THE HEIR AND THE SPARE: EDUCATION AND PREPARATION
FOR THE THRONE AMONG ENGLAND’S “SUDDEN MONARCHS”

by

LINDSAY RIDLEHUBER

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ABSTRACT

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Lindsay Ridlehuber, M.A.

The University of Texas at Arlington, 2013

Supervising Professor: Elisabeth Cawthon

The English royal family is experiencing a recent surge of popularity. Though they no longer personally govern England, their role is still crucial within the country. The current heir to the throne, Prince Charles, is expected to inherit peacefully upon the death of Elizabeth II. However, there has been speculation that he could be passed over for his far more popular son Prince William. If this does occur, it will not be the first time that a monarch who was not the primary heir inherited the English throne. Eight times in the period between 1100 and 1701 the primary heir to the throne did not inherit. These eight monarchs represent the most revered and the most reviled monarchs that English history has to offer. But unlike in modern times, their education and preparation is not well documented by contemporary historians. In addition, no comprehensive study exists that encompasses all eight “sudden monarchs” and their reigns. Were they afforded the same education as their elder, dynastically more important siblings?
Does their education or lack thereof show in the policies and administration of their reign? Is there a trend amongst the eight?

This study seeks to address those exact questions. It will look at the reigns of Henry I, Richard I, John I, Richard III, Mary I, Elizabeth I, and James II to assess whether their formal educations, preparations, and early life experiences do in fact show not only in their reigns but in their historical legacies. What this study asserts is that these unexpected monarchs did not receive the same education or preparation as the primary heirs. The trend that emerged is that when the monarch had a stable early life as well as excellent education and preparation in the things that contemporaries viewed as important, then his or her reign was effective; in addition the ruler left behind a memorable legacy and was generally seen by contemporaries—and historical scholars-- as everything that a monarch ought to be.
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION
1.1 The Heir and the Spare

The question of who inherits the English throne can determine the course of England’s domestic and international affairs; it can also have consequences reaching far beyond a particular monarch’s reign. In modern times the current heir is himself or herself a well known international figure. It is expected that Prince Charles will inherit the throne when Elizabeth II dies but there has been intense speculation that Prince Charles could be passed over for his much more popular eldest son Prince William. In an age of modern technology and online journalism, the education and preparation of both Prince Charles and Prince William is well documented. One may judge, in other words, the degree of formal preparation that an heir (or another holder of the throne) has received. The heirs’ tutors, formal education, military service, royal posts, and even their nannies are known worldwide and available at the touch of a button. If Prince William does surpass his father and inherit from Elizabeth II it will not be the first instance in British history where the throne passed to someone other than the primary heir.

Eight times from 1101 to 1701 someone other than the primary heir to the English throne became the monarch. Often this happened out of necessity, as no other viable heir was present, while in other cases the throne was taken by force. But for most of English history the education and preparation received by such “sudden monarchs” is not well documented. Were they afforded the same educations as their elder, dynastically much more important siblings had been? Was the preparation they received prior to becoming the heir (or at least prior to taking
the throne) sufficient to help them rule a kingdom that was often divided and under constant threat from more powerful neighbors?

Historians have largely ignored the referenced questions other than in the wider sense of investigating each monarch’s life overall. This is due to a variety of reasons. The most daunting reason is the overwhelming lack of contemporary resources on the subject. The second is that it confounds historians that monarchs who ascended under these circumstances often happened to have dramatic—even sensational—reigns. Scholars are so occupied with the monarchies themselves that they have ignored the circumstances of heirs’ education and preparation as it relates to their later traits and reigns. To leave a comprehensive study of these eight monarchs’ educations and preparations for the throne out of the historiography means that there is a gap in the understanding of the institution of monarchy.

There are numerous biographies and studies written on most monarchs between the Norman Conquest and the Act of Settlement of 1701. Those end-points for the present study start with scholars’ demarcation of the beginning of Norman royal inheritance traditions, and end in the legislation that showed clear Parliamentary control over the royal succession. Royal biographies focus primarily on the events within each reign and the impact these rulers had on England. In a few instances, such as that of Henry I and Mary I, historians who write royal biographies include a brief section on the monarch’s education as part of their childhood. Scholars largely downplay education and preparation for the responsibilities of reigning. In some cases, such as Richard I and John I, the reason for this omission could be a lack of primary sources available describing heirs’ lives prior to inheriting the throne. For example, biographies on Richard I make it clear that with a few small exceptions, he does not appear in written records after his birth until about the age of fourteen, when he was formally invested as Duke of Aquitaine. Even Mary I, who lived in an age of fuller records, is scarcely mentioned for large portions of her early life.
The secondary source that most carefully examines the education of these non-primary heirs is Nicholas Orme’s 1984 study entitled *From Childhood to Chivalry, the Education of the English Kings and Aristocracy, 1066-1530*. This study is one primarily of England’s educational system for aristocratic and royal children. It does not take into account the larger picture of other preparations and tutelage that could have taken place to ensure that these children were ready for the responsibilities that they were to inherit. Also, Orme, like many other historians usually concentrates on the primary heir to a throne or title.

1.2 The Chosen Monarchs

Succession has rarely been certain for the English monarchy. Beginning with the Conquest and continuing through the reign of John, feudal rights of inheritance were a factor in each succession. Following John the idea of an inheritable crown was revived and reinforced through the next five monarchs. Henry IV, Edward IV, and Richard III re-introduced the idea that monarchy was gained through the right of conquest. In the Tudor era the succession of four Tudor monarchs in the correct order of descent did much to bolster the principle of hereditary monarchy again. After the Tudors, the transition into the Stuarts only seemed to strengthen this idea of hereditary right. After the Stuarts, the Act of Settlement in 1701 effectively ended the question of succession, fully vesting it in a simple line of the royal family, and, critically leaving it at the will of Parliament.¹ After the Act of Settlement in 1701, succession was not only far less uncertain in a constitutional sense, it was at that point invested in the first male heir born to a ruling monarch and to successive males after that. The legislation of the Revolutionary Settlement also barred Roman Catholics or any member of the royal family married to a Roman Catholic from the line of succession. In the 21st century, the line to the British throne is still vested in a very strict succession of the British royal family and has not varied in the last three hundred years. Another reason for ending this study at the end

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¹ Howard Nenner, *The Right to be King the Succession to the Crown of England* (Houndmills [u.a.: Macmillan, 1995), 1-5.
of the seventeenth century is that the infant mortality rate decreased significantly after this time. Due to more advanced medical practices the likelihood of an heir dying prior to ascension from diseases or sheer mistreatment was reduced and far less likely than in the medieval or early modern eras.

In this study Henry I, Richard I, John I, Richard III, Henry VIII, Mary I, Elizabeth I, and James II are discussed because they became the heir or inherited after ten years of age. All of these monarchs had siblings who were expected to reign and who seemed quite healthy. For example, James II was fifty two years of age when he ascended to the throne; for most of his adult life, James’s elder brother Charles II was expected to produce a legitimate child to inherit. Each of these monarchs was also in the line of direct succession for the English throne. Though there were many more “sudden monarchs” throughout English history, this study has chosen to view only those monarchs who fit the above criteria.

1.3 Sources of the Study

In the available primary sources, the education and preparation that a primary, designated heir received for the throne was of chief importance to writers. For example, in the case of the heirs of William the Conqueror, the tutors and immediate masters, servants, and other important men who prepared William Rufus for the crown are carefully listed and well known. On the other hand, his siblings, including the eventual Henry I, do not have such carefully preserved records of their tutelage. Historians are often left to draw conclusions from a small number of extant documents. Documentation of the early years of a royal child who was not expected to inherit the throne was often not produced, at least until he was invested with titles or suddenly became heir to the throne through unforeseen circumstances. As a result of this, primary sources available on the education and preparation of royal children other than the primary heir are scarce. Due to this lack of material, the same general primary sources are
used in all secondary sources regarding these either monarchs. For example, *Orderic Vitalis* has been featured to some extent in nearly every biography of Henry I.

The bulk of the primary sources and research included in this study is in chronicles, court rolls, and correspondence. These sources are often the most reliable for their time period though each must be taken with the knowledge that no writer is free from the possibility of prejudice against his subject. Many of the sources for the medieval monarchs have been published in an online format by universities such as Fordham and Oxford. The court rolls and calendar rolls are also available in an online format from the British Library. While there are still some important sources that have not been translated from their original Latin or French, for the most part the sources have been put into both digitized and English language sources.

This study includes a range of secondary sources- including some from laudatory to quite critical- on each of the eight monarchs selected for analysis. There is a particular focus on recent scholarship about each monarch. The secondary literature, though, is vast, and this research mainly attempts to capture the general scholarly opinion about each ruler.

1.4 Concluding Thoughts

Despite their place in the succession at birth, these eight monarchs did manage to obtain the throne. They became some of the most praised and the most vilified rulers that England has seen in its storied history. From the two princes in the tower to Bloody Mary, their reigns and reputations have lived long past their own contemporary times. This study argues that many of the highs and lows of each of these eight reigns can be traced in large part to the heirs’ education and preparation for the throne. Few historians however, have troubled to look at what made these unexpected rulers what they became after ascending the throne. Historians have not examined the preparation and education of these monarchs individually, much less as a collective whole. Is there a trend among the unexpected wearers of the crown? Did obtaining more formal education mean that a monarch became a more effective or popular
ruler? Did lack of experience with governance or leadership, prior to ascending the throne, affect the ability of a monarch to administer the kingdom? The lack of scholarship concerning unanticipated monarchs leaves a large gap in the modern scholarly assessment of their reigns, which the present study seeks to address. Through the use of primary and secondary sources, a trend amongst these “sudden monarchs” will emerge.
CHAPTER 2
HENRY I

2.1 Henry I: A Look at Historiography

Henry I is remembered for his reputation as the first learned king of England. Among scholars Henry I is well known as a creator of administrative kingship. Scholars also note that his death caused a succession crisis with long-reaching effects. Until the middle of the 20th century, scholars who studied Henry I viewed him as the first truly learned king of England. Historiography on Henry and his reign varies but most of the variety in historians’ opinions seems to deal with his character rather than his competency as king. Few can deny his competency as a ruler.

His contemporary reputation was that of a great king whose education and learned mind far surpassed any who had reigned before him. This reputation as “Henry Beauclerc” was continued up until the twentieth century when historians began to attack his previous credentials. Historians such as Christopher Brooke viewed Henry’s reign as oppressive and Charles W. David claimed that Henry’s great learned reputation was more in contrast to previous rulers’ illiteracy than true mastery. Though these historians do make a valid point in that Henry was not an extremely educated man by modern standards, what they fail to take into account is that Henry cannot be judged based on a modern idea of education or reputation. This present research suggests that Henry was an exceptionally well-read and accomplished man for his era, and he set a precedent for those that followed him in terms of learning and administration. After his reign, it would no longer be safe to assume that the monarch was illiterate and the administrative machine that Henry created can be seen even today in the systems of judicial and financial administration in England.

The present study utilizes the available chronicles for the reign of Henry, in particular Orderic Vitalis, Henry of Huntington, and William of Malmesbury. Though Henry’s activities were recorded by an unprecedented number of historians and annalists, this study has chosen these three as the most reliable, comprehensive, and with the largest amount of contemporary evidence regarding Henry’s education and learning.  

The secondary sources chosen for this study are that of C. Warren Hollister’s *Henry I*, Judith Green’s *Henry I, King of England and Duke of Normandy*, as well as Judith Green’s *The Government of England Under Henry I*. These three resources represent the only major modern works regarding Henry I and his reign. They incorporate the most recent evidence and present a very balanced assessment of a complicated monarch.

2.2 Henry’s Ascension to the Throne

Henry was the third living son born to William the Conqueror and his wife Matilda. His father had conquered England two years prior to his birth in 1066 and Henry spent his formative years living in England. When he died, William the Conqueror bequeathed Normandy to his eldest son Robert Curthose and England to his second son William Rufus. As the third son it was unlikely that Henry would have been chosen to inherit England but his father left him with no land at all, only a large treasury. During the reign of his brother William II, Henry acquired lands and a title through conquest and purchase, including most of Western Normandy, due to his brother Robert Curthose’s financial troubles. Upon the death of his brother William II, Henry immediately claimed the throne based on his right of being born in the purple, the only one of his father’s sons to have been born after William the Conqueror was crowned king of England. Eventually, Henry would wrest Normandy from his brother and add it to his domains. Henry would rule for thirty five years, all but two of which he managed to maintain peace.

2.3 Henry’s Education

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2.3.1. Henry's Formal Education

There is little available evidence concerning Henry's formal education. It is known based on contemporary accounts that William and Matilda took some pains about the education of their eldest son, Robert Curthose, and the names of his tutors appear in the charters. It is also known that Cecilia, the eldest daughter of William and Matilda was instructed in grammar and dialectic. It is therefore clear that William and Matilda valued education, and is safe to assume that Henry was also given a chance to learn.\(^4\) However, unlike his elder siblings, evidence of Henry’s scholarly education is scarce. Most historians agree that Henry was more than likely tutored by a religious man as was common of the times for a royal son. His elder brother William Rufus was said to have received his education at the hands of Archbishop Lanfranc, so it is safe to assume that William and Matilda would have provided a similar tutor to their youngest son.

The most likely candidate in this case is Bishop Osmund of Salisbury due to the fact that it is known that Henry spent time in the bishop’s company. When Henry occurs as a witness to royal acts between 1080 and 1086, it is often with Osmund present.\(^5\) Though it can be speculated that all of this evidence adds up to Bishop Osmund being Henry’s tutor, it cannot be confirmed by contemporary sources. On the other hand, there are references to Henry’s education and to his learning in later chronicles that show he was in fact an educated man. Ordericus Vitalis says that “in his governance of the Contentin, Henry governed well and employed the years of his youth admirably. When he was a child he had been put to a study of letters by his parents and he was well instructed in both natural philosophy and knowledge of doctrine.”\(^6\) Peter of Blois says that “William was succeeded to the throne by his brother

\(^4\) Haskins and Taylor, *Anniversary Essays in Mediaeval History*, 56
Henry….who from his acquaintance with literature was much more astute than his two brothers.”⁷ These contemporary sources along with references to Henry having read letters and other such documents himself, lead to the conclusion that even if his reputation as a great learned king was exaggerated in later years, he was in fact literate and did in fact receive some sort of formal education. The end of any formal education that Henry might have received in his youth likely came to an end on 24 May 1086 when he was dubbed a knight.⁸ At this point, Henry would have begun his “other education”, that of military training and knightly conquests.

2.3.2. Experience in Governance

Henry was the only one of William the Conqueror’s three sons with no bequest upon William the Conqueror’s death, allowing the son to rule or govern lands. Normandy was left to William’s eldest son Robert Curthose and England to his second son William Rufus. This meant that at the time of his father’s death, Henry appears to have no lands at all, which is strange because it was common at the time for the younger sons and bastard sons of the Norman ducal line to receive counties and comitial titles.⁹ The fact that Henry did not receive what was traditionally given to the younger son of a Norman duke would suggest that he was never intended to rule over even a portion of his father’s domains and perhaps was intended for another purpose such as the church, though there is no official record of this. During his father’s lifetime, Henry had no way to gain practical experience in governance and was not given responsibilities that are recorded in contemporary chronicles.

Despite this fact, Henry did manage to open his own avenues to obtaining lands and experiencing governance. At the time Henry lived, if a younger son did not inherit lands or a title, he had no choice but to take it by force or by purchase. By 1088 his elder brother Robert had exhausted his wealth and offered Henry a bargain by which Henry provided the duke with

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⁸ Hollister and Frost, Henry I, 37
⁹ Ibid., 39-47
three thousand pounds in silver and received from him the whole of Cotentin, which was a third of Normandy. Henry governed the Cotentin effectively, and gained valuable experience in the administration of government and dealing with a fractious nobility. After he obtained the title of comte, Henry joined the court of his brother Robert, duke of Normandy and rose at the age of twenty to be one of the leading ducal counselors. This gave Henry experience in overseeing a large land with a complex bureaucratic structure, and to observe what did and did not function well in terms of governmental administration. He would put this early experience in governance to good use upon obtaining the throne.

2.4 Henry’s Reign and Legacy

Henry was crowned King of England on 5 August 1100, a mere three days after his brother’s death. (Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall 1969295) While Henry did have an elder living brother, his ascension cannot be viewed as an usurpation. The Conqueror’s eldest son Robert Curthose had already been passed over once for the throne, at his father’s command. Furthermore, the English throne at this time did not follow the laws of primogeniture. Orderic claims that the English chose to have as their lord a person that they knew had been born a nobleman and was a native of England. This is a reference to the fact that Henry was the only one of his brothers to have been born in England, after both of his parents had been crowned. His claim to the throne was legitimate and never questioned after the initial disputes.

During his formative years, Henry had experienced a great deal of warfare at the hands of his father and his brothers; he had also lived for a period of time in exile and poverty. Orderic Vitalis claims that this time of poverty and warfare assisted the king’s son in learning to endure hardship so that the future king might have better knowledge of misfortune and be

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10 Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*; 121
12 Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis*; 293
13 Hollister and Frost, *Henry I*, 105
compassionate to the poor. Henry did in fact use these early lessons to make England a better place for all of his subjects, including the poor. During the first few years of his reign, Henry was occupied with obtaining Normandy and reuniting his father’s Anglo-Norman domains. Once he successfully obtained Normandy, Henry began to work to centralize and stabilize the English government. He was involved in every aspect of the government and made reforms in areas such as reform of the curia regis, stabilization of the coinage system, an increase in diplomacy, and restoring the judicial system to the state it had been in at the time of Edward the Confessor.

2.4.1. A New Method of Kingship

Henry’s reign would be very unlike that of his brother and his father. Henry chose to surround himself with learned and able men, regardless of the station to which they were born, and entrusted these men to help him rule his vast domains. Unlike his elder brother and father, and due in large part to his education as a young man, Henry preferred to settle his disputes through diplomacy or mediation rather than through warfare. Orderic claims that “he preferred contending by counsel, rather than by the sword. If he could he conquered without bloodshed, if it was unavoidable with as little as possible.” To these ends, Henry immediately began making changes, clearing out much of the rabble that had infested his brother’s court and imposing laws both within the royal court and within the country itself. As stated before, Henry’s preference was to rule and maintain order with words and laws, rather than with swords and battles.

Henry was an educated and intelligent man who knew that with his domains spread over such a large area, he needed the support of local people in each region. The curia regis, or the royal court, had become unpopular due to corruption during the previous two reigns and Henry knew that they could not continue to function as they had in the past if he wanted to

14 Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall, The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis: ; 293
15 Ibid., 253
maintain the support of the people he ruled over. During the reign of his brother, the curia regis had become notorious for plundering and pillaging from the locals wherever the king and his court went. This continued into the early years of Henry I’s reign but unlike William II, Henry was not content to let his court and council function in this manner. He instituted strict regulations limiting the practice of requisitioning and he established fixed prices for local purchases. He forbade his court to plunder, rape and pillage and instituted harsh penalties for those that broke these rules. In the words of William of Malmesbury, “if at any time the better sort, regardless of their plighted oath, wandered from the path of fidelity, he immediately recalled them to the straight road by the wisdom of his plans, and his unceasing exertions.”

This statement clearly praises the intelligence of Henry in his plans to deal with a previously unregulated court and in creating better conditions for the people of England.

Henry had other reasons than the good will of his people for the reformation of his curia regis. Medieval kings had little time, even if they had the inclination or the capacity, for routine administrative matters. Henry spent much of his time traveling throughout his vast domains and attempting to maintain the peace among his fractious nobility. The king was expected to personally preside over the hearing of important legal cases, confirm charters, and issue official documents. Henry saw the need for delegation early on and unlike his predecessors Henry intended to make the system work to his advantage. In this area, Henry was far more farsighted than any king who had come before him. He had the ability to choose people who were capable and of a high caliber, a reflection of his own intelligence and ability. Personal presence had previously been required of the king to collect his dues and taxes as well as mete out justice, but Henry knew that this was not an efficient way to run a government when his

16 Ibid.
18 William et al., William of Malmesbury’s Chronicle of the Kings of England : From the Earliest Period to the Reign of King Stephen, 446
domains were so widely dispensed. Instead, Henry surrounded himself with capable, loyal, and learned men with whom he entrusted the collection of taxes, administration of justice, and other governmental tasks in his absence. This helped to create the most sophisticated administrative machine since Roman times.\(^{19}\) It is possible that this creation of such a sophisticated administrative machine points at an education studying more ancient models of statesmanship and government or even to his time on the continent in Normandy and France.

One obvious example of this new system of administrative kingship and delegation is that of the creation of the royal exchequer. Henry needed money and he needed a large amount of it for things such as his daughter Matilda’s dowry and campaigns on the continent to maintain peace. At the time, the monarch typically had to be physically present to collect his taxes and other dues. This simply would not work for a monarch who traveled constantly and often did not make it back to parts of his kingdom for years at a time. In response to this need, Henry appointed the able Bishop Roger of Salisbury to gradually assume the reigns of financial and judicial business and by 1110 at the latest, a central court for auditing royal revenues had emerged, called royal exchequer.\(^{20}\) This primitive exchequer would form the basis for what later became known as the English exchequer with its distinctive features such as: abacus accounting procedure, court of audit, and pipe rolls recording receipts from the sheriffs and their shires. Even if there was an earlier financial court prior to 1100, under Henry I it achieved a more firmly assured position and was able to provide the basis of an administrative center for England, something that was not present in the previous two reigns.\(^{21}\)

2.4.2. Law and Order

The other area in which Henry focused his attention was the restoration of law and order within the kingdom of England. His promise to uphold the laws of Edward the Confessor

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\(^{19}\) Green, *The Government of England Under Henry I*, 1  
\(^{20}\) Hollister and Frost, *Henry I*, 1  
\(^{21}\) Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy*, 5
and restore England to the justice of old was not forgotten and Henry worked hard to make it a reality. At the time Henry ascended to the throne, England’s court system and justice within the kingdom had deteriorated to a degree that in his coronation, Henry promised to maintain and restore good laws to England.\(^\text{22}\) Above all, Henry intended to create and maintain a lasting peace within his domains. In the words of Orderic Vitalis, Henry “always devoted himself, until the end of his life to preserving peace.”\(^\text{23}\) This peace involved a return to the laws of Edward the Confessor and the Old English system of shires, sheriffs, and shire courts as well as various other local types of government.

Henry began his revision of English judicial system by working to restore order to the court system within England. He ordered that all shire and hundred courts should meet at the times and places that they had traditionally in King Edward’s day. This confirmed and rehabilitated the system of local justice that had become so corrupt under his brother’s reign. Orderic Vitalis gives evidence that under William II, the local court system had been perverted to enrich the king and his ministers, depriving the local people of their property and rights.

Henry also increased penalties for various offenses throughout the kingdom, for nobility and commoner alike. Theft and robbery were made capital crimes and the subject of false coinage received particular attention.\(^\text{24}\) Having heard that “the tradesmen refused broken money, though of good silver, he commanded the whole of it to broken or cut into pieces and the measure of his own arm was put forth to correct the traders.”\(^\text{25}\) Thus Henry fully enforced the notion that the king’s reputation lay behind coinage.

### 2.5 Henry Beauchelu: A Learned Ruler

#### 2.5.1. Effects of Education and Preparation

\(^\text{22}\) Ibid., 217


\(^\text{24}\) Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis;*

\(^\text{25}\) Hollister and Frost, *Henry I,* 212
Henry’s education and early preparation in life assisted him greatly in reigning effectively, setting a precedent for other kings to follow. Henry was obviously literate and there are references to him reading letters or documents that were sent to him. Contemporary historians all express an admiration for his intelligence and learning, even if they deplore his character. The men that Henry surrounded himself with were men of great learning and ability; little attention was paid to the station to which they had been born and Henry had no problem promoting men who were not of noble families. These men that Henry raised to levels of power within the kingdom were a reflection on his own good judgment and ability, for even if he delegated authority, the orders ultimately came from him. Only one of Henry’s servants ever plotted against him; as Abbot Suger observed, his servants were remarkably loyal to him.\(^{26}\) This was due in large part to the fact that Henry showed intelligence in those to whom he entrusted the reigns of the kingdom and the fact that he had an uncanny grasp of human nature.

Not only did Henry’s education help in reigning and creating an effective administration with able men he could trust, but Henry’s experiences in poverty and governance when he was younger shaped his views. Henry spent two years wandering the Vexin in a state of poverty, seeking lodging where he could find it. Because of this, the future king had a better understanding of the plights of the poor people and the effects that insufficient justice could have on people who had nothing.\(^{27}\) Henry took this to heart and helped his humbler servants by giving them just laws.\(^{28}\) His enforcement of law and order would be remembered nostalgically after his death in the chaos of Stephen’s reign. Henry understood that maintaining peace and order allowed everyone in the kingdom to prosper which is why he strove so hard to reinstate the order that he presumed had existed under Old English law. Also, though Henry was left no

\(^{26}\) William et al., *William of Malmesbury’s Chronicle of the Kings of England: From the Earliest Period to the Reign of King Stephen*, 445

\(^{27}\) Green, *Henry I: King of England and Duke of Normandy*

\(^{28}\) Ordericus Vitalis and Chibnall, *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis;*, 253
lands upon his father’s death, he managed to obtain a title and lands and to effectively govern those lands. This short time governing the on the continent allowed Henry to learn to deal with a fractious nobility and find the balance between force and mediation for the resolution of disputes.

2.5.2. Conclusion

Henry of Huntington says Henry was “great in wisdom, profound in counsel, famous for his farsightedness, outstanding in arms, distinguished for his deeds, remarkable for his wealth.” William of Malmesbury says that Henry’s learning “though obtained by snatches, assisted him much in the science of governing” and Roger de Hoveden claims that Henry was supreme in wisdom, because he “was most profound in counsel, remarkable for foresight, and distinguished for eloquence.” The common denominator amongst Henry’s contemporary historians is respect for the king’s intelligence and learning. A man of some education, Henry surrounded himself with capable and well educated individuals whom he trusted and to whom he delegated great authority. He created a sophisticated administrative machine to rule the country and restored justice and order to a land that had long been without. Though some historians would like to argue the extent to which he was educated, the fact that he was literate and did have some education cannot be denied and its effects are far reaching. The accession of Henry I dates the beginning of a new period after which it was unsafe to assume the monarch was illiterate. Henry’s education may not be much by modern standards, but it must be placed into the context of the times in which he lived and reigned, and in his time Henry was a novelty. The benefits of this education show in his reign and his ability to create order and stability—at least during his own lifetime.

29 Ibid., 297
CHAPTER 3
RICHARD I

3.1 Richard I: A Look at Historiography

Richard I, better known as Richard the Lionheart is a legendary figure. Most modern readers associate Richard more with the myth than with the actual man, seeing in him the legend of Robin Hood and other such stories of a mighty warrior. Historiography on Richard is wide and stretches back to his own contemporary times. He was written about by early medieval chroniclers such as Richard of Devizes and Ralph of Coggeshall. He is generally thought to have been seen by his contemporaries as a “chivalrous, noble warrior who is what a king ought to be.” In terms of his general performance on the throne, Richard was held up by his contemporaries in comparison to other kings of the day, including Phillip Augustus of France, and each king was found wanting. For centuries after his death, Richard was seen as the standard by which all kings were judged. For example, in 1313 a work criticizing Edward III compared him to Richard, and found Edward to be the lesser man. All of this began to change during the Tudor era, when Richard was portrayed more negatively as a king who ignored his kingdom in favor of crusading. The tide began to turn again in Richard’s favor in the later twentieth century, with historians such as John Gillingham leading the charge. Gillingham claims that Richard was the victim of anti-papal sentiment as well as misrepresentation by historians who allowed religion and nationalism to cloud their judgment. These historians argue that Richard may not have been a king skilled in administration, but that he did effectively use the governmental machine left to him by his father and grandfather. Richard was not tutored extensively in the scholarly arts, but he was far from illiterate and he was trained in the one

thing that contemporaries would have seen as most important: warring. He lived in a time when kings were still expected to lead their troops into battle: his experience as a young man, dealing with the fractious nobility of Aquitaine, served him well. It is this experience in governance, as well as his exhibition of the qualities desired by contemporaries in a king, that historians recently have cited in regard to Richard.

3.2 Richard’s Ascension to the Throne

Richard was the second son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine to survive childhood. Richard was expected to inherit his mother’s duchy of Aquitaine; to this end at the age of fifteen he was invested as duke. His early years were spent in rebellion against his father and in putting down rebellions by the fractious nobility in Aquitaine. Richard’s elder brother Henry was crowned during his father’s lifetime; that sibling was referred to as Henry the Young King. Henry the Young King died in 1183, leaving twenty six year old Richard as the eldest surviving son of Henry II. Richard’s father refused to recognize Richard as his heir and Richard retaliated by joining forces with Phillip II, King of France. Richard and Phillip’s combined armies defeated Henry II, and Henry finally agreed to recognize Richard as his heir. Henry died two days later. Richard reigned over the Angevin Empire including England for ten years, only six months of which he spent in England. He would die without an heir, his brother John inherited the throne as a result.

3.3 Richard’s Education

Little is known about Richard’s formal education. There are no official records of his tutors or what course of study he was set to and his childhood is rarely spoken of, among contemporary writers. Richard almost completely disappears from contemporary chronicles and histories until he is invested at the age of fifteen as Duke of Aquitaine along with his mother. His parents traveled often by necessity to their various domains, including not only England but also Aquitaine, Normandy, and Poitou. It is assumed by most historians that he would have spent
some time in England, though those visits would have been short. By the time of his investiture as duke, Richard could speak, read, and write in French and he was able to at least understand Latin.

3.3.1. Experience in Governance

Unlike his younger brother John, Richard was intended from an early age to rule over a portion of his father’s domains. Richard’s mother Eleanor of Aquitaine earmarked her third son for her inheritance of the duchy of Aquitaine. In 1170 Henry II gave to his son Richard “the dukedom of Aquitaine and all the lands which he had received with his mother, queen Eleanor”.34 Ralph of Diecto described Aquitaine as “overflowing with riches of many kinds, excelling other parts of the western world to such an extent that historians consider it to be one of the most fortunate and flourishing of the provinces of Gaul. Its fields are fertile, its vineyards productive and its forests teem with wild life.”35 What Diecto describes is a kind of a medieval paradise. Aquitaine, with its cultural centers of music and learning as well as its courtly love would be the pervasive influence on the young Richard.

Unlike England, Aquitaine was not a cohesive domain; it was made up, rather, of several different provinces, each ruled over by a noble.36 This meant that a military dictatorship would never work in that southern portion of France; the nobility held much of the power and as a result Richard learned that military force must be used selectively. Richard was entrusted with the quelling rebellions that cropped up within Aquitaine. It was during such episodes that he learned when to use force and how to deal with fractious nobility. Richard, as duke of Aquitaine, enjoyed powers over the province no ruler had ever managed to obtain before. He had the added advantage of learning at his mother’s elbow as she ruled the duchy that she had

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35 Ralph of Coggeshall et al., Radulphi De Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum, De Expugnatione Terrae Sanctae Libellus, Thomas Agnellus De Morte Et Sepultura Henrici Regis Anglie Junioris, Gesta Falconis Filii Warini, Excerpta Ex Otii Imperialibus Gervasii Titurensis. Ex Codicibus Manuscriptis
36 Frank McLynn, ”Richard and John Kings at War,” Da Capo Press
controlled since the age of thirteen. Eleanor was noted in her time as exceptionally well-read for a woman. As her favored son and the wedge that she used against Henry II, Richard certainly received a more polished upbringing than he would have without Eleanor’s influence. In 1174, after Richard’s rebellion against his father, Henry handed over command of the duchy’s armed forces to Richard. Richard spent the next thirteen years of his life leading military expeditions on the continent. Richard extended ducal authority relentlessly; in 1189 there were fifteen ducal provostships in Aquitaine compared with four in 1174.37

3.3.2. Richard’s “Other” Education: War

Historians might not have any records of Richard’s formal education, but they do have records of the other education that he received: that of the arts of war specifically and fighting in a more general sense, as well. At the time Richard lived, men were expected to be well versed in the art of fighting. Kings were still expected to lead their troops into battle and many lands were in a constant state of rebellion. As a warrior Richard was a hard worker, a close observer, and a meticulous planner. He was not too proud to learn from his mistakes or take the advice of his followers who were more experienced.38

Richard’s education in warfare began with his first battle at the age of fifteen, courtesy of his eldest brother. Henry the Young King had decided that he was unhappy with the situation into which his father had placed him, crowned but with no power and no control over his lands. Henry was encouraged in this rebellion by his mother, Eleanor of Aquitaine, who put forth this reason as recorded by Roger of Hoveden, “It is not right that you should be king only in name, and that you should not have the power in the kingdom that is your due.”39 This statement might have referred to Henry the Young King, but both Richard and his brother Geoffrey apparently believed that it applied to them as well. Richard, the Young King, and Geoffrey

joined forces with the king of France against their father. Richard also, raised a rebellion within his own lands at Poitou. Richard was still an adolescent at the time and seems to have not been quite as skillful in battle as he would be in later years though he did managed to hold off his father for a number of months.\textsuperscript{40}

Richard continued to improve in leading battles and planning sieges, especially impressing his contemporaries with his individual prowess in battle. In 1180, Roger of Wendover describes a particular siege laid by Richard in admiring terms:

Richard, duke of Aquitaine, provoked by Geoffrey de Rancon, assembled his troops, and laid siege to Taileburg, a bold enterprise, which none of his ancestors had ever dared to undertake, for the castle was up to the that time unknown to its enemies....Richard invaded its territory with more than a lion’s fury, carried off the produce, cut down the vines, burned the villages, and demolished everything....when every thing was completed to the duke’s wish, he crossed into England, where he was received with the greatest honours by the king his father.\textsuperscript{41}

This is just one example of contemporary praise for Richard's skill in battle prior to his ascension; he continued to receive similar accolades throughout his life. In a time when a king was expected to also be a warrior and a strong king displayed the virtues of a knight, Richard's "other" education served him well. In later years, during his reign over England, Richard would turn to the only two things he knew from his youth: faith and war.

3.3.3. Eleanor of Aquitaine

Though the most pervasive influence in Richard's life might have been Aquitaine, he was also fiercely loyal to his mother Eleanor of Aquitaine. Eleanor was an extremely cultured and well educated woman who took a special interest in her second born son. Due to the fact

\textsuperscript{40} Roger de Hoveden and Henry Thomas Riley, \textit{The Annals of Roger De Hoveden, Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe, Volume One, the Second Part : A.D. 1155 to 1180} (Felinfach: Llanerch, 1996), 338.

\textsuperscript{41} Jean Flori, \textit{Richard the Lionheart: King and Knight} (Paris, France, 1999), 35.
that Henry spent a great deal of time traveling, Richard would have seen far more of his mother than his father but despite this factor, everything about his later life shows that Richard was much closer to his mother than to his father. She naturally would have influenced his personality and political decisions. After his installment as Duke of Aquitaine alongside his mother in 1170, Richard would have been in her company on an almost constant basis as they jointly ruled the duchy. Throughout her life, Eleanor would refer to Richard as the "great one" and she was far more involved in the life of Richard than most high born ladies of her time.

Richard would continue to show the polish and culture that Eleanor was so famous for throughout his life. He wrote poetry, composed songs, and like his mother was greatly influenced by and entranced with the troubadour culture. Ralph of Coggeshall was an eyewitness when Richard conducted the clerks of his royal chapel in a song and describes his eloquence and facial expressions as that of a great maestro.

3.4 Richard’s Reign and Legacy

Among most contemporaries, Richard was seen as everything that a king ought to be. He embodied the knightly virtues that were so prized during his day. During his coronation, Richard swore that he would always protect the holy church, exercise true justice towards the people committed to his charge, and abrogate all bad laws and unjust customs, while steadily observing those laws that were good. These promises made at his coronation foreshadowed the things that were to come in Richard’s reign. He spent nearly the entirety of his ten year reign at war, both on crusade and in campaigns pursued in his continental domains. Richard spent only six months of that ten year reign in England, showing that his love of Aquitaine and the south from his youth continued until his death.

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44 McLynn, *Richard and John Kings at War*, 29
45 Ibid.
3.4.1. England versus Aquitaine

Throughout his reign Richard continued to be drawn to Aquitaine. Richard preferred the freedom and hedonism of the warm south to the straitjacket of the priest-ridden north. The time he had spent in Aquitaine had been Richard’s only experience in governance and so he continued to use the military methods he had employed while duke of Aquitaine. During kingship, Richard primarily saw England as a source of revenue for his crusading and his continental campaigns. Almost immediately upon being crowned, Richard began to raise revenues to embark on crusade. Richard sold the office of sheriffs, first depriving the sheriffs of their positions on some trivial matter and then forcing them to pay a great sum of money to resume their offices. He claimed that if he could have found a buyer he would have sold London itself. Aquitaine, on the other hand, received much of Richard’s attention. Many of the battles that he fought on the continent were an attempt to retain his birthright from his mother. Some historians, especially during the early modern era, condemned Richard for spending less than 6 months in England after he was crowned claiming that he ignored the kingdom that had crowned him. What such judgments fail to take into account is the fact that Richard was not English by birth or by experience. Richard was born of French parents and spent his primary years in his mother’s Aquitanian lands; it is therefore assumed by modern scholars that Richard felt no special kinship with the island kingdom he inherited by mere chance from his father. Furthermore, none of the Angevian rulers ever referred to themselves as English. Due to his French heritage, Richard would have identified more closely with the people of the continent that he had grown up with and been responsible for since the age of fifteen. (Saul 1997a)

During his childhood the only real constant and lasting influence on Richard was not his father

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47 McLynn, Richard and John Kings at War, 25
nor his tutors but Aquitaine itself, its culture and ethos. Richard’s early years and experiences in Aquitaine shaped his outlook towards his domains after he ascended to the throne as demonstrated in the fact that he far preferred his continental domains to his island kingdom.

3.4.2. War, Crusading, and the Holy Church

Upon his ascension to the English throne, Richard immediately began preparing to go on crusade. Many of his contemporaries not only approved; he was seen as a pillar of faith for attempting to restore to the Christian faith what the infidels had stolen. Contemporaries proclaimed that “the king was indeed worth the name of king, for in the very first year of his reign, for Christ’s sake he left the realm of England.” Richard lived in a time when the church was very powerful and religion a cornerstone of everyday life. In a comparison with his contemporary Emperor Frederick of Hohenstaufen (“Frederick Barbarossa”), Richard’s warlike and sometimes bloodthirsty exploits while on crusade won much wider acclaim than the diplomatic and peaceful successes of Barbarossa, a paradox that speaks volumes about contemporary attitudes and the popularity of holy war.

Richard’s primary years had been spent in various wars against his father as well as against the rebellious nobility of Aquitaine. War was what Richard had received the most training and experience in as a young man and it is at war that Richard succeeded. Richard’s education in the arts of war and arms made him a believer in military solutions; for him, violence was a means to an end and he preferred it to the use of diplomatic or scholarly solutions. Richard’s reputation as a warrior preceded him even into the Holy Lands, where non-Christians viewed him as a contender worthy to fight against Salah al-Din Yusef (Saladin)--Saladin’s

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50 McLynn, *Richard and John Kings at War*, 285
brother claims that Muslims had heard of Richard even before he came to the Holy Land: “when he was made Duke of Aquitaine he overcame the tyrants of the province, whome none of his ancestors could conquer, with such speedy strength that he became an object of fear to the king of France himself and to all the rulers of the lands around his borders.” 52 In fact Richard was seen by Muslim and Christian contemporaries alike as far better than Phillip II of France, who put the interests of himself and France “above those of God” and fled the Holy Lands. Roger de Hoveden claims that when the rumor was spread about that the king of France was about to depart the Holy Land the principal men of his army came to him and “besought him with tears not in this shameless manner to desert the service of God.” 53 Phillip’s nobility were said to be ashamed of his actions “against God” despite the fact that Phillip claimed his need to return to France was in the best interests of his country since his heir was deathly ill and he could not leave France without an heir. (Flori 1999, 450) This is not to say that Richard was universally beloved among his fellow European monarchs and nobles. Quite the contrary; he engaged in bitter disputes with several of them. The most famous quarrels ended in Richard being captured and held for ransom by Duke Leopold V of Austra, who was encouraged by the Holy Roman Emperor Henry VI.

3.4.3. Government Under Richard

Despite the fact that there is no clear evidence of exactly where and how Richard received an education it is clear that Richard was competent enough in Latin to enjoy a Latin joke at the expense of the grammar of a less learned archbishop of Canterbury. 54 Richard was also praised by Ralph of Coggeshall for his dialectical skills and his eloquence, as a result of the

52 Jean Flori, Richard the Lionheart: King and Knight (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2006), 155.
53 McLynn, Richard and John Kings at War, 324
54 Richard of Devizes. and Appleby, The Chronicle of Richard of Devizes of the Time of King Richard the First, 76-77
letters he sent from England and from the Holy Land. Roger of Wendover praises Richard’s eloquence and gives several examples of Richard reading letters sent to him from England. Historians such as John Gillingham now point to Richard’s verbal skill and intelligence as reasons why he could govern England reasonably well despite his absence. Richard was interested in preserving a working relationship with his English barons. Historians see him as having been successful overall in this endeavor. Unlike his father and his brother Richard faced no major rebellions during his time as king of England. He successfully managed to use the primitive propaganda machine he created to enhance his reputation and maintain peace.

Richard was educated enough to not only understand certain public controversies but to end them in a way that left him on the better side of public opinion. For example, the abbey of Croyland brought its dispute over marsh lands to Richard twice while he was on the continent and both times Richard issued a mandate claiming that the abbey should have access to all the disputed lands. It was a solution that eventually worked

### 3.5 A Contested Reign

#### 3.5.1. Effects of Education and Preparation

Richard’s early education and preparation, particularly in Aquitaine in the company of his mother, shaped his outlook and the direction of his reign. Richard lived in a time when a king still led his troops into battle. His experience ruling over the duchy of Aquitaine gave him a lifelong love of war. It was battle and arms that Richard turned to more often than not to solve his problems—an outlook that was not uncommon in his day. Richard of Devizes claims that the

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55 Roger de Hoveden and Riley, *The Annals of Roger De Hoveden, Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe, Volume One, the Second Part : A.D. 1155 to 1180*, 216
56 Flori, *Richard the Lionheart : King and Knight*, 450
57 Roger de Hoveden and Riley, *The Annals of Roger De Hoveden, Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe, Volume One, the Second Part : A.D. 1155 to 1180*
king liked nothing better than storming cities and overthrowing castles and Roger of Wendover proclaims Richard's many victories in battle.\footnote{58 Ralph of Coggeshall et al., \textit{Radulphi De Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum, De Expugnatione Terræ Sanctæ Libellus}, Thomas Agnellus \textit{De Morte Et Sepultura Henrici Regis Angliæ Junioris}, Gesta Fulconis Filii Warini, \textit{Excerpta Ex Otis Imperialibus Gervasiil Tileyuriensis. Ex Codicibus Manuscriptis}}

Though there is no clear contemporary evidence of Richard getting an education other than in arms and war he was a literate man who could be surprisingly eloquent at times. Richard obviously managed to gain some scholarly knowledge in his early years, as evidenced by the fact that he was able to converse in Latin as well as his native French. In contemporary chronicles Richard is mentioned as having written or dictated numerous letters, including letters to his bishops in England referenced in Roger de Hovedens work, letters to his brother and foreign rulers referenced in Roger of Wendover’s chronicles, and missives to members of the clergy referenced in the Croyland Chronicles. Combined with his skill at arms, Richard’s knowledge and dedication to the lands he ruled made him a pillar of kingship for not only his contemporaries but many of the monarchs that came after him. In comparison to his brother John, Richard would be remembered as a hero of almost mythological proportions and a paragon of kingship.

3.5.2. Conclusion

Roger of Wendover lists three promises that Richard made in his coronation: that “he would observe peace, honour, and reverence, all his life towards God, the holy church and its ordinances; he swore that also he would exercise true justice towards the people committed to his charge; and, abrogating all bad laws and unjust customers, if any such might be found in his dominions, would steadily observe those which were good.”\footnote{59 Roger, H. O. Coxe, and Matthew Paris, \textit{Roger of Wendover Chronica}. (Vaduz: Kraus Reprint Ltd., 1964).} In each of these aims Richard’s contemporaries thought he succeeded admirably. He filled church vacancies far faster than his father had, he took up the cross and fought for the return of the holy lands, he rid the country of
unjust officials, and he meted out a swift justice towards those who had wronged him. Even foreign chroniclers saw Richard in a favorable light. The biographer of St. Louis, Jean Joinville, held Richard up as the model of kingship that Louis should strive to be. Richard was a military genius who used his knowledge and education in the arts of war to defend the Christian faith and maintain cohesiveness in his domains.

Richard did not fare so well in historical opinion during and after the Reformation in England. He was turned into everything that a king should not have been, thanks to anti-papal sentiment and a growing sense of nationalism. His final fall from grace came during the Stuart era when poet and historian Samuel Daniel criticized Richard for using the wealth and resources of England for foreign endeavors. Daniel claimed that Richard was guilty of “gleaning out what possible this kingdom could yield, to consume the same in his business of France.”

Coming at a time when English nationalism was on the rise due to external attacks, this complaint struck a chord with the public at large.

Richard and his reputation as a king and a learned man have undergone a revision in the latter part of the 20th century, led in large part by John Gillingham. Historians began to be more dispassionate in their research on Richard, trying to separate nationalism and religion from their work. They began to evaluate what contemporaries thought of Richard, and to see his reign in the context of its times, rather than colored by current views and issues.

This new way of viewing Richard and his reign is much more productive in a historical sense. Richard was a literate and by all contemporary accounts an articulate king. Richard may not have had a comprehensive or formal education but he was far from just a brutish warrior. He was literate in Latin, which was still a great accomplishment for a layperson during his era. Richard was extremely intelligent to use the skill seen by contemporaries as a great

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asset: his knowledge of battles, sieges, and war. Richard of Devizes claims that even in his foreign wars, Richard invariably was seen as the most knowledgeable combatant on the field—certainly among European warriors. At the Battle of Cyprus, for example, one contemporary observer noted that the “English would have been defeated that day if they had not been fighting under Richard.” Richard was judged as being on level with Saladin, even by Muslims. Take for example the Muslim chronicler Baha al-Din, who said that Richard was a “very powerful man of great courage…brave and clever.”

Richard had a practical education in war and governance that was typical for his time, as well as a somewhat unusual grounding in the arts and Latin while a young man—most likely due to the personal influence of his accomplished mother Eleanor of Aquitaine. Very few contemporaries could find negative comments to make about Richard as a leader, despite his heavy taxation and his constant warring. This should be taken into account rather than attempting to force modern views on Richard. For a king of his time, he was literate, cultural, and used the experiences of his youth to his advantage in his reign.

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62 Roger, Coxe, and Paris, Roger of Wendover Chronica, 90
CHAPTER 4
JOHN I

4.1 John I: A Look at Historiography

John I is one of England’s most reviled kings. Like his elder brother Richard, John has been immortalized in the legend of Robin Hood. John’s role, though, is in contrast to his hero brother; he is painted as evil king John. Though the legend of Robin Hood is more a child’s bedtime story than fact, the truth about John and his reign is at times far worse. Historiography on John tends to fall into two camps. Either John is seen as a product of his circumstances or as the worst king England has ever had. Contemporary opinion views John as “nature’s enemy.” He is often compared to his elder brother Richard I by contemporaries and invariably John comes up short. John did not possess any of the abilities that a medieval king was expected to have: he was not a great warrior and he was not particularly faithful to the church. Combined with his loss of Normandy to the French, John’s contemporaries viewed him more with hostility than respect.

John’s reputation remained the same up until the Reformation. When Henry VIII began to quarrel with the papacy, John became the rehabilitated predecessor “of the Protestant Tudors.” In 1611, John Speed claims had John’s story not fallen into “the hands of exasperated writers, he had appeared a king of as great renown as misfortunes.” Consequently as John rose, his brother Richard fell. In the seventeenth century, John’s reputation again fell with the revival of the cult of Magna Carta. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, historians such as W.L. Warren and J.C. Holt turned to the newly published judicial and financial records that claimed John was facing insurmountable odds against Phillip

66 Gillingham, *Richard I*, 158
Augustus and France. In the last decades of the twentieth century, new work in those same financial records is increasingly returning opinion of John and his record as king to contemporary negative views.

As primary sourcing for the reign of John, this study utilizes extant chronicles such as those by Richard of Devizes, Roger de Hoveden, Gerald of Wales, and Roger of Wendover. These sources represent the largest available body of contemporary evidence for the life and reign of John. Unfortunately, the calendar rolls available online that could shed light on a study such as this, do not begin until the reign of John’s son Henry III.

For secondary sources on John this study relies on Ralph Turner, John Gillingham, Frank McLynn, Doris Mary Stenton, and Kate Norgate. These works represent a wide range of opinions on John and his reign as well as the most current research in the field of study.

4.2 John’s Ascension to the Throne

John was the fourth surviving son born to Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine. By the time John was born the combined domains of the Angevin Empire had already been divided amongst his elder brothers. Henry was to receive England, Normandy, and Anjou; Richard was to receive the duchy of Aquitaine, and Geoffrey was to receive Brittany by right of marriage to its heiress. As a result there was no domain left to bequeath to John and he acquired the nickname John Lackland. John inherited the throne in 1199 after his elder brother Richard I died childless. It was contested by his nephew Arthur who many said should have been king by hereditary right. John reigned until 1216, losing his continental lands to the French and his royal power to his barons.

4.3 John’s Education
Like his elder brother Richard, virtually nothing is known about John’s education and early childhood. Historians such as Ralph Turner suggest that perhaps the key to John’s character is the fact that he was the youngest child and the youngest son by nine years. He would have seen little of his mother as she constantly traveled throughout her domains. Though he did spend more time with his father than any of his elder brothers, his father was not a constant influence in his young life either. This is not a life that would have been suitable to an extensive education but it is a life that was common of the times.

John’s academic education remains something of a mystery to historians. His tutoring seems to have been entrusted to Ranulph Glanville, the king’s most senior official in England. Glanville was well known as a major legal official under Henry II, Richard I, and John I. For many years historians attributed to Glanville the authorship of De Legibus Angliae. But modern historians, beginning with Frederick Maitland, have wondered whether Glanville could have taken time away from his duties as the Angevins’ chief judicial official to compose that treatise. One must wonder whether Glanville as a tutor would have taken more than a cursory interest in John. Perhaps, just as Glanville may have left the composition of the bulk of De Legibus to a more junior clerk such as Hubert Walter or Geoffrey Fitz Peter, so Glanville may have let a younger legal scholar teach see to John’s education. Beyond Glanville’s mentorship, little is known about John’s youth. Chroniclers were hardly aware of his existence, for fourth sons, even of a king, were very insignificant because the likelihood of their inheriting was very low.

4.3.1. Experience in Governance

John was first and foremost Henry II’s favorite son. John had the fortune of spending far more time than his elder brothers with his father and therefore had more opportunity to

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69 Ibid.
70 Ibid.
watch him govern. In 1174 John was with his father in Normandy as Henry received the papal legate and then crossed over to England with him.\textsuperscript{71} Though Henry II tried at various times to come up with ways to divide his lands in order to grant John with a portion of his domains, he was never successful. In fact all that Henry managed to do was to create resentment amongst his sons. Historians such as Ralph Turner suggest that it was this lack of a place within the family “consortium” that would give John much of his insecurity and determination to rival his brothers later in life.\textsuperscript{72}

Beginning in 1173, Henry II attempted to provide for his youngest son as well as seal alliances through marriage. He obtained in marriage for John the hand of the daughter of Hubert, count of Maurienne.\textsuperscript{73} The marriage contract offered John the fiefs in Piedmont and Savoy from his father-in-law; Henry in his turn would allow his son to have the three castles of Chinon, Loudun, and Mirebeau. But the treaty was moot for a couple of reasons: since John was only five years old at the time, the castles and the fiefs would have been governed by his father, and the treaty sat unenforced because the count’s daughter died not long after it was concluded.

In 1177 Henry created his son John king of Ireland, “having a grant and confirmation thereof from Alexander, the Supreme Pontiff.”\textsuperscript{74} At this time Henry also gave out huge grants of land to men such as to Hugh de Lacy and Hubert Fitz-Hubert. All of this he did in his son John’s name, while requesting each lord to do homage and swear fealty to both himself and John in exchange for their lands in Ireland.\textsuperscript{75} While Henry might have intended for John to eventually rule over Ireland, he did not give him the power to govern the country nor did he set up a council for his son to do so.

\textsuperscript{71} Ralph V. Turner, \textit{King John : England's Evil King?} (Stroud: Tempus, 2005), 168.
\textsuperscript{73} W. L. Warren, \textit{King John} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), 167.
\textsuperscript{74} Roger and Riley, \textit{The Annals of Roger De Hoveden. Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201.}, 144
\textsuperscript{75} Turner, \textit{King John : England’s Evil King?}, 168
During the reign of his brother Richard I, John received an extensive set of lands over which he would have full control. In 1189 Richard gave John the earldom of Gloucester, the castles of Marlborough, Lutegareshale, Bolsover, Nottingham, and Lancaster, with the honors belonging to those properties. Later in that same year Richard gave John the counties of Cornwall, Devon, Somerset, and Dorset. All of these were turned over to John with no restrictions placed upon his governance of them. Unfortunately, John's governance of his territories can only be guessed at because there is no contemporary record of his time spent there or his administration. It is telling that Richard never appointed John as his regent while he was away on crusade or in his continental domains. Instead he appointed a series of justiciars and allowed his mother a hand in running the country when she was present.

While John was the fourth born son of the king in a time when the youngest son often had no inheritance, he managed to obtain lands and some experience in governance. He spent far more time in the company of his father while his father governed England, than any of his elder brothers had.

4.3.2. Experience in War

At the time of John's life and reign, a king was expected to be a warrior. In fact his elder brother Richard was revered for just that reason; he was a "chivalrous, noble warrior who is what a king ought to be." John was certainly given his opportunity to become a warrior but does not seem to have possessed the aptitude or the need to excel in the arts of war as his elder brothers did. In 1185 John was made a belted knight by his father at Windsor and then

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78 Ibid., 143
sent to lead his first army into Ireland.\textsuperscript{79} John did not seem to have natural talent at war. In fact Gerald of Wales states that in John’s attempted expedition of Ireland in 1185 the methods that John used were not efficient and he was woefully inadequate in his planning to take and hold the country securely.\textsuperscript{80} Roger de Hoveden reports that John “thought fit to shut up everything in his own purse, and was unwilling to pay their wages to his soldiers, he lost the greater part of his army in several conflicts with the Irish, and being at last reduced to want of troops...he returned to England.”\textsuperscript{81}

John does not seem to have taken part in many other military excursions. He is listed as being a part of Richard’s final rebellion against his father in 1189. Hoveden claims that the name at the top of the list of those who had deserted King Henry for his son Earl Richard and the king of France was that of John.\textsuperscript{82} Though John is mentioned as having taken part in the rebellion, there is no evidence that he led troops, was with his brother in battle, or took any part in the fighting.

4.4 John’s Reign and Legacy

John did not seem to possess the qualities that a ruler was expected to have in his day. He was not a great warrior, he was not particularly dedicated to the church, and he was thought to have been sadistic on occasion. Most chroniclers are not quite as harsh regarding John in the first two or three years of his reign, but after that period opinion of him is overwhelmingly negative.

4.4.1. Loss of Normandy and Death of Arthur

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid., 144
\textsuperscript{80} Warren, King John, 167
\textsuperscript{81} Ralph of Coggeshall et al., Radulphi De Coggeshall Chronicon Anglicanum, De Expugnatione Terrae Sanctæ Libellus, Thomas Agnellus De Morte Et Sepultura Henrici Regis Angliae Junioris, Gesta Fulconis Filii Warini, Excerpta Ex Otis Imperialibus Gervasii Tileburiensis. Ex Codicibus Manuscriptis, 140
\textsuperscript{82} Roger and Riley, The Annals of Roger De Hoveden. Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201., 144
John’s failure to defend Normandy and his subsequent loss of all the Angevins’ continental lands with the exception of Aquitaine, were failures that later defined his entire reign. The English monarchs’ continental possessions were extremely valuable lands, providing a foothold on the continent against the French as well as a large amount of money for the royal coffers. John showed his lack of skill in battle and his lack of comprehension of defense, just as he had in Ireland. Roger of Wendover claims that when John was told that Philip Augustus was attempting to capture his castles, John was feasting sumptuously with his queen daily, and “prolonging his sleep until breakfast time. Messengers were sent to try to bring John from his pleasures and told him that the French king ‘disposes of your property at will, without anyone gainsaying him.’ In reply to this news king John said ‘let him do so.’” John’s apparent lack of care that the French king was seizing his property greatly upset his barons and earls. He was abandoned by his men and left with scarcely a force in Normandy. When he returned to England he blamed his barons for the loss of Normandy, exacting immense sums of money from the earls, barons, knights, and religious men. John did not display the battle prowess that his brother and father had, and many contemporaries held him in contempt for what they saw as his incorrigible idleness. Warren claims that Richard “would have been in the thick of the battles to regain Normandy or to defend its borders. John stayed in England biting his nails.” John’s repeated failures in battle earned him the title as the unluckiest king of England in later historiography.

The other great blow to John’s contemporary reputation was the mystery surrounding the death of his nephew Arthur. Arthur was certainly a rival claimant to the throne, and by

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83 Warren, King John, 167  
84 Roger and Riley, The Annals of Roger De Hoveden. Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201., 143  
85 Ibid., 143  
86 [{144 Roger, 1964/s207;}]  
87 Turner, King John : England's Evil King?, 168  
hereditary right he was the lawful king. In Arthur contemporaries saw a symbol of a mythically glorious past and a hopeful future. Because Arthur disappeared and was never heard from again, rumors ran rampant of John’s involvement. One such rumor claimed that John killed Arthur at Rouen and it is true that John was present at Rouen at the alleged time of death.

4.4.2. Battles with the Holy Church

John’s reputation also suffered from his battles with the Catholic Church and his mistreatment of the church within England’s borders. In 1203, John was accused of “laying violent hands on the property of conventual or parochial churches, inasmuch as he employed Hubert archbishop of Canterbury as the agent of this robbery in regard to the church property.” Later on in 1207 John was accused of threatening the pope. The pope responded by telling John that no “prince had sought [sic] to degrade his dignity like John had.”

The final straw came in 1209 when John was excommunicated by the pope. Two years prior due to John’s actions at Canterbury, England had been placed under an interdict. This was severe punishment for a religious country like England. Instead of attempting to reconcile with Rome and allow his people religious services again, John chose to pursue a “most severe persecution against the clergy as well as some of the laity, and had entirely destroyed all kind of hope in every one of any improvement.” John was also accused of “unceasingly laying the hands of rage and cruelty on the holy church in opposition to the Lord.”

John’s reputation as a king suffered from the fight with the pope. Though no layman’s comments are recorded on the subject, it cannot have been easy for a population to be

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89 Ibid., 215
90 Warren, King John, 99
92 Warren, King John, 82
separated from their religion for so great a time, particularly in a time when the church was a pervasive influence and crusading was a popular endeavor.

4.4.3. Magna Carta

Another major misstep in John’s reign was his mistreatment of his barons. John had taken the old Angevin weapons of exploiting the nobility in their weakest spot and capitalizing on their family interests, and generally had the nobles more ruthlessly and more generally than any English king had before him. In the words of Gervase of Canterbury, “No one in the land could resist his will in anything, the king himself seemed alone to be mighty in the land and he neither feared God nor regarding men.” John demanded hostages for the continued good behavior of his most powerful barons. In July 1212 John hanged twenty-eight sons of Welsh chieftains whose fathers had broken faith, proving that his threats against their family hostages were not empty. Another series of dramatic episodes came in the period of 1212 to 1214, when John attempted to force his barons to pay a scutage of 3 marks on the knight’s fee-- an extremely high rate for the time period. Individual grievances soon turned into a coordinated movement and “those who were on behalf of the barons it is not necessary to enumerate, since the whole nobility of England were now assembled together in numbers not to be computed. John knew he would be forced to at least put on a show of consenting to the baron’s wishes; the Magna Carta was drawn up. This document provided for the fair redress of complaints against the king’s extortion and abuse within the system--wrongs that had taken place over an extended period of time. The Great Charter also included a clause conceding the freedom of the Church, in particular the right of the Church to elect its own dignitaries without royal interference, reflecting John’s recent dispute with the pope.

94 Ibid., 241
95 Ibid., 250
96 Ibid., 269
97 Warren, King John, 181
98 Ibid., 181
This document effectively destroyed much of the sovereignty of the crown that John’s father had worked so hard to consolidate. Though John attempted to have the charter declared null by the pope and bring his barons back into line, the barons invited King Louis of France to invade and John died leaving his son Henry’s succession in question.

### 4.5 A Reign to be Remembered

#### 4.5.1. Effects of Education and Preparation

As little is known of John’s education and early life, it is hard to determine what if any effect they had on his reign. Ralph Turner claims that so little is recorded of John because the golden age of medieval English historiography ended in his first years. It is known that John acquired a love of books somewhere in his youth; he built an impressive library stored at Reading Abbey. It is also known from chronicles that John would have spent far more time with his father than any of his elder brothers did. He was Henry’s favorite son and is listed in several spots as accompanying him on his travels within the chronicles. Therefore in the company of his father John would have been able to observe his governance John did obtain a generous portion of lands when his brother Richard inherited the throne, all of which he had free rein to oversee as he saw fit. This leads historians to believe that John did come to the throne knowledgeable about administration and governance but completely inept at foreign policy or the arts of war. His ability as an administrator can be shown in the ways which he exploited his people. John was able to understand and employ the conventions that his predecessors had used to obtain money and power, but he took administrative efficiency so far that he seemed grasping. While he may have abused his powers, John’s early life and education had taught him to run a government in Richard’s absence and go about collecting his dues.

The one area in which John seems to have had little preparation or perhaps interest was warfare. A king in his time was expected to be a great knight and even a younger son

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99 Gillingham, *John, King of England*
would have received some instruction in martial affairs. John was a failure during nearly every major battle he undertook, which could be attributed to the fact that he did not receive the instruction his elder brothers did. William Marshall was the knightly instructor of the Young King and in turn seems to have had an effect on all three of the elder boys. Henry, Richard, and Geoffrey were close enough in age to have shared tutors or masters at arms; they would have shared a nursery and a schoolroom. John was younger than his brothers by nine years. By the time he reached an age of instruction in arms and warfare, his brothers were already out fighting battles.

However little is known about John’s early life and education, scholars recognize that he did learn administration and law at some point (perhaps under Glanville or one of his clerks) and would have observed both his father and brother as they governed the kingdom. John had acquired a significant area of land by the time of his ascension, though more than likely he was on the shorter end of any training in knightly virtues and warfare. King John died a failure, perhaps even in his own eyes, having failed to recover Normandy because of his lack of battle prowess and having provoked a baronial rebellion.100

4.5.2. Conclusion

Matthew Paris claimed that “with John’s foul deeds England’s whole realm is stinking, as doth hell, too, wherein he is now sinking.” John lost Normandy, forfeited much of his power as sovereign to his barons, and put the succession of his son Henry in serious jeopardy. His lack of knowledge in the arts of battle as well as the personality of entitlement he seems to have developed early in life combined to make him an absolute failure as a king in his contemporaries’ eyes. John lacked the skills that were needed to be considered a great king at the time: knightly virtues, a love of the Church, and skill in battle. Without these things, any king in 13th century Europe was bound to be considered a failure.

100 Roger and Riley, The Annals of Roger De Hoveden. Comprising the History of England and of Other Countries of Europe from A.D. 732 to A.D. 1201., 319
Historical opinion shifted on John as historical opinion of Richard fell. In the early modern era, John was considered a forerunner of English clerical independence for his rebellion against the papacy and held up as an idol for Protestant monarchs. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries historians examining the chancery rolls determined that John was at a severe disadvantage when fighting Philip Augustus to recover his continental domains. But what these historians failed to see, and what historians have recently discovered, is that John had less in terms of wealth through his own making. His own policies led to a drop in the amount of revenue that he could pull in; his crown revenues were cut in half in the years 1212 to 1214, while his loss of Normandy proved to be a huge financial blow to the Angevin Empire. Historians such as John Gillingham have proven that contemporaries never had a high opinion of John, even before his foreign policy disasters began in 1204. Such scholars contend that the financial records in fact prove nothing when it comes to John and his policies.¹⁰¹ Even Doris Mary Stenton, writing in the 1950s, claims that while modern scholars should take everything that John's contemporaries say with a grain of salt, that “when all has been said which may lighten the picture of this most enigmatic king, there remains the mistrustful sovereign who binds his subjects to him by taking their sons as hostages for good behavior, who charges individuals, even his best servants, with an insupportable weight of debt...who seems as irresponsible in his occasional pardons as in his impositions; the king whose arbitrary conduct drives his subjects to rebellion.”¹⁰²

John was seen as a failure within his own time. Though he did have more of an even may have been tutored in law by able scholars, John seems to have used this to exploit, not reign effectively. He also lacked extensive experience and training in military skills, which contributed to the loss of his continental domains and his inability to repel an attack at the end of his reign by King Louis of France and his English barons

¹⁰² Turner, King John: England’s Evil King?, 218
Richard III has inspired both love and hatred, both among the public and historical scholars. He was immortalized by Shakespeare as a murderous villain, and yet numerous Richard III societies have been created with the sole intent of rehabilitating his reputation. The majority of Richard’s early years are lost in obscurity due to the Wars of the Roses. His education can only be guessed at prior to the age of sixteen and even after this age the evidence is spotty. Despite this lack of evidence historians do know that Richard was literate and did have a chance to observe his elder brother on the throne.

Historiography on Richard is wide in scope and varied in judgment. The late fifteenth century is a poorly documented period of English history and few contemporary chronicles survive regarding Richard and his reign. The existing contemporary chronicles were written primarily by men of the south and Richard identified with the north, resulting in an extreme bias against Richard. He is portrayed by contemporary writers such as John Rous as a deformed monster and tyrant, likened to the antichrist. The first actual biography of Richard III was written in the early 1500s by Sir Thomas More. More in this instance is a fairly unbiased judge but he still portrays Richard as a man who betrayed his own family and nation. More claims that Richard was the sworn protector of the two princes in the tower who was “to their father beholden, to themselves by oath and allegiance bounden, all the bands broken that biden man and man together, without any respect of God or the world, unnaturally contrived to bereave them not only their dignity but also their lives.”

Modern historiography on Richard III falls into two camps, revisionist and traditionalist. Revisionists such as Josephine Wilkinson claim that Richard was limited by the situation in

103 Ibid., 325
104 Gillingham, John, King of England
which he found himself and even more so by the house he was born into. She places the blame for his actions squarely on factors other than Richard himself.\textsuperscript{105} Traditionalists such as John Gillingham accuse Richard of threatening the basis of the monarchy itself and claim he should have been content to play the role of the protector of a young king as John of Gaunt had been for Richard II.\textsuperscript{106} While there is very little middle ground, historians such as David Hipshon point out that there was quite possibly both good and bad within Richard and his reign. Hipshon also notes that most of the modern biographies and studies of Richard are based on mere speculation due to a lack of sources and questions regarding the veracity of those documents that are available.\textsuperscript{107}

This study has chosen to use for primary sourcing Dominic Mancini’s work \textit{The Occupation of the Throne of England by Richard III}, Thomas More’s \textit{Richard III}, Polydore Vergil’s English history and the \textit{Second Continuation of the Croyland Chronicles}. These three sources were chosen because they have repeatedly been proven as reliable. All three writers had no reason to be unjust towards Richard and the three works have fairly consistent stories despite having never viewed the other’s work. Also, all three sources were written fairly close to the time that Richard lived; each of the three authors would have either seen his reign first hand or would have access to primary sources and people who told of the events. For secondary sources Paul Murray Kendall, Alison Weir, Alison Hanham, Josephine Wilkinson, and David Hipshon have been chosen because these works represent the broad range of available material regarding Richard III, both revisionist and traditionalist. Several of these works also happen to be the most recent writings on Richard III and therefore encompass the most current research and theories.

\section*{5.2 Richard’s Ascension to the Throne}

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\item \textsuperscript{105} Stenton, \textit{English Society in the Early Middle Ages, 1066-1307}, 49
\item \textsuperscript{106} Alison Weir, \textit{The Princes in the Tower} (New York: Ballantine, 1994), 2.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Thomas More and George M. Logan, \textit{The History of King Richard the Third : A Reading Edition} (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005), 8.
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Richard was the fourth son born to Cecily Neville and Richard, Duke of York. Richard could trace his lineage to both Lionel, Duke of Clarence who was the second son of Edward III and to Edmund, Duke of York who was the fourth son of Edward III. It was this lineage that gave first Richard’s father and then his brother the basis for their claim to the crown when Henry VI proved to be unfit to rule. Richard was born just two years before the first major battle in the Wars of the Roses. His father and brother Edmund were executed and Richard himself was held prisoner several times during the various battles. Richard’s eldest brother Edward took up his father’s claim to the throne and along with his cousin, the Earl of Warwick, took the throne from Henry VI. After Edward’s premature death leaving his twelve year old son on the throne, Richard was appointed protector. As preparations for the young king’s coronation were made, Edward IV’s marriage to Elizabeth Woodville was declared invalid and young Edward V made ineligible to rule. Richard was proclaimed king two days later. Edward’s two young boys never emerged from the Tower of London giving rise to the rumors that Richard had them murdered to clear his path to the throne.

Richard’s reign was short, only two years in duration. He was killed at the Battle of Bosworth, the last English king to lead his troops into battle. He was succeeded by Henry Tudor.

5.3 Richard’s Education

Richard’s formal education and his experiences prior to ascending the throne are scarcely documented due to the disruptions of war and flight. In fact after his birth Richard virtually disappears from any contemporary source for the first seven years of his life and after this time he is only mentioned in passing until roughly his eighteenth birthday. Unfortunately historians are unable to rely on any evidence of his elder brother’s educations as these are also poorly documented; in addition Richard’s male siblings were significantly older than Richard, and were educated and grown men by the start of the war.
5.3.1. Formal Education

Richard seems to have been a weak child but appeared to have survived the perils of infancy. Historians generally agree that though there is no evidence of his infancy and early youth, he probably spent the first seven years of his life at Fotheringay in Northamptonshire where he was born in the company of his brother George and his sister Margaret. In his early years it was almost certainly his mother who was responsible for his education along with a governess that would have been engaged, something that was consistent with contemporary customs. As Richard’s father began his rebellion when Richard was only two years of age, it is likely that he did not experience a normal upbringing; even if the first seven years of his life were spent in one place, it was not an environment that was conducive to learning. Even after the age of seven, Richard continued to move about with his family and had an uncertain future. A letter written in 1460 shows that Richard was then in London with his family at the house of Sir John Fastolf, having left the relative safety of Fotheringay. This would not be the last stop for Richard on his childhood journey through war. Richard was essentially the child of a violent age, born to a legacy of civil war. His childhood and formative years were overshadowed by battles, treachery, and violent death.

Despite this upheaval and an environment that was not conducive to learning, Richard did manage to obtain knowledge of reading, writing, and Latin as well as some history. Thomas More points out that Richard “the third son...was in wit and courage equal with either of them”. It has been suggested that since Richard was the fourth of the Duke and Duchess of York’s healthy sons, he might have been destined for the church. His neat handwriting in a time of illegible jottings, his excellent grounding in grammar, and his abilities to Latin have been put

forth as possible indications that he was intended for the church but there is no contemporary mention of this.\textsuperscript{112}

Richard’s education became far more stable in 1465. His brother was king and Richard was sent to the household of his cousin, the Earl of Warwick, to finish his training and education. It was customary at the time for the sons of nobility to foster in the households of great magnates. Again there is no record for Richard’s activities once he entered into the earl’s household. The only contemporary evidence is an Exchequer receipt in 1465 telling us that the Earl of Warwick received a thousand pounds for the maintenance of Richard, duke of Gloucester.\textsuperscript{113} This time in the north began a lifelong bond with the people there that lasted throughout Richard’s life and influence his reign. The north would be his strongest power base and it was the north that he felt a special kinship with the populace. In 1469 Richard reached the age of maturity in medieval England, sixteen. His formal education was considered to be at an end and he was ready to move into the world of war and court politics.

5.3.2. Military Education

Though Richard’s scholarly education can only be guessed at based upon his letters, formal correspondence, and later accomplishments, historians do have a fairly accurate accounting of his military training after his coming of age. It is assumed that the time with the Earl of Warwick would have begun Richard’s training in arms and the art of war but his time with his brother would certainly make him a master at it.

Edward’s throne was far from secure. He faced rebellions throughout the kingdom, some from his own allies and family. Beginning in October 1469 Richard was tasked by his brother with restoring order in Wales. He was given royal powers to raise troops, reduce castles, and bring the rebels to justice. In the space of a few short months Richard had gone

\textsuperscript{112} Norman Davis et al., \textit{Paston Letters and Papers of the Fifteenth Century}. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 525.
\textsuperscript{113} Weir, \textit{The Princes in the Tower}, 29
from landless minor to a powerful lord. He was a lieutenant charged with subduing a major rebellion in one of the most difficult regions in the realm.\textsuperscript{114} He acquitted himself well and confirmed his brother’s faith in his abilities, the castles were reconquered, and the rebels were brought to heel in a matter of months.\textsuperscript{115}

If the fighting and rebellion in Wales had been Richard’s introduction into commanding troops and battle, then his brother’s reconquest of his throne would thoroughly baptize him in the arts of war. Edward and Richard fled into exile in 1470 and spent seven months attempting to raise the forces needed to return Edward to his throne. Richard would be an integral part in restoring the crown to Edward, his loyalty never waverling. In 1471 Richard fought in his first major battle at Barnet and performed with distinction. There is no contemporary record of Richard’s involvement in this battle, but historians such as Hipshon and Kendall claim that Richard was given command of the rearguard at Tewkesbury. Just three weeks later, as well, a later charter issued by Richard called for prayers for those who had died beside him at Barnet and Tewkesbury; such documents place him at the battle.\textsuperscript{116}

Even after his brother’s throne was secure again and England was restored to peace, Richard continued to perform military service for his brother. In 1482 Richard was given the command of the entire “tremendous and destructive war proclaimed by Edward against the Scots.”\textsuperscript{117} Richard successfully fought several battles in Scotland and secured the return of Berwick to the English. This was a significant achievement because it meant that the eastern coast of England was secure from Scottish naval depredations.\textsuperscript{118}

5.3.3. Experience in Governance

\textsuperscript{114} More and Logan, \textit{The History of King Richard the Third : A Reading Edition}, 9
\textsuperscript{115} Wilkinson, \textit{Richard III : The Young King to be}, 90
\textsuperscript{116} Hipshon, \textit{Richard III}, 56
\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 69
\textsuperscript{118} Paul Murray Kendall, \textit{Richard the Third}. (New York: W.W. Norton, 1956), 90.
Richard was uniquely poised to gain great experience in governance and administration prior to his ascension to the throne. Not only did he spend an increasing amount of time in his brother’s presence but he was awarded vast estates in the north and had a free hand in running them. After his coming of age Richard was given far more responsibility by his brother; Edward apparently realized that there were few upon whom he could rely with as much confidence as he could trust his younger brother.

Richard was endowed with a number of pieces of land and several titles by his brother beginning at the age of nine. Richard was created the duke of Gloucester in 1461 at the same time his elder brother George was created the duke of Clarence. In 1462 Richard was created Admiral of England, Ireland and Aquitaine as well.\(^\text{119}\) Due to his young age these initial investments were thought not to allow Richard a part in his brother’s reign but to provide the needed income to meet the costs of a princely upbringing.\(^\text{120}\) Later in life Richard again would be endowed with a great deal of land, particularly in the north, that would require his attention in administrative affairs and increase his reputation in the northern areas of the kingdom. Richard, by right of his wife Anne Neville, inherited in 1472 a portion of all “castles, honors, lordships, manors and other possessions, late of Richard Earl of Warwick.”\(^\text{121}\) Just before this in 1471 a grant was issued to “Richard of Gloucester and heirs male of the castles, manors and lordships of Middleham and Sherriff Hutton, co. York, and Penrith, co. Cumberland.”\(^\text{122}\) These are just two examples of the numerous appointments of titles and lands made to Richard through his marriage and royal patronage. Because of the nature of the holdings granted to him in the north, Richard took an increasing interest in the government there and spent his time

\(^{119}\) Hipshon, \textit{Richard III}, 86; Kendall, \textit{Richard the Third.}, 96

\(^{120}\) Ingulf, Peter, and Riley, \textit{Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers.}, 481

\(^{121}\) Hipshon, \textit{Richard III}, 116

administering justice and creating allies for himself. It was these allies that would later form the bulk of his office holders, council members, and general support system when he came to the throne. He was given his own areas to administer and govern, providing invaluable experience for his later reign.

Richard not only had the opportunity to learn governance and administration in his own lands but he increasingly took part in his brother’s administration and was given responsibilities to carry out in the name of royal justice. In 1469 Richard had his first taste of meting out royal justice. He was present at the treason trial of Thomas Hungerford and Henry Courtenay in Salisbury. Edward himself presided over the trial and Richard took a prominent role in the proceedings. The earliest surviving letter written in Richard's hand dates from just after this trial in June 1469 as Richard was preparing to go north with his brother. He wrote to Sir John Say asking for a loan to outfit his troops for battle. Even though John Say had powerful connections of his own, at this point Richard's favor and influence with the king was worth courting.  

Beginning in 1471 Edward began to entrust his brother with more and more responsibility and power. Richard was made constable and admiral of England and was active in both capacities throughout his reign. In 1473 Richard was commissioned by Edward to “array the king’s leiges of the county of York and bring them to the king’s presence with all speed when required.” In 1477 Richard was commissioned to enquire into a report that “diverse Scots, women as well as men, wander about various parts of the county of York, especially the West Riding, and have burnt diverse houses and buildings; [his duty was] to arrest and imprison the offenders and their instigators.” In 1483 Richard was charged with an inquiry into discords between the king’s tenants and the abbot of St. Mary’s Fountain concerning the

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123 Hipshon, Richard III, 54
124 Dockray, Richard III : A Source Reader, 42
125 Ibid., 51
bounds of the forest and the chase.\textsuperscript{126} His power in the northern region was more or less absolute by this time. Contemporaries as well as modern scholars credited him with a successful administration in the north due to the loyalty he inspired in his deputies that he treated with great respect and rewarded handsomely.\textsuperscript{127} Richard was becoming an increasingly integral part of his brother’s reign, giving him invaluable knowledge of the inner workings of government, administration, and justice. Learning firsthand how to mediate disputes and exercise royal authority was far more effective than any scholarly course into the history of government.

5.4 Richard’s Reign and Legacy

Despite the fact that Richard experienced a turbulent youth that was not conducive to scholarly education he did acquire a solid grounding in grammar and Latin, and by all accounts continued to have a preference for books and learning until his death. He also experienced a practical immersion in the art of governance and administration, observing his brother during his reign as well as administering his own domains. Despite the reputation that he acquired after his death, Richard did reign effectively during his two years on the throne and was known for being a king who valued justice, though he was woefully inept in the area of foreign policy. All of this can be traced back to his early education and preparation for a throne that no one had expected him to inherit.

5.4.1. Usurpation and the Princes in the Tower

The Croyland Chronicle explains Richard’s usurpation of the throne, as well as his rationale supporting his royal claim this way: “Richard, the protector, claimed for himself the government of the kingdom with the name and title of king; and, on the same day, in the great hall of Westminster, he thrust himself into the marble chair. The pretext for this intrusion and taking possession in this was as follows. It was put forward, by means of a supplication

\textsuperscript{126} Hipshon, Richard III, 57
\textsuperscript{127} Dockray, Richard III: A Source Reader
contained in certain parchment roll, that King Edward’s sons were bastards, on the grounds that
he had been precontracted to a certain Lady Eleanor Butler before he married Queen Elizabeth
and, further, that the blood of his other brother, George Duke of Clarence, had been attainted,
so that, at the time, no certain and uncrupt blood of the lineage of Richard Duke of York could
be found except in the person of Richard Duke of Gloucester.”\(^{128}\) Croyland goes on to say that
to enforce this Richard had brought in armed men, “in fearful and unheard-of numbers, from the
north, and Wales”\(^{129}\) Richard used the base of power he had cultivated and acquired in his
youth to assume the throne. Many historians claim that he was merely doing what the
experiences of his youth had taught him. His father and brother had both coveted the throne
while Henry VI was reigning and many contemporary chroniclers claim that Richard had a hand
in murdering Henry VI in the Tower of London. Vergil says that “Henry the Sixth, being not long
before deprived of his diadem, was put to death in the Tower of London. The continual report is
that Richard Duke of Gloucester killed him with a sword.”\(^{130}\) Thomas More claims that Richard
“slew with his own hands King Henry VI”.\(^{131}\) Richard had experienced the death of an anointed
king during his lifetime, if not by his own hand then surely at least by order of his brother
Edward. Richard’s early experiences did not teach him deference toward an anointed king.

If this were the case, why would he have felt any loyalty to the young King Edward V
upon his brother’s death? Thomas More, who was no great lover of Henry VII and a stickler for
the truth most of the time, believed Richard to be the guilty party in the deaths of King Edward V
and his brother.\(^{132}\) Historian Alison Weir cites evidence that the bones discovered and tested
during the seventeenth century, then again in the twentieth century were in fact that of the two
young princes. She states that given the evidence produced by the scientific findings and the

\(^{128}\) Ibid., 51
\(^{129}\) Ibid., 52
\(^{130}\) Weir, The Princes in the Tower, 56
\(^{131}\) Ingulf, Peter, and Riley, Ingulph’s Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by
Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers., 489
\(^{132}\) Ibid., 489
fact that no other young boys of rank disappeared into the Tower during the time period prove that Richard was indeed the culprit.\footnote{Vergil and Ellis, \textit{Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III, from an Early Translation, Preserved among the Mss. of the Old Royal Library in the British Museum}, 152}

5.4.2. Governance, Law, and Foreign Policy

Aware that he needed support and that a king’s presence can do an immense amount to secure the loyalty of his people, Richard embarked on a progress not long after his coronation. He was anxious to “display his superior royal rank as diligently as possible in the North, where he had spent most of his time previously.”\footnote{More and Logan, \textit{The History of King Richard the Third : A Reading Edition}, 8}Richard understood from his time in the north that a king must be seen and heard to inspire loyalty in his subjects. His time governing one of the most contentious areas in England had taught him what factions could do to undermine authority and he wished to build a power base. It seems that while Richard had loyalty and support from much of the north, he received a cold welcome from the south. Vergil claims that Richard’s progress and attempts at handing out justice were merely his calculation and deceit disguised to make him seem a better king.\footnote{Ibid.}

As Duke of Gloucester Richard built up a reputation for the impartial administration of justice promoted by his ducal council and it was one he aimed to continue after his ascension. He admonished his councilors to act with impartiality and justice at all times and encouraged those citizens who had been ill-treated, wronged, or unlawfully persecuted to come forward with petitions. There is no doubt that Richard’s concern for the welfare of the poor was genuine, he understood that a reign filled with injustice and disorder would make it hard for a king to preside.\footnote{Weir, \textit{The Princes in the Tower}, 258}Richard had been renowned for the order and stability that he had brought to the north and he was determined to try and do the same in the south. Unfortunately for Richard the rebellions he experienced early in his reign made him mistrustful. He tended to promote his

\footnotetext[133]{Vergil and Ellis, \textit{Three Books of Polydore Vergil's English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III, from an Early Translation, Preserved among the Mss. of the Old Royal Library in the British Museum}, 152}
\footnotetext[134]{More and Logan, \textit{The History of King Richard the Third : A Reading Edition}, 8}
\footnotetext[135]{Ibid.}
\footnotetext[136]{Weir, \textit{The Princes in the Tower}, 258}
northern brethren over others and this was resented in the south. This tendency to promote those he trusted, namely the men from the north, caused unrest within his kingdom and did little to lend credence to his reign.

The one area in which Richard was woefully inept and untrained was that of foreign policy. Unlike his elder brother, as a younger son Richard had not interacted with foreign ambassadors on his father’s behalf, he had not been at court for extended periods of time in the company of foreign emissaries, nor had he learned how to play the game of politics that was so necessary in foreign relations. In his dealings with foreign nations Richard had often been leading men into battle rather than entering into diplomatic negotiations; he was far more adept at dealing with his own countrymen. Richard also had known prejudices against many of the international players. In 1475 he made his dislike of the French known when he refused to attend peace negotiations at Picquigny. It was in the end French support for Henry Tudor that would bring about Richard’s demise.\(^{137}\) Richard had little training in diplomacy. As a result of the upheavals of his time as a child, as well as his time during his brother’s reign, he knew little more than war to solve his problems.

5.5 A Short Reign

5.5.1. Effects of Education, Experiences, and Preparation

Richard’s early life and his experiences shaped his outlook in life and his sense of what was expected of him. He was well trained in the arts of war and his bond with the north was absolute. Richard was a king who had learned from experience during his predecessors reign what it took to govern effectively. He also knew that a crown was an uncertain thing and that any man with a relatively good claim and a desire to rule could make himself a king.

\(^{137}\) Ingulf, Peter, and Riley, *Ingulph's Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers.*, 490
Seldom has a rule so brief been so impregnated with the character of the monarch.\textsuperscript{138} Richard attempted to continue the style of governance he was so familiar with from his time in the north. He sought to use the experiences and his knowledge of administration to ensure that the kingdom of England had justice and efficiency. Richard sought to essentially replicate his administration and governance of the north on a larger scale, including the justice that he had enacted and the bonds he developed with the people of all classes.\textsuperscript{139} Richard was successful in using the lessons of his youth to create a bond between the monarchy and the middle classes. He had developed a great respect for the middle class while in the north and when king he forged a bond that helped create a stable layer between working people and elites. Richard sought to bring the justice he had imposed upon the north and that he had meted out as his brother’s official to the poor class. To this end he created the forerunner of the Court of Requests to allow those with no means to bring their grievances to a court of law. There they could be heard by officials and obtain justice.\textsuperscript{140}

Richard III did not understand that what his people craved was not the justice he envisioned but stability. His usurpation of the throne worked precisely against stability. In taking the throne so abruptly he secured his own end. Though he was well equipped to rule by education and experience he was not given the time to enact many of his proposed changes within England due in large part to the instability created by his ascension. Even had Richard’s virtues and ability to reign been great they would have been insignificant to keep him afloat. His unforgiven crime was not inefficiency or unpopularity but the deposition of his nephews. Richard could not justify the boys’ demise to the populace, nor could he explain their

\textsuperscript{138} Vergil and Ellis, \textit{Three Books of Polydore Vergil’s English History, Comprising the Reigns of Henry VI., Edward IV., and Richard III. from an Early Translation, Preserved among the Mss. of the Old Royal Library in the British Museum.}, 191
\textsuperscript{139} Hipshon, \textit{Richard III}, 166
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 171
disappearance in official statements. The Croyland Chronicle refers to those who have entered the place of power by a back door “confounding themselves and their cause together by confusing private desires with public good. Neither birth nor experience nor military valour can suffice to make such a man a real king thereafter.”

5.5.2. Conclusion

Richard was a well educated and well prepared politician when he ascended the throne. Despite the upheaval of his early years he managed to oversee some measure of stability in certain venues, and as such was an invaluable asset to his brother’s regime. Though he was poised to reign effectively, several factors worked against him. One was his method of obtaining the throne. Edward IV had been a beloved king; the usurpation and possible murder of his sons left avenues of discord open almost immediately at the start of Richard’s reign. Another problem was Richard’s apparent paranoia and determination to promote only those he could trust implicitly. Unfortunately for him, those English citizens that he trusted tended to be northerners. In a time when the divide between north and south was not just merely cultural differences, he was perceived as being extremely partial to those men of his youth. Finally, time was a factor in Richard’s reign. He reigned only two years, and for a great deal of his reign parts of England were in rebellion. Had Richard had more time on the throne and had his heir not died at such a young age, then he might have succeeded in turning his reign and reputation around. He certainly had the tools at his disposal.

Richard III remains controversial even today. In 2012, the remains of Richard III were discovered buried underneath a car park in Leicester. His body had been placed into a hastily dug hole that was slightly too small for his body and appears to have suffered a death blow from a halberd. After the discovery, dissention arose over where and how the remains of Richard

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141 Kendall, Richard the Third., 370
142 Ibid., 372
143 Ibid., 374
III should be buried. Leicester, where his remains were discovered, continues to fight petitions from York to have him buried within their own local cathedral. York’s insistence that Richard be buried in the north as he grew up in Yorkshire and was known as Richard of York. This is just another example of how Richard, who is identified throughout his reign as being a northerner, can still inspire controversy over five hundred years after his death.

Overall, the characterizations of Richard by the extreme traditionalists who vilify him are not correct nor is the characterization of Richard by the revisionists on-point. Richard was well suited for the throne in both education and preparation but he possessed some character flaws that proved to be detrimental to not only his success, but also his survival.

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CHAPTER 6
HENRY VIII

6.1 Henry VIII: A Look at Historiography

Henry’s life has become fodder for movies, books, plays, and more recently a medical study into possible afflictions that the monarch might have had. The first thing that most modern readers think of when Henry VIII is brought up in conversation is his six wives. It is true that Henry divorced two wives, beheaded two wives, one wife died in childbirth, and the final survived only by outliving him but this is not the only thing that Henry’s reign should be remembered for. His reign also saw the consolidation of the monarch’s power within England, the creation of the royal navy, ushered in a new religious order to England, and saw a surge in scholarship and the arts. Henry was the second monarch of the immensely popular Tudor dynasty and what’s more, he left a wealth of documentation behind from his reign including letters, state papers, portraits, and official acts. Contemporary historians gave overwhelming praise for Henry VIII, particularly when compared with his father Henry VII. Modern historians are much more divided on their opinions of Henry both as a man and as a king. Despite the overall consensus that Henry was an able monarch of England, historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick have sought to diminish Henry in light of his excesses in life. Henry did have his shortcomings, but he also helped England create a name for itself on the international stage, set the foundations for the Church of England, and consolidated the power in the monarch’s hands. Henry blazed the trail in terms of education of the monarch and in fact continued to exhibit scholarly tendencies up until his death, a trait his daughter Elizabeth would share. Evidence is, admittedly, scarce for Henry’s life prior to obtaining the throne at the age of seventeen but Henry seems to have continued his education even after taking the throne. He was allowed experience in governance through the help of administrators such as Wolsey and continued his scholarly pursuits with a number of learned minds he gathered at this court.
This study primarily focuses on the letters of Henry VIII, the Calendar of State Papers for Henry VIII’s reign, and listings of Henry VIII’s library inventory and expenses for scholarly pursuits. This is partially due to availability and partially due to the fact that these documents best illustrate Henry and his use of the education he received at the hands of various tutors. Though Henry’s scholarly education and early life cannot be traced with as much certainty as that of his elder brother Arthur, Henry does leave evidence of an excellent education and a variety of interests. In terms of secondary sourcing this study has chosen some of the leading scholars in regard to Henry VIII including Charles Ives, J.J. Scarisbrick, Alison Weir, and David Starkey because each of these historians represents a different viewpoint on Henry and his reign. Scarisbrick and Ives offer negative assessments of Henry’s effectiveness as a monarch as well as his character, while Starkey and Weir are much more tempered in their opinion of Henry. It is this author’s opinion that the truth lies in the middle, that while Henry might have possessed some character flaws he still managed to govern effectively in many areas. Besides, Henry VIII achieved the most important thing to a king in Tudor times, the goodwill of his people both in lifetime and in the nation’s memory.

6.2 Henry’s Ascension to the Throne

Henry was the third child and the second son born to Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. His father was the first of the Tudor dynasty, replacing the last Plantagenet monarch Richard III. Elizabeth of York was the eldest daughter of Richard III’s elder brother and predecessor Edward IV. In his first five years of life, Henry was made constable of Dover Castle, warden of the Cinque Ports, earl marshal of England, Lieutenant of Ireland, Duke of York, and warden of the Scottish marches. The duties of these appointments were all performed by various deputies or marshals; Henry held no responsibilities for any of them, but the offices did allow his father to
keep the revenues of each post within the king’s household and Privy Purse. Henry is primarily absent from the historical record up until his ascension with the exception of listing his titles and his participation in November 1501 in the ceremonies of the marriage of his brother Prince Arthur to the Spanish princess, Catherine of Aragon. In April 1502, four months after he was sent to the Welsh Marches with his new bride, Prince Arthur died of consumption. Henry (formerly known as Prince Hal), the only living male heir left to Henry VII was created Duke of Cornwall, and in 1503 he was created Prince of Wales, solidifying his place in the line of succession. In 1509, Henry VII died, leaving seventeen year old Henry to rule England. Henry would reign for nearly thirty eight years and marry six times, dying in 1547 and leaving boy king Edward VI on the throne of England.

6.3 Henry’s Education

Henry’s formal education is not well documented. Scholars usually attribute that lack of information to the fact that he was not the primary heir to the throne until the age of ten. Even after that, the younger Henry was not often seen in public due to the fact that Henry VII sought to protect his last male heir. What is known is that Henry did receive excellent instruction from leading scholars. His educational and broader experiences after obtaining the throne at seventeen years of age are well documented. It was not only his scholarly tutoring, but these certain other formative experiences early in his life and reign that would shape Henry’s policies and political strategies.

6.3.1. Formal Education

Henry was five years younger than his elder brother Arthur. The only contemporary record of Henry’s education is that the poet-laureate John Skelton was his first tutor. Henry’s early scholarly education probably resembled that of his elder brothers. Their tutoring was based on the classics and covered grammar, poetry, rhetoric and ethics, and a good deal of

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Ingulf, Peter, and Riley, *Ingulf’s Chronicle of the Abbey of Croyland with the Continuations by Peter of Blois and Anonymous Writers.*; Hanham, Richard III and His Early Historians, 1483-1535, 196
history. A remark made by Thomas More that Henry was nourished on philosophy and the Nine Muses suggests that his education had a humanist cast. Henry spoke French and Latin well, understood Italian and learned some Spanish.\textsuperscript{146} Henry was known to have a genuine interest in reading and corresponding as well as maps and astronomy.\textsuperscript{147}

Skelton’s principal job would have been to consolidate Henry’s previously learned skills in English and to give Henry an excellent foundation in Latin. At this time Latin was considered to be the universal language of intellectual expression and Skelton was an accomplished master at the language. Historian David Starkey has suggested in his book examining Henry’s youth and early reign that Skelton not only taught Henry Latin but communicated his varied love of obscure scholarly subjects to Henry including astronomy, mathematics, and poetry composition. Starkey points to the fact that Skelton’s turn of phrase can be seen frequently in Henry’s poetry later in life and Henry routinely read poetry even after ascending the throne.\textsuperscript{148} Henry’s book collection certainly reflected his love of the subjects of astronomy and mathematics, uncommon intellectual pursuits for a monarch at this time.\textsuperscript{149}

In contrast to the treatises written for his two daughters and his eldest brother, no treatise or guide written for the education of Henry has survived.\textsuperscript{150} It is possible that Henry benefited some from the education received by Arthur and the guidelines set out for him as heir to the throne. Henry VII was a practical man and a penny pincher, and it is known that Henry did share a tutor with his sister Margaret for a time. Henry VII drew up a basic plan for the education of his heir, one that was both rigorous and diverse. Henry and Arthur studied classical Roman authors and historians such as Tacitus and were well versed in scriptures.

\textsuperscript{150} Ibid., 2
Though Henry followed the same course of study set out by his father for Arthur he probably lacked the lessons in statecraft that Arthur had, as Hal he was not expected to inherit.151

After his creation as Prince of Wales, Henry was given a much more extensive education—indeed King Henry VII set up a kind of educational household surrounding the newly designated heir to the throne. Though Henry cannot be seen as following the exact course of study that was set out for his elder brother, Henry did in fact receive a much more rounded and thorough education. Skelton was dismissed and John Holt was appointed as tutor to the new Prince of Wales. This event is recorded in one obscure piece of documentary evidence in a record for the expenditures of the new heir’s household; tutor Master Holt was allotted mourning cloth by the household expenditure in 1503.152 Holt was not the only new addition to Henry’s household, Henry VII also appointed Giles Duwes as young Henry’s linguist and musical teacher, and another unnamed person was appointed to take over the physical development of the heir.153 Despite this change in personnel, Henry’s education continued along much the same lines as when Skelton was his tutor.

Only two letters from his own hand remain to provide clues into Henry’s own views about his life and education at this time. One, written in 1507 when Henry was aged fifteen, is addressed to the great humanist scholar Erasmus. The letter is surprisingly eloquent and written in clear, concise Latin.154 Erasmus was so impressed with this letter that he assumed Henry must have had help in composing it, given its flawless Latin composition. However, one of the prince’s companions, William Lord Mountjoy, assured Erasmus that this was not the case and showed him various other letters written by Henry in the same Latin style and hand to

153 Starkey, Henry: Virtuous Prince, 115
154 Loades, Henry VIII, 136
convince Erasmus of Henry’s abilities. The only other extant letter by Henry from this time period is a letter written to Phillip, Archduke of Burgundy and King of Castile. This letter is merely a letter of introduction for the chamberlain of Catherine of Aragon to Phillip. Henry recommends the man and asks that Phillip make him comfortable; diplomatically says that he is resolved to return the favor if that ever is asked of him. What these letters show is that Henry was in fact highly literate at the time. He was fully able to correspond on a high level with even men of Erasmus’s capabilities and scholarship.

6.3.2. Experience in Governance

As was stated before, Henry (unlike his elder brother Arthur) received no formal instruction in the arts of governance or statecraft. Though he was given many titles such as Lieutenant of Ireland, each of those offices was discharged by another individual appointed by his father. Even after Arthur’s death, Henry does not seem to have been given any governmental responsibilities and he was certainly not to follow in his brother’s footsteps in ruling the Welsh Marches. By the age of fifteen, Arthur had been married and set up with his own court in the Welsh Marches; Henry by contrast was given neither wife nor official duties with his own court. In fact the only thing that marked Henry’s transition from Duke of York to Prince of Wales was a monetary independence when his revenues began to come from Wales and Cornwall rather than York. The only practical experience in governance that Henry likely gained while his father was alive was that of observation of his father at court. Beginning in 1504, Henry was frequently at court and shadowed his father in his royal duties including ceremonies with the Order of the Garter. This small knowledge of the inner workings of the English governmental and political system were not enough to fit the heir to rule England

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156 Starkey, *Henry: Virtuous Prince*, 181


158 Ibid., 3
though; Henry would further learn about governance and administration after he took the crown from various administrators.

Any formal education that Henry might have had in both scholarly pursuits and in the arts of statesmanship ended with the death of his father in April 1509 and Henry’s ascension to the throne. Though his formal lessons might have ended, Henry continued to learn about the art of governance from his various administrators, especially Cardinal Wolsey. In conversing with the leading scholars of Europe, reading and broadening his experiences in foreign affairs, Henry VIII built upon an already sound intellectual base.

6.4 Henry’s Reign and Legacy

Henry ascended the throne of a relatively stable and secure kingdom. Despite the fact that Henry VII had provided stability after thirty years of civil war and upheaval, he was not mourned greatly at his death. He had been regarded as a miser and an extortionist. In contrast, the coming of his son, young and full of life was welcomed.\(^{159}\) William Blount, Lord Mountjoy, expressed national sentiment in a letter to Erasmus saying that “when you know what a hero he now shows himself, how wisely he behaves, what a lover he is of justice and goodness, what affection he bears to the learned, I venture to swear that you will need no wings to make you fly to behold this new and auspicious star.”\(^{160}\)

Henry ascended to the throne in a time when the monarchy was a personal business. The monarch was directly responsible for policy and directly involved in the running of government. Henry was not prepared for this sort of responsibility immediately upon his ascension; he was independent of his father for the first time and was an unknown quantity in terms of statesmanship and opinions on political matters to his new kingdom. This meant that Henry needed to learn to govern and he needed to learn fast.

6.4.1. Governmental Administration and Power

\(^{159}\) Ibid., 7-8  
\(^{160}\) Loades, *Henry VIII*, 45
At the start of Henry’s reign, he had little to no practical experience in governance. But early on, Henry showed a genius for choosing talented and capable men to serve him, two of the most notable being Cardinal Wolsey and Thomas Cromwell.\(^{161}\) Despite the fact that Henry did leave many of the day to day details to administrators, he remained very much in control; little escaped his attention. Henry’s vast store of knowledge (gained from his reading while he was the heir) was a huge advantage when he took up the task of ruling. He was able to brief ambassadors, intervene in disputes, and follow current events both locally and internationally with ease.\(^{162}\) Henry was also able to debate new laws and quickly understand new policies. By the end of his reign, he had increased the power that the monarch had, reformed the nobility and transformed the Privy Council from simply a general body of advisors to an executive committee, ready to aid the monarch.\(^{163}\)

6.4.2. Religion

Henry took an interest in religion early in life using the Latin he acquired during his education to read and translate several texts. Henry felt so passionately about the Catholic faith that he wrote a treatise defending Catholicism against the attacks being made by Luther. Although modern scholars have debated how much Henry contributed to the “Defense of the Seven Sacraments”, as opposed to large sections of the tract being ghost-written by Thomas More, Henry’s peers seemed to accept his authorship as plausible. In a letter dated October 1521 contemporaries noted that:

> when John Clerk, the King’s ambassador in Rome, presented the King’s book against Luther to the late pope, Leo X, in presence of the college of Cardinals, it was beautiful to hear with what exultation the Pope and Cardinals broke out into the praises of Henry, declaring that no one could have devised a better antidote

\(^{161}\) Starkey, *Henry: Virtuous Prince*, 195


to the poison of heresy, and that Henry had with great eloquence completely refuted Luther by reason, Scripture and the authority of the Fathers. He had thus devoted his learning to the support of religion, and shown to be an example to Christian princes......the Pope, with the unanimous assent of the Cardinals, ordained that Henry should henceforth be called “Defender of the Faith.”

This letter and the treatise written by Henry defending the Catholic faith against Luther’s attacks are just one set of examples of his early dedication to religion. Henry did receive an education that was more reflective of the growing movement of humanism than his predecessors, but it was still steeped in religious ideals. It was this education and knowledge of religion that Henry used during his attempt to divorce Catherine of Aragon. Henry, thanks to his extensive study of theology, often in its original Latin form, was able to cite examples about why his marriage was invalid. He pointed out that he and the queen had lived in adultery, that he had broken with religious ideals and the laws of God by marrying his brother’s wife, and that he was being punished by God with the lack of a lawful heir for these sins. Henry, thanks to his early education and scholarship in religion was able to cite scripture to support his claim. He wrote impassioned letters to the pope regarding his crisis of consciousness and his need to be relieved of his marriage with Catherine of Aragon. When refused his desire, Henry again turned to his knowledge and education in religion to create his new Church of England. Henry leaned heavily on his knowledge of theology and knowledge he had acquired of the doctrines of reformers such as Luther for the creation of his new religion. Henry proclaimed himself supreme head of the church and declared that allegiance to the pope was the same as being loyal to a foreign court over that of one’s own king.

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164 Weir, Henry VIII: The King and His Court, 23
165 Ibid., 24
166 Loades, Henry VIII, 200
This fascination with religion as well as Henry’s changing ideas regarding religion is reflected in the inventory of his books. Originally, during Henry’s defense of the Catholic faith, he collected orthodox doctrines including works by leading church fathers. He also collected a copy of Martin Luther’s commentary on Psalm 21, which he read and annotated with disapprobation, using this as the basis for his treatise defending the Catholic faith. During his anti-papal period Henry collected works by the medieval canonist and chancellor of the University of Paris, Jean Gerson, who believed that nothing necessary to salvation was to be found outside of the Bible. He also collected reformist material in French and then finally materials reflecting an acceptance of and a shift towards the German religious reform movement (aka Protestantism).167

6.4.3. The Arts

Henry was a great patron of the arts during his reign. His royal secretary claims that “we have the most noble king who far surpasses all other Christian princes in learning as well as in power. He is so well disposed to all eruditi that he hears nothing more willingly than conversations about scholars and books.”168

Henry’s interest in music can be dated to his early years. Giles Duwes, who took over Henry’s education in linguistics no later than 1503, also doubled as his instructor in music and instruments. Henry showed an early affinity and talent for playing instruments such as the lute and his love of music continued throughout his life. It is known that Henry always had musicians accompany him on progress and kept several court musicians on his payroll. For example, the royal account books note a lute player referred to as Bresician was given 300 ducats per year by the king.169 At one point in his life, Henry was said to have employed about

168 Ibid.
169 Ibid.
sixty musical professionals; he often engaged freelance instrumental groups to play in the latest styles. Henry was not above poaching musicians from other courts or even from his own nobility, and he employed these professionals in entertaining the court, performing pageants in which he often took part, as well as composing originals for religious ceremonies.  

Ambassadors remarked not only on the number of musicians that inhabited Henry's court but also his musical abilities. The Venetian ambassadors were greatly impressed with Henry's skills in music claiming that he was “an excellent musician, [and] plays well on the harpsichord, the lute, and other musical instruments.” Henry often took part in these court performances and composed, himself. Henry would play the recorder and he and his courtiers would sing; such royal participation was unusual for the time; ensemble works were generally left to professionals. At his death Henry possessed over three hundred instruments.

Henry also engaged artists and painters at court, collecting hundreds of pictures and employing architects of great renown to assist in his building projects. For example, Henry engaged a series of artists on various projects including Hans Holbein, Italian Antonio Toto, and Pietro Torrigian. A great number of the paintings and portraits of Henry's collection survive, as do many of his architectural works. The visual records of Henry VIII's reign include portraits commissioned by Henry, miniatures of Henry, and illuminated manuscripts.

Though Henry loved music and art, he loved the scholarly world of books even more. In spite of all its turmoil and activity Henry's world one in which reading played a large part. A detailed inventory of Henry's books in 1542 included nine hundred and ten books in the upper

170 Carley, The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives, 33-34
173 Ives, Henry VIII
library of Westminster alone. Henry read large amounts of material on various subjects throughout his life and he was a detailed annotator of most of these books. His interests ranged from theology to mathematics to cartography and he traveled with books wherever he went. There are numerous entries in the privy purse expenses of boatmen receiving payment for having delivered Henry’s books to whatever palace he occupied. This love of learning and books lead Henry to attract a large selection of learned men to his court that included Thomas More, Roger Ascham, and Thomas Linacre. He regularly commissioned translations of great works from scholars, Jean Froissart’s *Chronicles* by Sir John Bourchier, Lord Berners. This love of learning and scholarly pursuits was one that Henry developed early on under the tutelage of first his mother and grandmother then under a series of scholarly tutors; it was one that would continue up until his death.

6.5 A Learned Monarch on the Throne

6.5.1. Effects of Education, Experiences and Preparation

Despite the fact that he was not the intended heir until the age of ten and despite the fact that after ascending the throne he had a great deal to learn in terms of governance, Henry did manage to advance England and its interests. His scholarly education was thorough and he would continue to use that training to manage the kingdom. He also continued to be personally interested in the arts and education. Even with the demands of being monarch, he read and conversed with men such as Thomas More and Erasmus. Perhaps due to his excellent early grounding in reading and study, once on the throne Henry managed to acquire a deep personal respect from his subjects. He brought England a new religion—though that was not his original intention when he began proceedings to annul his marriage to Catherine of Aragon—and defend the new religious order ably as a result of his own religious study. And while the ascension of England as an international power also may not have been his key goal upon

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175 Ives, *Henry VIII*
taking the throne, during Henry VIII’s reign England did gain a new place within the international order. Henry’s early life and experiences were psychologically quite tame compared with those of his two daughters and son, but his grounding in scholarship pervaded his life and reign, just as their youthful learning influenced the next three Tudor monarchs.

6.5.2. Conclusion

Henry VIII’s reign initially was seen by many of his English contemporaries as an idyllic age after the reign of his father. In contrast to Henry VII, his son at first appeared to be a young, handsome prince who did not possess the extreme qualities of avarice and misery that his father did. By contemporary standards Henry had everything that a king ought to have: magnificence, victory in battle, and a large than life personality that his subjects adored. His first contemporary biographer William Thomas wrote that Henry “was undoubtedly the rarest man that lived in his time…I wot not where in all the histories I have read to find one king equal to him.” This statement is characteristic of contemporary opinion of Henry and his reign.

Henry and his reputation have not fared so well in modern times. Modern historians such as J.J. Scarisbrick contend that Henry did nothing if it did not benefit himself. Twentieth century scholars contend that, contrary to what has been written in the past centuries, most of Henry’s actions did not reflect what was best for England but what was best for Henry. Scarisbrick points to the fact that Henry led England to war with France three times with little more to show as a result but “ungracious dogholes and ephemeral international prestige.” Eric Ives claims that Henry’s evil legacy extended to everything during his reign, even politics and government.

While these historians do make valid points about Henry and his character, they are unable in the long term to devalue many of the results that Henry was able to achieve.

176 Ibid.
177 Carley, The Books of King Henry VIII and His Wives, 413
178 Ibid., 80
179 Ives, Henry VIII
Historians such as David Loades have taken the approach that while Henry may have possessed a detestable character, his ability to consolidate power into the hands of the monarchy, his legacy of leading England onto a national stage politically, and the fact that he introduced the Reformation and its ideas into England therefore shaping Christianity within its borders cannot be denied. Even Scarisbrick touts Henry's accomplishments and his education and calls him the most learned monarch to sit upon the English throne for centuries. Alison Weir states that Henry patronized the arts to lasting effect and created the most magnificent court in English history, setting a pattern for future centuries. While she, like many historians, is harsh in describing Henry's character, she credits him with inheriting a kingdom that was medieval and leaving it a modern state.

A common theme among modern historians is a respect for Henry's education and the ways in which he put that education to use. Henry is credited with building a royal navy though his fascination with cartography, patronizing the arts through his love of music and art, and leaving a wealth of buildings and centers of learning behind after his reign. Henry took a kingdom that had seen strife and civil war for nearly a hundred years and strengthened it into one of the most important states of his time.

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181 Ibid.
CHAPTER 7
MARY I

7.1 Mary: A Look at Historiography

Mary Tudor is remembered as “Bloody Mary” with her reign marked by a determination to force England to return to the folds of the Catholic Church and the Papacy. Sandwiched between the strong reigns of her father and her sister, Mary has been considered by many modern historians to be a weak ruler, whose religious zeal and need to please her husband rendered her ineffectual in politics. This is the modern day reputation of the woman who was England’s first female ruler, but her reputation is perhaps not altogether justified. Mary is an anomaly for scholars studying the Tudor era. She is remembered primarily for the over two hundred people she put to death in her attempt to return England to Catholicism and for surrounding herself with ineffectual, religiously-minded councilors. Most of what is written about Mary is often a comparison between her and her sister Elizabeth, and Mary comes up short more often than not. Elizabeth is seen more intelligent and far more adept at ruling; Elizabeth is portrayed the monarch presiding over a Golden Age in English history. There have been some modern scholarly attempts at redeeming Mary’s reputation, such as the publication of Mary Tudor Old and New Perspectives in 2011.

These efforts to rehabilitate Mary’s reputation so far have not located her in proper context. This study maintains that Mary’s education was religious in nature and her upbringing was severely disrupted by her father’s attempts at procuring an heir; such hardships in her early life stayed with Mary emotionally and mentally throughout her life and reign. Historians such as Judith M. Richards who believe that Mary was as well prepared to rules as Henry VII, Henry VIII or Elizabeth I are sorely misguided. Scholars should consider not just Mary’s formal education but also the other preparations that Mary received, as well as her early life experiences. All of those factors should be taken into consideration when judging her readiness for the throne.
Though Mary may have been judged too harshly overall in terms of the executions during her reign and her loss of Calais, the overall assessment of her reign as a failure remains accurate. Mary’s reign was a product of her education and upbringing it remains clear that she was unprepared to rule England. Even had she had a longer tenure on the throne, she may not have been able to make her governance a success.

7.2 Mary’s Ascension to the Throne

Mary was the eldest surviving child born to Henry VIII and his first wife Catherine of Aragon. Until the age of twelve, Mary enjoyed the position as the only surviving legitimate child it appeared Henry VIII was destined to have. All of that changed when Henry began to pursue a divorce from her mother, and Mary suffered as a result. In 1531, Henry officially banished Catherine from court and in 1533, Mary was officially declared a bastard and forced to join her infant sister’s household. Mary was stripped of the title of princess and was henceforth known as the Lady Mary. She lost not only her title, but also her household and her place in the line of succession. During the rest of the 1530s and the 1540s, it seemed a remote possibility that Mary would inherit the throne. She was re-instated into the line of succession late in Henry’s reign under the Third Act of Succession (1543). Henry dictated that his son Edward would inherit upon his death, followed by Edward’s heirs. In the event that Edward failed to produce an heir, Mary was to inherit the throne. In the same fashion, should Mary inherit and fail to produce an heir, her younger half-sister Elizabeth would take the throne. Henry VIII died in 1547, leaving a child of only nine on the throne. Edward, led by his councilors, attempted to subvert the succession of his staunchly Catholic half-sister late in life and bestow the throne upon the Lady Jane Grey, forcing Mary to fight for her throne upon her brother’s death. Mary successfully obtained the throne and ruled only five years.

7.3 Mary’s Education
Mary’s formal education and her experiences prior to ascending to the throne are fairly well documented. Historians can trace her tutoring and the events of her life through treatises, correspondence, and official documents. This formal education and other preparation in her early years influenced Mary’s life and reign and play a large part in the events that occurred during her five years on the throne.

7.3.1. Formal Education

Mary’s scholarly education was under the direction of a variety of people including tutors, her parents, and various governesses throughout her life. Mary began her scholarly life as a member of her mother’s household, where she learned the basics of reading and writing. A letter in 1520 from the Lords of the Council to Henry VIII attest to the satisfactory thirst for learning the then four year old showed, claiming that the lords were “at your manoir of Richemounte with your dearest daughter the Princesse, who….is right mery and in prosperous helth and state, daily exercising herself in vertuous pastymes and ocupacions.”

As was a common practice of the time, Mary was soon given her own household; it was headed first by Lady Margaret Bryan and then by a close friend of her mother’s, the Countess of Salisbury. Even after leaving her mother’s household, Mary’s education continued to be at the direction of her mother, Catherine of Aragon who had received in her own youth an excellent and varied edification. Catherine’s parents, Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon were great proponents of education and believed in educating not only their heir but also their younger children as well. Given the thorough nature of her own education and her belief at the time that Mary was the heir to the English throne, Catherine exposed her daughter to learning and religious teachings early on.

When Mary reached the age of seven, closer attention began to be paid to her education; Catherine placed her under the direction of her fellow Spaniard Juan Luis Vives.

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182 Ives, Henry VIII
183 Loades, Henry VIII
Education, both in theory and in practice, was a principal concern of the humanist Vives who was a member of a close knit circle of men in England that included Thomas More, John Fisher, and Thomas Linacre. Vives, like his fellow humanist scholars, believed that the education of a woman was above all about creating better behavior and the avoidance of sin. Vives believed in not subverting the social order, meaning that women were not to try and put themselves above men; still Vives also argues that it was ignorance, not knowledge that created sin.\footnote{Weir, \textit{Henry VIII: The King and His Court}} He instructed Mary to read the Gospels day and night, as well as the Acts of the Apostles, and the Epistles and some passages from the Old Testament.\footnote{Henry Ellis, \textit{Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries} (London: Printed for the Camden Society by J. B. Nichols and Son, 1843), 175.} His instruction revolved around Christian teachings, as well as Latin and Greek. He based much of her education on the teachings of Erasmus and the teachings received by Thomas More’s learned daughters.

While Vives did believe in educating girls and used a variety of more modern ideas about education, there were some things which he was firmly against; in the treatise he wrote concerning Mary’s education, he made sure they were stated clearly. Vives believed that a woman should be denied access to those liberal arts that were more connected with the man’s world: dialectic, history, mathematics, and politics.\footnote{John Edwards, \textit{Mary I: England’s Catholic Queen} (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 116.} Vives believed that a woman should be denied access to those liberal arts that deal more with the man’s world: dialectic, history, mathematics, and politics.\footnote{Ibid., 12} He also advocated against teaching women the art of dancing asking “What is the purpose of these dances in which the girls’ elbows are supported by their male partners so that they can go higher in the air?...In fact who would not believe women are mad when they are dancing....who would not believe they are mentally deranged?\footnote{Juan Luis Vives and Charles Fantazzi, \textit{The Education of a Christian Woman: A Sixteenth-Century Manual} (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 78.} Instead Vives advocated that girls such as Mary spend their time collecting examples of virgins, holding
herself up for imitation, and reading holy materials that will further purify her and preserve her chastity.\textsuperscript{189}

Mary’s scholarly education was shaped not only by Vives’ teachings and her mother’s education in Spain, but also by the fact that she had a clearly defined political role spelled out for her future. Mary was expected to be the wife of a ruling monarch, but never the monarch herself. Mary’s essential duty as described by her father was to find herself, or rather to be found a husband. To this end, as a child and a young lady, Mary endured a series of betrothals including to Charles the Holy Roman Emperor and the Duke of Orleans, as well as the dauphin of France. Clearly, Mary’s value was not as heir to the throne but as a marriage prospect to seal alliances with foreign powers. Mary’s education often reflected this; she was not being prepared to take the throne but to marry the man who did. This meant that while Mary was given an excellent education in some respects, her education was not that of heir to the throne and did not include more practical aspects such as lessons in governance or diplomacy.

7.3.2. Experience in Governance

And so Mary’s formal education did not include the lessons in governance or diplomacy that an heir to the throne, such as her younger brother Edward, would receive. Any experience or observation of the inner workings of running the country came by pure chance or through avenues that were not considered to be strictly for learning purposes. The primary example of this was Mary’s time in the Welsh Marches. Mary spent nearly three years alone in the Welsh Marches with her own retinue and court. This occurrence was due in large part to the fact that Henry’s bastard son, Henry FitzRoy (b.1519), had been created Duke of Richmond and given a court similar to Mary’s Welsh court and station. Some scholars have argued that the creation of Henry FitzRoy as Duke of Richmond was in preparation for his being placed into the line of succession ahead of Mary and that Mary was sent to the Welsh Marches in order to hide this

\textsuperscript{189} Ibid., 15
plan by Henry VIII. This suggestion has never been confirmed by official records, however; Henry VIII never made his intentions towards Henry FitzRoy clear prior to FitzRoy’s death in 1536.

Regardless of the reasons behind Mary’s journey and somewhat internal exile in the Welsh Marches that stay away from London gave Mary a chance to observe government first hand. Mary was sent “with an honorable, sad, discreet, and expert counsel, to reside and remayne in the Marches of Wales, and the parties thereabouts, furnished with sufficient power and authority to hold courts of oyer and determiner, for the better administration of justice, the viewing of letters-patent and to ensure order”.\(^{190}\) Mary’s council governed in her name, due to her young age. And yet Mary was present often at council meetings and often heard the complaints and requests put to the royal government by petitioners.\(^{191}\) This time in the Welsh Marches also served to give the people of the north a strong bond with Mary, which would be essential in her bid for the throne later in life; that connection also gave her a strong geographical base with which to begin her campaigns.

\subsection*{7.3.3. The King’s Great Matter and the end of Mary’s Formal Education}

Upon Mary’s return to court, her formal education was interrupted by the rise of Anne Boleyn and her father’s determination to set her mother and his marriage aside. Mary chose to side with her mother. Eventually the strain of being caught between her two parents took a toll on Mary’s physical health, not to mention her time in the royal classroom. Mary no longer held the position of privileged princess within the royal household and her education was not a primary focus. If her father succeeded in divorcing her mother and declaring Mary illegitimate, she would not only lose her place in the line of succession and her royal status, but also her desirability as a consort of any other monarch. In 1533, what little remained of Mary’s formal education was destroyed. Her household was broken up and she was ordered to take up a

\begin{footnotes}
\item[190] Ibid., 15
\item[191] Ibid., 140-141
\end{footnotes}
position in the household of her infant sister Elizabeth. There is little evidence that Mary’s formal education continued after her return to court in 1527 and even less after her mother’s removal from court in 1533. The next mention of anything concerning Mary’s education or scholarly abilities is her assistance in the religious translations of Catherine Parr, late in her father’s reign.

The King’s Great Matter not only affected Mary’s formal education, but her health; it certainly also served to firm up her own religious beliefs. Anne Boleyn continuously mistreated Mary prior to her exclusion from court, referring to her as the ‘bastard’, which could not have helped a teenager’s development or self-esteem. Soon Mary was no longer invited to court and separated even further from her father and any observations of a reigning monarch and a working government.\(^{192}\) Also, Mary’s new stepmother was a firm believer in the Protestant faith, encouraging Henry to take up ecclesiastical power within his own kingdom and reform the church within his country’s borders. Henry ordered every subject, including his daughter Mary, to recognize him as the Supreme Head of the Church of England and to refute any foreign powers such as the Pope. In a letter to her daughter Catherine of Aragon tells Mary to obey her father in everything “save only that you will not offend God, and lose your soul”, a reference to the pressure put on Mary to abjure her faith.\(^{193}\) Not only did Mary begin to suffer bouts of ill health that would continue to the end of her life, but she clung desperately to the faith in which she had been raised and educated and the faith in which her mother believed so strongly.

Mary’s formal education and any benefit she might have received from remaining at court to observe diplomacy or governance was at an end. She would not be recalled to court for nearly five years, during which time she would live in obscurity and near poverty. At various

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\(^{192}\) Ibid., 119

moments until her ascension, though she often feared for her life, Mary would turn to the faith of her childhood for comfort, holding masses even when forbidden.

7.4 Mary’s Reign and Legacy

Mary’s disrupted youth and the religious teachings of her education had far reaching effects on Mary and her reign. Mary’s reign was defined by her efforts to return England to the Catholic Church. Much of her legislation and attempts at governing are rooted in this deep seated religious zeal. Mary’s education prior to her parents’ separation revolved around the Catholic religion. Even after her father’s remarriage to Anne Boleyn, Mary’s life revolved around her Catholicism and her resistance to the changes her father was creating within the religious framework of England. All of this combined to create a deeply religious woman who still retained the ideals of her youth, including a woman’s subservience to a man, the need to avoid sin, and a deep seated loyalty to the Pope. When Mary succeeded in obtaining the throne, she was too politically inexperienced to rule and she lacked the knowledge that her new position required. All of this combined to make her rule one of constant political failure and personal disappointment.

7.4.1. Overcoming Her Family

The cataclysmic events of her parents’ divorce and her subsequent bastardization created a chain of events that would shape Mary’s life and reign. The effects of Mary’s loss of her title as princess and the strain of supporting her mother’s claims in the face of her father’s wrath show in the fact that Mary’s first act as Queen was to declare her parents’ marriage valid and herself legitimate. Mary’s bastardization and her reduction to the Lady Mary from Princess Mary had a profound effect on her. Mary would forever blame her father’s ‘concubine’ and by extension the concubine’s daughter Elizabeth. Consequently Mary’s relationship with her sister would show this strain up until Mary’s death. Mary refused to recognize her Protestant sister as

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194 Edwards, Mary I: England’s Catholic Queen, 21
her heir until the very end of her life and spent most of her reign attempting to convert Elizabeth to Catholicism. All of this served to create tension within England between those who supported Mary and those who supported Elizabeth, making it difficult for Mary to reign effectively.

Also, due to her parent’s disagreement, the disruption in educational stability that Mary began to suffer at the age of twelve was traumatic. Her extended absence from court meant that Mary’s worldly experience and knowledge of ruling were shortened. She was not able to enjoy an extended or stable education that certain privileged young women at the time could receive, nor was she able to benefit from the acquaintance of a wide variety of people that court life would have provided her. As a result of all of this, Mary proved woefully inadequate at not only court politics but also at foreign affairs. She struggled to administer the effective governmental machine for which the Tudor monarchs were so famous.

7.4.2. The Formation of Government

In the words of David Loades, what Mary needed, given her lack of political experience, was an established regime in working order, such as her father had inherited. The circumstances of her inheritance, however, made that impossible. 195 In Robert of Wingfield’s description of the men that placed Mary upon the throne he mentions none of great intelligence, rather calling them loyal, of great lineage, or cheerful. Those these men had succeeded in winning a throne, they were unproven on the national level. It was these same men who had assisted Mary in defeating Northumberland with which she promoted and surrounded herself during her reign. 196 Mary feared alienating the section of her population who so strongly supported her. Furthermore she had been away from court for far too many years to have

195 Ibid., 33
196 Madden, Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary, Daughter of K. Henry VIII., Afterwards Queen Mary
accumulated sufficient servants to fill the offices of state; nor did she have the knowledge of how to locate qualified government servants.

7.4.3. Phillip of Spain

It was not unheard of in Mary’s day for women to wield considerable political power, although Catherine D’Medici’s outsize influence over French political life did not occur until 1559—after Mary’s own death. And yet even if the notion of a female sovereign was becoming more familiar and acceptable to the people of Europe, the overwhelming expectation when Mary took the throne was that she would marry. It was almost universally assumed she would need a husband to help with the governmental tasks she had before her.¹⁹⁷ This opinion was not new to Mary; it was one that she had been taught from her earliest years. She needed a husband, and it was her chief duty to marry and produce an heir to secure the throne. Mary’s early teachings and experiences with men taught her that a woman’s place was not to put herself above her husband; moreover she was anxious to please the men in her life, as she always had been. She spent most of her reign attempting to accommodate her husband, whose name is synonymous with hers during her reign. The signature of Phillip of Spain often appeared on charters and official documents; he attended council meetings along with Mary and swayed her decisions on numerous matters.

7.5 A Woman Not Prepared to Rule

7.5.1. Effects of Education and Lack of Preparation

Education and early preparation shaped Mary’s outlook more so than any other Tudor monarch. Her deep religious zeal shaped her policies and set the tone of her reign. Although Mary did receive some education and preparation for the throne, she was emotionally immature as a result of her early life experiences. She allowed her feelings of insecurity and her desire to adhere to the teachings of her childhood to dictate her official decisions, decades later. Mary’s

¹⁹⁷ Edwards, Mary I: England’s Catholic Queen, 108-109
obstinate and determined refusal to give up Mass during her brother’s reign, even when faced with personal danger should have foreshadowed what was to come when she obtained the throne. Religion had been the center of Mary’s education as well as the center of the relationship she shared with her cherished mother. Her tutors and servants growing up were religious minded people and her mother’s last act was to send Mary two books in Latin for her spiritual guidance. It is no wonder that as a woman and a queen, Mary strived to bring England back into the folds of the religion that had played such a profound role in her life. In the words of Wingfield, after obtaining the throne the queen “turned her whole attention to religion and godliness, the excellence of which she had learnt from her early childhood under the guidance of that most sacred princess her mother.”198

Not only did Mary’s singular focus on religion disrupt her reign, but her lack of ability to control court politics or adequately deal with foreign powers created a rebellion-fueled atmosphere in England and abroad. Mary clung to what she knew of her childhood, that of her devotion to the Emperor Charles V. She continued throughout her reign to seek his guidance. In marrying a foreigner, she lost the affection of the people of the realm.199 In addition, Mary did not have the benefit of an extended period within the royal court, during which she could observe the scope of royal power. She could not rely on experiences learned at the hand of the reigning monarch nor could she lean on observations made while attending court. She had little understanding of the machinations of power factions in London, and foreign representatives.

7.5.2. Conclusion

Mary’s reign marked a turning point in English history. She was the first woman to rule England in her own right. Women, from that point on, would not be excluded from possibly inheriting the throne. Good or bad, Mary’s reign did blaze new territory and she would remain a


source of controversy long after her death. Though some historians would like to completely rehabilitate the views of Mary’s character and reign, such an accomplishment cannot be achieved without contradicting the evidence that is present. While in some respects Mary was the victim of the Elizabethan propaganda machine, she was woefully unprepared to rule and it showed. She may not have been as cruel and incompetent as she was made out to be by Protestant apologists, but Mary was dedicated to her religion at all costs and she did let the experiences from her early life color her decisions during her time on the throne.
CHAPTER 8
ELIZABETH I

8.1 Elizabeth I: A Look at Historiography

Elizabeth I is remembered as one of the greatest monarchs in English history ushering in a time often referred to as the Golden Age of English history. Hers was a reign characterized by learning and innovation as well as by great changes both politically and religiously. Elizabeth is not only celebrated for her reign but also for her reputation as one of the most learned monarchs of her time. Despite a tumultuous early life, Elizabeth managed to acquire a thorough education that allowed her to rule effectively, despite having little experience or practical knowledge in the art of ruling a kingdom. Historians both contemporary and those writing in later times have attributed much of the success that Elizabeth achieved in foreign policy and religion to her extensive education and her intellect. Historiography on Elizabeth is almost all overwhelmingly positive but in recent years there has been an upsurge of historians who claim that Elizabeth was not the exceptional monarch that history has made her out to be. Historians such as Susan Foran and Thomas Freeman claim that Elizabeth was less a great monarch and more a beneficiary of a great political and administrative machine and that while she was learned, she was no intellectual. This study contends that such arguments are weak; there is an abundance of evidence regarding Elizabeth and the depth of her learning, which continued until her death. It was Elizabeth's excellent educational foundation as well as the fact that she took to heart many of the practical lessons she learned at the hands of first her father, then her
brother, and finally her sister, which allowed Elizabeth to govern successfully in her own time, and to craft a reputation that endured.

This study has chosen to utilize the Calendar of State Papers that are available for Elizabeth’s era, Roger Ascham’s letters, as well as the letter’s and personal writings of Elizabeth herself. This represents the largest amount of extant evidence regarding Elizabeth’s education and upbringing; it also shows the extent to which Elizabeth’s early life affected her reign and policies. For secondary sources, this study has attempted to achieve a balanced view on Elizabeth and her reign. To that end, Ann Somerset’s biography *Elizabeth I*, Alison Weir’s *The Children of Henry VIII*, D.M. Loades *Elizabeth* have been chosen due to the fact that they represent the most tempered and balanced view of Elizabeth’s reign and offer an insight into her early life. They also collectively represent the most recent biographical research done on Elizabeth and her reign.

8.2 Elizabeth’s Ascension to the Throne

Elizabeth was the second living child born to Henry VIII and the only live child born to his second wife, Anne Boleyn. Though she was treated to every honor and lavishly praised as an infant, she was not the hoped for boy and this created tension within her parents’ marriage. Elizabeth’s mother was convicted of treason and beheaded when Elizabeth was two and a half years old. At this time, her father went even further and invalidated his marriage to Anne Boleyn, declaring Elizabeth a bastard and removing her from the line of succession. For several years after the death of her mother, Elizabeth lived in a state of chaos. She was often short of funds and clothes and shuffled between various households. In 1544 Elizabeth was reinstated to the line of succession in the third and final Act of Succession created by Henry VIII. If both Edward and Mary failed to produce heirs, Elizabeth would ascend to the throne. At the time she was reinstated to the line of succession it was thought to be a remote possibility that Elizabeth would ascend the throne, given the fact that she was behind two seemingly health
siblings. Elizabeth enjoyed a relatively peaceful existence during the reign of her brother, despite the fact that at the end of his reign, Edward attempted to cut both Elizabeth and Mary out of the succession. Elizabeth’s time during her sister’s reign was far less peaceful. She was often under suspicion from her sister, regarding both her religious views and her participation in various rebellions that occurred during Mary’s five years on the throne. Elizabeth was obliged several times to write to her sister in defense of her actions or lack thereof. Mary, for her part, was strongly suspicious of the child of the woman she referred to as “the concubine” and strove to disinherit her. Mary refused to recognize Elizabeth as her heir until just days before her death and even had Elizabeth committed to the Tower of London at one point. Elizabeth succeeded peacefully to the throne of England and ruled for forty-five years.

8.3 Elizabeth’s Education

Elizabeth’s formal education and experiences prior to ascending to the throne, like that of her sister Mary’s, are well documented. Historians have access to manuscript copies of works written by her tutors as well as translations and letters written in Elizabeth’s own hand. Elizabeth was by all accounts an apt and eager pupil, a trait that would follow her into adulthood and the throne.

8.3.1. Formal Education

Elizabeth’s early education was at the directive of her governess Catherine “Kat” Ashley. Kat Ashley began Elizabeth on a rigorous regime of study that included French, English, and Italian. Her education even this early in life was sufficient to impress Sir Thomas Wriothesley, who visited Elizabeth in 1539 and reported back that “If she be no worse educated than she now appeareth to me, she will prove of no less honour to womanhood than shall beseem her father’s daughter.” In 1544, Elizabeth was appointed a tutor of her own, William Grindal. Grindal was a member of the tightly knit group of scholars at St. John’s Cambridge.

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200 Edwards, Mary I: England’s Catholic Queen, 144
College. He was a diverse scholar who specialized in Latin and Greek and was himself taught by Roger Ascham, pupil of Elizabeth’s younger brother Edward’s own tutor John Cheke. Under Grindal Elizabeth learned to read, write, and speak Latin fluently and could also converse or correspond in Greek, English, French, or Italian. Grindal argued that a mixture of ancient study along with a study of contemporary scholars was the best course for a young mind. This emphasis on Greek as well as the mix of ancient and contemporary scholars was a departure from the education of Henry VIII and his daughter Mary. While Henry did have a passing knowledge of Greek and Mary had rudimentary knowledge as well, neither was fluent in the language. Grindal also believed that the education of a woman should be well rounded, including not only scholarly tasks but also riding, music, and dancing.

In 1548, William Grindal died from the plague and was, at Elizabeth’s own insistence, replaced by Grindal’s former teacher, Roger Ascham. Roger Ascham entered royal service as Elizabeth’s tutor after eighteen years at Cambridge University amongst some of the most progressive and learned minds of the age. Even prior to his appointment as her tutor, Ascham had heard of and admired Elizabeth’s learning, writing in a letter to her in 1545 that “he can do nothing more than congratulate you, because you more and more give luster daily to the great resources of your fortune and natural talents with such great reinforcements of your learning”. After his appointment, Ascham continued Grindal’s course of study, further instructing Elizabeth in various languages and music. In a letter written to a colleague, Johann Sturm, dated 1150, Ascham could not contain his praise of the sixteen year old Elizabeth stating “She speaks French and Italian as well as she speaks English; her Latin is smooth, correct and thoughtful; frequently and voluntarily she has even spoken with me in Greek tolerably well. When she

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201 Royal Historical Society (Great Britain), *Camden Miscellany: Vol. XVI.*, 272
writes in Greek or Latin; nothing is more beautiful than her handwriting. She is as skilled in music as she is delighted by it.” 203 Even after Ascham ceased to be her formal tutor and Elizabeth ascended the throne, Elizabeth would continue her study with him, often making time in the mornings to read classics and in the evenings to read and converse in Greek with her former tutor.

Unlike her elder sister, Elizabeth’s early life did not involve the various treaties of betrothal or an extended period of time at the royal court as the heiress presumptive. Elizabeth was a mere two and a half years old when she was bastardized, meaning that her prospects on the marriage market were severely downgraded and she was no longer the political pawn that she was prior to the invalidation of her parents’ marriage. As a result, unlike her sister Mary who formed deep attachments, for example to Emperor Charles V to whom she was betrothed for a time, Elizabeth seemed to identify more with the learned men in her life and her governess Kat Ashley. Despite this difference and the fact that Elizabeth’s education included more Protestant and forward thinking ideas, like her sister Mary Elizabeth did not receive any formal education or lessons in governance or diplomacy.

8.3.2. Experience in Governance

As stated before, though Elizabeth did receive a well-rounded and excellent education from some of the most learned contemporary minds and though Elizabeth’s education was taken further than her sister Mary’s education, Elizabeth’s education did not include lessons in governance or diplomacy. Elizabeth’s younger brother Edward on the other hand received an introductory course in the problems of practical politics at the hands of the Clerk of the Council, William Thomas. 204 Furthermore, Elizabeth was not often at court. Though she did make occasional holiday visits and was invited on a few other occasions, for the most part Elizabeth’s early life was spent in the country, away from court politics, intrigues, and observations of the

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204 Ibid., 11
inner workings of the kingdom. Despite all of this, in her early twenties prior to her ascension, Elizabeth was often dragged into these court politics in the form of the various rebellions held ostensibly in her name. She also had the chance to observe, even at a distance, her sister’s disastrous reign. It taught her to be careful in her dealings with religion, to choose those who surrounded her carefully, and how disastrous a marriage to a foreigner really would be. Elizabeth also observed during the reign of her sister that it was the people who could make or break a monarch and their legacy. Upon Mary’s marriage to Phillip of Spain, Elizabeth stated that “the queen had lost the affection of the people of this realm because she had married a foreigner.”

Elizabeth never forgot these early lessons.

8.3.3. The End of Elizabeth’s Formal Education

Despite the execution of her mother for treason and Elizabeth’s subsequent bastardization, Elizabeth did not experience an extended period of disruption in her education or life. She was only two and a half years old at the time her mother was executed and her memories of Anne Boleyn were faint and distorted at best. Therefore she seemed to feel no deep loyalty to her mother or resentment of her father for his treatment of either her mother or herself. Though Elizabeth may have passed out of the royal nursery and beyond the confines of a formal tutor after the death of her father, she certainly took to heart the contemporary idea that learning was a lifelong endeavor. Elizabeth would continue to meet with her old tutor Roger Ascham to practice reading and conversing in languages and music would be a lifelong passion. She would continue to translate texts and prayers and would even produce some poetry. For Elizabeth, learning and education was something to be valued and continued and she would show this later in life with those that she surrounded herself with.

8.4 Elizabeth’s Reign and Legacy

205 Roger Ascham and Alvin Vos, Letters of Roger Ascham (New York: P. Lang, 1989), 76.
206 Ibid., 166-168
Elizabeth was crowned on 15 November 1559, at the age of twenty five. Her ascension was peaceful and the people welcomed the change from the oppressive rule seen under her sister. Elizabeth was a familiar and beloved figure within England and many of her subjects pinned their hopes for the future on this young woman. Though she did not receive any formal education in governance, Elizabeth showed herself to be up to the task. She surrounded herself with learned officials, impressed foreigner visitors with her intellectual ability and her skill at languages, she successfully navigated the creation of the Church of England, and the arts flourished under her reign.

8.4.1. A Governmental Machine

From the start, Elizabeth struggled with contemporary opinion that still viewed a woman as the weaker sex and unfit to make decisions of state. There were many people, both domestically and internationally, who assumed that upon her ascension, she would need their guidance and be open to suggestions on appointments and the formation of her government. One of these, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, had drawn up a secret plan for her on men she should appoint to each post; he assumed that Elizabeth would be open to his advice as she had been in the past.207 Another example of this was Phillip of Spain who had protected Elizabeth during her sister’s reign and courted her good favor when it became clear that she would inherit from Mary. His ambassador, Count Feria, was one of the first men to visit the new queen just prior to her coronation. In a letter to his master, Feria reported that Elizabeth declared during an interview that "it was the people who put her in her present situation and it is to them that she owes her allegiance. She will not acknowledge that your majesty or the nobility of this realm had any part in it. She is determined to be governed by no one."208

207 Somerset, Elizabeth I, 50
What these instances with Throckmorton and Phillip of Spain represent are not only Elizabeth’s determination to be governed by no one but also her confidence in her own personal choices for official positions. Elizabeth had grown up surrounded by some of the greatest scholars and statesmen of her day. Despite being only the son of a minor official, she chose as her Principal Secretary of State William Cecil. Elizabeth had previous knowledge of and dealings with Cecil prior to her ascension. Cecil represents the type of man that Elizabeth chose to promote. Her government servants were educated and talented, regardless of the station to which they had been born or the religious leanings they professed.

8.4.2. Foreign Affairs

The area in which Elizabeth’s education most greatly benefited her was that of foreign affairs. While Elizabeth had not been given lessons in diplomacy, she was a skilled intellectual and often capable of conversing with ambassadors and diplomats in their own native languages. Many of the letters that she composed to the king of France as well as to Catherine D’Medici were written in the recipient’s own native tongue, an impressive feat for the time period. Her knowledge of so many languages and her keen mind impressed and often intimidated foreign ambassadors.

Elizabeth was pressured throughout her reign to marry, beginning almost immediately after her ascension. She repeatedly received appeals from Parliament to take a husband and entertained no less than sixteen official suitors during her reign. Most modern biographers, however, argue that Elizabeth had no intention of marrying. She stated once to the Venetian ambassador that she would rather be “a pauper and single, than Queen and married.” She had learned from the example set by her sister, claiming that in marrying a foreign prince, “the queen had lost the affection of the people of this realm...by whose grace she reigned.” This did not stop Elizabeth from shrewdly using her stature as one of the most desirable brides in

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210 Somerset, *Elizabeth I*, 61
Europe to not only strike alliances, but also to keep her neighbor and rival, Mary Queen of Scots, in line. One example in this regard was playing Spain off of France and vice versa to suit England’s needs. Elizabeth entered into serious negotiations to marry the younger brother of the king of France in order to persuade Phillip II of Spain to bring conflict in the Netherlands to an end.\(^{211}\) Elizabeth knew that England needed every advantage against its neighboring giants and did not hesitate to use her marriage prospects to England’s advantage, and yet managed somehow to not seriously offend any of her suitors. Even after a refusal, King Eric of Sweden still set sail to England, apparently nourishing the hope that one day Elizabeth might be open to his suit.\(^{212}\) She was able to negotiate effectively and intelligently during such matrimonial overtures, creating opportunities abroad for England. Elizabeth’s skill in foreign affairs positioned England to become Great Britain and paved the way for Great Britain to become a global superpower, dominating geopolitics for centuries to come.\(^{213}\)

8.4.2. Religious Settlement

Elizabeth’s early experiences in life shaped her religious outlook. She had seen the chaos that occurred in her predecessors’ reigns, due in large part to the strict religious laws and views they held. Edward had made even more radical changes within the Church of England created by his father and Mary had been determined to return England to a religion that was no longer the majority. This divided the country deeply and allowed foreign powers to cultivate allies within its borders based on religious divides. Elizabeth also had personal dealings with the effects of religious extremism. She had experienced great distress and political problems due to her perceived religious preferences during her sister’s reign. Mary was determined to

\(^{211}\) Great Britain. Public Record Office., Lemon, and Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, 1547-[1625] : Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty’s Public Record Office*

\(^{212}\) Ascham and Vos, *Letters of Roger Ascham*, 51

\(^{213}\) Great Britain. Public Record Office., Lemon, and Green, *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, 1547-[1625] : Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty’s Public Record Office*
disinherit her Protestant half-sister after it became clear that Elizabeth would not conform to Catholicism. Elizabeth was the central focus of many of the rebellions during Mary's reign because of her Protestantism and she was subject to house arrest within the walls of the Tower of London as a result of her sister's strong Catholic views. Elizabeth famously protested against Mary's suspicions. In 1556 Elizabeth wrote to her sister that she wished her to remember her last demand that "she not be condemned without answer and due proof, which it seems that I now am; for without cause proved, I am by your Council from you commanded to go to the Tower, a place more wanted for a false traitor than a true subject." \(^{214}\)

Elizabeth chose, as a result of the experiences early in her life, to take a much more practical view of religion than her predecessors. Though Elizabeth was devoutly Protestant in her personal life, she chose not to make radical changes within religion immediately upon taking the throne. She often said that religion was a personal thing and that she had no wish to “make windows into men’s hearts and secret thoughts." \(^{215}\) To this end, Elizabeth chose aspects of both her brother’s and her father’s religious ideals. She adopted the religious settlement that had been put into place under her brother but like her father, still retained vestiges of the Catholic faith within the settlement such as mass and the reading of the gospels. \(^{216}\) Though Elizabeth eventually created a national church within England rather than contend with the humiliation of bowing down to a Papacy who never recognized her parents’ marriage or her legitimacy, she also seemed to calculate that this church would have to cater not only to the minority within her kingdom that desired extreme reform but also to the many that felt more ambiguous. \(^{217}\)


\(^{217}\) Elizabeth and Harrison, *The Letters of Queen Elizabeth I.*, 21
Elizabeth had seen what extremism of religion could do to England and she strove to avoid that at all costs. The lessons of her childhood and her time under Mary had taught her well, and Elizabeth attempted introduce the changes she intended to make within religion and the national church she wished to create at a far more gradual pace than either of her predecessors. Also, though during her reign the Act of Uniformity was passed making attendance in church mandatory and required that the 1552 Book of Common Prayer be used in churches throughout England, Elizabeth never went to great lengths to severely punish those who failed to comply. In the end, Elizabeth succeeded in creating the foundations of the modern Church of England and established the Church of England constitutionally, with the head of state as its supreme governor. Though she did not go far enough for many radicals and she went too far for many extreme conservatives, Elizabeth managed to learn from the mistakes observed within her predecessors’ reigns and use her own intelligence to enact reforms within the religious arena while still maintaining the good will of her people. She took as her motto in religion this view: “there is only one faith and one Jesus Christ; the rest is a dispute about trifles.”

8.4.3. A Flourishing of the Arts

Elizabeth had received a well-rounded education at the hands of one of the most learned men in England. This gave Elizabeth an appreciation and lifelong love for not only scholarly pursuits by also for the arts. Both Grindal and Ascham believed Elizabeth should be exposed to not only classical philosophy but classic plays and dramas as well as music and poetry. At the start of her reign, Elizabeth encouraged the revival of folk-festivals, the morris dances, and May-games, the Midsummer watch and various other cultural and artistic traditions that had been taken away in previous reigns. Elizabeth was also one of the theater’s most devoted patrons throughout her life and she often invited writers to come to court to perform

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219 Somerset, Elizabeth I, 76
their dramas and comedies at special occasions. She protected the players and playwrights from the more Puritanical of her subjects who sought to harass or persecute these artists. For example, in 1574 after hearing that city fathers’ had turned down a (Weir 1996:12) request by Leicester’s Men to be permitted to perform in recognized places in London, Elizabeth issued a license overturning the city father’s decision. The license allowed the players to “use, exercise and occupy the art and faculty of playing.” Under Elizabeth’s reign, men like Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare flourished.

8.5 A Woman Prepared to Rule

8.5.1. Effects of Education and Preparation

Elizabeth, unlike Mary, did not come to the throne with prejudices left over from being at the center of her parents’ matrimonial discord. She was only two and a half years old at the time of her mother’s execution and seems to have held no grudge against her father for the way in which he treated her mother. Rather Elizabeth strove to imitate Henry in many things and often invoked the memory of her father in court proceedings. In addition, despite her parents’ marital woes and the execution of her mother, Elizabeth seems to have experienced a relatively stable childhood and education. She was never short of tutors and found in Katherine Parr a loving step mother at an early age, one who took her education in hand and lavished praise on the young woman for her scholarly accomplishments. Though Elizabeth did experience a period of uncertainty and extreme unrest during her sister’s reign, she seems to have been able to take these as lessons in what not to do as queen, rather than letting it affect her entire character and personality.

Though Elizabeth’s early education and life experiences were not intended to shape her for the throne, they did in fact enable her to succeed where her sister failed. Elizabeth possessed a keen intelligence that she honed throughout her life through scholarly pursuits and

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220 Ibid.
she learned from experiences early in her life, she was determined to be governed by no one but herself.\textsuperscript{222} Elizabeth came to the throne a woman who had experienced hardship due to religion and the turmoil created by rebellion. She was also a woman who had spent most of her life surrounded by the greatest minds of her age. She put all of this to good use upon obtaining the throne by choosing to surround herself with able bodied administrators and chose to take a more gradual path to religious modification. Elizabeth turned her keen intelligence and linguistic ability into a huge asset in impressing foreign ambassadors. She was also shrewd enough politically to encourage possible marriage alliances to gain allies while never really offending any of her would be suitors with her rejections. The Elizabethan age saw an upsurge in the production of the arts, scholarly learning, and brought England to the forefront of innovation and exploration of the New World. In more recent scholarship there is a trend in attributing this innovation and exploration to her administrators rather than to Elizabeth herself, such as in The Myths of Elizabeth (2003). However, like her father, Elizabeth kept tight control over her government despite delegating many of its duties to various officials and her participation in these areas cannot be discounted.

8.5.2. Conclusion

Elizabeth’s reign would be looked back upon with nostalgia during the turbulent years that followed under the Stuarts. Elizabeth’s reign had been one of relative peace within the kingdoms borders and her government’s efficiency was unparalleled. Though some modern historians would like to discredit Elizabeth in terms of her actual ability to reign and the advantages that her education did in fact bring to the table, the evidence to the contrary cannot be denied. By coincidence, this downward swing in opinion of Elizabeth seems to be occurring at the same time that an upward swing in opinion is occurring for her fellow female monarch Mary I. Elizabeth may have had some character flaws, as did many monarchs before her, but

she was a more able ruler than her elder sister, as measured by her efficient government and her ability to effectively facilitate religious change within England’s borders. She used her Reformist education to good end and was not hampered by an extreme devotion to religion. In the words Ann Somerset: when Elizabeth came to the throne, “her kingdom was weak, demoralized and impoverished….under Elizabeth the nation regained its self-confidence and sense of direction.”

Other historians such as Alison Weir claim that Mary had “left England in a sad state, reduced to the status of a minor power on the edge of a Europe riven by religious and political strife, and prey to the ambitions of the two major international monarchies, Spain and France…..but that she left it in a position of power within England and helped to create a modern state with an established religion.” The consensus amongst historians, despite some recent trends, is that Elizabeth was an effective monarch who negotiated a religious settlement for England, navigated foreign affairs efficiently, and administered a well-organized government.

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223 Somerset, Elizabeth I
224 Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, 1.
CHAPTER 9

JAMES II

9.1 James II: A Look at Historiography

James II is remembered as the Catholic monarch who was deposed by his daughter and her foreign husband in the English (“Glorious”) Revolution of 1688. His reputation in both contemporary and modern times is that of a man whose religion led him to lose his throne and be forced into exile for the rest of his days. Historians such as W.A. Speck and John Miller represent a consensus among recent scholars who have looked at the available sources on James’ reign. Historians’ opinion currently is that James’s downfall was entirely of his own making. The one point of contention remaining in historians’ opinions of James is whether or not James’s early life and experiences contributed more to his downfall or if perhaps he experienced some damaging later event—including the onset of venereal disease—that explained his extreme changes in personality. Historian John Callow refutes the idea that a disease caused James’s change in outlook, religion, and personality after he came to the throne. Instead callow points out that James showed signs of an extremely rigid personality once he took the throne, based in large part on his early observations of monarchy and his military experiences.\(^{225}\) John Miller claims it was sheer bad luck that created James’s disastrous reign and that the king actually had some redeeming qualities.\(^{226}\) This study maintains that while James seemed to experience a great deal of bad luck during his reign, it was often in a situation of his own making. The research of Callow and Speck provides convincing evidence that James was a product of his environment, education, and experiences. James’s early life was very tumultuous. He spent twelve years in exile on the continent after his father Charles I was beheaded at the hands of Cromwell and his allies. It was these twelve

\(^{225}\) Great Britain. Public Record Office., Lemon, and Green, Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, of the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth, James I, 1547-[1625] : Preserved in the State Paper Department of Her Majesty’s Public Record Office

\(^{226}\) Somerset, Elizabeth I, 570
years and the experiences of his father’s reign that formed James’s personality and his religious convictions—characteristics and principles—that would be so important in his reign.

This study has includes a variety of primary sources related to James. Primary materials for James’s early life are extremely scarce and little is recorded of his early education. The most reliable sources are therefore the Calendar of State Papers in the British Archives, James’s own Memoirs, and the contemporary opinions of Bishop Burnet and Count Grammont, both of whom were first hand viewers of James and his reign. While the account written in James’s own hand is valuable in its own way, here it is used sparingly because it does not necessarily provide an unbiased account, being written by the subject himself. In terms of secondary sources, recent biographies on James include those by Callow and Speck, and a slightly older book written by John Miller. These three secondary sources provide an excellent range on the scholarship of James, including theories on medical causes for his behaviors and discussions of the effects of James’s military and religious leanings on his reign.

9.2 James’s Ascension to the Throne

James (b. 1633) was the third child and second living son born to Charles I and his French queen Henrietta Marie. James’s father had problems with Parliament and had turned out to be an increasingly unpopular monarch. By 1642 Charles was forced to flee London and England soon descended into civil war. James eventually escaped London on his own and join his mother and brother in France. Charles I was beheaded on 30, January 1649 at the age of forty eight. England came under the rule of Cromwell and James began a twelve year exile on the continent with his family. During his exile James would be at odds with his mother, who used her financial power as a French princess in an attempt to control her sons. As a result of this and his lack of stable income, James would be plagued by money issues throughout his time in exile. To cure these money woes James joined the military, first in France and finally in Spain. In May 1660 James and his elder brother sailed back to England to a boisterous
welcome. Cromwell’s rule had been oppressive and trying for the people of England; a return to the Stuart regime appeared to many to be a relief. James became Lord High Admiral under his brother’s reign and saw action in several battles. At an unknown date during the reign of his brother, James converted to Catholicism, putting his place in the line of succession into question. Charles II died without issue in February 1685 and James succeeded him to the throne as James II of England and VII of Scotland. He ruled from 1685 until he was deposed by his own daughter Mary II and her husband William of Orange in 1688. James lived the remainder of his life in exile in France, where he died in 1701.

9.3 James’s Education

Civil war in England encompassed much of James’s childhood; there is, as a result, little surviving evidence regarding his formal education. James was created Duke of York and Albany as well as Lord High Admiral and was given an adequate source of income. As he was only three years old at the time of his appointment, duties for each of these offices were performed by others. What influenced James more than any formal education he might have received was his time in the military and his later conversion to Catholicism. It was his experiences in these two areas that James would use to shape the both his life and his reign.

9.3.1. Formal Education

There is very little evidence of James’s early education. The civil strife of his father’s reign and his exile on the continent meant that James was unable to enjoy the standard royal education that a prince of his time would have received—i.e. tutoring with religious and university figures. (James’ father Charles I, as a youth had been tutored by John Murray, who later headed Eton.) Unlike his elder brother Charles, who was almost thirteen years of age when the family fled England, James was only nine at the time of the Stuarts’ forced exile. Though it would seem that Charles and James received much the same education and early

influences, then. James’s education stopped at a far earlier age than his elder brother’s. At precisely the age which James would have been expected to reap the full benefits of a comprehensive social and political education at Whitehall, the storm clouds of civil war and unrest began to emerge.\textsuperscript{228}

What historians do know about James’s formal education is that it began quite early. James was taught to read and write by William Seymour, the Marquis of Hertford, and was provided with fencing, archery and dancing masters. All of these were skills thought to be befitting the station of a prince at the time. James showed some interest in music, playing the guitar and dancing well. He learned, probably in his travels, to speak French fluently and was familiar with Italian.\textsuperscript{229} James was an energetic youth and for him book learning seemed much less exciting than warfare and mock battles. In a letter written to James in 1647 his father claimed that he “wished him to play his book more and his gun less.”\textsuperscript{230}

James’s formal education came to an abrupt halt when he was eight years old. Tensions had boiled over and his father was forced to flee London for Oxford. Eventually James and Charles would both join their father in the town and it was here that James would spend the next three years of his life. While at Oxford some attempt was made to resume James’s bookish education though he often was to be found with arms rather than with books. Oxford was no longer a center of education but the headquarters of the royalist military regime and battles were being fought in the immediate vicinity on an almost continuous basis. Any young man would have been hard pressed to pay attention to the long lectures he was receiving--much less one who never “minded to make study his business, being so averse from

\textsuperscript{228} John Callow, \textit{The Making of King James II : The Formative Years of a Fallen King} (Stroud, Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2000), 147.
\textsuperscript{229} John Miller, \textit{James II} (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2000), 64.
pringing upon his book”. Though his father encouraged him to put more effort into his book learning and less into hunting and other sports, Charles I was often away on military excursions; advice from his remote father was often ignored by both Charles and James.

James’s scholarly education further deteriorated as his father began to retreat and was eventually overtaken by the New Model Army. James was left as a hostage under Parliamentary, put into the care of the Earl and Countess of Northumberland. In 1647 Charles I was handed over to Parliamentary forces and James was allowed to visit him two or three times a week at Hampton Court. Charles I’s outlook was rapidly deteriorating, as he realized that Parliament held supreme power. He urged James and his younger siblings to escape to the continent to join their elder sister and to never desert the Church of England.

In 1648, any chance James had at a stable formal education came to a halt when he fled for his sister’s court in Bruges. There was little opportunity for James to resume his interrupted education once he left England; he was often short of money and on the move to the next court with his elder brother.

James was unable to receive the benefits of a princely education due in large part to the strife of civil war and exile. Even during the brief periods when James might have been able to obtain some formal education, his lack of enthusiasm for bookish learning and outside events that were far more exciting to a young boy prevented him from obtaining the scholarly education that many of his near predecessors had enjoyed as a member of the royal family.

9.3.2. James’s “Other” Education: The Military and His Time on the Continent

James’s military education began early in life as a result of his father’s struggles with Parliament. He witnessed his first battle at Edgehill and lived for three years in Oxford, the

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231 Callow, The Making of King James II: The Formative Years of a Fallen King, 34
232 Miller, James II, 2
233 Great Britain. Public Record Office., Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James II., 160
234 Edward Hyde Clarendon, “The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641. ... Written by the Right Honourable Edward Earl of Clarendon ...” Printed at the Theater
Royalist headquarters. James was surrounded by military men and seemed to be far more interested in battles, both mock and real life, than his formal education. It is no surprise that when he found himself short of money in exile that James turned to military service to provide for himself. James joined the army of the boy king Louis XIV at the age of eighteen and came under the command of famed military genius Turenne. James would remember the four years he spent as an officer in the French Royal Army as the happiest and most fulfilling time of his life, recounted in fond detail in his memoirs.\textsuperscript{235}

After leaving service in the French army at the request of his brother, James joined the Spanish army in fighting against his former French comrades. He was far less pleased with his time in the Spanish army and would continue to prefer the French style of military order and preparation even after his return to England. James's military experiences led him to take a soldier’s view of the world. The code of honor that was central to the bond between commander-in-chief and his officer corps made a lasting impression; it colored the way in which he handled not only military matters but also his political relationships.\textsuperscript{236} James believed that respect for the chain of command was necessary in military relationships as well as within politics. He had known the military far more than he had known courtly life when he obtained the throne and James chose to have recourse to martial lessons throughout his reign.

In addition to James's time in the military, the other main influence that came out of his stay on the continent was a less than firm conviction about religion. While in exile in France, James quarreled with his mother when she tried to convert him to her faith. He endeavored to keep his younger brother loyal to the Church of England when she made similar attempts upon

\textsuperscript{235} Miller, James II, 3
\textsuperscript{236} Lewis Innes et al., The Life of James the Second, King of England, &c., Collected Out of Memoirs Writ of His Own Hand, Together with the King’s Advice to His Son, and His Majesty’s Will. (London: Printed for Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1816), 27.
him. Despite his apparent conviction early on in his exile to adhere to his father’s wishes and remain loyal to the Church of England, James could not help being impressed by the exemplary lives of the Catholics he came to know. He was in almost constant company with men of the Catholic faith while serving in both the French and the Spanish armies and it was during this time that James began to question the Anglican faith that he knew so little about. The first seeds of real doubt regarding his Anglican faith were placed while James was in France. A bishop of the established church asked James to read a treatise justifying the Church of England’s secession from Rome. James thought the treatise actually proved the reverse. After his return to England James began to read all the histories he could find on both the Reformation and its foremost members. Dr. Heylin’s *History of the Reformation* and Hooker’s *Ecclesiastical Politie* thoroughly convinced James that neither the Church of England nor the leading reformists had the power to break with Rome. Combined with the examples of faith and determination that he witnessed in his comrades while on the continent, James began to have serious doubts regarding his religious convictions; his religious turmoil was compounded by his marriage to Catholic Mary of Modena.

9.3.3. Experience in Governance

Though James did not experience any formal instruction in governance or administration, he did gain some experience at various points in his life. In January 1650 James received his first experience in governance. His brother left him as governor of Jersey until that summer, when Charles recalled him to Paris. Though he only held the position for a short time, James made contacts that would continue through the remainder of his life. The remainder of James’s experience in administration and authority during his early years in exile

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237 Clarendon, *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England Begun in the Year 1641. ... Written by the Right Honourable Edward Earl of Clarendon ...*, 228

238 Callow, *The Making of King James II: The Formative Years of a Fallen King*, 62

would come as a military leader, something that would shape his outlook towards politics when he ascended the throne.

James next took up an official position within his brother’s government, as the Lord High Admiral of the English Navy. James spent his time as Lord High Admiral at the head of English naval affairs with the assistance of a Navy Board that was similar to a council for a king. Controversy over James’s handling of the royal navy and its affairs, occurred during his own time. Scholars continue to examine his performance, citing contemporary views that he squandered its resources on foreign battles. Some modern scholars however have noted James’s ability to ensure that the navy was properly manned and equipped. Despite his personal attention to naval affairs, James developed a suspicious nature when it came to promotion within the navy. His preference was to promote gentleman and nobles over ordinary sailors who others said merited a promotion. He contended that these ordinary sailors who had served in the Republican army were suspect and not to be trusted. In replacing the promotion system in the navy, his contemporaries argued that James was advancing nobles rather than ordinary seamen, to the detriment of the navy itself.

James was also appointed as a chancellor in Scotland during his brother’s reign. Charles’s goal in bestowing upon James an appointment in Scotland was not a design to educate his younger brother and heir but rather an attempt to defuse an extremely sensitive situation. James had recently converted to Catholicism and there was growing anger over his rebuttal of the national faith. Many dissenters wished to exclude James from the succession as it was becoming increasingly clear that Charles would have no legitimate sons to follow him to the throne. James went to Scotland as the royal high commissioner and spent three years there. He sought to continue the efforts of his predecessor and practiced the practical

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240 Ibid., 24
241 Innes et al., The Life of James the Second, King of England, &c., Collected Out of Memoirs Writ of His Own Hand. Together with the King’s Advice to His Son, and His Majesty’s Will., 225
expression of political ideology which stressed paternalism and order; he touted the idea of absolute monarchy allied to a stable hierarchical society.\textsuperscript{242} He made concessions to various Scottish religious parties, advocated the creation of the Royal College of Physicians and generally found that this system of government gained him support within the Scottish parliament and with the people as well. It was James’ Scottish experience in government, along with his military experiences in leadership, upon which James would attempt to draw when he ascended to the throne.

9.4 James’s Reign and Legacy

In the words of his contemporary the Bishop of Burnet James was “very brave in his youth; and so much magnified by Monsieur Turenne, that till his marriage lessened him, he really clouded the king [Charles II], and passed for the superior genius. He was naturally candid and sincere…till affairs and his religion wore out all his first principles and inclinations. He had no true judgment and was soon determined by those whom he trusted…he was bred with high notions of kingly authority, and laid down for a maxim, that all who opposed the king were rebels in their hearts.”\textsuperscript{243} This statement is remarkably accurate in its description of James. His early experiences in life during the civil wars of his father, his exile on the continent combined with his military service, his experiences in Scotland and his conversion to the Catholic faith echo in his reign and in his legacy.

9.4.1. Lack of Stability and Early Examples

James’s early life and education was far from stable. Unlike his elder brother Charles (later Charles II) James was not given the opportunity to fully take advantage of the education he was entitled to in his rank as a royal prince. He experienced a great deal of upheaval at an early time in his life. James fully believed that the concessions his father made to his opponents, particularly his sacrifice of the earl of Strafford, were seen by his adversaries as

\textsuperscript{242} Speck, James II, 17
\textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 22
signs of weakness which led to the downfall and ultimate death of Charles I. James was determined to learn from the experiences of his youth and to never show signs of such weaknesses himself.\(^{244}\) His convictions against showing weakness became even more firm when his brother allowed his chief minister to be used as a scapegoat in a naval disaster. James claimed that “the most fatal blow the king gave himself to his power and prerogative was when he sought aid from the House of Commons to destroy the Earl of Clarendon, but that he put the House again in mind of their impeaching privilege which had been wrested out of their hands by the Restoration.”\(^{245}\) James used the two examples of his predecessors’ dealings with Parliament to further strengthen his convictions that the monarchy needed be the chief power within the national government; concessions would simply show weakness to his enemies. He refused to compromise as king in both political and religious matters, opening up avenues for dissent and rebellion.

In addition to what he saw as his predecessors’ weakness when dealing with dissenters, James remained a military minded man even after his ascension. James’s military education and experiences early in life led him to take a soldier’s view of the world. To James, the code of honor was central to the bond between the commander-in-chief and his officer corps. This same bond and chain of command was essential in political discipline and governance as well, in James’s opinion. His *Memoirs* show the remarkable degree to which his mind was very much that of a soldier.\(^{246}\)

### 9.4.2. Religious Influence

James’s religious conversion and outlook shaped his reign and policies more so than any other experience he had early in life. Prior to his conversion James was described as

\(^{244}\) Gilbert Burnet et al., *Bishop Burnet’s History of His Own Time* ... (London: Printed for Thomas Ward ..., 1724), 236.

\(^{245}\) Speck, *James II*, 29

licentious and every bit the womanizer his brother Charles was. For example, Grammont describes James’s views on marriage in his memoirs. “The Duke of York, having quieted his conscience by the declaration of his marriage, thought that he was entitled, by this generous effort, to give way a little to his inconstancy: he therefore immediately seized upon whatever he could first lay his hands upon; this was Lady Carney.” All of this carefree frivolity and womanizing changed after James converted to Roman Catholicism. James became a devout Catholic who genuinely believed that it was only out of fear that people conformed to the Protestant religion. Even in the face of rebellion from his subjects James continued to believe that his (Catholic) religious path was the correct course for England.

After his ascension James did not immediately set out to change the religion of his country, though he later claimed that it was his goal all along. James stated in a speech just after his ascension that he “shall make it my endeavor to preserve this government both in church and state as it is by law established. I know the principles of the Church of England are for monarchy and the members of it have shown themselves good and loyal subjects; therefore I shall always take care to defend and support it.” James would later regret not amending these words to say that he would try not to change the established church. After his conversion James had gone from a prince of a habitual but empty conformity to a man of active and devout piety. He now believed that the monarch was divinely appointed into God’s service. For James, God’s service meant the advancement of Catholicism. The religion that had first taken root when James was in exile on the continent and that had so dictated his years prior to his ascension now came to control much of his policy as king. The fact that he had survived the assaults on his faith in his younger years only served to strengthen James’s conviction that his sitting on the throne was divinely willed.

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247 Speck, James II, 217
248 Innes et al., The Life of James the Second, King of England, &c., Collected Out of Memoirs Writ of His Own Hand. Together with the King’s Advice to His Son, and His Majesty’s Will., 593
249 Speck, James II, 21
James sought to repeal legislation such as the Test Acts. He believed that if this were done that Catholics would become so numerous that his successors would have to allow them a measure of toleration. James even mentioned to a papal legate that once the laws no longer held people in fear, then England would be Catholic in two years.\textsuperscript{250} James sought to not only change the religion of his class but the religion of the masses as well. No case was too small scale to escape his notice, if it related to religion. In one letter, for example, James wrote to the Attorney General concerning a petition by Ambrose Crowley, an ironmonger in London, who claimed that he was being harassed because he was a Catholic. The Attorney General reported that James “was disposed to give all fitting encouragement, his majesty was to order that the Catholic and other workmen to be employed in the factory for making ironware may as quietly enjoy their religion and not be molested as Protestant strangers as the English do.”\textsuperscript{251}

9.5 A Contrasting Legacy

James lost his crown to a rebellion in England after just a few years on the throne. In the words of his contemporary Bishop Burnet “a great king with strong armies and mighty fleets, a vast treasure and powerful allies fell all at once and his whole strength, like a spider’s web, was so irrevocably broken with a touch, that he was never able to retrieve what for want of judgment and heart he threw up in a day.”\textsuperscript{252} This contemporary opinion placing the blame for the sudden downfall of James squarely on his own shoulders is one that has been carried into modern times. What historians still debate are the exact reasons why James could not see sooner that his actions were paving the way for his removal from the throne.

9.5.1. Effects of Education and Early Experiences

James’s early life was tumultuous and often uncertain. From this early upheaval James deduced several conclusions which would greatly affect his reign. One was that politics were in

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{250} Hamilton and Goodwin, \textit{Memoirs of Count Grammont}, 154
\textsuperscript{251} Miller, \textit{James II}, 120
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 133
\end{footnotes}
a constant state of flux: nothing could be taken for granted in a world subject to unfathomable changes. Another was that his father had lost his throne because he had not shown sufficient firmness when faced by opposition. James would take this lesson to heart. Much of his undoing as a king had to do with the fact that he could not tolerate dissent in any form. He preferred to use force rather than political wit or negotiation to solve his problems and as a result he lacked the political finesse of his elder brother Charles II, the Merry Monarch.

This rigidity in dealing with his problems as king was also characteristic of his training as a military man. James spent over thirty years of his life as a soldier. The happiest times he recalls in his Memoirs all involve military education. James’s early training as a soldier led him to develop a great trust in the order and chain of command. He believed that military logic and order would also work in political affairs.

The other factor that played into James’s downfall was his extreme religious beliefs. James stubbornly believed that the English people would accept Catholicism alongside Protestantism and that he had the power to do within his own kingdom whatever he chose. Though James was of too strong a mind to submit completely to papal authority, he did attempt to replace judges, subvert popular elections, and promote the principals of his own religion. While his brother Charles did convert to Catholicism, Charles was astute enough to keep it to himself until his death. James, on the other hand, believed in the monarch’s power and was not politically savvy enough to realize that Catholicism was a pill too bitter for the people of England to swallow. The most destructive examples of in his mistaken religious zeal were James’s final dismissal of Parliament in 1685 and his refusal to let them meet again while he reigned. It would be this action that provided the basis for the rebellion that would cost him his throne and send him into a final exile.

9.5.2. Conclusion

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253 Ibid., 127
254 Great Britain. Public Record Office., Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, James II.
James’s religion was not that of the majority and his government could not function well enough to establish order within England. James’s early experience as chancellor in Scotland taught him to believe in absolute monarchy with an almost paternalistic outlook towards his subjects. He trusted that the problems of his two predecessors’ reigns had occurred because his father Charles I and his brother Charles II had not been firm enough in their convictions and had given in to the demands of dissenters. As successful as his time in Scotland may have been this same type of reign in England did not work. The English people were firmly rooted in their religion and traditions and had recently seen the execution of an anointed king. As a result, a monarch who refused to play the political game that was necessary to win concessions from his government and his people who firmly believed that it was he who held all the power did not stand a chance of succeeding on the throne.

James’s reign can be seen as a product of his early education and experiences in life. He did not receive a stable or extended education in England and as a result was woefully out of touch with his people and their religious convictions. In addition the events of his early life strengthened his own religious views. James’s extended stay within a military structure created a rigid personality. When added to his newfound devout piety, James’s religious views caused him to be unable to see that his actions were creating the stirrings of rebellion, much as his father’s actions had spurred revolt nearly forty years before.
CHAPTER 10
CONCLUSION

10.1 A Question of Kingship

Eight times between 1100 and 1701, someone other than the primary heir to the throne inherited. These “sudden monarchs” represent the most revered and the most reviled monarchs that England has to offer. Their education and preparation is less well documented by contemporary historians than that of their elder, dynastically much more important siblings. For that reason it is far harder to trace the affect that their education, preparation, and early experiences had on the course of their reigns. Despite this challenge, it is possible to assess their education and preparation prior to ascending the throne. It was these life experiences that shaped them into the hero or villain that they would eventually be.

10.2 Not Afforded the Same Education

Overall these “sudden monarchs” did not receive the same education as their elder sibling. Take for instance Henry VIII and his elder brother Prince Arthur. Even after his creation as heir and Prince of Wales in 1504, Henry did not follow the same tract of education and preparation that had been set out for his elder brother. By the age of fifteen, Prince Arthur had been sent with his own court, a wife, and regent powers to the Welsh Marches. Henry by contrast was never given any official duties under his father Henry VII and was not extensively trained in statecraft as Prince Arthur had been from an early age. This example is characteristic of the younger, less important child in the royal family from 1100 to 1701. They were rarely given any formal responsibilities or training in governance and were often trained for other avenues. For example, there has been speculation that both Henry I and Richard III were trained initially for entrance into the church. Though there is no official confirmation in contemporary records, it can be speculated that their extensive training in Latin, grammar, and writing show that they were possibly meant for a life within the clergy. All three of these skills
were not commonly taught in the classroom of medieval England, even to a royal child. Overall, these monarchs did not receive the same education and preparation that was afforded to their dynastically more important elder sibling.

10.3 Preparation to Rule

Quite a bit of the preparation that the non-primary heir to the throne received had a great deal to do with stability. When their environment was stable and civil war was not a factor, they were able to receive a far better formal education; in addition, they were also able to receive more formal training or observation in administration of government. For example, both Mary I and James II had extremely unstable childhoods. Mary was the casualty of her parents divorce struggles and her father’s need to produce a legitimate male heir. Her education and knowledge of governmental affairs suffered terribly as a result. Mary was shuffled between various households and often short of money for clothes let alone tutors. She was away from court for long periods of time and unable to see the political dynamics that were involved in ruling England. James II’s early years were disturbed by the civil war that broke out when he was nine years of age. James was forced to flee England and reside on the continent for twelve years. He had no way to continue his formal education and was forced into the military in order to make ends meet. This time in the military, as well as his lack of understanding regarding his people and their Protestant faith affected his reign and its policies. All together, if their childhood and early years were stable and free of conflicts, their knowledge of governance in addition to their formal education benefited. As did their reign.

10.4 Trends Amongst the Monarchs

The overall trend that emerged from this study was that the education, preparation, and early life experiences of each of these eight monarchs did in fact have an effect on their reigns and policies. It was often a combination of these three factors that showed later in the monarch’s policies and abilities at administration. Henry I used his formal education, his
training in the arts of war, and his experience during his brother’s reign to create a peaceful England. Henry I was able to create a governmental machine that allowed for more efficiency and the delegation of responsibilities. He left a stronger, more efficient governmental machine to his successors and changed the way in which historians looked at monarchs. No longer was it safe to assume a king was illiterate and the education of royal children became far more advanced after his reign. In contrast to this, Mary I’s formal education, early life experiences, and her lack of preparation for the throne showed in every aspect of her reign. Mary’s education was thorough but it was also very religious in nature. She would make religion the basis of her reign. Her determination to return England to papal authority and the Catholic religion would destroy her reputation amongst her people and would seal her fate as “Bloody Mary”. In addition, Mary’s lack of preparation or even knowledge of governance and administration hurt her abilities to effectively govern England. Because of her parent’s divorce and her subsequent bastardization, Mary was not often at court and did not have the opportunity to observe the political machinations and daily life that ruled England in the sixteenth century.

Though on the surface it would seem that Richard III does not fit this trend, his rule was just as much a product of his education, preparation, and early life experiences as the other seven monarchs. Richard did have an extremely unstable early life due to the Wars of the Roses. But Richard’s life and education became far more stable after the ascension of his brother Edward IV as king. Richard received an excellent education in the arts of war and had ample opportunity to learn governmental administration. Richard’s power in the north was virtually absolute and he became an increasingly integral part of his brother’s governmental machine throughout Edward IV’s reign. Richard was an excellent administrator as king and he attempted to implement justice throughout the kingdom. Richard’s mistake was not realizing that his subjects craved the stability of continuation of succession. His brother Edward IV was
an extremely popular monarch and that popularity transferred to his son Edward V. Richard’s subjects could not forget the fact that there was the possibility that Richard had murdered his two young nephews, as well as an anointed king. Therefore, it was not Richard’s policies or administration that perpetuates his reputation as a bad king, but his failure to realize that his monarchy would not be accepted on the terms in which he took the throne.

10.5 Concluding Thoughts

Recently, the line of succession for the English throne has changed again. In 2012, the rules about the line of succession for the English throne changed again. Bowing to concerns about gender equality, England has agreed to change its laws of royal succession. A female child born first will now take precedence over any younger sons in the line of succession, thus changing hundreds of years of the Norman custom of male primogeniture. This landmark change means that no matter their gender, the first born child of the Prince or Princess of Wales will inherit the throne. The 21st century legislation on succession minimizes the differences between the primary heir and his or her siblings to an even greater extent than did the Act of Settlement of 1701. There is another respect in which modern heirs to the English throne will have an advantage over much earlier heirs. Modern standards of education are far more stabilized and universal than they were four hundred years ago. Both Prince William, the heir apparent after his father, as well as his younger brother Prince Harry attended Eton and went on to college and military careers. The difference in the education and preparation among first-born versus later siblings in recent years is marginal compared to that prior to the Act of Settlement in 1701. Prince Harry would be just as prepared to inherit the throne as his elder brother, and the fact that the English monarch no longer represents the supreme head of government also factors in.

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255 Burnet et al., Bishop Burnet's History of His Own Time ..., 153
Between 1100 and 1701, the eight “sudden monarchs” who inherited show a trend in how their education and preparation for the throne affected their reign. When those monarchs experienced a stable early life and had a detailed education in the things that contemporaries felt were important, whether languages or warfare, then those monarchs were able to effectively govern England. Their historical legacy is typically one of greatness, looked back upon with nostalgia in later eras. The changes that they brought about, such as the Reformation, had lasting effects that benefited England both internally and internationally.
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BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Lindsay Ridlehuber graduated from Texas A&M University in 2006 with a Bachelor's of Science in Leadership and Development with minors in Chemistry and History. She will graduate with an M.A. in History from the University of Texas Arlington in May 2013. Her primary research interests are Great Britain and the English monarchy. After obtaining her masters Lindsay intends to continue research and writing with the possibility of obtaining a Ph.D in the near future.