MARRIAGE, SUCCESSION AND ELIZABETH I

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In an official petition decreed February 1, 1563, England's House of Lords made a desperate plea to Queen Elizabeth I: "If God shall call your highness without heir of your body, be in more dangerous state and condition than ever it was that any man can remember."[1] This distressed, and finally futile, plea for the 30-year-old Queen to "dispose [herself] to marry where it shall please [her]...and as soon as it shall please [her]"[2] reflected the growing concern of the governing class as to securing the future of the country. Although the numerous appeals of the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and Elizabeth's privy council did not fall upon deaf ears, the Queen at last decided against the wishes of her governing bodies, a decision that many feared would entail dire consequences for England. The question remains whether Elizabeth ever really planned to marry in the first place, or whether her final decision reflected one made at the beginning of her reign in 1559. Although hypotheses abound, historians may never discover the true answer to this query. But the vital role that marriage endeavors, negotiations, and ultimately deflections played in Elizabeth's reign, persona, and popular and historical legacy demonstrate the magnitude of the marriage and succession questions in Tudor England.

According to Elizabeth, the reasons for the failure of potential marriages to suitors ranging from the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester to François De Valois, varied from a fear of discord within the country caused by new alliances to issues of religious conformity to trepidation over a loss of power and forced submissiveness in the case of a male head-of-state. In the end, it seems that Elizabeth's failure to marry may have stemmed from a deliberate desire to keep the fate of her country in her own hands, and thus retain the confidence of her people in her, and only her, as monarch. It is also vital to take into account the role that her privy council played in marriage negotiations – indeed, their inability to fully unite behind any single suitor made rejecting proposals an easier task.[3] Elizabeth's decision caused much strife within her private council, the government, and amongst the people of England and beyond; most of who saw marriage as the only means of securing a smooth transfer of power after her death. In the words of Matthew Parker, the archbishop of Canterbury in 1560, Elizabeth's increasing capriciousness regarding the marriage issue was met with "[a great fear] that this continued sterility...be a token of God's displeasure towards us."[4]

1 Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose, eds. *Elizabeth I: Collected Works.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000, p. 86.
2 Marcus et. al., p. 86.
3 Susan Doran, "Why Did Elizabeth Not Marry?" *Dissing Elizabeth: Negative Representations of Gloriana*, ed. Julia M. Walker, London: Duke University Press, 1998, p. 41.
4 Doran, p. 30.

Historically, the two most crucial issues facing the monarchs – and country – of England were succession and religion. The crises involved with succession were engraved in the minds of the English before Elizabeth became queen – during the fifteenth century, the country faced continual friction and upheaval as rival contenders vied to gain control of the throne through military means. Much of this turmoil took the form of the War of the Roses (1455-1487), which ended with the accession of Henry VII.[5] Although this all took place well before the reign of Elizabeth, it fostered an environment in England that left not only the country vulnerable to foreign invasion (an issue that Elizabeth would later have to address with Spain), but also planted a genuine fear in the minds of the English subjects concerning the consequences of a succession crisis. This fear manifested itself in the minds of later monarchs as well, becoming a key concern governing the minds of future regents, famously including Henry VIII, whose drive to produce a viable heir to the throne culminated in a break with Rome in 1531.[6]

Thus, when Elizabeth finally took the throne in January 1559, it was as a direct result of a succession crisis that began after Henry VIII's death in 1547. Indeed, the attitude at the time towards a female regent was fearful – as Matthew Parker's quote attests, many regarded the prospect of a sole female ruler as punishment from God. Moreover, "most believed a female ruler to be, if not an unnatural monstrosity, an unusual, and in principle undesirable exception to the regular rule governing human affairs."[7] Initially, Elizabeth appeared to bow to pressures from her council and governing bodies to seek a husband; at no time during the first half of her reign did she ever publicly rule-out the prospect of marriage, and according to Anne Somerset, there are numerous instances between 1558 and 1568 in which the Queen "said that she had already informed the Commons...that she intended to take a husband, and she could not understand why so little weight had been attached to this assurance."[8] As a woman of her time, the Queen must have been well aware of the importance of marriage and childbirth as solutions to the issue of succession. The skepticism on the part of the Commons, however, was well-placed, as Elizabeth's dealings with the marriage issue had been notoriously ambivalent and her ability to settle on a decision, nonexistent. Her apparent strategy of irresoluteness began as early as 1559, when the Commons, including all of her privy councilors, first asked her to take a husband as means of dealing with the threat posed by Mary Stuart. Elizabeth's response remained open to the possibility of marriage; however, it concluded with the prediction that ultimately, it would be sufficient that a marble stone state 'that a Queene, having raigned such a tyme, lived and dyed a virgin.'[9] This petition was

5 Class notes, 1/17/08.
6 Anne Somerset, *Elizabeth I.* New York: Anchor Books, 1991, p. 34.
7 Patrick Collinson, "Elizabeth I (1533–1603)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept. 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/8636, 16 Feb 2008.
8 Somerset, p. 186.
9 Collinson.

repeated by Parliament three times between 1563 and 1576 as the need to secure a successor grew more and more pressing.[10] The petition delivered in 1566 addressing the questions of marriage and succession "implicitly censured the Queen for lack of action despite her promise to marry," and led Elizabeth to respond reproachfully "a strange order of petitioners, that will make a request and cannot be otherwise ascertained but by the prince's word, and yet will not believe it when it is spoken."[11]

The pleas of the Commons and the Lords were justifiable. As noted previously, crises of succession were embedded in the memories of the English. What is more, Elizabeth's precarious relationship with Mary Stuart, and the Scottish Queen's claims to the English throne immediately following Elizabeth's coronation further compounded the sense of urgency for Elizabeth to marry and name a successor. To begin with, following Mary's claim to the throne, Spanish King Philip immediately rallied in favor of Elizabeth's legitimacy. This support left Elizabeth, at least initially, in a strong position: France wanted to create an alliance against Spain, and Spain and the Hapsburgs wanted to form one against France. Thus, Elizabeth's potential future husband would tip the entire balance of power in Europe. The urgency of this decision is clearly reflected in the 1563 petitions from Parliament, as the House of Lords noted that the threat posed by Mary from abroad could be dealt with in Elizabeth's marriage and production of an heir: "Th'assenting to and performing of those petitions [marriage and succession] cannot...but breed terror to your enemies, and therefore must of necessary bring private surety to your person."[12] In the same petition, the House of Lords even went so far, using classical and religious allusions, to suggest that Elizabeth's failure to marry would put her people in danger: "...the not doing of this...cannot by [our] judgment but be the occasion of our evident and great danger and peril to all states and sorts of men of this realm by the factions, seditions and intestine war that will grow... [and] much innocent blood is like to be shed."[13] England's – and the Queen's – precariousness for lack of marriage and the naming of a successor are further exposed in Parliament's 1571 Treasons Act, which explicitly forbade anyone to affirm that "our said sovereign lady...is not able to make laws and statues of sufficient force and validity to limit and bind the crown of this realm and the descent, limitation, inheritance, and government thereof..."[14]

In her direct responses to these particular petitions, Elizabeth's exasperation with her Parliament was evident. To the Commons, she stated that "I know...I am mortal...and that I must seek to discharge myself of that great burden."[15] Though, she does slyly consent that "if I can bend my liking to your need, I will not resist such

10 Doran, p. 30.
11 Doran, p. 31.
12 Marcus et. al., p. 82.
13 Marcus et. al., p. 85.
14 "Treasons Act, 1571," www.gunpowder-plot.org/archives/eliz2.htm.
15 Marcus et. al., p. 71.

a mind."[16] This phrase is telling: Elizabeth did not publicly, until her last suitor of François De Valois, Duke of Alençon in 1585, commit to remaining unwed. Instead, a series of more than two dozen suitors came and went through her court. There are even indications that she harbored a deep desire to marry a few of them, wishes that were eventually quelled by her councilors. As Susan Doran notes, "it is doubtful that her public statements were merely cynical gestures to her parliamentary critics...[for in the 1560s] she well knew that marriage and childbirth provided the best route for resolving that thorny issue of succession."[17] Although, there are accounts from Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Sir William Pickering that "ever since her years of understanding, [she] concluded that spinsterhood would suit her best." Thus, in Somerset's words, "since there is evidence which suggests that she had formed [an unfavorable view on marriage] long before she became Queen, political considerations cannot on their own account for her attitude."[18] Regardless, before choosing Elizabeth also had to take numerous questions into account, in spite of the House of Lords' request that she just marry "with whom it shall please you."[19] First, there was the vital issue of religion: if Elizabeth married a Catholic, such as François d'Anjou, she must decide to what extent he would have to conform to English law. In the case of a Catholic suitor, Elizabeth and her council had to keep in the back of their minds the fact that many would be fearful and suspicious of secret clauses in the marriage treaty that could be detrimental to England. In general, the predominant view of the council towards marriage between Catholics and Protestants seems to have been that "Christian intermarriage was acceptable provided there were sound expectations of a future conversion to Protestantism."[20] Additionally, there was the ever-present issue of Elizabeth's gender, for as a woman and a wife, albeit a monarch, she would inevitably have to bow to the requests of her husband. This held great potential to disfavor England. Furthermore, if she chose to marry someone who was also in line to inherit their own throne, their resulting heir would be a monarch of two kingdoms, leaving the possibility that England would be abandoned in favor of the other.

One of Elizabeth's first notable and seriously-considered marriage proposals came from King Philip II of Spain in 1559, who saw an alliance with England as means of putting him in a position to guarantee that the country remained in the hands of the Catholic Church under Elizabeth. Upon the proposal, however, "Elizabeth did not seem in the least elated...and she made difficulties about the fact that Philip had previously been married to her sister."[21] Politically, it is easy to see why his proposal was rejected: as both Elizabeth and her council were well-aware, the marriage would prove incompatible with the radical alterations in religion that

16 Marcus et. al., p. 79.
17 Doran, p. 39.
18 Somerset, p. 95.
19 Marcus et. al., p. 82.
20 Doran, p. 47.
21 Somerset, p.108.

the Queen was prepared to enact. Thus, she told the Spanish ambassador that "she could not marry your Majesty as she was a heretic."[22] Nearly all of the remaining candidates early in her reign were simply deemed not good enough for a reigning monarch. Even the Catholic Archduke Charles of Austria, who, from the English point of view was enticing, elicited only a "non-committal" reaction from the Queen in 1566, and was ultimately rejected after much delay on account of his refusal to convert to Protestantism. There is something to be said for the fact that the Queen knew her country's stability could be wrecked if she married someone of a different faith – though she also knew that the "religion issue" would provide the public with a "sufficiently weighty impediment" as to her failure to secure a husband yet again, and "was confident that it in no way reflected badly on her if she declared it to be an insuperable bar to a union."[23] Religion proved to be an insurmountable obstacle too in other Catholic suitors, Henri d'Anjou to Charles' brother, Ferdinand.

There does exist evidence that Elizabeth may have been favorably inclined towards marriage in the case of two individuals, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and François De Valois, Duke of Alençon, although neither worked out due to an unfavorable response from the Privy Council, or a sense of futility that arose with Elizabeth's passing of child-bearing age. Dudley and the Queen cultivated a close relationship, and even while his wife Amy was still alive, courtiers swapped scandalous stories about his relationship with Elizabeth.[24] In spite of Elizabeth's apparent infatuation with the Earl, he was far from popular as a potential husband to their contemporaries. Thus, even when his wife died (under suspicious circumstances, which further aggravated his poor reputation at the court), Dudley's viability as a suitor was low. Not only was his character doubted by Elizabeth's council, but "hostility to the match also owed much to political self-interest,"[25] no doubt fueled by the perception that in marrying Dudley, the Queen would have "gone down in the estimation of foreign courts, and England's standing within the international community would have been grievously diminished."[26] Thus, it seems that in the case of Dudley, Elizabeth's rationality and political instincts overruled those of her emotions. As for Alençon, after the failed marriage negotiations with his brother, Henri d'Anjou, due to once again to the religion issue, "the Queen [had] assume[d] the guise of injured maidenhood."[27] When Alençon sent his servant to England in 1578 to begin marriage negotiations with Elizabeth, the 45-year-old queen seemed swept off her feet. When he became the sole foreign suitor to visit Elizabeth later that year, her feelings apparently intensified, and she took to calling him her "frog."[28] However, this match proved divisive amongst her councillors and in the country, and many lampooned the match for the wide age discrepancy between the Queen and Alençon, as well as the Frenchman's staunch Catholicism (including a widespread propaganda campaign mobilized by Leicester and Sir Francis Walsingham[29]). By late 1579, "councilor argument against the marriage prevailed"[30] in spite of the political boons that an alliance with France may have provided, and as it grew clearer that Elizabeth was past heir-producing age, negotiations were finally desisted. Still, there is evidence that suggests Elizabeth was pleased with this final, failed negotiation, as she had provided Alençon with unfair terms in negotiations, "allow[ing] her to make out that it was [the French] who were being unreasonable, and that it was no fault of hers if Alençon and she did not become man and wife."[31]

22 Somerset, p. 108.
23 Somerset, p. 201.
24 Collinson.
25 Doran, p. 45.
26 Somerset, p. 133.
27 Somerset, p. 264.
28 Collinson.

Her numerous courtships, and notably her last – and much-ridiculed – attempt at marriage with Alençon were damaging to Elizabeth's reputation both at home and abroad. To deal with her deliberate failure to marry (and failure that was aided in large part by the inability of her council to rally completely behind one candidate for marriage), she began to modify her public image to fit her emerging status as an unwed queen, an image that reached its height in the "Virgin Queen" iconography propagated after 1579. With this imagery, Elizabeth was able to eschew her role as a mere unmarried woman in favor of an image that presented her as an "exceptional woman whose purity made her worthy of devotion, even adoration."[32] This notion is clearly in display in her Sieve Portraits, which were painted between 1579 and 1583, coinciding with her unpopular marriage negotiations with Alençon.[33] These images, and others depicting her as a powerful, near-divine ruler helped to ensure that even without a successful marriage, Elizabeth's authoritative and popular status would remain ensconced in the minds of her people.

Ultimately, it is clear that a number of circumstantial and imperfect conditions fatally harmed Elizabeth's marriage negotiations from the time of her accession to the last failed attempt in 1579. In spite of Parliament's numerous pleas to the Queen to settle on any husband for the safety and future of the country, from issues of religion to court status to disagreements within the privy council as to the qualifications of a potential mate, there were a fair number of obstacles that blocked the path to marriage, not the least of which was the failure of Elizabeth's councilors to fully back any one of her suitors. However, it is also clear that many of these failures were abetted by Elizabeth's ambivalence towards marriage, an attitude that had been honed since childhood. Even though she was a woman of her time, and no doubt knew the importance of marriage and succession to her country (a façade that she proliferated to the public for at least the first half of her reign), Elizabeth's irresoluteness seemed to mask a desire to remain unmarried until her death in 1603.

29 Doran, p. 49.
30 Collinson.
31 Somerset, p. 329.
32 Doran, p. 35.
33 Strong, p. 97.

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THE LITTLE RED PAPER: A BRIEF SKETCH AND ANALYSIS OF THE THOUGHT AND ACTION OF CHAIRMAN MAO

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Mao Tse-tung was "a genius at not sinking."[1] At countless points in his life, Mao seemed to be facing the certain death of his cause and even his own demise. However, Mao single- handedly carried China into the twentieth century, out of the quagmire of warlord politics and imperialist threats. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) survived and grew because of Mao's pure will power and his ability to harness the masses. A large part of this innate talent was the publishing and distribution of Maoist literature. Mao found it was much easier to effectively govern an informed nation, with a population that knew his political philosophy and goals, than it was to lead an uninformed nation. There is a general rule both to Mao and to Maoist thought. All of Mao's actions can find substantiation in his contemporary and earlier writings. Still, many in the West would label Mao a dictator, as they would any communist leader; he was, however, considerably more enlightened intellectually than the average head of state. In fact, an ideal leader to Mao would "take the ideas of the masses and concentrate them (through study) then go to the masses and propagate and explain these ideas until the masses embrace them as their own, hold fast to them and translate them into action."[2] He certainly endeavored to carry out this ideal.

Mao was born in 1893, and he did not arrive on the national stage until the early 1920s. Mao was a "member of the May Fourth generation,"[3] the generation of revolutionaries who would replace Sun Yat-sen and Li Tai-chao. They were inspired by the revolutionary thought of the past and present communist thinkers. Mao and others were especially influenced by the newspaper *New Youth*. This paper encouraged "political mobilization,"[4] and the exploration of any "radical ideals of foreign origin."[5] It was with socialism and communism that Mao found his intellectual niche and greatly influenced his political thought.

First, he participated in the mobilization of his rural home province of Hunan. During this mobilization Mao first put his thoughts on paper. His writings from Hunan are the cornerstone of his political thought and are applied over and over again in his

1 Jonathon D. Spence, "Mao Zedong," *Time*, 13 April 1998 <http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/mao.html> (accessed February 25, 2008).
2 Mao Zedong. "Some Questions Concerning Methods of Leadership."
3 Stuart Schram, *The Thought of Mao Tse-Tung* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 13.
4 John E. Wills Jr., *Mountain of Fame: Portraits in Chinese History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 336.
5 Ibid, 338.