (d. 1565), trained the young princess in needlework, deportment, good manners, music, and the rudiments of French and Italian grammar (Baldwin 257; Pollnitz 241-242). Elizabeth was under the tutelage of Astley until age eleven, when she began to learn Greek and Latin under the supervision of the English humanist William Grindal in 1546 (Wright). The rapid progress Elizabeth made with Grindal is seen when in December 1545 she was writing to her father in Latin rather than French or Italian (Pollnitz 243). Following Grindal's death in 1548, when Elizabeth was fourteen years old, Roger Ascham became her tutor and instructed her for two years; he remained her teacher, with long intermissions, until his death in 1568 (Baldwin 257; Collinson; Loades 9). Following one of Ascham's departures part-way through 1550, Johannes Spithoff became Elizabeth's Latin and Greek tutor for the next five years (Pollnitz 249). Nevertheless, Ascham, who managed to have Elizabeth's education accredited to him, was Grindal's teacher at St. John's College, Cambridge, and had himself made suggestions regarding Elizabeth's education before he began tutoring her (Baldwin 258-259). Unfortunately, there are no concrete statements concerning Elizabeth's rhetorical training until Ascham began reading with her in her fifteenth year (Baldwin 257). Only a handful of Ascham's letters survived from this period—no letters at all are extant from 1549—and, thus, one and a half years are lost. Between a chatty and uninformative letter of mid-1548 to William Ireland (Letter 30) and a desperately anxious and apologetic one to his fellow humanist in Cambridge John Cheke in early 1550 (Letter 31), we have nothing from Ascham the tutor (Vos 109). As a result, most of the extant information on

Ascham's tutelage of Elizabeth is derived from Ascham's later letters and his treatise *The Schoolmaster* (1570).

The 1544 Succession Act transformed Elizabeth's training as she started to expand her knowledge of Latin, and later Greek (Pollnitz 241). She proved to have a quick wit and blossoming literary skills; however, she wrote predominantly familial letters and translations of prayers and devotional texts (Pollnitz 244), including her English prose rendering of Marguerite of Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'Ame Pecheresse*, which she prepared for Katherine Parr in 1544. The following year, she presented her father, Henry VIII, with a trilingual transposition of Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* (1545). Unlike Edward, whose household was formally separated from his sisters when the king returned from France in 1544 and who produced translations as a part of his rhetorical training, Elizabeth was required to translate as part of the more elementary school exercises, using the conventional method of word for word translation. Pollnitz argues that these curricular differences represent Edward's and Elizabeth's divergent roles in the dynastic strategy (Pollnitz 244).

Despite these initial differences between the siblings' program of study, Elizabeth's later education followed that of Edward. In fact, both Edward, who was tutored by Grindal's and Ascham's colleague Cheke, and Elizabeth received training associated with the masculine ideals of humanist education with its emphasis on the functions of government and public orations (Baldwin 201). Elizabeth's princely education is attested by several letters written by Ascham, in which he reveals that his student was instructed in the use of rhetoric to assert authority (Crane, "Video et Taceo" 4). Ascham argues that she received an education unequal to that of any other woman in the early modern period. In the *Schoolmaster*, he states

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 as doth the Queen's Majesty herself. Yea, I believe that, beside her perfect readiness in Latin, Italian, French and Spanish, she readeth here now at Windsor more Greek every day than some prebendary of this church doth read Latin in a whole week. And that which is most praiseworthy of all, within the walls of her privy chamber she hath obtained that excellency of learning, to understand, speak, and write, both wittily with head and fair hand, as scarce one or two rare wits in both the universities have in many years reached unto. (Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* 56)

Similarly, in a letter to the German humanist educator Johannes Sturm, dated April 4, 1550, Ascham boasts that many honourable women have surpassed the daughters of Thomas More in learning—among them Elizabeth for the splendor of her virtue and learning (Ascham, *Letters* 167). He writes that Elizabeth spoke French and Italian as well as English and that her Latin was “smooth, correct, and thoughtful” (Ascham, *Letters* 167). Furthermore, “when she writes in Greek or Latin, nothing is more beautiful than her handwriting” (Ascham, *Letters* 167). She had “talent without woman's weakness, industry with a man's perseverance, and a memory unparalleled in its perceptiveness and retentiveness” (Ascham, *Letters* 167).

Elizabeth learned her exceptional language skills from reading all of Cicero and a great deal of Livy under Ascham's supervision (Ascham, *Letters* 167). According to Ascham, he read with her the best of the ancients—Greek in the morning and Latin in the afternoon. Lawrence V. Ryan suggests that “although [Ascham] concentrated, because of the purity of their expression, upon the pagans Cicero and Livy, Sophocles, Isocrates and Demosthenes, he did not neglect Christian writings in the classical tongues” (Ryan xvi). The princess' day would begin with a passage from the Greek New Testament

supplemented by patristic authors like St. Cyprian and Melanchthon's *Commonplaces* (Ascham, *Letters* 167; Baldwin 259; Giles, *Ascham* vol I 191-192; Ryan xvi). Nevertheless, Ascham was of the opinion that the object of grammar school was to shape orators and he wished to train his students to write like Cicero, but not through direct imitation or by studying those who had imitated the Latin author. Rather, he maintained that one should study Cicero's imitation of the Greek writers, such as Demosthenes, Plato, Isocrates, and Aristotle's rhetoric (Baldwin 262). Accordingly, Ascham continued instructing Elizabeth, throughout his career, focusing on reading Greek orations (Baldwin 277-278). In a letter to Sturm, dated September 15, 1555, Ascham notes that after some interruptions, he and Elizabeth resumed their readings together:

The Lady Elizabeth and I read together in Greek the orations of Aeschines and Demosthenes *On the Crown*. She first reads it to me, and at first glance she understands not only the propriety of the language and the speaker's meaning, but also the whole nature of the argument, the decrees of the people, the manners and the customs of the city: she is so intelligent you would be simply amazed. (Ascham, *Letters* 211)

Later, in another letter to Sturm, dated April 11, 1562, Ascham returns to the theme of Elizabeth's rhetorical training:

I will now only state in addition, that neither at Court, now in the universities, nor among our heads in church or state, are there four of our countrymen who understand Greek better than the Queen herself. When she is reading Demosthenes or Aeschines, I am very often astonished at seeing her so ably understand, I do not mean, the force of the words, the structure of the sentences, the propriety of the language, the ornaments of oratory, and the harmonious and elegant bearing of the whole discourse; but also, what is of more importance, the feeling and spirit of the speaker, the struggle of the whole debate, the decrees and inclinations of the people, the manners and institutions of every state, and all other matters of this kind. (Baldwin 278)

Subsequently, in a letter dated October 20, 1562, Ascham informs Strum that he had never been in greater favour with Elizabeth, as she daily reads with him something in Greek or Latin. As confirmed by the preface to the *Schoolmaster*, Ascham continued to read Greek orators with Elizabeth well into her reign.

After dinner I went vp to read with the Queenes Maiestie. We red than together in the Greke' tonge, as I well remember, that noble Oration of *Desmosthenes* against *Aeschines*, for his false dealing in his Ambassage to king *Philip* of Macedonie. (Baldwin 279)

Elizabeth's education was, therefore, heavily focused on the orations of Cicero, Demosthenes, and Isocrates, as designed by Ascham; the marked emphasis on classical orators later aided the young queen in constructing her own speeches (Ascham 7; Baldwin 274), and, as Mary Thomas Crane pointed out, allowed her to become the humanist ideal of an authoritative statesman (Crane, "Video et Taceo" 4).

## Chapter II: Elizabeth I's Commonplace Book (*Precationes*)

### History and Theory of Commonplace Books

Both Vives's *Satellitium* and Elizabeth's *Precationes* reveal not only the practical application of the commonplace book as an indispensable pedagogical tool in the sixteenth century, but also its multifaceted function, as Beal remarks in "Notions in Garrison: The Seventeenth-Century Commonplace Book" (1993), its role as "the primary intellectual tool for organizing knowledge and thought among the intelligentsia" (Beal 134). In *Printed Commonplace-Books and the Structuring of Renaissance Thought* (1996) Ann Moss posits that the rhetorical methods instilled in commonplace books changed the way educated individuals both read and wrote for the next five hundred years, while in *Framing Authority: Sayings, Self, and Society in Sixteenth-Century England* (1993), Mary Thomas Crane emphasizes the importance of both the gathering and framing of extracts from classical literature into commonplace books, which informed "most forms of literary and political discourse in sixteenth-century England" (Crane 4). In his work, *Commonplace Books: A History of Manuscripts and Printed Book from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (2001), Earle Havens also calls attention to their significance in many disciplines, such as literature, law, science and theology in the early modern period. In addition, in *Too Much to Know* (2011), Ann M. Blair points out that the experience of being overwhelmed by information and the strategies to cope with excess data is not unique to the digital age, but has existed since antiquity. Consequently, Blair traces the history of information organization in the form of the commonplace book from antiquity through the early modern period, and relates it to the digital age of the twenty-first century. Moreover, in "Recent



Studies in Commonplace Books” (2013), Victoria E. Burke asserts that although commonplace books are typically thought to have flourished during the humanist Renaissance, their use persisted further into the eighteenth and nineteenth century than has previously been acknowledged.

In fact, commonplace books originated in the philosophical and rhetorical theories of the ancient Greeks and Romans and formed integral part of logical philosophical discourse and rhetorical argument. These commonplaces consisted of *sententiae*, or wise sayings, from the most authoritative philosophers and orators, and they served as logical philosophical proof and persuasive oratory (Havens 8). Thus, the concept of commonplaces emerged in Aristotle’s (384 BC-322 BC) *Topica*, in which the Greek philosopher defines various forms of arguments as commonplaces, in the sense that they are: “the principal tools of any logical and systematic interrogation of the truth or falsity of an opinion” (Havens 13). In his *Topica*, Aristotle also argues that in order to find and develop arguments in support of a philosophical proposition, the subject must be considered in terms of the most basic categories or topics (Havens 13). Aristotle’s ideas on commonplaces influenced the great Roman statesman, orator, and philosopher Cicero (106 BC-43 BC), who adapted them for the Latin intellectual tradition. Joan Marie Lechner explains that “Cicero follows Aristotle in his definition of [commonplaces] as the ‘seat of arguments,’ as a kind of psychological locale or storehouse for ideas” (Lechner 23). This is clearly shown in Cicero’s own philosophical treatise *Topica*, and in his rhetorical treatise *De oratore*, in which he clarified the functions of the commonplaces of logical reasoning and argument and applied them more directly in the practical exercise of public speaking demonstrated by lawyers and statesmen (Havens 13). Furthermore, Cicero noted that

the pithy line plucked from the works of esteemed philosophers, statesmen, and poets could help sway the jury or the mob. Their words, having long been approved for their profundity and confirmed by the reputation of their authors, could be deployed as a form of external evidence that would endorse a given position. These great words, spoken and written by great men, were commonly referred to as *sententiae*, and later became the principal subject matter of commonplace books. (Havens 14)

Thus, employing the *sententiae* of a respected authority would make one's own argument more persuasive and credible to the audience.

Following Cicero's philosophical and rhetorical program, the Roman educator and rhetorician, Quintilian (c. 35-c. 100 AD), expanded and codified commonplaces within a pedagogical frame work. He elaborated and expanded on Cicero's theory of commonplaces and made it fundamental to rhetorical argumentation and oration. In his *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian identifies Demosthenes, Lycurgus, Aeschines, Cato the Elder, and above all, Cicero himself as the sources and models of classical oratory (Havens 14). In addition, he also notes that without "a commanding arsenal of *sententiae*, the orator would be ill-equipped to have his audience of his opponent *ex tempore*" (Havens 14). Thus, a rhetorical education, including the collecting and deploying of *sententiae*, would prepare students to defend and deliver persuasive orations whether in the law court or the senate. Quintilian was not the only champion of the collection and employment of commonplaces in the early centuries of the Roman Empire; the Roman orator, statesmen, philosopher, and tragedian Seneca the Younger (c. 4 BC-65 AD) also promoted the collection and organization of commonplaces to be used in rhetoric. In his *Epistulae morales*, Seneca relates the collection of commonplaces, in particular of *sententiae*, to that of the honeybee and the flower

(Havens 15). In this famous letter on the issues associated with imitation, Seneca argues that

We also, I say, ought to copy the bees, and sift whatever we have  
Gathered from a varied course of reading, for such things are better  
Preserved if they are kept separate; then, by applying the supervising  
Care with which our nature has endowed us...we could so blend those  
Several flavors into one delicious compound that, even though it betrays  
Its origin, yet it nevertheless is clearly a different thing from that whence  
It came. (Havens 15)

In this analogy, the bee represents the reader, who flies from source to source, gathering, arranging, and assorting the sweetest nectars and the most important quotations in their hive, or notebook (Havens 16). These ideas about the organization of information from antiquity were transmuted during the medieval period, when vast amounts of information was systematically categorized in notebooks, though not for the purpose of rhetorical argumentation. Many historians have concluded that commonplace books had reached their zenith during the Renaissance, while the Middle Ages saw a general decline in the relative authority of rhetorical persuasion and the use of classical *sententiae* as a legitimate form of learned discourse, due to the elevation of formal, abstract logic in philosophical thought (Havens 16). Nevertheless, despite the apparent decline of interest in classical rhetoric during the Middle Ages, “compilations of sententious text excerpts organized under headings flourished, literally, in the form of largely theological *florilegia*, or ‘books of flowers’” and were widespread (Havens 9; 19). While Quintilian’s *Institutio oratoria* advocated classical orators, such as Demosthenes and Cicero, the commonplaces of the Middle Ages recognized the scriptures and the writings of the early Church Fathers as the most authoritative sources (Havens 16).

The idea of systematically gathering and organizing vast amounts of knowledge likely descended from the encyclopedic works produced in the ancient world, such as Varro's *Antiquitates* and *Disciplinae*, Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis historiae*, the miscellaneous collections of the ancient "paradoxographers" (collectors of paradoxes and oddities), Aulus Gellius's *Noctes Atticae*, which constituted the foundation of the medieval encyclopedic tradition (Havens 19). Initially, the *florilegia* appeared as a simple series of short excerpted quotations, arranged in order of their appearance in a single text, as seen in the early *Florilegium gallicum*. By the thirteenth century, these collections were systematically organized under discrete thematic headings, such as the *Floretus*, often attributed to Bernard de Clairvaux (Havens 19). These *florilegia*, though overwhelmingly moralized, were not always rigidly religious in subject matter and would contain Biblical passages, the writings of the early Church Fathers, and select passages of pagan wisdom literature (Havens 16; 19). For example, although Aristotle was pagan, he was elevated to the status of medieval authority by the end of the thirteenth century by Albertus Magnus and his two students, Thomas Aquinas and Peter of Spain (Havens 22). However, by the end of the fourteenth century, secular figures, such as Gernia da Montagnone, created a *florilegia*, based on Greek and Roman *sententiae*. The cultivation and mixture of sacred and secular literary texts became increasingly widespread among scholarly laymen at the end of the Middle Ages into the Renaissance (Havens 22).

In the Renaissance, the revival and celebration of classical Greek and Roman culture represented a conscious departure from the religious philosophy of medieval theologians and the return of the rhetorical commonplaces of Cicero and Quintilian (Havens 23). The rhetorical pedagogical tradition of Quintilian was adopted by humanists

in grammar school classrooms and “became centerpieces of the new Latin curriculum, the so-called *studia humanitatis*” (Havens 23). Thus, the tradition of the classical *sententiae*, derived from the ancient Greek and Roman authorities, with its objective of rhetorical argumentation, and the meticulous organization of medieval *florilegia* drawn from ecclesiastical adages, were combined in the grammar schools of the Renaissance and their progeny was an easily accessible notebook for the humanist student to use in their daily reading and writing (Havens 23).

The commonplace books of the early Renaissance resembled the structure of the medieval notebooks and were arranged alphabetically by author; it was not until the sixteenth century that commonplace books were arranged under thematic headings. In his *De copia* (1512), Erasmus, for example, proposes a tripartite structure consisting of general places, commonplaces, and an abundance of quotations (Havens 28). Philipp Melanchthon took over Erasmus’s system, albeit modified it significantly in his *De locis communibus ratio* (1521), which was published repeatedly throughout the sixteenth century in order to guide students. Melanchthon believed that Erasmus’s secondary level of *sententiae* and comparisons, which were to mediate between general themes and collected quotations, were unnecessary and therefore eliminated them (Havens 28-29). Thus, Melanchthon simplified Erasmus’s tripartite arrangement of headings by using such general thematic headings as war, peace, labor, and sloth; in his view, these thematic headings should then be followed by a “carefully selected and well-ordered series of quotations and extracts from texts and authors of particular relevance and authority” (Havens 28). Melanchthon’s model became the most popular framework used during the sixteenth century, and students and

grammarians began classifying both classical and religious sentences under such thematic headings.

However, humanists gave minimal instruction on how many thematic headings the compiler should use. Too many headings risked separating items which belonged together and too few headings would lead to a compilation that is too hard to be effectively consulted (Blair 90). Erasmus cautioned only in general terms against excessive subdivision of topics and recommended headings that would be most useful for students in oral and written composition “arranged in whatever order [they] prefer” (Blair 90). For example, the *sententiae* in Erasmus’s *Adagia* (1508) were classified according to 257 different commonplace headings (Blair 90; Moss 186-187). On the other hand, Jesuit pedagogues advocated using significantly fewer topic headings, only forty in total, to avoid confusion caused by too many loci. Similarly, Francis Bacon advised using “far fewer [heads] than you shall find in any pattern,” and John Locke, recommended using around one hundred headings (Blair 90). At the same time, there notebooks, such as Thomas Harrison’s, that contained almost 3,000 headings (Blair 90).

Although commonplace manuscripts were frequently kept for personal use and reference, many of these compositions were created exclusively for the printing press as ideal examples of the medium (Havens 9). These printed commonplace books were rigidly organized and faithfully followed the advice of humanists steeped in the ancient theories of the commonplaces; some of these examples were replete with thousands of entries, systematically organized under thematic headings, exhaustive indexes, marginal notes, and elaborate tables of contents (Havens 9; Moss 136-137). However, manuscript records reveal that there is a considerable gap between the highly theoretical history of

commonplace books, represented in print culture, and the historical practice, shown in the numerous extant manuscript copies created for personal use and reference (Havens 9; Smyth 90). Often times these manuscript notebooks were little more than loosely gathered scraps of everything and anything, sewn together between two protective boards (Havens 9). These undisciplined and disorganized commonplace books appeared in every variation and degree of sophistication, and included almost every type of text: lines of epic poetry, medicinal and culinary recipes, couplets, cartoons, magic spells, bad jokes, and more (Havens 10).

### **Princess Mary's Commonplace Book: *Satellitium sive Symbola***

Although no extant manuscript survives, it is quite likely that Mary composed and used a commonplace book in her studies. In *Plan of Girls' Studies*, Vives writes:

Let her have a good sized note book, in which with her own hand she shall note, both words, if any are found in reading grave authors, either useful for daily use, or rare, or elegant, as well formulas of speaking, witty, delectable, fine, learned, as also *sententiae* grave, facetious, acute, urbane, witty, and stories out of which she can seek an example for her life. (Baldwin 187)

Thus, Vives advises that Mary should create a commonplace book of authoritative authors and *sententiae* in order to use for her own compositions. While Vives did not supply any additional instruction on how the notebook should be organized, in *Plan of Boys' Studies*, composed for Charles Blount, the eighth Baron Mountjoy, Vives described in detail what kind of notebook Charles should keep:

Make a book of blank leaves of a proper size. Divide it into certain topics, so to say, into nests (*nidos*). In one, jot down the names of those subjects of daily converse, *e.g.*, the mind, body, our occupations, games, clothes,

divisions of time, dwellings, foods; in another, rare words, exquisitely fit words; in another, idioms, and *formulae discendi*, which either few understand or which require often to be used; in another, *sententiae* (maxims); in another, joyous expressions; in another, witty sayings; in another, proverbs; in another, difficult passages in authors; in another, other matters which seem worthy of note to thy teacher or thyself. So that thou shalt have all these noted down and digested. Then will thy book alone know what must be read by thee, read, committed, and fixed to memory, so that thou mayst bear in thy breast the names thus written down, which are in thy book and refer to them as often as is necessary. For it is little good to possess learned books if your mind is unfurnished for studying them. (Vives 243)

In this description, Vives outlines that this notebook should consist of a collection of *sententiae* divided into topics, such as the mind, the body, etc, collected from readings and conversations. However, unlike in *Plan of Girls' Studies*, the commonplaces in *Plan of Boys' Studies* were not exclusively for moral training, but instead were meant to serve as rhetorical proofs in the boys' writings. To demonstrate his pedagogical principles concerning note-taking, Vives published a collection of Latin commonplaces, *Satellitium*, which was later translated into English and adapted for male instruction by the scholar and reformer Richard Morrison for Thomas Cromwell's son, Gregory's moral training under the title *An Introduction to Wysedome* (1544).

Like *The Education of a Christian Woman* and *Plan of Girls' Studies*, it was intended to teach Mary Christian morals (Pollnitz 231). Consequently, both *Satellitium* and the notebook described in *Plan of Girls' Studies* contained predominantly religious paradigms for moral education. *Satellitium* recalls the medieval tradition of gathering *florilegia* and its headings reflect different aspects of Mary's domestic moral training, such as piety, virtue, and preparation for marriage. It comprises six hundred and four *sententiae*,



or maxims, subdivided into fifteen subheadings; for example, “De corpora” (On the body), “De animo” (On the soul), “De religion” (On religion), “De Christo” (On Christ), “De sumptione cibi” (On the consumption of food), “De somno” (On sleep), and “De charitate” (On charity). Furthermore, there is a running head, “Ad sapientiam” (On wisdom), throughout the text. Although Vives does not list the authors, texts, or page numbers, nearly all of the proverbs are from either scripture or the writings of the early Church Fathers, and no pagan quotations are included. The selection corresponds with Mary’s domestic training with a strong moral overtone. For example, in the section “On sleep,” Vives remarks: “you should keep your bed chaste and pure, so that your enemy, the author and source of all defilement, may not enter” (Vives, *Introduction to Wisdom* 127). Similarly, in “On the nature and value of things,” Vives notes that “the queen and principal mistress of this world is Virtue. All other things serve her as handmaids do their mistress, if they wish to fulfill their ends” (Vives, *Introduction to Wisdom* 87). In *The Education of a Christian Woman*, Vives addresses the same topics—arguing that women need not prepare for public careers and should instead be prepared for the domestic activities in the home (Norena 195).

### **Elizabeth’s Commonplace Book: *Precationes Private***

Although Elizabeth’s tutor, Roger Ascham, was famously opposed to the use of commonplace books, Elizabeth still created one. Ascham argued that the gathering of commonplaces was a silly kind of study and an absurd form of imitation with no tangible value to these writers, except as compilers. Yet, despite his reservations, in *Schoolmaster*, Ascham writes: “indeed, books of commonplaces be very necessary to induce a man into orderly general knowledge, how to refer orderly all that he readeth *ad certa rerum capita*

and not wander in study” (Ascham 107). Moreover, he urged students to keep three separate notebooks for translation, retranslation, and for the collecting of phrases and grammatical notes while reading (Berland et al. 23). This was an essential component of Ascham’s double translation method, in which students would translate a text from Latin into English, and back to Latin (Crane, *Framing Authority* 90). Consequently, Elizabeth likely composed and used a commonplace book as a part of her rhetorical training.

It is difficult to determine when Elizabeth began compiling her own notebook; however, it is likely that she created and used more than one during her studies. In 1616, James Montague, Bishop of Winchester, reported seeing “a century of sentences” which had been compiled and written out by Princess Elizabeth, and had been dedicated to her father (Mueller and Scodel 331). Although this collection is not known at present, this “may have been the germ of the larger collection published as an addition to Elizabeth’s *Precationes Private*” (Mueller and Scodel 331-332). Thus, Elizabeth may have enlarged the project and prepared it for publication after her distant prospects of ruling became a reality (Mueller and Scodel 332). The composite volume of *Precationes*, *Sententiae*, and *Regna Quibus Imperat* reveals her unique princely education formed by both feminine and masculine rhetorical instruction. It is not easily categorized, however, within the gender norms of the sixteenth century. While *Precationes Private* is typical of female commonplace books and consists mainly of religious poetry, like Anne Southwell’s notebook, *Regna Quibus Imperat* is more similar to the chronicles kept by Richard Hill and John Colyn in their commonplace books. Significantly, *Sententiae* contains elements associated with both female and male commonplace books; the predominantly religious authorities gathered in *Sententiae* recall the sources of Vives’s *Satellitium*, but instead of

topic headings on domestic moral guidance, its subjects are organized according to the masculine principles of rule.

*Precationes* contains a collection of Latin prayers arranged under six distinct headings in order to depict Elizabeth's feminine piety. The prayers were likely composed in 1562, as in one of the prayers she thanks God for having recovered her health after being gravely ill with smallpox in October 1562 (Collinson; Marcus et al. 135). These Latin prayers were typical of the period as women would compose personal prayers and religious translations to show their devoutness. Following the tradition of humanist commonplace books, the first three headings, "Preparationes ad Preces" (Preparation for prayers) (Aii), "Pro peccatorum venia" (Preparations for the forgiveness of sins) (Aviii), and "Precationes pro Regno" (Prayers for the Kingdom) (Ciii), are divided into two sections: *versiculi* (Av, Biii, Ci, Cvi), which are versicles, or verses from the Psalms, copied somewhat unusually from the traditional Vulgate Bible, and *collecta* (Avi, Biii, Ci, Cvii), comparatively short prayers composed by Elizabeth (Marcus et al. 135). Nearly all of the verses are from the Psalms; however, there are also excerpts from Proverbs, Romans, Ecclesiasticus, Jeremiah, and Luke (Mueller and Marcus 109-123). Similarly, Elizabeth's Italian and Spanish *Versicles and Prayers* (1569) are structured in the same manner with the topic headings, with corresponding versicles from Psalms, followed by Elizabeth's personal prayers. For example, her Spanish *Versicles and Prayers* contains "First Prayer" (Psalm 34), "Second Prayer" (1 Kings 3), "Third Prayer" (Psalm 37), wherein she characterizes herself as God's "handmaid" and "maidservant" (Prayers 20- 22, Marcus et al. 155-157). Similar to *Precationes*, these prayers were composed in order to represent Elizabeth's own personal piety.

In contrast, the final three headings in Elizabeth's *Precationes*, portray her as the masculine head of state. For example, the final three headings, "Gratiarum action pro sanitate recuperate" (Thanksgiving for recovering her health) (Diiii), "Gratiarum actio pro beneficiis collatis" (Thanksgiving for benefits conferred) (Eii), and "Precatio pro sapientia ad Regni administrationem" (Prayer for wisdom in the administration of the kingdom) (Evi), comprise Elizabeth's own compositions. Likewise, many of Elizabeth's foreign prayers, such as her French "Prayer for the whole kingdom and body of the church according to their estates and members" (Prayer 13) and "Prayer to make before consulting about the business of the kingdom" (Prayer 15); her Italian "Third prayer, for the administration of justice" (Prayer 19); her Latin "Prayer to God for the auspicious administration of the Kingdom and the safety of the people" (Prayer 24); and her Greek Prayers: "The prayer of the subjects on behalf of the queen" (Prayer 26) and "The prayer of the queen on behalf of herself and her subjects" (Prayer 27) represent Elizabeth's role not just as a Christian subject, but also as a sovereign ruler.

In the early modern period, translations and prayers from the Psalms were extremely popular, particularly among Protestant women, as it allowed them to exhibit their own personal piety. Significantly, Katherine Parr anonymously published *Psalms or Prayers* (1544), an English translation of the Latin Psalms. In addition, she also published *Prayers or Meditations* (1545) and *The Lamentation of a Sinner* (1548). Marcus, Mueller, and Rose noted that Parr's psalmic *Prayers or Meditations*, which Elizabeth rendered into Latin, French, and Italian, was an early prototype for Elizabeth's *Precationes* (Marcus et al. 135). These two works are similar in content as both women admit their sins and ask for God's forgiveness. For example, in *Precationes*, Elizabeth pronounces: "I have sinned, I

have sinned, Father, against heaven and in Thy sight: I am unworthy of Thy compassion” (Prayer 4). Similarly, in her *Prayers or Meditations*, Parr declares: “I am a wretch, and of myself always ready and prone to evil: and do never abide in one state, but many times do vary and change” (Mueller, *Katherine Parr* 408). Moreover, Elizabeth’s prayers in *Precationes*, like Parr’s *Prayers or Meditations* contains prayers for both a private and a public audience illustrating the dual role of queenship (Mueller, *Katherine Parr* 369). For example, Elizabeth’s “Preparation for prayers” and “Preparations for the forgiveness of sins” are private in nature, emphasizing her role as a pious woman; while “Prayers for the Kingdom,” “Thanksgiving for recovering her health,” “Thanksgiving for benefits conferred,” and “Prayer for wisdom in the administration of the kingdom” represent Elizabeth’s duty as king of England. For example, in her prayer “Thanksgiving for the benefits conferred,” she notes that: “I may rightly and perpetually use upright governance towards Thy people, and sound administration of the kingdom and Thy commonwealth” (Prayer 8, Marcus et al. 142). Similarly, in addition to Parr’s *Prayers or Meditations*, the composite volume includes five prayers composed by Parr: “A devout prayer, to be daily said,” “Another prayer,” and “A devout prayer,” symbolizing her position as a devout woman and “Prayer for the king” and “A prayer for men to say, entering into battle,” denoting her public role as queen of England.

In its composition *Precationes* also resembles Southwell’s notebook which contained predominantly religious poetry, based on the Decalogue, which was a set of Biblical principles relating to ethics and worship (Burke, “Medium and Meaning” 102). The manuscript included poems based on some of the Ten Commandments, written in multiple line stanzas, with a rhyme scheme of aback, interspersed other original and

transcribed poetry (Burke, “Medium and Meaning” 103). This is similar to Elizabeth’s commentary on the verses from the Psalms in her *Precationes*; however, apart from depicting her feminine virtue, Elizabeth’s *Precationes* was also meant to assert her regnal authority. This is well illustrated in the prayer in which Elizabeth thanks God for having recovered her health, where she equates her own physical well-being with the strength of the country as a whole. The impact of Elizabeth’s health on her people is shown in her prayer “Thanksgiving for Recovered Health”:

Though hast likewise gravely pierced my soul with many torments; and besides, all the English people, whose peace and safety is grounded in my sound condition as Thy handmaid nearest after Thee, Thou has strongly disregarded in my danger, and left the people stunned.  
(Prayer 7, Marcus et al. 140)

Constance Jordan has noted that Elizabeth’s French prayer, “Avec l’aveugler si estrange,” depicts “what might be called her lively faith, particularly as it informed her decisions as head of state. Historians have stressed her investment in religion as an instrument for maintaining the public order” (Jordan 111). Thus, just as in *Precationes*, Elizabeth’s prayers allowed her to manipulate feminine learning in order to proclaim authority over her realm, as both the sovereign ruler and head of the English Church.

**Elizabeth’s Commonplace Book: *Regna Quibus Imperat Elizabetha Regna Angliae***

The theme of regnal authority is carried over to the third section of her commonplace book, *Regna Quibus Imperat*, which comprised a 1562 chronicle cataloging the administration of towns, cities, and counties under her rule. In total, there are forty-two headings with the titles of the administrative positions in government, such as

“Archiepiscopatus” (archbishopric) (Kviii); “Episcopatus” (episcopate) (Kviii); “Vicecomites” (viscounts) (Liii); “Barones” (barons) (Liiii); “Curiae pro Iustitia” (courts of justice) (Miii), followed by a list of individuals who held these positions. This section of the notebook recalls a common pattern exemplified in popular chronicles, such as Richard Grafton’s *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England* (1506-7-1573), Raphael Holinshed’s (c. 1525-1580?) *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (1577), and John Stow’s (1524/5-1605) *Summarie of Englyshe Chronicles* (1565) often reproduced in early modern notebooks (Beer; Clegg; Ferguson; Djordjevic 1). For example, Hill’s notebook, compiled between 1503 and 1536, contains excerpts from a chronicle of London from 1413 to 1536 (Parker 37). Each yearly entry consisted of the date, the names of the mayor and sheriffs of London, and a brief mention of significant events: “1416. Nicholas Wotton Aleyn Everarde/ Thomas Chambridge } a<sup>o</sup> III<sup>o</sup>” (Parker 78). Similarly, Colyn composed his commonplace book during the reign of Henry VIII, and cited material from a lengthy chronicle of London, focusing on historical events from 1399-1539 (Parker 89). For example, the entry for 1400 states: “1400 {John Ffraunces} {Wylliam Evot/Iohn Walker} / The Kyng wente *in* to Walys to dystroy Owen Glendor” (Parker 101). In addition to this annal, Colyn also documented the number of counties, towns, and parishes, as well as the churches, cloisters, and hospitals of England. Moreover, Colyn included a memorandum for Henry Fitzroy, Duke of Richmond, which lists his official titles and his counselors, a list of members of the fourth parliament of Henry VIII, 1491-92, and a chronicle of the royal houses of England (Parker 91-93). Colyn’s final lists are most like those in Elizabeth’s *Regna Quibus Imperat* as they survey and categorize the governing bodies of the monarch’s kingdom. But unlike Hill’s and Colyn’s chronicle which granted them economic

advantages in their business affairs, the annal in Elizabeth's commonplace book placed the Queen at the center of the realm and reinforced her public image as the head of government. In fact, *Regna Quibus Imperat* reinforces the same public image that is present in her private prayers for the kingdom, confirming and popularizing through print her authority as queen of England.



### Chapter III: Elizabeth I's Commonplace book (*Sententiae*)

Unlike *Precationes*, which bears the marks of female note taking, *Sententiae* incorporates elements associated with both female and male commonplace books. *Sententiae* is “a collection of 259 ‘sentences’ in [the] Renaissance sense of pithy sayings, especially pronouncements by persons of authority” (Mueller and Scodel 331). It comprises quotes and paraphrases from classical authors, the Bible, the Church Fathers, medieval ecclesiastical writers, and contemporary authorities, all of which address the principles and responsibilities of the monarch under six headings: “De regno” (On rule), “De justitia” (On justice), “De Misericordia” (On mercy), “De consilio” (On counsel), “De pace” (On peace), and “De bello” (On war). In contrast to the domestic feminine categories in Vives’s *Satellitium*, the topics in Elizabeth’s *Sententiae* focused on the masculine ideas of ruling as a just and merciful king. Nevertheless, similar to *Satellitium*, seventy-six of Elizabeth’s *sententiae* are from the Bible and seventy-six quotations from the Church Fathers amount to a total of one hundred and thirty-six references to Judeo-Christian authorities, while only one hundred and twenty-three derive from classical sources (Mueller and Scodel 344).

The author of *Sententiae*, however, rarely consulted the original classical sources and instead used the popular anthologies, *Polyanthea* (1503), a compilation alphabetically arranged by Domenico Nani Mirabello, and Thomas of Ireland’s *Manipulus florum*, or *Flores omnium pene doctorum*, a medieval collection of patristic, ecclesiastical, and pagan authorities organized under alphabetically arranged topic headings (Havens 20; Mueller and Scodel 240). Mirabello’s *Polyanthea* incorporated material from the *Flores*. When citing from these anthologies, Elizabeth always refers to the original source and does not

acknowledge the shortcuts she took in order to depict herself as a learned scholar of classical literature (Mueller and Scodel 240). In fact, Elizabeth followed a common, but also a condemned, Renaissance practice in the creation of commonplace books: the copying of others' collected commonplaces. For example, Paolo Cherchi describes "*Polyanthea* as one of the major 'secret manuals' of the sixteenth century, pillaged by many but cited by none" (Cherchi 42-50; Mueller and Scodel 339). Although Michel de Montaigne famously mocks men who "quote Plato and Homer without ever having set eyes on them" and, consequently, "eke out their studies on the cheap," he admits that he frequently gathered quotations "not from the original but from elsewhere" (Montaigne 1196-1197; Mueller and Scodel 339). Furthermore, Mueller and Scodel remark that "Elizabeth's subterfuge is understandable in light of Ascham's admonition that a student is not to 'dwell in epitomes and books of commonplaces' to the neglect of original sources" (Ascham, *The Schoolmaster* 107; Mueller and Scodel 440). Thus, Elizabeth did consult Renaissance editions of many of her quoted authors and she evidenced reading the original sources, though she may have only examined their marginal glosses, which became essential to Renaissance editions, as they frequently reduced long, circumstantial passages in a classical text to detachable quotes and could be used in early modern notebooks (Mueller and Scodel 240).

The organization of passages in *Sententiae* are similarly modelled on *Polyanthea* which, like *Sententiae*, began with Scripture, progressed on to patristic and medieval ecclesiastical writers, and followed with classical authorities. The chapters in *Polyanthea* ended either with classical authors or with selections from Italian vernacular writers, such as Dante or Petrarch, in order to reinforce Christian ideals (Mueller and Scodel 344).

Accordingly, the first five topic headings in *Sententiae* were organized in an envelope structure which reinforced the primacy of the religious texts: each section commenced with passages from a mix of secular and Christian sources, and concluded with Christian authorities (Mueller and Scodel 344). For example, the heading “On rule” begins with Romans 13:1, “Powers that be are ordained by God” (no. 1); includes passages from Plutarch, Isocrates, Xenophon, Seneca in the middle; and ends with Bernard of Clairvaux, “To lead and not be of use is grievous, and not to wish to be of use even more so” (no. 46, Mueller and Scodel 346-354). Nevertheless, Elizabeth’s final section, “On war,” deviates from her previously used envelope structure by citing Augustine on the morality of war (no. 249-251) as the penultimate authority; however, this section ends with several adages from Vegetius on military strategy (Mueller and Scodel 344). For example, “he who desires peace prepares for war” from the prologue of Vegetius’s *De re militaria* (Concerning Military Matters) appears under “On war” (no. 253, Mueller and Scodel 393). Mueller and Scodel have theorized that, as in some of Elizabeth’s translations, she was less motivated as she neared the end and may have deviated from her initial plan (Mueller and Scodel 344). Alternatively, her eagerness to demonstrate her expertise “in war [could have] prompted her to set aside her otherwise consistent arrangement” (Mueller and Scodel 344).

Among Elizabeth’s sources, the Christian Bible has an important role both in regards to its placement at the beginning of each section of her commonplace book and the sheer quantity of quotations from it, which again reflect Elizabeth’s early education. In accordance with Ascham’s pedagogical principles, the Holy Scriptures constituted an essential component of Elizabeth’s Christian humanist instruction as they contained “the foundations of religion, together with elegant language and sound doctrine” (Ascham,

*Letters* 167; Baldwin 259). Biblical adages are inserted in nearly all of her categories: eight times in “On counsel,” six times in “On justice,” four times in “On peace,” and three times in “On mercy”. Thirty-seven sentences are drawn from the wisdom books alone (Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiasticus, and Wisdom by Solomon). Erasmus identified these books of wisdom as “the most useful part of the Bible for the young prince” (Mueller and Scodel 337). The Book of Proverbs seems to be of particular importance, as Elizabeth cites it a total of twenty-one times throughout her notebook; she borrows extensively from this collection of *proverbs*, or words of wisdom, relating to moral behaviour, the meaning of human life, and right conduct (Alter xiii-xvii), all of which a Christian prince was advised to learn through these proverbs and apply them to their reign.

Furthermore, Elizabeth’s *Sententiae* also contains excerpts from Exodus (no. 122), Deuteronomy (no. 56, 212), II Samuel (no. 214), Tobias 4:20 and 4:19 (no. 123, 129); and 1 Maccabees 3:18, 19 (no. 211) and includes selected maxims from the Twelve Prophets: Amos 9:8 (no. 11), Isaiah 16:5 and 32:17 (no. 100, 177), Jeremiah 48:7 and 48:42 (no. 215, 216), and Daniel 2:21 (no. 8). The Pauline Letters also feature prominently with nine adages from the Epistle to Romans 5:12, 13:1-13:4, and 14:19 (no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 184, and 96 extracted from Chrysostom’s Homily 10 on the Epistle of the Romans) and two from II Corinthians 13:11 (no. 185, 186). Many of Elizabeth’s quotations from Romans derive from the thirteenth chapter (Romans 13) on the obedience to earthly powers. In Romans 13, Paul reminds his readers that they should honour and obey secular authorities (Bruce 2). For example, “the powers that be are ordained by God,” “ruler as minister of God and does good for those that do good for him,” and “rulers as minister of God and does ill on those who have done him ill” (no. 1, 5, 6, Mueller and Scodel 346-347). Thus, it is

not surprising that Elizabeth employs Romans a total of seven times in her section “On rule”.

The Church Fathers Augustine, Gregory, and Ambrose are the most cited patristic writers in *Sententiae*, although Ascham does not explicitly recommend that Elizabeth read them as a part of her training. Rather, in Ascham’s curriculum, Elizabeth is directed to supplement her reading of the Holy Scriptures with patristic authors like Cyprian, accompanied by the German reformer Philip Melanchthon’s Common Places (Ascham, *Letters* 167; Baldwin 259). Yet, there were only two quotations from Cyprian in Elizabeth’s notebook (no. 198, 172). In this respect, Elizabeth’s notebook resembles Vives’s reading list for girls, which includes Augustine, Gregory, Ambrose, Jerome, Hilary, and Cyprian due to their important role in Christian humanism, while Ascham does not include any of the other Church Fathers in Elizabeth’s curriculum aside from Cyprian (Baldwin 185, 187-188; Vives, 62). Nevertheless, Elizabeth’s most frequently cited Christian author was the philosopher and theologian, Augustine, with eighteen sentences (though one misattributed) mainly from his book of Christian philosophy: *De civitate Dei* (The City of God), in which he presents human history as a conflict between the earthly city of men and the city of God (Mueller and Scodel 342). Augustine was widely acknowledged as the most authoritative church father by Protestants (Mueller and Scodel 342). Here again the cited passages confirm the authority of secular rulers: “the order of mortal things, being favourable to peace, demands that the authority and judgment [counsel] to undertake war be in the ruler’s hands” (no. 243). In addition, most of the Augustinian adages, however, are classified under “On war” (no. 241, 242, 243, 249, 250, 251), while his sayings also appear under the remaining five headings: “On justice” (no. 85, 88, 89, 91, 95), “On peace” (no. 203, 204,

205), “On rule” (no. 37, 42), “On mercy” (no. 117), and “On counsel” (no. 173). As in the case of biblical passages, several quotations from Augustine are derived from the sixteenth century encyclopedic anthologies *Polyanthea* and *Flores*; however, for the most part, Elizabeth used Erasmus’s edition of Augustine’s works (Mueller and Scodel 342).

Gregory the Great, Pope of the Catholic Church from 590 to 604 A.D., is another Church Father frequently quoted, a total of seventeen times, by Elizabeth. His maxims appear under every heading: “On peace” (no. 195, 197, 199, 200, 201, 202), “On justice” (no. 82, 87, 90, 94), “On rule” (no. 43, 44, 45), “On counsel” (no. 170, 171), “On mercy” (no. 120), and “On war” (no. 247). Many of the Gregorian *sententiae* are drawn from his epistles, as well as his *Regula pastoralis* (*Book of Pastoral Rule*) and *Commentarii in librum I Regum* (*Commentary on I Kings*), which primarily address ideas of governance. Fourteen of these Gregorian sayings appear in the indexes of Gregory’s *Omnia Opera*, edited by Erasmus, for example, “all peace is from God,” “humility is the root of peace,” and “[one who does] not undertake to serve peace refuses to bear the fruit of the spirit” (no. 199, 202, 200). It is most likely, therefore, that Elizabeth used the index in *Omnia Opera* in order to cover Gregory’s vast catalogue of writings.

Elizabeth’s next most cited Church Father was Ambrose (c. 340-397), Bishop of Milan and one of the most ecclesiastical figures of the fourth century; he is cited a total of seven times with one misattribution. The majority of Ambrose’s passages appear in Elizabeth’s heading “On justice” (no. 59, 85, 91), though some are also found in “On counsel” (no. 162, 169), “On war” (no. 244), and “On rule” (no. 34). Three of the quotations derive from Ambrose’s *De Officiis Ministrotum* (*On the Offices of Ministers*), which was an ecclesiastical handbook on the moral obligations of the clergy, modelled on

Cicero's *De Officiis*. This emphasis on justice is seen when Ambrose stated "let the rulers pass laws that he himself would keep" (no. 59). However, Elizabeth does not quote directly from Ambrose's *De Officiis*, but cites an index entry from the *Flores* instead. As with Elizabeth's classical sources, many of her citations of the early Church Fathers derive from Renaissance anthologies.

As in the case of religious sources, when quoting from classical reference books, such as Plutarch's and Johannes Stobaeus's collections of ancient Greek sayings, Elizabeth would often cite either the original author, or the ancient anthologist, or sometimes both. In fact, fifteen excerpts derive from Stobaeus's chapters on political themes from his early fifteenth century anthology of pagan Greek writers (Mueller and Scodel 337). Mueller and Scodel have argued that Elizabeth's phrasing most closely follows Konrad Gesner's edition of Stobaeus, although she may have turned to other contemporary Latin editions published, among others, by Erasmus (Mueller and Scodel 337). In addition, another seven quotations were drawn from several collections of Greek apophthegmata, or sayings of wise men, assembled by Plutarch (ca. 46-127 C.E.) (Mueller and Scodel 337). Thus, despite Elizabeth's "youthful study of Greek" and the continuing lessons with Ascham, she most likely used pre-existing translations of Greek authors rather than translating them herself, like most of her educated contemporaries (Mueller and Scodel 338). In addition, there is no evidence that she consulted the Greek originals, as her wording is more similar to the Latin as opposed to the original Greek (Mueller and Scodel 338).

However, Elizabeth most likely had read many of these classical sources and consulted these anthologies as a part of her humanist training under Ascham's direction. The speeches of the Greek orators and rhetoricians, Demosthenes and Isocrates, whom

Ascham regarded as the most important Greek orators for both the purity of their language and their persuasive rhetoric, feature prominently in Elizabeth's notebook (Ascham, *Letters* 211; Baldwin 278; Ryan xvi). Demosthenes was Elizabeth's most cited Greek author to whom she refers to a total of ten times (Worthington 1). She often consults his orations—*Exordium* 7, 54, and 27, *On the Liberty of the Rhodians* 33, *On the Chersonese*, and *Olynthiaca* 1—works highlighting the need for prudent counsel and warning of the dangers and necessities of war (Mueller and Scodel 240). For example, in Demosthenes's Fourth Philippian 58.5, he remarks that “many distresses arise from a necessary war” (no. 235). Accordingly, the passages have been arranged under the heading “On counsel,” and two others under “On war” and “On justice”. Despite studying Demosthenes in Greek under Ascham's supervision, all of Elizabeth's quotations from Demosthenes are from Hieronymus Wolf's popular Latin translation *Orationes et epistolae* (1557) (Mueller and Scodel 240). The notebook includes only three quotations from Isocrates, despite Ascham's emphasis on both Isocrates's and Demosthenes's speeches. Two of Elizabeth's selections from Isocrates are placed under the headings: “On justice,” while one appears under “On rule”. Two of the Isocratic aphorisms (no. 23 and 63) are exact quotations from Stobaeus's *Sententiae*, while in the third (no. 64), she paraphrases, in the vein of Wolf's Latin translation, Isocrates's *Ad Nicoclem* (To Nicocles), which forms part of a collection of orations dedicated to the rulers of Salamis and Cyprus with advice on how the new king, Nicocles, should rule (Usher 3). For example, Nicocles 19 and 22 “let him who manages the commonwealth regard public matters as his own, but his own affairs as public” (no. 64), must have proved particularly noteworthy for governance, as these *sententiae* emphasize



the importance of ruling for public good and that a good ruler must care for his realm as if it were his private estate (Mueller and Scodel 357).

The importance of Aristotle's and Plato's moral philosophical treatises on governing the public justly in princely education is also revealed in her notebook. In *Schoolmaster*, Ascham instructed students to read Aristotle's works on practical philosophy and Plato's writings on governing the republic (Ascham 48). Thus, Elizabeth cites Aristotle a total of seven times in her *Sententiae*. Most of the Aristotelian quotations are arranged under the heading "On justice," while two appear under "On counsel" and "On rule". The adages that are categorized under "On justice" are from Aristotle's *Politics* and those which appear in "On counsel" are from his *Ethics*. In *Politics*, Aristotle argues that the city is a natural community and emphasizes the necessity of justice within a civil society, a precept that was noted in *Sententiae* as well: "those who are lowly and needy do not know how to rule" (no. 13). Conversely, in his *Ethics*, Aristotle examines the individual rather than society and asserts that citizens should become good and do good, instead of simply having knowledge of what good means. This is also exemplified by a citation in *Sententiae* from *Ethics*, where Aristotle notes that "a King should treat his subjects as a shepherd does his sheep" (no. 12). Yet again, all of these seven quotations derive from the Latin compilation *Polyanthea* (Mueller and Scodel 338). In addition, Elizabeth's notebook contains five Platonic aphorisms under the thematic heading "On justice" (no. 66, 71) and a maxim which appears under each of the following headings: "On counsel" (no. 141), "On peace" (no. 187), and "On war" (no. 240). Again, they are derived from Masilio Ficino's Latin translation (no. 71, 141) and his marginal glosses (no. 240), as well as from Stobaeus's *Sententiae* (no. 66, 187). These sententious sayings are taken from two of Plato's most

important works concerning politics, the *Republic* and the *Laws*, where the ancient philosopher uses Socratic dialogue in order to address ideas of justice and how best to govern the republic.

The most cited classical Latin writer in the notebook is the Roman statesman and orator, Cicero, with seventeen passages from a range of his works (Mueller and Scodel 340). Cicero formed an essential component of Elizabeth's education in rhetoric; in a 1550 letter, Ascham claimed that she had read all of Cicero under his tutelage (Ascham, *Letters* 167; Mueller and Scodel 340). In her notebook, her most cited source was the moral philosophical treatise: *De officiis* (On Duties), which covers topics treating the best way to live, to behave, and to observe moral obligations in the Elizabethan educational system. Baldwin has argued that in the early modern period "*De Officiis* was the pinnacle of moral philosophy" (Baldwin 1590). The second most cited source in *Sententiae* was Cicero's *Phillippicae* (Phillipics), a series of fourteen political speeches condemning Mark Antony. Cicero himself likened these speeches to those of Demosthenes's *Phillipic*, which Demosthenes directed at Philip of Macedon. Elizabeth also included excerpts from Cicero's *Epistulae ad familiares* (Letters to friends), the judicial oration *Pro Caecina* (On behalf of Caecina), the philosophical treatise *Laelius de amicitia* (On friendship), and rhetorical and political treatises: *De oratore* (On the orator) and *De legibus* (On the laws). The Ciceronian sentences permeate all six topic categories. In the section "On justice," the Ciceronian quotations emphasize the importance of upholding the law: "let those who govern the commonwealth be like the laws, which are led to inflict punishment not with wrath but with equity" (no. 68), while in "On counsel," the passages stress the importance of wise counsel from good men and not from the "ignorant multitude," because, as Cicero states "weightier

and stronger is the opinion of ten good men than that of the whole ignorant multitude (no. 161, Mueller and Scodel 375). Finally, in the section “On war,” in an Erasmian manner, the adages underline the need for good counsel in war and that war should only be undertaken to attain peace, “wars should be undertaken so that we may live in peace without harm” (no. 221, Mueller and Scodel 387).

Elizabeth’s second most cited classical Latin author is the Roman Stoic philosopher, statesman, and dramatist Seneca the Younger with eleven citations. Although Erasmus paired Seneca with Plutarch as the best author for a young prince’s reading, Seneca seems largely absent from Ascham’s curriculum for Elizabeth (Mueller and Scodel 341). Nevertheless, Elizabeth’s frequently consults Seneca’s his hortatory essay, *De clementia* (On Clemency), addressed to Nero on the need for clemency as a virtue to an emperor, with specific emphasis on mercy. For example, in *De clementia*, Seneca remarked that “mercy is necessary in all men, but especially honourable rulers,” “mercy offers the king safety in an exposed place,” and “the mercy of a ruler itself causes shame of wrongdoing” (no. 113, 114, 115, Mueller and Scodel 366-367). The remaining axioms from Seneca are from his *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* (Moral Letters to Lucilius), a collection of letters dealing with moral issues written for the instruction of Lucilius Junior in which Seneca urges his dedicatee to “weigh judgments, do not number them” (no. 77). Further six quotations appear under “On mercy” (no. 101, 102, 113, 114, 115), three under “On rule” (no. 27, 28, 29), two under “On justice” (no. 57, 77), and one under “On peace” (no. 188), emphasizing the same themes such as “for a king, the one impregnable defense is the love of his citizens” (no. 101) and “let the king not consider the commonwealth to be his, but consider himself to belong to the commonwealth” (no. 29, Mueller and Scodel 351-364).

Apart from Cicero, the Roman historians and war strategists Vegetius and Livy appear to be much favoured among Latin authors, the majority of excerpts classified under the subject headings: “On war” (no. 228, 229, 230, 231) and “On Counsel” (no. 157, 158, 165). Although Vegetius was largely absent from Ascham’s curriculum for Elizabeth, humanists regarded his military handbook, *De re militaria*, as the most authoritative source on Roman military strategy and tactics (Mueller and Scodel 341). Nine quotations were drawn from a chapter in *De re militaria*, consisting entirely of maxims. For example, Vegetius instructed his readers to “never lead an army into open battle except when you suppose it anticipates victory” (no. 232, Mueller and Scodel 389). These excerpts reveal preoccupation with the “masculine art of war” (Mueller and Scodel 341). Both the *Polyanthea* and the *Flores* cite Vegetius extensively in their chapters on war, and two of Elizabeth’s citations (no. 253, 254) appear to have been taken from these collections. One of Elizabeth’s renderings of quotations from Vegetius is more similar to these collections than the original text; however, the other is more similar to Vegetius’s original work. Mueller and Scodel have theorized that the collections likely inspired Elizabeth to immerse herself in the original source (Mueller and Scodel 341).

Similarly, Elizabeth inserted nine of Livy’s quotations from his *Ab urbe condita* (*History of Rome*), which was the most popular guide to Roman warfare. In a 1550 letter, Ascham noted that Elizabeth read a great part of Livy’s *History of Rome*, as it held many sententious reflections on counsel and war (Ascham, *Letters* 167). In the selections on counsel, Livy cautions against taking advice from those who have private interest, and are wily and audacious. Likewise, the sentences on war taken from Livy demonstrate the justification for war only when there are no other options, and warn that discipline is lost by

extravagance and ease, and that undesirable outcomes occur most often during war. For example, Livy's assertion that "the war is just that is necessary, and arms are righteous for those for whom no hope remains but in arms" (no. 228, Mueller and Scodel 388) seems highly relevant to Elizabeth's governance. The Livy quotations appear as index entries in the Renaissance edition of his work; these indices often provided quotable condensations of longer passages (Mueller and Scodel 342). Mueller and Scodel, have, however, pointed out that Elizabeth must have consulted Livy's text directly as the references she provided are not found in such general indexes; nevertheless, aside from one exception, her versions are closer to those in the index (Mueller and Scodel 342). As many of Elizabeth's pagan sources are found in anthologies, she likely used these collections as her basis and then consulted the original source for additional details.

The only sixteenth century author cited in Elizabeth's notebook was the Dutch humanist, Desiderius Erasmus, though only two sentences were explicitly ascribed to him (no. 164, 194), three others were derived from his works (no. 38, 39, 76) (Mueller and Scodel 343). These excerpts echo Erasmus's guidelines on princely education, expounded in his *Institutio Principis Christiani* (The Education of a Christian Prince) (1516), an instructional manual composed for Prince Charles, the future Charles V, in order to guide the future reigning monarch on just rule. Erasmus recommends that a prince must read the works of Isocrates, Aristotle, Plato, Cicero, and Seneca on rule—all of which defined Elizabeth's princely education as attested by her curriculum as well as *sententiae*. The excerpts in *Sententiae* assert that justice administered by the sovereign is necessary within a civil society, "without justice it is impossible for a community to be inhabited" (no. 72); however, a ruler must also show mercy when it is warranted, since "mercy is necessary in

all men, but especially honourable rulers” (no. 113, Muller and Scodel 359-366).

Furthermore, the passages stress the importance of wise counsel from good men and not from the “ignorant multitude,” because “weightier and stronger is the opinion of ten good men than that of the whole ignorant multitude (no. 161, Mueller and Scodel 375). These adages also underline the need for good advice in war and that war should only be undertaken in order to attain peace: “wars should be undertaken so that we may live in peace without harm” (no. 221, Mueller and Scodel 387). In fact, the carefully constructed *Sententiae* serves as an example of an Erasmian *speculum principis*, or mirror for princes, and reads as a collection of examples from the most important classical works on how a monarch should rule—with wise counsel, justice, and mercy—only engaging in warfare in order to establish peace. It remains a question, however, whether her notebook was composed for her as a guide, or was composed by her to demonstrate her mastery of Erasmus’s *speculum principis*. However, it matters little whether the commonplace book served as a model, created by someone else to guide her training, or if she composed the notebook, to demonstrate her mastery of these concepts. Regardless, it is clear that Elizabeth internalized these principles on how a prince should behave and rule, as it serves as a spiritual, intellectual, and governance model for her.

#### Chapter IV: The Commonplace Book Method in Elizabeth I's Speeches

The same duality that characterizes Elizabeth's early education and her *Precationes* is also detectable in her speeches, in which she manipulates her own gender representation by using both feminine and masculine rhetoric. Elizabeth used *sententiae* in her speeches and letters in order to represent herself as a just and merciful ruler, who is receptive to counsel (Mueller and Scodel 335). The theme of the just ruler also appears in her "Prayer for Wisdom in the Administration of the Kingdom" (1562), included in *Precationes*, where she writes:

[God] may train me that I may be able to distinguish between good and evil, equity and iniquity, so as rightly to judge Thy people, justly to impose deserved punishments on those who do harm, mercifully to protect the innocent, freely to encourage those who are industrious and useful to the commonwealth. (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 143)

Similarly, in Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, the selected excerpts stress the importance of ruling as a just prince. For example, Elizabeth noted in her commonplace book how in *De clementia*, Seneca proposes that when it comes to "the law regarding punishment in injuries...the ruler should consider these three things: either that he amends the one whom he punishes, or that he makes others better by the one man's punishment, or that, by removing bad men, he makes other men live more safely" (no. 57, Mueller and Scodel 356ff). Later Elizabeth applies this lesson in her "Speech at the Closing of Parliament" (1593), where she declares:

This kingdom hath had many noble and victorious princes. I will not compare with any of them in wisdom, fortitude, and other virtues, but (saving the duty of a child that is not to compare with her father) in love, care, sincerity, and justice, I will compare with any prince that ever you had or ever shall have. (Speech 21, Marcus et al 329)

In the same speech, she also asserts that she was “contented to reign over [her] own and to rule as a just prince” (Speech 21, Marcus et al. 331). Similarly, in her “Final Speech before Parliament” (1601), Elizabeth states that she “never entered into the examination of any cause without advisement carrying ever a single eye to justice and truth” (Speech 24, Marcus et al 347). Later in the same speech, Elizabeth proclaims that “[her] care was ever [her] proceeding justly and uprightly to conserve [her] people’s love” (Speech 24, Marcus et al. 347).

Like the passages in her *Sententiae*, Elizabeth’s speeches emphasize that she was a ruler who was open to the advice of her counsellors. Her *Sententiae* demonstrates the importance of wise counsel from both God and her advisors. In her commonplace book, Elizabeth cites a section from Tobias: “seek of God that He may direct thy ways, and that all thy counsels may abide in Christ” (no. 123, Mueller and Scodel 369). The importance of counsel from God is also illustrated in her “First Speech before Parliament” (1559),

Elizabeth advises:

If I persist in this which I have proposed unto myself, I assure myself, that God will so direct my counsels and yours that you shall have no cause to doubt of a successor which may be more profitable for the commonwealth than him which may proceed from me, sithence the posterity of good princes doth often-times degenerate. (Speech 3, Marcus et al. 59)

In contrast, Elizabeth applies an excerpt from Proverbs, “designs are shattered where there is no counsel, but where there are many counsellors, they are established,” in order to impress the importance of advice from learned men (no. 137, Mueller and Scodel 370). Crane notes that “in her parliamentary speeches [Elizabeth] uses aphoristic language to establish her ability to advise herself on matters of prerogative (such as marriage and the



fate of Mary Queen of Scots)” (Crane, *Framing Authority* 120-121). As a result, Elizabeth carefully stresses that she has received and accepted advice from William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and her other counsellors in important matters (Crane, *Framing Authority* 120-121). In her “Answer to the Commons Petition that she Marry” (1563), she remarks that “for this so great a demand needeth both great and grave advice” (Speech 5, Marcus et al. 70-71). Similarly, in her “Speech to the Troops at Tilbury” (1588), she states that she has “been persuaded by some that are careful of [her] safety to take heed how [she] committed [herself] to armed multitudes, for fear of distrust” (Speech 19, Marcus et al. 325-326). However, in practice, Elizabeth often did not follow the advice of her counsellors, such as Lord Burghley, who would often complain to others that Elizabeth would not comply with his guidance (Crane, *Framing Authority* 120). Thus, Elizabeth was able to pose herself as both a queen advised by her counsellors and an autonomous king guided only by God; she was able to manipulate these two systems and the factions that she adopted against each other (Crane, *Framing Authority* 120).

Moreover, in several of her speeches, Elizabeth applies excerpts from her notebook in order to establish herself as a part of the divinely sanctioned male Tudor dynasty. She frequently disarms her subjects’ “insecurities about female rule by inscribing herself in the prestige of male heroism and kingship,” and as the “legitimate successor in a divinely sanctioned, symbolically male dynasty,” of her father and grandfather, Henry VIII and Henry VII of England (Rose 1079). Concordantly, in her *Sententiae*, Elizabeth inserts several passages from Romans 13 which establish that a rule must be divinely sanctioned. For example, “the powers that be are ordained of God,” “whoever resists power, resists the ordinance of God,” and “for the ruler is the minister of God for the good of him who does

what is good” (no. 1, 2, 5, Mueller and Scodel 346-347). She reiterates that male kingly power is anointed only by God in her “Answer to the Commons Petition that she Marry” (1563), where she declares:

yet the princely seat and kingly throne wherein God (though unworthy) hath constituted me maketh these two causes to seem little in mine eyes, though grievous perhaps to your ears, and boldeneth me to say somewhat in this matter, which I mean only to touch but not presently to answer. (Speech 5, Mueller and Scodel 10)

In addition, in the sections entitled “Collecta,” which form part of her private prayers in *Precationes*, she inscribes herself within the male Tudor succession as she denotes that it is “by [God’s] mercy alone hast made [her] sit on the throne of [her] father” (Prayer 6, Mueller and Scodel 138). Similarly, in her “Speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons” (1566), she aligns herself with this sanctified line of legitimate Tudor male rulers as she compares herself to her father: “I care not for death, for all men are mortal; and though I be a woman, yet I have as good a courage answerable to my place as ever my father had” (Speech 9, Marcus et al. 97). It is undeniable that in her speeches to parliament, Elizabeth “was pursuing the image of a masculine, brave woman often comparing herself to her father” (Kizelbach 150). Henry VIII was known for being a courageous king and a strong leader who was well respected by his people. It seems that Elizabeth shared her people’s love for Henry with excessive vigor and she often identified herself with him and his kingly power (Green 424). In her “Speech at the Closing of Parliament” (1593), she argues that although she does not compare to “many noble and victorious princes,” such as her father, in “wisdom, fortitude, and other virtues,” she does compare to any other prince of England in “love, care, sincerity, and justice” (Speech 21, Marcus et al. 329). Unlike her

father's inclination towards the military prowess of Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar, Elizabeth followed a program which included both the Erasmian curriculum highlighting "love, care, sincerity, and justice;" and a military syllabus emphasizing "wisdom, fortitude, and other virtues" (Speech 21, Marcus et al. 329).

Apart from the Tudor dynasty, Elizabeth associates herself with a historically masculine line of classical rulers. Not only does she employ "her education to showcase her position as a learned prince, but she also builds her authority on the examples of other rulers" who were renowned statesmen of antiquity (Levin, "All the Queen's Children" 81-82). In her "Latin Oration at Cambridge" (1564), Elizabeth uses an extended metaphor to liken herself to former kings of England, as well as Alexander and Caesar. When she sees these "sumptuous edifices" erected by "most noble kings," she sighs and compares her sigh to Alexander's grief when he read of the "many monuments erected by princes," while he "has done no such thing" (Speech 7, Marcus et al. 88). She reinforces this comparison by alluding to Plutarch's account of Caesar's career in *Parallel Lives*, a series of biographies of famous men, in which when Caesar reads Alexander's biography he bursts into tears. Like Alexander, Caesar felt that he had accomplished nothing of great significance (Levin, "All the Queen's Children" 81-82). "[I]n this double allusion, Elizabeth allies herself with two 'greats' of antiquity who are associated not only with learning but also with conquering, authoritative power" (Levin, "All the Queen's Children 81-82). Thus Elizabeth connects her emerging English Empire to Alexander's Macedonian Empire and Caesar's Roman Empire, when she states that her grief is not removed, but is lessened by the saying that "Rome was not built in a day" (Speech 7, Marcus et al. 88). It is evident that Elizabeth read Plutarch's account of Caesar's *Parallel Lives*. Plutarch is one of the most frequently

cited classical authors in Elizabeth's *Sententiae* appearing eleven times (see no. 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 22, 61, 74, 112, 144, 233). Although, passages from Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* are included in *Sententiae*, Elizabeth does not cite specifically his biography of Caesar.

Nevertheless, *Sententiae* does contain passages from Alexander the Great's biography in *Parallel Lives*. For example, "to be spoken of badly when you have performed kindness is a king's lot" (no. 20, Mueller and Scodel 349). In addition, *Sententiae* has five excerpts from Caesar's *Commentarii de bello civile* (The Civil War) (no. 81, 108, 140, 191, 223), which retells the events of the Civil War from Caesar's perspective. It is clear, therefore, that Alexander and Caesar were important figures in Elizabeth's *Sententiae*, who were also presented to her as exemplary rulers as part of her humanist education.

In accordance with the last few chapters of Erasmus's treatise on *The Education of a Christian Prince*, the maxims in the final section of *Sententiae* "On war" discourage violent and uncontrolled warfare, and instead advocate for intelligent and strategic combat (Cheshire and Heath 202). Erasmus's treatise emphasizes *artes pacis*, or the art of peace, according to which war is unnecessary and should be avoided rather than waged. Here, Elizabeth may have been influenced by Katherine Parr, who, unlike her husband, shared Erasmus's pacifism, as attested by her "Prayer for Men to Say, Entering into Battle," included in *Prayers or Meditations*:

Our cause now being just, and being enforced to enter into war and battle, we most humbly beseech Thee, O Lord God of hosts, so to turn the hearts of our enemies to the desire of peace, and no Christian blood be spilt. Or else grant, O Lord, that with small effusion of blood, and to the little hurt and damage of innocents, we may, to Thy glory, obtain victory. And that, the wars being soon ended, we may all, with one heart and mind, knit together in concord and unity, laud and praise Thee: which livest and reignest, world without end. (Parr 418)

Likewise, in *Sententiae* many of the sentences call attention to the importance of prudence in war (no. 147, 154), pragmatically warning the reader that “war must not be undertaken, unless the profit of hope [hope of profit] appears greater than fear of loss” and that one should “never lead an army into open battle except when you suppose it anticipates victory” (no. 227, 232, Mueller and Scodel 388-389). In a similar vein, Elizabeth’s commonplace book includes several sentences on military strategy, such as “let him who wishes for successful outcomes fight with tactical skill, not at random” (no. 254, Mueller and Scodel 393). As a member of what she calls the “imbellis” or “unwar-like sex” in one of her Latin “Prayer for Wisdom in the Administration of the Kingdom,” in *Precationes*, Elizabeth did not lead men in battle; instead, in *Sententiae*, she tacitly acknowledges gender distinctions, as she cites Plato “let boys learn the discipline of arms,” as boys, not girls, should be trained for war (no. 240, Mueller and Scodel 3). Nevertheless, in the same prayer for the kingdom, Elizabeth demonstrates her ability to lead a nation in war as she asserts that she is “adequate to administer these Thy kingdoms of England and of Ireland, and to govern an innumerable and warlike people” (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 142).

Elizabeth’s engagement with wise counsel in war is also a recurrent theme in her speeches. In her most famous oration on war, “Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury” (1588), delivered on the eve of the Spanish invasion unto England, Elizabeth declares that “[she has] been persuaded by some that are careful of [her] safety to take heed how [she] committed [herself] to armed multitudes, for fear of treachery” (Speech 19, Marcus et al. 325-6). However, this assertion on wise counsel is replaced by battle imagery likening herself to a general in order to establish her masculine authority. She addresses the troops:

“wherefore I am come among you at this time but for my recreation and pleasure, being resolved on 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 honour and my blood even in the dust” (Speech 19, Marcus et al. 390). Although the Erasmian and classical commonplaces in Elizabeth’s notebook promoted wise counsel, her Armada speech glorified and advocated active participation in war. In her notebook, Elizabeth employs the same compositional technique of admitting her feminine weakness only to replace it with images of masculine strength, which she would later apply to her Tilbury speech.

In many of Elizabeth’s speeches, as in her notebook, her chief rhetorical strategy was to acknowledge the prejudices of the court against her gender and then subvert these negative preconceptions about women with masculine authority (May 126; Fredlund 34). Her “rhetorical technique involves appeasing widespread fears about female rule by adhering to conventions that assert the inferiority of the female gender only to supersede those conventions” by “representing herself as being above and beyond the social and biological mandates that her age attached to womanhood” (Rose 1079; Mueller, “Virtue and Virtuality” 220). This rhetorical strategy can also be traced in in her prayer “Thanksgiving for Recovered Health” (1562), included in *Precationes*, where Elizabeth thanks God, the “perfect Physician,” for having both “healthfully warned or justly punished” her, with “a most dangerous and nearly mortal illness,” but also healing both her health and soul in order to govern her people (Prayer 7, Marcus et al. 140). Similarly, in “Prayer for Wisdom in the Administration of the Kingdom,” Elizabeth remarks:

Almighty God and King of all kings, Lord of heaven and earth, by whose leave earthly princes rule over mortals, when the most prudent of kings who

administered a kingdom, Solomon, frankly confessed that he was not capable enough unless Thou broughtst him power and help, how much less am I, Thy handmaid, in my unwarlike sex and feminine nature, adequate to administer these Thy kingdoms of England and of Ireland, and to govern an innumerable and warlike people, or able to bear the immense magnitude of such a burden, if Thou, most merciful Father, didst not provide for me (undeserving of a kingdom) freely and against the opinion of many men. (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 142)

Thus, although Elizabeth is of an “unwarlike sex and feminine nature,” with the aid of God she is able to lead the people of England and Ireland (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 142).

Moreover, in her prayer “Thanksgiving for the Benefits Conferred” (1562), Elizabeth initially notes that:

when I think of late I was altogether nothing—without body, without soul, without life, without sense of any understanding—and when I think that at this point I was as clay in the hand of the potter, so that by Thy will Thou mightst make I a vessel of honor or disgrace, Though hast willed me to be not some wretched girl from the meanest rank of the common people, who would pass her life miserably in poverty and squalor. (Prayer 8, Marcus et al. 141)

However, because God has willed it, she is “unimpaired in body, with a good form, a healthy and substantial wit, prudence even beyond other women, and beyond this, distinguished and superior in the knowledge and use of literature and language, which is highly esteemed because unusual in [her] sex” (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 141). In each of these Latin Prayers in *Precationes*, Elizabeth begins with image of the weak and feeble female body, but she attributes overcoming her sexly weakness to God.

The same rhetorical technique of replacing female weakness with masculine strength, seen in *Precationes*, is also manifested in her speeches. In Elizabeth’s “Armada to

the Troops at Tilbury” oration, she likely “mentioned being a woman to disarm any chauvinistic anxieties aroused by her unusual appearance on a battlefield by meeting those fears directly, tactfully allowing her subjects to entertain them even as she gracefully disproved their necessity” (Green 427). Elizabeth exhibits absolute control of her rhetoric in her speech; she asserts, “I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and a king of England too” (Speech 19, Marcus et al. 326). The heart represents both courage and royal identity in this case, while the stomach stands for an organ that does violent or distasteful deeds deemed unnecessary, like bloodshed in some circumstances (Mueller, “Virtue and Virtuality” 232). Here Elizabeth juxtaposes her degenerative female body with assertions of her masculine strength. This juxtaposition between her female and male body may also serve to represent the two bodies of the ruling monarch and appears both in her Tilbury oration and her “Speech to a Joint Delegation of Lords and Commons” (1566), in which she acknowledges her womanhood only to subvert it with masculine courage: “I care not for death, for all men are mortal; and though I be a woman, yet I have as good a courage answerable to my place as ever my father had” (Speech 9, Marcus et al. 97). As in her Tilbury speech, Elizabeth points out that although her physical body is that of a “weak woman” limited by mortality, men are also mortal (Speech 19, Marcus et al. 326). Lastly, in her “Speech at the Closing of Parliament” (1593), Elizabeth looks back on her reign and admits her feminine weakness, but then she reminds her audience of her rule as a just ruler. She recognizes her “womanhood and weakness,” but she asserts that it was not her femininity that held her back from invading her neighbours, but her desire to “rule as a just prince” (Speech 21, Marcus et al. 329). Elizabeth conceptualizes the king’s two bodies, as “the monarch is at once a frail earthly



being, subject to death and disease, and an immortal being, the incarnation of a sacred principle of kingship which exists along with the merely mortal body” (Marcus, “Shakespeare’s Comic Heroines” 138). This juxtaposition encases both Elizabeth’s physical body and her body politic. Despite Elizabeth’s descriptions of her feminine weakness, she was a “vigorous and healthy fifty-five-year-old Tudor prince with the strong nerves of her redoubtable father” (Green 427). This recalls her earlier prayer “Thanksgiving for the Benefits Conferred,” in *Precationes*, where she asserts that her body is in good form, unimpaired, with healthy and substantial wit, as well as distinguished knowledge in language and literature compared to other women (Prayer 9, Marcus et al. 141). Despite her glancing reference to her own feminine weakness, she speaks with the authority and power of her true voice—the voice of a king of England (Green 427).

On the other hand, Elizabeth does not only represent herself as a strong king, but also depicts herself as an equally powerful queen in both her commonplace book and her orations. She was able to maintain independence and absolute power throughout her reign by remaining unmarried. In her “Answer to the Lord’s Petition That She Marry” (1563), one of the many appeals of the court urging her to marry, Elizabeth rejects the courtiers’ request: “for though I can think it best for a private woman, yet do I strive with myself to think it not meet for a prince” (Speech 6, Marcus et al. 79). Elizabeth was acutely aware that though an advantageous marriage would secure an heir and the succession, she would have to surrender her political power to a husband. Although marriage would be “best for a private woman,” as her early domestic education suggested, it was not appropriate for her public life as a “prince” (Speech 6, Marcus et al 79). In “First Speech before Parliament” (1559), Elizabeth declares that “in the end this shall be for me sufficient that a marble stone

shall declare that a queen, having reigned such a time, lived and died a virgin” (Speech 3, Marcus et al. 58). Similarly, in “Second Reply to the Parliamentary Petitions Urging the Execution of Mary, Queen of Scots” (1586), Elizabeth carefully codifies her language by referring to herself as a “maiden queen,” emphasizing her unmarried status (Speech 18, Marcus et al. 201). Although Elizabeth does not refer to herself as a virgin queen in her notebook, her *Sententiae* denotes that rulers must put the common good above their own personal interest (Mueller and Scodel 333). Similarly, in her “Final Speech before Parliament” (1601), Elizabeth returns to this trope; she “diminished [her] own revenue that [she] might add to [their] security, and been content to be a taper of true virgin wax, to waste [herself] and spend [her] life that [she] might give light and comfort to those that live under [her]” (Speech 24, Marcus et al. 347). Thus, she likens herself to the Virgin Mary, as she has made sacrifices in order for her people to live comfortably (Rose 1078).

This construction of Elizabeth as a virgin and mother of England appears not only in her speeches, but also in art, particularly in a number of portraits connecting her to the Virgin Mary. In Nicholas Hilliard’s nearly symmetrical portraits, *The Pelican Portrait* (1575) and *The Phoenix Portrait* (1575), Elizabeth is represented wearing a jewel in the shape of a pelican and in the shape of a phoenix respectively (Hackett, *Virgin Mother* 80-81). The pelican was an image of self-sacrifice, as it was believed to have fed its young with blood from its own breast. Although the pelican was traditionally connected with Christ, it was also an image of a self-denying maternal care, and thus could be associated with the Virgin (Hackett, *Virgin Mother* 80-81). It may also refer to Elizabeth as a selfless mother of all of the people of England, “sacrificing her own happiness of marriage in order to devote her whole care to sustaining the nation from her own person alone” (Hackett,

*Virgin Mother* 80-81). In the same manner, in her “Final Speech before Parliament,” Elizabeth declares that during her reign she put her subjects’ needs above her own. Similarly, the phoenix’s “primary characteristics were that only one was alive at a time, and that it lived for several centuries, then mysteriously and asexually renewed itself from its own ashes.” Because of this association, the phoenix was often connected with the resurrection of Christ and the chastity and uniqueness of the Virgin Mary (Hackett, *Virgin Mother* 81). Another popular Marian image of Elizabeth during the sixteenth century was one in which the sun appears behind her, alluding to the biblical image of the Virgin Mary in the Book of Revelation (Hackett, *Virgin Mother* 81). Although Elizabeth did not construct the iconography of her portraits, as she did that of her orations, there remains a clear association between her and the Virgin Mary, an image avidly propagated by her courtiers and councillors.

This theme of self-sacrifice is also seen in *The Education of a Christian Prince*, where Erasmus asserts that the only good guide to government was Christ himself (Pollnitz 108). Instead of praising the stoic Greek and Roman rulers, Erasmus argues that feelings of compassion, mutual affection, and charity are crucial for a Christian ruler (Pollnitz 107). Moreover, Erasmus asks the prince to turn aside from the un-emotional war-like behaviour of rulers such, as Alexander and Caesar (Pollnitz 110), as Christ was not a “marble statue of reason, but a truly human, subject alike to the affections of the body and the mind” (Pollnitz 108). Thus, Erasmus proposed that “a truly Christian prince would feel emotionally bound to his subjects. He would be as ready to *cruciare* [or sacrifice] himself for the commonwealth as Christ has been” (Pollnitz 110). Erasmus defines the ideal Christian prince as one

Who holds the life of each individual dearer [*charior*] than his own; who works and strives night and day for nothing else than that conditions should be the best possible for everyone;...he wants so much to do well by his people [*ciuis*] of his own free will that if necessary he would not hesitate to attend to their well-being at great risk to himself; who considers that his own wealth consists in the welfare of his country; who is always on the watch so that everyone else may sleep soundly; who leaves himself no leisure so that his country has the chance to live in peace; who torments himself [*se discruciet*] with constant anxieties so that his subjects may enjoy peace of mind. (Erasmus 27; Pollnitz 110)

Erasmus argues that when self-sacrifice is taken on the subject's behalf, it will create genuine feelings of *sentire voluptatem*, or pleasure in a Christian prince (Pollnitz 110).

Both her notebook and orations attest that Elizabeth internalized these Erasmian principles, unlike her father, who, despite his own Erasmian education, did not agree with Erasmus's pacifistic curriculum, and instead followed a military style conduct (Pollnitz 112).

Elizabeth seems to vacillates between the pacifism instilled in Erasmus's treatise and the military prowess of her father Henry VIII, as shown in her "Armada Speech to the Troops at Tilbury" in which she combines both attitudes.

There is a constant tension throughout Elizabeth's speeches between her performance of masculine and feminine gender roles. In her last speech delivered to parliament, the "Golden Speech" (1601), Elizabeth combines both masculine and feminine tropes, illustrating the absolute mastery of her rhetoric. Her final speech ends with a juxtaposition of feminine weakness and masculine strength: "shall I ascribe anything to myself and 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 yet given me a heart" (Speech 23, Marcus et al. 340). Thus, Elizabeth overcomes her "sexly weakness" with the "heart" of a king.

However, she does not only portray feminine weakness in this speech. She also asserts herself as a uniquely powerful queen whose “heart was never set on worldly goods, but only for [her] subjects good” (Speech 23, Marcus et al. 338). She again compares herself to the Virgin Mary, emphasizing the sacrifices she has made on behalf of her people throughout her reign. Later in the speech, she declares that “there will never queen sit in [her] seat with more zeal to [her] country, care to [her] subjects, and that will sooner with willingness venture her life for [their] good and safety, than [herself]” (Speech 23, Marcus et al. 339). Elizabeth’s artful mastery of the performance of both a strong king and powerful queen in her orations reveals the force or *vis* of the gendered rhetoric, also manifest in the duality of *Precationes*. In both cases, her command of her language and emotions was fundamentally rooted in the pedagogical principles she encountered in her youth.

## Conclusion

As I have argued above, the same gendered duality that characterizes Elizabeth's early education can be traced both in the commonplace book, published under her name, and in her speeches, delivered to her subjects and parliament during her reign. This duality, shaped by her early education, was defined, on the one hand, by the conventional elements of training reserved for noblewomen, and, on the other, by a markedly masculine instruction designed for princes by the leading humanists of the period. All three parts of Elizabeth's commonplace book offer a unique insight into the actual methods with which she acquired life-long lessons from the past, for her future role in governance. *Precationes* contains both private prayers, which, inspired by the Psalms, depict Elizabeth's personal piety, and public prayers, which portray her as a masculine head of state. *Regna Quibus Imperat* reinforces the same public image, present in her private prayers for the kingdom, confirming and popularizing through print her authority as king of England. *Sententiae* comprises quotes and paraphrases from classical authors, the Bible, the Church Fathers, medieval ecclesiastical writers, and contemporary authorities, all of which address the principles and responsibilities of the monarch, focusing on the masculine ideas of ruling as a just and merciful king. Not only does her commonplace book confirm that she internalized the Erasmian pedagogical methods promoted by her tutors, but that she continued to apply the very same principles to her orations. In fact, Elizabeth employs the same compositional techniques associated with her notebook to the composition of her orations in which she manipulates her own gender representation by using both feminine and masculine rhetoric. This conscious application of the commonplace book method and

the Erasmian tenets of princely education is particularly evident in her speeches on rule, justice, mercy, counsel, peace, and war in governance. Thus, Elizabeth's unique princely education prepared her to write and perform her public orations and addresses and to control her own voice throughout her reign, while fashioning herself as a strong and powerful regnant queen who can rule and govern the nation in her own right.

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