

THE ARTS IN THE EARLY RENAISSANCE COURT OF  
HENRY VIII, KING OF ENGLAND: A STUDY  
IN ROYAL PATRONAGE, 1509-30

A THESIS

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We hereby recommend that the thesis prepared under  
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## FOREWORD

In my years of teaching history to high school students, I have come to realize how important it is that they be exposed to and be able to evaluate not merely the political nature of men and women who have lived before our time, but the attitudes and cultural interests of these people as well. To understand the "what" of history, they must first understand the "why." Events and persons viewed out of the context of the age and circumstances which produced them cannot encourage valid reasoning. This manuscript is an attempt to keep one major historical person in the realm of his time and the forces that shaped him as a man and leader. This study of the culture of the early English Renaissance court and the influence it gave to and received from Henry VIII is presented with the hope of revealing the total man who has left so powerful a mark on British history.

I acknowledge my debt to North Texas State University and the University of Texas at Austin for the use of their library facilities and the help of their kind personnel. I am especially grateful to the library and staff of Texas Woman's University for the effort given in my behalf and for the constant use of the sunny table where this manuscript took shape.

Several works were especially beneficial to me in the research and formation of this study. Certainly, Albert Frederick Pollard's Henry VIII was the greatest single help, providing a fine background and an excellent bibliographical list. The Gustave Reese Music in the Renaissance was the only source available to me on its subject and of genuine help in the musical portion of this work. Two contemporary documents, Edward Hall's The Triumphant Reigne of Henry VIII and The Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, edited by R. H. Brodie and J. S. Brewer, were not only beneficial but extremely interesting to read.

I express my sincere appreciation to the members of the Oral Examination Board, Dr. John L. Dawson, Mr. Alonzo W. Jamison, and Dr. Kemp P. Yarborough, for the time and the suggestions they have shared with me, enabling me to make this study more successful.

My special thanks to my graduate advisor, Dr. Harral E. Landry, without whom I would have had a far more difficult task in the preparation of this paper, and to whom I am especially indebted.

L.E.H., 1974

## INTRODUCTION

Although the English Renaissance and the personalities of its Tudor monarchs have always been topics of great interest to students of history since that time, there are surprisingly few works about the cultural awakening in the early sixteenth century in Britain. The mention of the English Renaissance generally produces recollections of the Golden Age of Elizabeth--of Dowland, Spenser, Shakespeare. The reign of her father, Henry VIII, on the other hand, usually calls to mind the political and religious struggles of the 1530's, of despotism and violent will, of divorced and headless wives.

Of the volumes of material collected and presented concerning the Tudors and their years, one aspect of the reign of the second Tudor king is often sublimated. The power he wielded politically, the zealousness of his foreign and domestic affairs, the tragedies of his personal life are given much attention by historians and authors. Yet, the one great contribution of the first twenty years of his monarchy, the establishment of the Renaissance in England, is often delegated to several pages in the first chapter of a work. The patronage and participation in the visual arts, the musical and literary interests of the Renaissance by Henry VIII is rarely given the attention it deserves.

Far from being the indulgent, frivolous, lackadaisical young king, forsaking governing his nation in pursuit of endless pleasures, Henry VIII was a person of insight and creativity who was of major importance in the establishment of the Renaissance in England. He was considered by his contemporaries of those early years a fine example of all a monarch should be--the perfect English Renaissance man.

This manuscript is the result of exploration into that oft neglected field, the Renaissance arts in the court of the Renaissance king, Henry VIII.

## CHAPTER I

### THE BACKGROUND OF THE KING

The world into which the second son of Henry Tudor, king of England, and Elizabeth of York, heiress to the York legacy, was born on June 28, 1491, was a world in the throes of political, social, and cultural upheaval. The era marked the birth of the Renaissance, begun in Italy and spreading throughout all Europe. It was the dying of the old world and the formation of the new. The power of medieval kings was consolidating and changing, and even the power of the Holy Church in Rome was on a brink between supremacy and disaster. New ideas were finding expression in new universities, and new talent was gaining patronage from new money. The baby christened in the "cradle of estate, under crimson and cloth of gold,"<sup>1</sup> and called Henry after his father, was to be the first of the new breed of monarchs who were to rule Europe for a century. Reared in a dawning age, he was to become not just a product of the knowledge of the past but of the hopes of the future.

England in the early Renaissance had seen the consolidation of the monarchy into a viable force on the

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Arthur MacNalty, Henry VIII, Difficult Patient, p. 12.

political and social scene of England. Young Henry's father had achieved the throne by dynastic default and military prowess. Henry VII's defeat of Richard III at Bosworth Field had ended the York control of the monarchy. The marriage between Henry and Edward IV's daughter, Elizabeth of York, had begun a new royal line. The de facto king of England had become the king de jure by vote of Parliament. Ever aware of his debt to the Houses of Parliament and the growing merchant classes of the cities, Henry VII's claim to the island kingdom's highest office had been tenuous indeed. Henry Tudor was, in fact, the posthumous son of the questionably legitimate husband of the granddaughter of the illegitimate child of the fourth son of Edward III, the last of the Plantagenets. His claim to the throne could not be by Divine Right or unquestioned bloodlines. Therefore, Henry VII depended on forces rarely necessary to British monarchs before his time.

The government he inherited was in the process of changing from medieval tradition of loyalty to lord and fuedal protection, to one of a more modern nature, supported by popular will and general taxation. His throne was built on laws carefully recorded and protected by the rising houses of Parliament. Henry VII had a government, while by no means democratic or supreme over the throne, made of councils and

by consent. These councils, though controlled by royal appointment, were none-the-less being filled with dedicated men who were not merely pawns of the throne. Many were politicians in their own right. As Joseph Strayer states, "If there was anything new about the new monarchies it was the personnel of the council, men who worked at their jobs and knew how to do their work."<sup>2</sup> These new councilmen hired their own staffs, employed spies and informers, and had some duties not shared by all members. They tended to be better educated and more intellectual than had been their predecessors. As these new councilmen and councils began to play major parts in the European governments of the late fifteenth century, they gave strength to the monarchies they supported by their loyalty and compatibility with the sovereign they served.<sup>3</sup>

Not only did Henry VII rule a kingdom of council, but a kingdom of law as well. Though the ideals of supreme law and Parliamentary rule had yet to develop in England, this Tudor monarch, and those to follow, realized and capitalized upon their obligation to the legal statutes and principles of the nation. The right of kings to make law was dying, and yet, arbitrary acts were still considered

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<sup>2</sup>Joseph R. Strayer, "Origins of the Early Modern State," Developments in the Early Renaissance, p. 110.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.



acceptable. Final judicial decisions were to continue in the king's hands until 1533, with Henry VIII's last personally decided lawsuit. The Tudor tradition of adherence of law and support of Parliament as an institution began with Henry VII, who used existing law whenever available and rarely confronted the Houses. To be sure, this does not imply power of the Parliament, for Henry VII packed the Lords with newly elevated supporters and called the Houses only once in the last twelve years of his reign.<sup>4</sup> Yet, in the emerging age, this practice by Tudor monarchs was not met with any of the hostility which was to follow a century later. Prior to the Renaissance, Parliament tended to do little legislating on their own and had small influence on public opinion--far less than did the monarch.<sup>5</sup> By the early sixteenth century, the law, the Parliament, and the king were to be harmonious and complimentary.

All over Europe the growing emphasis on trade and commerce was causing the rise of new classes, classes whose strength was grounded in money and industry, not in land or old titles.

England, with her good location and growing shipping industry, was assuming a prominent role in the modern world.

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<sup>4</sup>G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 68.

<sup>5</sup>Walter P. Hall, Robert G. Albion, and Jennie Barnes Pope, A History of England and the Empire-Commonwealth, p. 166.

London merchants, especially, were amassing wealth and property. During the long War of Roses, much of the support Henry Tudor received was from this new moneyed class. After his ascension, and throughout the Tudor reigns to follow, the crown supported these English merchants. Though Henry VII was by no means a middle-class king (none of these self-made men was ever appointed to any position of authority during his reign), the royal encouragement of the middle class is obvious. Through taxes which affected the aristocracy far more than the merchants, the Tudor treasury grew full. Henry VII asked the Parliament for grants only twice in the last eighteen years of his rule. Instead, he relied on the royal customs duties given him at his accession by the Houses of Parliament and taxes gathered primarily from the landed nobility by pressure tactics and court decisions. Land left unclaimed at a nobleman's death was confiscated by the crown, and tax appeals rarely met with reversals in the king's arbitrary Court of Star Chamber. As the Spanish minister Pedro de Ayala noted, ". . . if gold coin once enters his strong boxes it never comes out again. And his servants are like him. They have a wonderful dexterity in getting other peoples' money."<sup>6</sup>

At Henry VII's death, he left his young heir a consolidated royal power, having varied support from all sections

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<sup>6</sup>G. R. Elton, p. 44.

and classes in England, and a treasury estimated at 1,800,000 pounds, probably the richest in Renaissance Europe.<sup>7</sup>

Besides this legacy of financial security and popular support, Henry VII left a court deliberately surrounded by late medieval splendor. It was a court of protocol and respect for the crown. It was a court filled with men of talent and ability. Henry VII welcomed talent from all over Europe "as may become me best in field, in town, in court, or anywhere."<sup>8</sup> He had especially encouraged Italians to come to London. These men, foreign or domestic, were repaid for their effort by royal grants of titles and property.<sup>9</sup> Henry VII had hired well-respected and well-known men of letters and abilities to tutor his sons and daughters. Artists and architects found this island appreciative of them and willing to pay their prices. Whatever were Henry VII's real motives in forming his elegant court, cultural or purely political, he had set the stage on which his son would star.

This was the English age into which the new Duke of York was born. Henry VII's children were reared in the philosophies and culture of the early Renaissance. As young

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<sup>7</sup>Albert Frederick Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup>Mary Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, Mary Tudor, the White Queen, p. 41.

Henry grew, he was surrounded by ceremony and comfort, by foreign ambassadors and domestic political leaders, by men of learning and talent. The king he became at his father's death was the unmistakable product of his age.

## CHAPTER II

### HENRY VIII AS THE NEW RENAISSANCE KING

My son, be a soldier of the cross, oppose the enemies of God, sustain the Church and her appointed chief.<sup>1</sup>

With those words, Henry VII willed his kingdom and his crown to his eighteen-year-old son and died of tuberculosis at Richmond House. It was April 21, 1509, and the son was fully prepared to follow his father's last command. He had been well educated to lead the kingdom and wear the crown. But it was not to be as a "soldier of the cross" that Henry VIII, Bluff King Hal, was to gain fame and his early international popularity. Although to be sure the young king was a Roman Christian in the traditional sense, it was as a crusader of the new thought and a patron of the new arts that Henry VIII would find his claim to fame at the dawn of the new century.

As Duke of York, most of Henry's life had been in preparation for his role as a Renaissance leader. Long before his importance as heir had been obvious, he had been schooled in the traditional and in the "new learning" cultural ideas. As a youngster, he was destined for the Archbishopric of Canterbury, England's highest and most influential see.

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<sup>1</sup>Mary Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 111.

Thus, Prince Henry had learned the many skills and mental endeavors needed by a Son of the Holy Church. When Henry VII decided that his youngest son could be of more use to the kingdom and the monarchy in the secular life, Henry began his training as a young nobleman. When his older brother, the brilliant and sickly Prince Arthur, died at sixteen, Henry found himself the most important child in England. It was at this time, before he was eleven, that his political education began in earnest. So, by 1509, the youth who claimed his father's throne was the product of varied training and mental skills.

Henry VIII was married and crowned within six weeks after the death of his father. The bride was the widow of his older brother Arthur and the child of the King of Spain. She was known as Katherine of Aragon. The coronation ceremony was at Westminster Abbey on Midsummer's Day. The king wore red velvet, white ermine, and raised gold, and the queen wore white satin and was "goodly to behold."<sup>2</sup> The reception afterward was "greater than any Caesar had known."<sup>3</sup> According to the historian G. R. Elton, young King Henry's contemporaries "were ready to be impressed."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Francis Hackett, Henry VIII, p. 39.

<sup>3</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 15.

<sup>4</sup>G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 70.

Henry Tudor was a man to impress anyone. The reports from his court sent throughout Europe were glowing with praise. With the ascension of the young king, wrote the noted humanist Lord Mountjoy to his friend in learning, Erasmus of Rotterdam, "The heavens laugh, the earth exults, all things are full of milk and honey."<sup>5</sup> An astute observer, the Venetian ambassador Sebastian Giustinian, said Henry was "as handsome as nature could have made him, above any other Christian Prince."<sup>6</sup> The Spanish ambassador de Puebla wrote to Henry's father-in-law that "There is no finer youth in the world. He is taller than his father . . . and his limbs are of gigantic size."<sup>7</sup> Another foreign minister notes "Love for the king is universal with all who see him, for his highness does not seem a person of this earth, but one descended from heaven."<sup>8</sup> The papal nuncio in England, Francisco Chieragato, said of Henry as a young monarch, ". . . there is this invincible king, whose acquirements and qualities are so many and so excellent, that I would consider him to excel all who ever wore a crown."<sup>9</sup> And praise swept

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<sup>5</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 33.

<sup>6</sup>Mary Luke, p. 102.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 88.

<sup>8</sup>David Harrison, Tudor England, p. 40.

<sup>9</sup>Neville, Williams, p. 13.

throughout England as well. The personal historian to Henry VIII was Edward Hall. In his The Triumphant Reigne of King Henry VIII, he records of the monarch, "The features of his body, his goodly countenance compliment the noble qualities of his royall estate. I cannot express the giftes of grace and of nature that God hath endowed hym with."<sup>10</sup> Even discounting the flattery associated with ambassadors and men of the Renaissance in general, Henry was quite a man to be reckoned with in these early years of his reign. Later, the Italian minister Faler would write that the praise of Henry's features was overrated, that he had a face "angelic rather than handsome,"<sup>11</sup> and another unnamed foreigner would note that while Henry had been acclaimed for his moral leadership, he had in truth been merely "young and lusty."<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, during these early years of his reign, the new king had made a generally favorable impression throughout Europe.

In 1509, Henry VIII was eighteen, energetic, and almost a giant by Renaissance standards. He was six feet, two inches tall, with a waist measured at thirty-five inches,

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<sup>10</sup>James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, p. 20.

<sup>11</sup>Francis Hackett, p. 43.

<sup>12</sup>Ralph Dutton, English Court Life, From Henry VII to George II, p. 27.



and a chest of forty-two inches. His eyes were bright blue and his hair was shoulder length and Tudor red-gold. His skin was fair, in the style of noble paleness, and clear. His hands were huge, and his legs were shapely and muscled. He was athletic and strong. His voice was loud and he walked quickly. He was talented and versatile. As one minister wrote in summation of his appearance, Henry VIII was ". . . very accomplished, a good musician, composes well, is a capital horseman, a fine jouster, speaks French, Latin and Spanish, is fond of hunting and tennis."<sup>13</sup>

It was not unusual for Renaissance kings to be admired or flattered in a period when European monarchs basked in the same adulation and king-worship that Roman emperors had enjoyed. Nevertheless, Henry VIII was not simply flattered because he was royal, but because he personally excelled in many of the talents considered important by men and women of the age. Henry VIII at eighteen was sexually moral and as attentive as any young lover might be to his chosen lady. He was vain enough and egotistical enough to satisfy the Renaissance attitude of modern man's superiority to those who had preceded him. As Mountjoy told Erasmus, "Our king does not desire gold or gems or precious metals,

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<sup>13</sup>David Harrison, p. 40.

but virtue, glory, immortality."<sup>14</sup> Henry was a man who loved to learn, and he applied himself to his studies with vigor. As Erasmus wrote, Henry VIII was well "set to study" with a vivid and active mind. But, again in typical fashion, he never attempted anything he could not eventually do.<sup>15</sup>

Erasmus also noted Henry's athletic ability and physical strength.<sup>16</sup> As one Englishman put it, it was "the prettiest thing in the world to see him play" tennis, a major sport of Renaissance noblemen.<sup>17</sup> This emphasis on bodily activity and skill at games is typical of the new spirit that glorified the human form and function.

According to the historian Elton, Henry Tudor in his early years of kingship was "utterly sure of himself as only a man born to the purple can be, passionately devoted to his own interest and inclinations, unscrupulous but careful of legal form."<sup>18</sup>

Again, Elton claims the young Henry was cruel, lacking his father's clemency. His will and desire for public

<sup>14</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 33.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>Maurice Ashley, Great Britain to 1688, A Modern History, p. 203.

<sup>18</sup>G. R. Elton, p. 71.

support was illustrated shortly after Henry VIII became king. In January of 1510, on a fictitious charge of treason, Henry disposed of his father's unpopular ministers Richard Empson and Edmund Dudley. Despite the fact that Parliament voted approval of the executions, there is little doubt that it was Henry who decided on that course of action. Arbitrary acts of questionable justness were not uncommon or unaccepted in Renaissance society, and the English public greeted this particular case with an approval that was almost joyous. Innocence was of no matter.

Always having been uncomfortable about his father's frugality, Henry VIII began spending his inherited wealth as soon as he acquired the throne. He spent money in patronage and on art. In true Renaissance fashion, he collected art and artists. The historian Lewis Einstein, in his work Tudor Ideals, concludes that collecting was the great passion of Englishmen and that their young king was no exception. In the manner of his countrymen, he collected art from all over Europe and used it to enhance his court's splendor and set off his majesty.<sup>19</sup>

In new fashions and fads, the English court of Henry VIII was always a little behind the court of Louis XII, and

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<sup>19</sup>Lewis Einstein, Tudor Ideals, p. 272.

later, François I of France. Henry VIII was always aware of this evaluation and was always bothered by it. According to the Venetian ambassador Andrea Trevisani, the English so hated feeling inferior to any other nation that "When they see a handsome foreigner, they say he looks like an Englishman."<sup>20</sup> Silvestro Pasqualigo, an Italian Bishop visiting England, mentioned the king's obvious concern that François Valois might be physically more handsome and "well-informed" than he. He pried and questioned the Italian about François's beauty and build and ended by demanding to know if Pasqualigo had noticed his legs. Opening his jacket, Henry said, "Look here. I have also a good calf to my leg."<sup>21</sup> It was not an accident that contemporaries claimed Henry VIII to be the best-dressed monarch in Europe.

He dressed his court likewise. The court was beautiful and flashy and expensive. Henry entertained lavishly and well. He kept around him all his close friends, male and female, and presented for them and for the envy of Europe pageants and monthly ceremonies. In 1513, Henry VIII introduced the Italian masque to the English court. His friend and biographer, Hall, describes the first masque:

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<sup>20</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup>Sebastian Giustinian, Four Years in the Court of Henry VIII, p. 91.

On the daie of the Epiphanie at night the kyng with . . . others were disguised after the maner of Itali called a maske, a thyng not seen afore in Englande.<sup>22</sup>

Henry VIII intended to permit no foreign court to surpass his own. This desire for international respect and awe of him and his surroundings was as universal to Renaissance men as it has been to men ever since. As Henry himself explained, in the manner of the day, "Kings of England have never had any superior but God alone."<sup>23</sup> There seems no doubt that he believed that boast completely, and wanted everyone else to know its truth as well.

Because the English were well known to be filthy, rarely even bothering to mop their floors or take out their garbage, Henry's palaces were opened and closed several times a year. Henry VIII hated filth, a trait not universal throughout Europe; he actually published a booklet for his servants and hosts to inform them what he expected in the way of cleanliness:

The haute-pace to be cleane kept, soe that noe ale, water, broken meate, or other thing conveyed to the King's chamber, be cast, or remain there, to the annoyance of the same.<sup>24</sup>

Part of this desire for sanitation may have been Henry's

<sup>22</sup>Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance, p. 771.

<sup>23</sup>Maurice Ashley, p. 213.

<sup>24</sup>Ralph Dutton, p. 24.

paranoid terror of the plague. During his father's lifetime, the plague had ravished Europe and England, and from time to time, small outbreaks still swept through the provinces and towns. The French ambassador, Marillac, minister to Henry's rival and associate, François Valois, I, wrote to his monarch describing the English monarch's reaction to the plague: "He is the most timid person in the world in such cases."<sup>25</sup> That description must have amused François, who was probably the filthiest monarch in Europe!

Young Henry had the time and the temperament to be a Renaissance king. While the advisors, generally capable and very loyal men chosen with care by the king's paternal grandmother, the brilliant Margaret Beaufort, ran the durinal functions of state and government, Henry established himself and his court as international leaders. He took little actual leadership in domestic politics until years later. Although he had been schooled in English law and jurisprudence, in Justinian and early Christian political systems as well, Henry VIII in his first years as king found culture and splendor far more exciting and worthy of his efforts than domestic policies.

Thus, the setting described by the ambassador in 1515 was just as impressive as the king intended it to be.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

In rooms hung with tapestries and three hundred halberdiers, and sitting on a huge golden throne under gold brocade and red velvet, Henry received the foreign dignitary. Wearing a white and red doublet, with scarlet hose, purple train, and a crimson jeweled cap, Henry looked every bit the demi-god he considered himself to be. He was the perfect person to bring England into her social position and assert her claim to leadership in the Renaissance world.

### CHAPTER III

#### HENRY THE RENAISSANCE MUSICIAN

Most of the training and the cultural exposure the children of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York received was primarily the result of their father's influence as a man and a monarch. Music was the one interest and achievement, though, that the author Mary Luke attributes to the mother rather than the father.<sup>1</sup> She, rather than Henry VII, deserves the credit for the accomplishments the children achieved in music. Elizabeth was a fine musician in her own right, and she nurtured the interest and the talent of her sons and daughters. Her husband, too, enjoyed music and provided the cultural environment for his children to explore the field.

Music during the early Renaissance was becoming more and more popular. In the centuries preceding the sixteenth, music education and musical accomplishment was reserved almost exclusively for the nobility. With the coming of the Renaissance, music became more a part of everyday life, and the children of middle-class merchants and city shopkeepers,

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<sup>1</sup>Mary M. Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 37.



as well as the children of kings and dukes, receives instruments and instructions. Naturally, the royal children of England received the best the age had to offer.

All of the Tudor youngsters loved music. Arthur, Prince of Wales, and his bride, Katherine of Aragon, spent their honeymoon with his siblings and their musical instruments. All of them played and practiced with each other nearly everyday following the wedding festivities. It was a love of which they never tired and one that the surviving Tudor children would always patronize.

Henry VIII grew up with music. As Duke of York he was given his own band of minstrels. As a child he studied theory and practiced on several instruments. As a boy he wrote short pieces for practice, some of which were fairly good, and some of which are in the British Museum today.<sup>2</sup> Henry's tutor, Skelton, recorded that his beloved pupil played "on almost every instrument,"<sup>3</sup> and the ambassador, Giustinian, wrote that Henry "plays almost every instrument, sings and composes fairly."<sup>4</sup> According to Pollard, he loved music so much that

<sup>2</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 20.

<sup>3</sup>Maurice Ashley, Great Britain to 1688, A Modern History, p. 203.

<sup>4</sup>Sebastian Giustinian, Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII, p. 76.

after his accession, Henry practiced the art even over affairs of state.<sup>5</sup>

A contemporary wrote that the young monarch was an expert in ". . . plaiyng at the recorders, flute, virginals, and in setting of songs, makyng of balletes and did set two goodly masses, everyone of them fyve partes, whiche were sung oftentimes in his chapel and afterwards in divers other places."<sup>6</sup>

Henry loved to sing as well as play. He learned to chant by the time he was seven years old, and he became a choir boy at the Chapel Royal at eleven. A member of the court noted that "King Henry the eight could not onely sing his part sure, but of himselfe composed a service of foure five and sixe parts."<sup>7</sup> In The Lyffe of Sir Peter Carewe, this account of Henry's love of singing and appreciation of trained voices is mentioned:

For the Kynge himse self beinge miche delited to synge, and Sir Peter Carewe havinge a pleasaunte voyce, the Kynge woulde very often use hyme to synge with hime cereyne songes they called fremen songs, as namely "By the bancke as I lay."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Sir Arthur S. MacNalty, Henry VIII, Difficult Patient, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup>Eric Blom, Everyman's Dictionary of Music, p. 242.

<sup>8</sup>Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance, p. 769.

The king played and sang and composed all his life. His own compositions were varied and better than those of most royal musicians. One, with words in French, was called "Helás, Madame," a simple, secular song. It has a discant melody and was popular at court, which was to be expected.<sup>9</sup> A more important piece written by the king is the religious work found in Anglican hymnals today. It is "O Lorde the Maker of All Thyng" ("Oh, Lord, the Maker of All Things"). For years it was attributed incorrectly to William Mundy, but through the diligent research of the historians and musicologists, Aldrich and Boyce, the work was proved to be the king's.<sup>10</sup> A third piece, called "Gentil Prince," is often accredited to Henry; but the musical historian, Gustave Reese, explains it could not have been the king's. Reese is certain that unlike many royal composers who either borrowed melodies from their more talented subjects, or wrote shallow pieces of little skill, Henry VIII was a good composer. "Gentil Prince," though, could not have been Henry's original composition because at least three of its parts, besides the altus, were found in pieces sung before the king's birth.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 771. (See Appendix B.)

<sup>10</sup>Eric Blom, p. 241.

<sup>11</sup>Ralph Dutton, English Court Life, From Henry VII to George II, p. 28.

Surely the most famous of Henry's songs is the pleasant and pretty, "Pastance With Goode Company." Written while Henry was still a young man, it expressed his attitudes about life and responsibilities. It is the song of a confident and conscientious young man in a position to use himself to the fullest. It is a good summary of what Henry expected from life, and what he was willing to give in return. The words express his ideas:

Pastance with good company  
 I love and shall until I die  
 Grudge who will, but none deny,  
 So God be pleased this life will I  
     For my pastance,  
     Hunt, sing, and dance,  
     My heart is set,  
     All goodly sport  
     To my comfort  
     Who shall me let?

Youth will needs have dalliance,  
 Of good or ill some pastance;  
 Company me thinketh best  
 All thought and fancies to digest,  
     For idleness  
     Is chief mistress  
     Of vices all;  
     Then who can say  
     But pass the day  
     Is best of all?

Company with honesty  
 Is virtue--and vice to flee;  
 Company is good or ill  
 But every man hath his free will.  
     The best I sue,  
     The worst eschew;

My mind shall be  
 Virtue to use;  
 Vice to refuse  
 I shall use me.<sup>12</sup>

Henry VIII loved all types of music and spent a small fortune on personal musicians and better instruments. Never satisfied with the fanfares and ceremonial music of his father's formal court, Henry hired a special group of very talented, professional musicians he called The King's Musick. They played for his pleasure and sang for his company. At the time the king died, he was supporting over sixty personal musicians, not counting the men of the Chapel Royal who sang the chants and choir music.<sup>13</sup>

A survey of the personal payments made for instruments and to musicians, found throughout the records in The Letters and Papers . . . of Henry VIII, provides an idea of the king's interest in Renaissance music, both religious and secular. According to state records, in 1542, the monarch had a personal supply of forty musical instruments.<sup>14</sup> Throughout his lifetime he supported hundreds of people in various musical fields. There are remaining today nineteen ballads and songs of his own composition, in English or

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<sup>12</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, pp. 34-5. (See Appendix A.)

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 36.

<sup>14</sup>Dutton, p. 28.

or French. Several of these have original manuscripts written in his own handwriting.<sup>15</sup>

If a man is to be judged by the standards of his day, then surely Henry VIII was a true Renaissance man, excelling in some of the most praised fields of the period. Had he not been a king, perhaps he could have been a king's minstrel. There seems small doubt that he was qualified.

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<sup>15</sup>Sir Arthur S. MacNalty, p. 22.

## CHAPTER IV

### HENRY AS A HUMANIST PRINCE

The most serene king is not only very expert in arms, and of great valor, and most excellent in his personal endowments, but is likewise so gifted and adorned with mental accomplishments of every sort that we believe him to have few equals in the world. He speaks English, French and Latin; understands Italian well . . . is prudent and sage.<sup>1</sup>

This assessment by the Venetian ambassador Giustinian of Henry VIII's many personal talents seems accurate. Henry VIII was the first English monarch reared on humanism, the prevailing scholastic thought of the Renaissance. It was no accident.

The England of his father had not been ready to produce a Henry VIII. During the long Wars of the Roses, nobles and men of capital had been too busy with affairs of war and tumult to sponsor the arts needed to establish the Renaissance in England. There were a few exceptions. The most notable was Henry's relative Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who supported literature and collected humanist writings. But his desire to encourage the arts was not generally popular before Henry's childhood. In fact, among the upper

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<sup>1</sup>Sebastian Giustinian, Four Years at the Court of Henry VIII, p. 76.

classes of England there prevailed an idea that "learning is great hinderance to a nobleman."<sup>2</sup> Henry VII had not shared that belief. Having himself been embarrassed on several occasions by his own lack of Latin, he had been determined it should not happen to his sons.<sup>3</sup> Into his court he had brought men of arts and letters, and he had given each of his children tutors of note and talent. He had been, perhaps, the first English royal patron. He had surely been a man who recognized the future.

The men who educated the Tudor children were famous in their own right. Into the court of Henry VII were brought Bernard Andre and Giles D'Ewes, for the education of his eldest son and heir, Arthur Tudor. Arthur was a fine student and considered one of the most promising heirs in Europe. After Arthur's untimely death, another of his tutors, the brilliant Thomas Linacre, remained at court to teach other royal children. Linacre, though never Henry VIII's teacher, was so respected by him that years later he assigned the education of his bright, young daughter, Mary, to this English humanist. D'Ewes, a French scholar, was also a tutor of the Duke of York and his beloved younger sister, Mary Tudor.

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<sup>2</sup>Francis Hackett, Henry VIII, p. 38.

<sup>3</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, Mary Tudor. the White Queen, p. 26.



To the regret of many court scholars, though, Henry's major teacher in his formative years was the "mery poet," John Skelton. It was Skelton who had the primary influence on young Henry's developing character. To many noblepersons at court, Master Skelton was brilliant and talented to be sure, but also an immoral and disavowed cleric. Sarcastic and witty, finding fun in all things, noble or sacred, great or small, Skelton made no secret of his nightly activities, which proved at least the chastity part of his religious vows a sham.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps this teacher's lack of compassion for those he could abuse, and his flagrant disregard for promises he had made, had a lasting influence on his pupil who in the years ahead showed obvious similar callousness. After all, it was he who wrote for Henry "Speculum Principis," a treatise on proper behavior for a prince. Skelton has left this ditty to explain his influence on the young prince:

The honor of England I learned to spell  
I gave him drink from the sugred well  
Of Helicon's water crystalline  
Acquainted him with the Muses nine.<sup>5</sup>

Still, with all his questionable virtues, Master Skelton instilled in his student a respect for knowledge and a spirit

<sup>4</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

willing to dabble in creative fields. Long after Henry had progressed to more worthy intellectuals, he would always enjoy Skelton's company and laugh at his merry rhymes.

There is disagreement among historians and contemporaries of Henry VIII as to his "liberal patronage of letters," but there is little dispute that he enjoyed the company and conversation of learned men. Pundits all over England recognized the king as a worthy supporter of humanism and scholarship.

Lord Mountjoy recorded the following conversation with Henry shortly after his accession. He said the young monarch stopped him one afternoon and said:

I wish I had more learning.

To which the humanist replied:

That is not what we expect of you, your grace. It is enough that you foster and encourage learned men.

Mountjoy was completely impressed by Henry's answer:

Yea, surely, for without them we should scarcely exist at all.<sup>6</sup>

Henry must have believed Mountjoy's truth, for he encouraged English writers and provided them an audience. At his accession he began inviting intellectuals to court. Those who had worked under his father's patronage found the son to be a worthy successor. He encouraged new talent to

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<sup>6</sup>Mary M. Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 103.

join the court circle. The king and his queen read extensively and often debated religious or moral points with England's greatest minds. Since most of these persons maintained residences of their own, or lived at universities, Henry issued personal invitations to individuals, knowing no one could then decline to come to court, at least for a visit.

The well-respected Dean of St. Paul's School, John Colet, was in Henry's circle of scholars. Colet's religious ideas were so impressive to the king that he once remarked to his companions, "Let every man have his own doctor . . . this man is doctor for me."<sup>7</sup>

Living in England after Henry's coronation was "the Prince of the Humanists," Desiderius Erasmus. Erasmus was not actually at court during these early years, probably because his satires, which were very popular in England, were often very political.<sup>8</sup> Yet, the king and he did meet and share ideas in the homes of mutual friends. The fact that Erasmus spoke no English and Henry spoke no Dutch was of little importance. They could converse in French or Latin.

Erasmus had long been impressed by Henry's intellect, having first met the future king when Henry was only nine-years old. In 1499, while staying with his good friend

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<sup>7</sup>Francis Hackett, p. 54.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

Mountjoy, Thomas More had introduced the sage to the Duke of York. Henry, already skilled in Latin and interested in debate, challenged several of Erasmus' claims in his writings. Erasmus was surprised and pleased at the child's inquiring spirit. Later, after returning home, he wrote a poem about England, "De Laudibus Britanniae," which he dedicated to the Duke of York.<sup>9</sup>

Several years later, at the death of Philip Hapsburg, Henry's brother-in-law, Erasmus sent the king a letter of condolence. Henry wrote back and requested that the scholar continue the correspondence. Erasmus did, and the letters he received from the teenage monarch were so extraordinary to Erasmus that he doubted so young and inexperienced a man could have written them. It was not until he was shown the original drafts to several letters, all in the same handwriting as the king's, that he accepted their authorship.<sup>10</sup>

Probably the most important of the learned men who directly influenced Henry VIII's humanist outlook was Sir Thomas More. For years More was the king's constant companion of the mind and his devoted friend. Henry made no secret of his admiration and love for More. With his arm

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<sup>9</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 18.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

"merry holding . . . around his neck," the king exclaimed that More was his "beloved teacher."<sup>11</sup> In those early days before conflict and absolutism, there is little doubt that the royal claim was true.

Henry himself wrote several essays and was a fair poet. But his attack on Martin Luther's reformed religious ideas is considered his greatest personal achievement. "In Defense of the Seven Sacraments" represents an excellent Latin summary of Henry's orthodox religious views. Although it is possible his reasons for writing the paper were more personal than religious--the Pope had already acclaimed Charles V "His Most Catholic Majesty" and François I "His Most Christian Majesty"--Henry showed an intellectual's ability to define and debate, perhaps even discredit. It had taken several years for the king to formulate the ideas he expressed in the work, and it was written between political duties and crises. More and the Chancellor, Thomas Wolsey, had encouraged the king's efforts. If, perhaps, the Chancellor's motives for supporting the king's interest in disclaiming Luther were less religious than personally advantageous, More was ready to give any help the king might need. More was a scholar and a devotee to the Roman church, and it was natural to expect him to want his friend and

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<sup>11</sup>James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, p. 18.

and monarch to produce an internationally acclaimed piece of Renaissance writing.

Henry completed "In Defense of the Seven Sacraments" in the summer of 1521. He had it bound in cloth of gold and dedicated to Pope Leo X. In the letter to the Pope explaining the work, Henry said he had written it to defend the church "not only with his arms, but with the resources of his mind."<sup>12</sup> He ended the letter by offering the Pope this "first offering of his intellect and his little erudition."<sup>13</sup>

The Pope was duly impressed. He told his companions that the work was "well done," and that he

would not have thought such a book should have come from the king's grace. . . . Other men which have occupied themselves to study all their lives cannot bring forth the like.<sup>14</sup>

In November of that same year, Leo X rewarded and recognized Henry VIII by proclaiming him "Fidei Defensor," Defender of the Faith.

According to Hall, when ". . . his grace received the sayd Bull and caused it to be redde and published he went to his chapell to heare masse."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>12</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 99

<sup>14</sup>Mary Luke, p. 235.

<sup>15</sup>Edward Hall, The Triumphant Reigne of Henry VIII, p. 235.

Henry was obviously pleased with the acclaim and the title. Some who doubted that it was his own work suggested that it was More's. More admitted that he had often spoken of faith with the king, and had been a "sorter-outer and placer of principal matters . . . therein," but that the theology and the Latin were no one's but the sovereign's.<sup>16</sup> Erasmus was sure it was Henry's scholarship because he knew the king's "happy genius."<sup>17</sup>

One last comment on Henry VIII's claim as a humanist, thinker, and writer was given by the king's favorite fool, Patch. With the informality allowed only personal clowns, he said to the newly appointed "Fidei Defensor," "Prithee good Harry, let thou and I defend one another and leave the Faith alone to defend itself."<sup>18</sup> The Henry of the next decade would take that fool's advice to heart.

In 1519, Erasmus claimed there were more men of learning in the English court than in any university.<sup>19</sup> At that time he said of the king, "Henry was a universal genius. He has never neglected his studies; and whenever he has leisure from his political occupation, he reads or disputes--

<sup>16</sup>Mary Luke, p. 235.

<sup>17</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 19.

<sup>18</sup>Mary Luke, p. 236.

<sup>19</sup>A. F. Pollard, P. 98

of which he is quite fond. . . . He is more of a companion than a King."<sup>20</sup> Coming from the world-acknowledged leader, the prince of humanist Renaissance philosophy, that was an outstanding compliment.

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<sup>20</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 98.



## CHAPTER V

### WOMEN IN THE RENAISSANCE ENGLISH COURT

The women of the court of Henry VIII were influenced by the same ideas and the same company as were their fathers and husbands. It was a time of change for women. The medieval attitude which had presupposed female legal and social submission, while certainly not alleviated, was less absolute. Women in high places found themselves in the presence of learned persons and new concerns, and it was only to be expected that this new environment would create different attitudes in women about themselves, and in men about women.

Henry VIII always enjoyed female company; as a boy he had relished social and spiritual contacts with women long before his sexual interests in them had awakened. When he organized his court, he naturally encouraged his female friends to be present. Women were invited to masques and banquets and all social activities. They hunted and danced and kept company with the whole court. Of greater importance to their changing status, though, was their admission into discussions with scholars, and the rising belief at the Tudor court that women should not be ignorant.

English women of the noble class were reared on a combination of liberal and conservative beliefs. The medieval tradition that a women need be far less educated than a man in order to be marriageable, still prevailed; yet, there was increasing interest in female scholarship. Women of the Tudor court were taught not only the traditional household management skills and needlecrafts, but to read and write as well--perhaps, even, to think as educated individuals.

Literacy for noblewomen, as well as for daughters of the rising merchant class, was certainly a modern, not a medieval idea. But if fathers desired their daughters, as much as their sons, to be educated, the type of education each received was not the same. While the boys learned the liberal arts, their sisters studied less intellectual, more easily controlled subjects. Academic interest was the end desired; rarely was it serious intellectual curiosity.

English women, despite the ideas expressed a few decades later by John Knox, were not totally condemned as "weak, frail, impatient, feeble, foolish."<sup>1</sup> Yet, the general attitude that women's education had to be tempered in consideration of their less stable characteristics was certainly prevalent in Renaissance England, though the idea was stated

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<sup>1</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, Mary Tudor, the White Queen, p. 29.

less offensively, if stated at all. Women were rarely encouraged to choose literature for its own sake or because they felt some desire to explore its contents. Women's judgment was suspect. As one contemporary educator explained, women, if allowed free choice of books on any subject, would by their nature choose the wrong ones.<sup>2</sup> History and oratory were never taught. Girls found these subjects "too awakening."<sup>3</sup> History demands interpretation, and oratory gives skills of persuasion unnecessary in a female. Moral guides were considered the best type of material for women's education. Famous intellectuals such as Erasmus wrote to supply needed moral goals in works like Adages and Familiar Colloquies.<sup>4</sup> While read by men as well as women, these two particular books of Erasmus' were examples of the type almost exclusively read by the latter.

For females, moral attitudes and sexual abstinence were paramount. Nothing mattered in a nubile female like her chastity.<sup>5</sup> A noblewoman could be plain or simpleminded or offensive in personality, and still expect to make a suitable marriage. But a young woman who gave up her virginity outside the bonds of matrimony was lost. She would, if exposed, be condemned to spinsterhood, as a ward of her humiliated family, or to a convent, regardless of her

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.    <sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 30.    <sup>4</sup>Ibid.    <sup>5</sup>Ibid.

religious inclinations. Women were to remember that even St. Jerome would not restore a girl's virginity.<sup>6</sup> As the Spanish humanist, Juan Luis Vives, taught Henry VIII's daughter Mary, "I would rather see a girl deaf or blind than . . . over-stimulated to pleasure."<sup>7</sup>

Because of its arousing characteristics, poetry was usually censored and always viewed with caution.<sup>8</sup> The sexual ideas poetry caused could be damaging to a woman. As explained in Gratian's Decretum, wives were totally subject to their husbands as their husbands were to God.<sup>9</sup> Wives should, therefore, be above "shameless carnality,"<sup>10</sup> so as not to threaten their husbands' authority. Yet, at the same time, they were reminded in Anthony Fitzherbert's The Boke of Husbandrye, to be "merry of cheer" and "easy to leap upon."<sup>11</sup> However, it was probably the husband and not the wife who read Fitzherbert's work, since it was considered in the words of the historian, Walter Richardson, "horse-like" humor.<sup>12</sup> Even the Utopia of socially liberal Thomas More had women in positions of subservience to men, as children to parents.

Yet, it was also a time of female assertion. By the 1520's, women of Henry's court, as well as women of the moneyed merchant classes, were demanding and receiving better

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid.    <sup>7</sup>Ibid.    <sup>8</sup>Ibid.    <sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 28.    <sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 106.    <sup>12</sup>Ibid.

training in the arts and a more general education than women had experienced in the past. The tutor Vives desired that women write their own personal textbooks, incorporating the various truths they had learned through their education.<sup>13</sup> Foreign noblewomen of letters were more and more accepted as scholars in the eyes of the English court; women like Louise of Savoy and her daughter Marguerite Valois, a poet in her own right, were popular guides and accepted ideal models for bright young British females.<sup>14</sup> Erasmus notes his approval of the intelligence and training of Jane More, wife of Thomas More. More, he said, had "taught her literature and trained her in every kind of music," making her "more to his [More's] taste."<sup>15</sup> Henry VIII encouraged his own daughters' scholarship, and his daughter Elizabeth pleased him as a child with her translation for him of Marguerite Valois' Mirror of the Sinful Soul.

Love marriages among the upper classes was a rare occurrence in early Tudor England; most marriages were arranged. This custom usually led to making women more

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<sup>13</sup>John E. Paul, Catherine of Aragon and Her Friends, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>E. E. Reynolds, St. Thomas More, p. 34.

independent than other European women.<sup>16</sup> It was natural to assume a woman with a large degree of personal independence would desire and need a broader education than one who expected to be always loved and doted on by her husband.

Some of the women in the court of Henry VIII and his father are worthy of special note. Their interests and achievements must have had a permanent effect on Henry VIII and on his continued encouragement of the education of women.

Margaret Beaufort, Duchess of Richmond and Henry's grandmother, was such a woman. A widow and mother before she was fourteen, she became a woman able to meet nearly any situation with skill and foresight. She enjoyed study, and all her life she continued organized learning. In the words of Bishop John Fisher, Margaret represented all that was "praisable in a woman."<sup>17</sup> She was a translator and student, though, more than a scholar, and she never entered into that male domain of her son's and her grandson's profession, politics.<sup>18</sup> Her translations were good, and her translation of the major part of St. Augustine's Imitatio Christi was considered above average. She established two new colleges, Christ's College and St. John's College, and she supported

<sup>16</sup>James Lees-Milne, The Tudor Renaissance, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 21.

<sup>18</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 21.

both Oxford and Cambridge. Her money and patronage also helped English printers and publishers.<sup>19</sup> Although she died soon after her grandson's accession, her influence lived at court after her.

Henry's sisters were also educated women. Margaret and Mary Tudor appear to have been bright and curious, and might, perhaps, have become the intellectuals their brothers were had they received a similar education.<sup>20</sup> Being the daughters of the monarch and always in the center of the nation's activities, their experiences were more varied and less routine than the average noble child, male or female. They met the greatest scholars of England, as well as visiting foreigners, and were allowed great amounts of physical and mental activities. From birth, each of the girls was trained to be a public figure and a show piece of their nation's accomplishments.<sup>21</sup> Although their destinies as royal females were planned while they were children without their slightest involvement, these Tudor girls, in the words of their biographer, Hester Chapman, "revolutionized the careers marked out for them."<sup>22</sup> Reared in the Tudor court

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<sup>19</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

in the attitudes of Renaissance individualism, they were not women to be passive pawns of the Fates.

Margaret was the eldest daughter of Henry VII, and all during her childhood, his adoring child.<sup>23</sup> From him she gained her interest in the lute and the clavichord, and together, they often practiced their instruments for hours. Her father and her mother loved music and she and her siblings followed suit. Of the Tudor girls, Margaret was the less inclined to study; and that fact, along with her sex, kept her from rivaling her brothers' accomplishments. She could read and write, speak English, rudimentary Scottish, and possibly French, manage a household, and maintain her position with dignity, and that was all that was expected of her. She must have appeared a fine English lady when at twelve years old, she stood for her wedding to the king of Scotland, James IV. With royal obedience and presence, she answered the Archbishop of Glasgow's question as to her acceptance of the marriage. She replied: "If it please my lord and father, the king, and my lady my mother, the queen."<sup>24</sup> At twelve, she sealed her future to a man over twice her age whom she would never love.

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<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., p. 29.



As the Queen of Scotland, Margaret Tudor was less successful than she had been as an English princess, and her youthful indulgences were less accepted than they had been in her father's court. Although her husband was a charming, literate, even intelligent man, he did not replace the father she had been separated from at so tender an age. With her career established, she wrote homesick letters to London and became more willful and less an extrovert.<sup>25</sup>

Surely, a modern woman of the English court must not have felt comfortable in medieval Scotland, and along with her successive pregnancies and losses of her babies, it is little surprise that she lost any interest in scholastic pursuits and neglected her music. Only during her brief visit home to her brother's court in London in 1517 did she seem very happy. By that time, her son, James V, was the new king of Scotland, and Margaret had been relieved of the pressure of an adultrous husband. The remainder of her life in Scotland was turbulent and eventful, if never satisfying. When she died in 1541, there was no doubt that the inner spirit of this daughter of the early Tudor Renaissance had died long before.

Mary, the youngest living child of Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, was a more permanent product of that early

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<sup>25</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 37.

Tudor Renaissance. The favorite of her brother Henry, she would reflect all her life the attitudes and display the personality she developed at her father's and brother's courts.

At the age of three, this little Mary Tudor began playing the royal gambit. She was given her own household and a private tutor.<sup>26</sup> In the company of her brothers and sister, she learned all the social graces of her position. She learned to manage a household and administer responsibilities. Like her grandmother, she had an interest in medicinal drugs and minor medical treatment. She could play cards and make good conversation. She danced well and knew all the proper etiquette. Mary learned spoken French as a young child from the conversations of her older friend, Jane Popincourt, and later she learned its proper grammatical structure from John Palsgrave.<sup>27</sup>

When her parents were visited by foreign dignitaries, Mary Tudor played her lute and clavichord for their entertainment. A traveler with the handsome Philip Hapsburg watched her play and marvelled that she was so accomplished a child. He noted that "She played very well and was greatly

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<sup>26</sup>Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 160.

<sup>27</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 23.

praised."<sup>28</sup> She also played the regals. She could display her talents at faultless dancing or reciting Latin. However, unlike her beloved brother, Mary had no interest in sports; in music and company and personality, she and Henry were quite alike. With her bright red-gold hair and her pale blue eyes, they even looked very similar. She always loved Henry and he always loved her. All her life she could count on his encouragement and indulgence, and with the one exception of his "Great Matter" only a few years before her own death, he could always count on her adoration and support. Henry VIII called her his "well-beloved sister."<sup>29</sup> He always enjoyed her company, and he never denied her anything she really wanted.

Mary was graced not only with love, an education, and an amount of talent from her parents, but she also inherited the looks of her Yorkish grandfather, Edward IV. Of the children born to Henry VII and Elizabeth of York, Mary was the beauty. Dainty and pale, with long, thick hair and freckles, she was possibly the most beautiful royal woman in all of Europe. The Spanish minister, Fuensalida, wrote to Ferdinand of Aragon of Mary, "I think man never saw a more

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<sup>28</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 161.

<sup>29</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 61.

beautiful creature."<sup>30</sup> Henry VIII's biographer, Hall, recorded her to be "one of the fayrest Ladyes of the worlde."<sup>31</sup> Being the sister of the king of England, aware of the age around her, and a striking beauty as well, Mary Tudor was considered quite a prize.

The first person Mary was matched with was the heir to the Spanish crown, the grandson of the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles Hapsburg. By treaty in 1513, Mary and Charles were formally married by proxy, although both remained at home as Charles had yet to obtain puberty. For a year, Mary was called by her child-husband "my good wife."<sup>32</sup> Although Mary was showered with gifts, she faced the dismal prospect of preparing to go to the solemn youth called by his own grandfather "as cold and immovable as an idol."<sup>33</sup> But Mary was not destined to be Queen of Spain, and after much discourse, she formally renounced her contract with the boy. With the same obedience to royal will that her sister had shown years before, Mary begged her brother's forgiveness for desiring to end the match before she became a wife in

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<sup>30</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 165.

<sup>31</sup>Edward Hall, The Triumphant Reigne of Henry VIII, p. 118.

<sup>32</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 70.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., p. 71.

fact as well as name.<sup>34</sup> Of course, no one doubted that her brother and his chancellor, Thomas Wolsey, had made her decision, but her plea for understanding was part of the royal game she had learned to play long before.

Charles' grandfather, Maxmilian I, was the next to be interested in the princess. Maxmilian, a genuine charmer, friendly and popular, was not very concerned that his proposed bride was thirty-six years his junior. He wrote his beloved daughter Margaret, the regent of the Lowlands and a capable, clever woman herself, that if he could not have Mary, "I will not marry at all."<sup>35</sup> He had already received his minister's report expressing the man's delight at so talented a girl.<sup>36</sup> Maxmilian may have considered it a splendid match, but Henry VIII did not. Mary was refused him. Maxmilian contented himself by informing his daughter, probably in jest, that he would renounce his titles and have himself elected pope.<sup>37</sup>

Mary's future lay in France. The king of France, Louis XII, was an old man, lonely after his well-beloved queen had died, and ready to consider the English princess. Mary was a perfect candidate, as if made to order for the French Renaissance court. Despite Louis' advanced age and

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 75.    <sup>35</sup>Ibid., p. 71.    <sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 37.

<sup>37</sup>Aram Wandruszka, The House of Hapsburgs, p. 87.

failing health, Mary seemed quite willing to become Queen of France.<sup>38</sup> She enjoyed the attention and the excitement of the elaborate plans. Her dowry was rich--four hundred thousand crowns in gold. The court painter of France, Jean Perréal, came to England to paint her portrait, and stayed to help select her wardrobe. (True to the French tradition, this and her subsequent portraits as queen, show her as a brunette. Redheaded persons were considered lusty or aloof, certainly not qualities wanted in a queen.)<sup>39</sup> The trousseau she took to France was beautiful. As her husband would note later, Mary came to him "most honourably, sumptuously and splendidly outfitted."<sup>40</sup> Her wedding gift, sent to her before her departure, was the pigeon-egg-sized diamond, set in a ring of perfect pearls, the Mirror of Naples. It was worth sixty thousand crowns.

The proxy wedding was officiated by Archbishop Warham and the Chancellor, Cardinal Wolsey. In August of 1514, Mary Tudor became queen of France. Henry VIII took her to the coast himself and was prevented from sailing along side her vessel by the encumbent weather. According to popular tradition, Mary exacted from her dearest sibling her Magna Carta guaranteed right to choose her second husband herself.

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<sup>38</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 80.

<sup>39</sup>Ibid., p. 107. <sup>40</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

Whether this actually occurred or not, Henry's sorrow at losing her might have allowed him to grant her any request.

The trip to Calais was stormy and rough. Mary was forced to disembark in the rain. It was not a bad introduction to France, though, as crowds of citizenry greeted her in the mud with a song declaring her "the rose among the lilies of France."<sup>41</sup> Mary rode a white horse with a gold bridle and was accompanied by two thousand English courtiers. Louis, under guise of hawking, accidentally, by her entourage, met her on the road and escorted her to Paris. According to Louis' heir's mother, the ambitious and protective Louise of Savoy, "King Louis XII, very ancient and feeble, set forth from Paris to present himself to his young wife, the Queen Mary."<sup>42</sup> Their marriage was solemnized on October 9. An attendant recorded it as "the amorous nuptials of Louis XII, King of France, and Mary of England."<sup>43</sup> Although Louise and her children greeted the prospect of a new dauphin with understandable concern, the majority of Frenchmen enjoyed having their new English queen.

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>42</sup>Desmond Seward, Prince of the Renaissance, The Golden Life of Francois I, p. 35.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

The diarist, Mario Sanuto, wrote of the eighteen-year-old royal lady, "The Queen does not mind that the king is a gouty old man . . . and she herself a beautiful damsel . . . so great is her satisfaction at being queen of France."<sup>44</sup> The French were good to the young Tudor queen. She enjoyed the luxury of the court and the Renaissance surroundings of art and music. Louis tried to make her happy, and she in turn was considerate and loving to him. She listened to talented mistrels and saw the collected treasures of French-owned art. She attended tournaments where Englishmen and Frenchmen competed in the gentlemanly sports, and where she herself was viewed by crowds who "wondered at her beauty."<sup>45</sup> But her reign with her husband was short-lived. In January of the next year, Louis XII gave Mary what he called his greatest gift to her--his death. François Valois became the king of France, and Mary became a widow. Her French destiny had lasted scarcely six month.

For the next three weeks Mary, the "Reine Blanche," endured perhaps the worst ordeal of her life. As custom demanded, her absense of pregnancy had to be proven so François could assume the throne. She was laid to bed in a shuttered room with hundreds of candles and only three female

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<sup>44</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 76.

<sup>45</sup>Desmond Seward, p. 36.



attendants, all unfamiliar to her and chosen by Louise of Savoy to act as spies. It must have been a horrible situation for the vivacious, gregarious Tudor. Henry wrote her immediately, and according to Hall, "After he sent a letter to conforte the Queene his sister requyryng to knowe her pleasure whither she would continue . . . in France or returne into Englande againe."<sup>46</sup>

After her confinement was ended, Mary said she was ready to go home. She was very unhappy as the ex-queen, nervous about her future, and concerned about the constant attention she was receiving from the dashing new monarch. Adultery and widowhood had nothing to offer her. She feared that Henry would demand her service again and mate her to her once intended, Charles Hapsburg.

Mary Tudor acted with typical Tudor willfulness and with the mind made in her brother's court. She declared in a letter to her brother that she would not marry the Spanish ruler. She sobbed to the English ministers that she "would rather be torn to pieces!"<sup>47</sup> If Henry tried to insist, she would take the veil to prevent it.<sup>48</sup> In typical fashion, Mary had no more political interest than a royal female was expected to have, but this was not a political matter to her.

<sup>46</sup>Edward Hall, p. 145.    <sup>47</sup>Seward, Desmond, p. 43.

<sup>48</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 188.

She did not want another loveless marriage, although hers to Louis had been pleasant enough, and she wanted to go home to her native land. Mary also wanted Charles Brandon.

It had never been considered that Mary should marry outside royal circles. Certainly few Englishmen would have considered the idea.<sup>49</sup> Charles Brandon, the new Duke of Suffolk, was a long-time friend of all the Tudors. He and Henry VIII had always been the best of friends. Brandon was loud and friendly and had a reputation as a rogue. Aside from his physical structure, huge and strong, there was little that should have interested a cultivated Renaissance woman like Mary Tudor. He was scarcely literate and not a participant in any of the artistic endeavors of Henry's court. But Mary knew him well, and in her state of despondency and loneliness, a handsome, sexy old friend of her big brother must surely have seemed appealing. She may or may not have been passionately in love with him since her childhood, as is often suggested in recounts of the incident, but she was definitely demanding. She wanted Brandon, as she informed her brother, "because of his great virtue."<sup>50</sup>

Even a romantic such as Henry VIII could not have believed that reasoning. But as Hall informed readers,

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<sup>49</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 58.

<sup>50</sup>Desmond Seward, p. 42.

Brandon was so comforting and kind and "behaved hymselfe so to her," that she married him.<sup>51</sup> Probably it was Mary, not Brandon, who behaved herself so to him that he married her. The sobbing, hysterical Tudor princess, begging him to save her virtue from the French king, and her body from the Spanish, is well documented. Apparently most of the French court knew of the secret marriage that took place in a small room in a small hotel on March 3, 1515.

Henry VIII may have known as well, but with his orders ignored--it was this very man he had trusted to bring Mary home safely and widowed--and his plans, whatever they were, foiled by his wayward sister, he maintained an attitude of hostility. Brandon, if contemporaries are to be believed, was actually in fear for his life. But Henry VIII was not yet the man who could turn on those he cared for, and he was lonely for Mary and her disobedient husband. Hall relates that Henry told them they could come home. Mary, still displaying the French royal arms, ". . . passed through Fraunce to Caleys where she was honourably entertained and after, with great honour, married to Lord Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolke, openly."<sup>52</sup> The couple returned to England and they

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<sup>51</sup>Edward Hall, p. 145.

<sup>52</sup>Sebastian Guistinian, Four Years in the Court of Henry VIII, p. 123.

were married for the third time in Henry's presence. Even those who were mortified by the match were usually calmed by Brandon's careful handling of the situation, with dignity and without haughtiness.<sup>53</sup>

The couple paid dearly for that royal forgiveness. A fortune was demanded by Henry and his chancellor from them in yearly installments which, until he lifted them, they were hard pressed to pay. The Mirror of Naples found its way into Henry's possession, and all the wiles of François I failed to secure its return to France.

Back in England and good graces, Mary resumed her role as a popular participant in court recitals and daily functions. Even though she and her husband spent most of their married life in their country estates, Mary returned for all special occasions and ceremonies to her brother's court. Her first son was called Henry, and Henry VIII showered the baby, and also his subsequent nieces and nephews, with gifts and titles.

Mary was known to the peasant folk of her estates as lovely, graceful, and of great charity. Brandon was popular because he was down to earth and at home with the lowest tenant on the land. The only trouble he and Mary had that could be considered serious was when they differed about

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<sup>53</sup>Desmond Seward, p. 43.

Henry's annulment from his first wife. Brandon had protested his majesty's wishes only once, and he did not rebel again. Mary supported her old friend and companion of her childhood, Katherine of Aragon.<sup>54</sup>

When the creative spirit faded from the court of Henry VIII, and when Henry's angry frustration at the annulment welled up within the royal family, Mary Tudor felt uncomfortable at court. She died young and left Brandon wealthier and with a young family. But she was remembered all of Henry's life, and maintained in the memories of his court as the beautiful, well-trained princess she had been when Thomas More wrote these lines in "Lamentation" for Elizabeth of York: "Adieu my daughter Mary, bright of Hue, God made you virtuous, wise, and fortunate."<sup>55</sup>

But it was not Henry VIII's sisters or grandmother who was the greatest Renaissance woman of his court. Katherine of Aragon had been for years the outstanding female scholar and musician of her husband's early reign. She was talented as a student, a diplomat, a musician. She was a reader and a thinker; she enjoyed the company of her husband's great minds. She was a patron of men of letters. For years after her marriage, she was her husband's constant

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<sup>54</sup>Hester Chapman, The Sisters of Henry VIII, p. 202.

<sup>55</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 11.

companion and his intellectual partner. She was very much a part of Henry's formation of his Renaissance court. In the words of Erasmus, Katherine of Aragon was a "brilliant example of her sex."<sup>56</sup>

The queen was popular with the court. Katherine had been reared between the Aragonese and Castilian courts of the late fifteenth century. The latter was a court dominated by a bright, enterprising Isabella Trastamare. Isabella had supported not only adventurous Italian discoverers, but court artists and writers as well. In the Castilian court of Isabella, as one Spaniard explained, "little girls sucked in Latin with their mothers' milk."<sup>57</sup> As Vives said of his employer, "This woman has dusked the brightness of heroes."<sup>58</sup> Katherine was courageous and concerned; she was a woman shaped by and directly influential in the early English Renaissance.

Katherine was not only a financial boon to men of letters in the English court, but a woman who appreciated their efforts spiritually as well. She sought out men who appeared to have interests and talents she considered worthwhile. The Spanish teacher, Juan Luis Vives, traveled to

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<sup>56</sup>Mary Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 8.

<sup>57</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 28.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid.



England at Katherine's request to teach the English heir, Mary. He was so impressed by the mother and her abilities he dedicated his guide to modern female education, De Institutione Feminae Christianae, to her.<sup>59</sup> The English educator, Linacre, wrote his text, Rudimenta Grammatica, for Katherine.<sup>60</sup> Thomas More never visited the king's court that he did not go to see the queen in her compartments. The popular court composer, William Cornish, wrote songs for her.<sup>61</sup> The queen was an immensely supportive friend of the arts in England.

Erasmus wrote that Katherine of Aragon was "a miracle of learning, and as pious as she was intelligent."<sup>62</sup> The latter appraisal was as accurate as the first. She was a woman who said at the loss of her fourth newborn child in succession, "You must love me, Lord, to confer upon me the privilege of so much sorrow."<sup>63</sup> In the years to come, Katherine received more comfort from her religion than she did from her scholastic abilities. But in the early years of her marriage she was, in the words of Gernard Pleine to his employer, Margaret Hapsburg, "A lady of lively, kind and

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid., p. 27.    <sup>60</sup>Ibid.

<sup>61</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 79.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid., p. 83.    <sup>63</sup>Mary Luke, p. 166.

gracious disposition."<sup>64</sup> Her friend and companion, Thomas More, paid her the highest compliment: "There were few women who could compete with the queen in her prime."<sup>65</sup>

These were the dominant feminine figures in the first half of Henry VIII's reign. Born and bred in the new learning, reflecting the attitudes and participating in the arts of the early Renaissance, they were prominent in their time. With their direct influence, newly created colleges prospered, learned and creative persons thrived, and the role of royal women marked a change for the better. Fortunately, the tremendous advances for women in court did not die with the women who had made them.

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<sup>64</sup>Ibid., p. 161.    <sup>65</sup>Ibid., p. 110.



## CHAPTER VI

### THE MUSIC OF THE COURT

With the coming of the European Renaissance, music changed from a craft to an art. No medieval composer thought of signing his work, of being singled out for fame and fortune. As a musician, he was considered no more skilled or special than chemist or cobbler. Rare was it a medieval composer experimented with new sounds or new arrangements. Changes were gradual and rarely surprising. With the Renaissance, though, this musical reticence would change.

The major change in English music began with the reign of Henry VIII. During his father's rule, young Henry had watched English music become an integral part of court life. Under Henry VII, his heir saw English music come of age. Before the War of Roses, England's music had been copies of music from neighboring realms. What little the English did produce on their own was not considered very important, and was little respected outside of England.<sup>1</sup> But with the accession of the Tudors, who spent freely on players and musicians, this neglect of music changed. The

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<sup>1</sup>Gustave Reese, Music in the Renaissance, p. 763.

monarch and his chief minister, Cardinal Morton, were both great patrons of that art form and encouraged it in others.<sup>2</sup> Henry VIII, from the very beginning of his own reign, followed his father's example.

Henry VIII was the best royal musician for years to come. Naturally, as a musician and a monarch, as well as a very egotistical man, he wanted the music of his court to be world famous, internationally recognized. The English court had always loved plays and pageants, so it was ripe for a musical invasion when its new monarch took the throne. The Kings Musick and the Chapel Royal of Henry VIII became as great as any academy, rich with musicians and singers and teachers of the art.<sup>3</sup> The king himself so loved his music that he never travelled anywhere without his instruments and his minstrels--not even to war.<sup>4</sup> No court in Europe could rival the music of the early court of Bluff King Hal. Most knew it.

Henry VIII was a very popular patron. Not only was he liberal in his financial support, but in his appreciation of artistic endeavors as well. Not only Englishmen, but foreigners in large numbers, enjoyed Henry's pleasure. The

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>3</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 37.

<sup>4</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 19.

royal account books of his early reign list many artists, both composers and performers, from all over Europe, residing at court and supported by the monarch.<sup>5</sup> Unlike the French Renaissance court of François I, where poor performances and limited skill were accepted, the English court demanded genuine effort and continued practice from the court musicians.<sup>6</sup> In return, life as a musician in the English court was pleasant and profitable.

From all over Europe talent congregated in the court of the young king. Musicians were often recruited and invited by the king himself, and they were always men with genuine ability. There was the flutest, Guillam Troche, Hans Aseneste with his violin, Marquesse Loreden a drummer. Two trumpeters, Domynyk and Andryan, were specially invited to England. The royal musicians lists read like a cosmopolitan assortment of names.

There were Englishmen, as well. The Cambridge-educated Doctor of Music, Robert Fayrfax, was already famous enough to have been mentioned in the early book of composers and musicians, The Fairfax Book of 1503, when Henry VIII invited him to court.<sup>7</sup> There he experimented with counter-

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<sup>5</sup>Gustave Reese, p. 771.

<sup>6</sup>Neville Williams, p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>Gustave Reese, p. 768.

tenor voices and wrote monets and masses. He supplemented his sizable salary with his handprinted, illuminated "prick-song books," which he sold for the astounding sum of 20 pounds apiece.<sup>8</sup> As Master of the Chapel Royal, he taught music and staged productions. He wrote secular songs as well as religious ones, two such being "Somewhat Musing" and the popular, "My Harte's Lust."<sup>9</sup> The Tudor historian, Neville Williams, calls Fayrfax "The most distinguished English musician" of his day.<sup>10</sup> When Fayrfax died in 1521, Henry gave him a full choral funeral at Westminster Abbey.

Another of the famous composers was John Taverner. Taverner was appointed to the post of Master of the Choir several years after Fayrfax's death. He, too, like Fayrfax, wrote monets and masses and secular songs. One religious one, "Christi Jesu," included a prayer for the king, and it contained the unusual device of a full choral ending.<sup>11</sup> "The Western Wynde," "Plyne Song," and "O Michael" are examples of his secular work. There are harmonic, polyphonic, free, and complex.<sup>12</sup> In the words of the musicologist, Gustave Reese, John Taverner was the "greatest composer of the period."<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Neville Williams, p. 37.   <sup>9</sup>Ibid.   <sup>10</sup>Ibid.

<sup>11</sup>Gustave Reese, p. 781.   <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 778.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

There was the lutenist and composer, Philip van Wilder, who served as Keeper of the Instruments for the king.<sup>14</sup> Also, Edmond Turges, who wrote songs distinctively English, like "Alas It Is I That Wote Nott What To Say."<sup>15</sup> But it was William Cornysh who was the most popular professional songwriter in Henry's court.

William Cornysh came to court at Henry's accession and remained there for fourteen years in continued popularity. Probably his single most extraordinary piece is the powerful "Garden of Esperance," first performed in 1517.<sup>16</sup> One of his prettiest is "Gentile Robyn," written for a Twelfth Night celebration with the poet, Thomas Wyatt.<sup>17</sup> Sung by a dejected clown in that festivity, it is sorrowful and melodic. The words express the feelings of this melodious song:

Hey Robyn, Gentile Robyn  
Tell me how they lady doeth  
And thou shalt knowe of myn.

My lady is unkynd, perdel  
Alas whi is she so?  
She loveth anothr better than me  
And yet she will say no.

Hey Robyn, Gentile Robyn  
Tell me how they lady doeth  
And thou shalt knowe of myn.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 771.    <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 769.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 768.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 769.

I cannot thynk such doublenes  
 For I fynd women trew  
 My lady loveth me dowlles  
 And will chaunge for no newe.

Hey Robyn, Gentile Robyn  
 Tell me how thy lady doeth  
 And thou shalt knowe of myn.<sup>18</sup>

Of Henry's patronage of all the musical arts, the most important was of the Chapel Royal. The Chapel was an old institution long before 1509. It first appears on the tax records, in The Red Book of the Exchequer, in 1135.<sup>19</sup> But under Henry VIII, it was established as the greatest choir in England. The king supported its one-hundred fourteen or so musicians in a manner to which they were not accustomed.<sup>20</sup> The Chapel cost the king over two thousand pounds a year.<sup>21</sup> Its musicians were treated as court gentlemen and given unexpected respect by other persons.<sup>22</sup> Boys recruited for the Chapel were assured of a prosperous life. If at puberty their voices failed to mature into beautiful adult voices, they were supported, at the king's expense, through an Oxford or Cambridge education.<sup>23</sup> The only chapel that rivaled the king's was Cardinal Wolsey's, and he often lost

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 770.    <sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 767.

<sup>20</sup>Sir Arthur S. MacNalty, Henry VIII, Difficult Patient, p. 22.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.    <sup>22</sup>Neville Williams, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid., p. 39.

his best voices to the king's through appropriate gifts to the monarch.

Probably the greatest organist in England was the organist of the Chapel Royal. He was Dionysius Memmo, recruited from St. Mark's Cathedral in Venice. The day-book of the Venetian, Sagudino, records that Henry so enjoyed Memmo's ability that on more than one occasion, the king listened for four straight hours to the organist.<sup>24</sup> Memmo must have known of his effect on the monarch, for he did the unheard of thing of requesting a raise.<sup>25</sup> Although Memmo shared the Chapel organist duties with Benedictus de Opitiis, he was the greatest attraction and he acted accordingly.

Some of the songs played and sung in the Chapel were the king's compositions. Both the John Hawkins History of Music and Boyces' Cathedral Music of English Masters list several of the monarch's works. The Chapel masses were either Great Masses, formal and ceremonial, or Short Masses for ordinary occasions and purposes.<sup>26</sup>

Along with masses, other types of music were popular at court. Chansons had developed and were unmistakably English. Usually secular, they were pretty and fairly simple. One such was "Who Shall Have My Fayre Lady?" Another was

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<sup>24</sup>Gustave Reese, p. 771.      <sup>25</sup>Neville Williams, p. 38.

<sup>26</sup>Gustave Reese, p. 773.

Cornysh's "Trolly Looy Lo." Henry's own "Pastance With Goode Company" was a chanson.<sup>27</sup>

Melismalic cadences, chantlike and even, were sung. An example of a melismalic cadence is Sheryngham's "My Woeful Hart in Paynful Weryness."<sup>28</sup> Rounds were popular. Plainsongs, or Gregorian chants, though less popular, were still played and sung. A more modern type, the freemen's songs, were well liked and well received.

The freemen's song was played all over England. It demanded two male voices and an instrument. The name may be a corruption of the Anglo-Saxon "freoman," or just a variation of "three men," for the participants.<sup>29</sup> The earliest reference to one is in John Foxe's Actes and Monuments, published in 1554. The reference is to "a threeman's song in the English tongue and all after the English fashion."<sup>30</sup> Two later works of the early sixteen hundreds, Deuteromelia and The Legend of Thomas Cromwell, mention freemen's songs sung at Henry's court.<sup>31</sup>

Outside the court there were some professional musicians in the early Tudor Renaissance. Only London was wealthy enough as a city to support its own music company, but players could usually find work in other cities as waits. Waits

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid., p. 771.    <sup>28</sup>Ibid., p. 768.    <sup>29</sup>Ibid., p. 769.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid.    <sup>31</sup>Ibid.



received their name from their predecessors who had waited as watchmen at city gates and signaled danger to each other in song form. Two of the most famous waits groups were the London Waits and the Oxford Waits. Waits sang or played at town ceremonies and gave exhibitions for the townspeople.<sup>32</sup>

The English people of the early sixteenth century loved music, and those who could financially support it generally did. This musical aid was especially generous at the king's residence. With its well-rehearsed pageants, its songfests, its elaborate props and backdrops, its rudimentary ballets, and its extraordinary Chapel Choir, the Tudor court of Henry VIII was the music capital of the north.

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 772.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE VISUAL ARTS IN THE COURT

England in the Renaissance produced many extraordinary men, some extraordinary women, much beautiful music, and some great works of literature. It produced almost no original visual arts. Painting and architecture, so popular and innovative throughout the rest of Europe, was almost nonexistent in England. The few exceptions where some art of note was produced were the very large cities where wealthy merchants desired art products, and, of course, the Tudor court.

The most popular art form patronized and encouraged during the Tudor Renaissance was tombs. The English people loved tombs. (Judging from their attendance to tombs and grave sites today, that love is still alive.) Perhaps those days of such uncertainty as to longevity of life stimulated an interest in the articles of death. As the historian James Lees-Milne explains, the English of Henry's time expected their tombs to pave their way to the after-life.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, p. 12.

Henry VIII's first major artistic patronage involved the creation of his father's tomb. Henry VII had begun the chapel and grave within Westminster Abbey for another king before his own death. His son completed it and placed in it the bodies of the first monarchs of his lineage.

After his father's funeral, which Hall called "Th-entierment of the moost excellent prynce King Henry the vijth,"<sup>2</sup> Henry VIII ordered the completion of an elaborate, splendid resting place for his parents. He gave instructions that it should "be filled with ymages specially of our said avouries of coper and gilte."<sup>3</sup>

The tomb was to be a combination of all the art styles and the visions considered beautiful by the young monarch, part English Gothic, part Italian Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> An Italian, Pietro Torrigiani, traveled to England at the king's request to supervise the construction of the tomb and chapel. He received English subordinates, craftsmen of proven talent, to help with the work. It took several years to complete, but the finished tomb and its surroundings were very pleasing to Henry's taste.

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<sup>2</sup>Letters and Papers of . . . Henry VIII, p. 11.

<sup>3</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 29.

<sup>4</sup>David Piper, London, p. 46.

The tomb of Henry VII and his devoted queen, Elizabeth of York, was of black touchstone, white marble, and gilt bronze. Around it were raised, realistic reliefs. All over the large tomb were representations of the royal arms, greyhounds, roses, angels. There were strange griffins and portcullis. The "nakyed Children"<sup>5</sup> caused quite a sensation, as cherubs had not been used in English art before.<sup>6</sup> The gilt work was done by Nicholas Ewen, and was described as "well gilt and surely done."<sup>7</sup> Around the tomb itself was the chapel. The British always incorporated wood in anything; in this case, the chapel was heavily paneled in dark wood. It was carved and raised and very elaborate. The high altar was designed by Torrigiani. The windows above the paneling were unusual in that they were set at a zigzag angle in the apse. The stalls around the tomb were dark wood with fretted canopies. Later, the flags of the Order of the Bath were painted on the stalls themselves. The roof was fan vaulted and groin vaulted. It was designed by the English architect, William Vertue.<sup>8</sup>

The tomb and chapel of Henry VII has been described in different ways. Francis Bacon called it "one of the

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<sup>5</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 29.    <sup>6</sup>David Piper, p. 46.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 141.    <sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 41.

daintiest monuments of Europe."<sup>9</sup> John Evelyn, though, said the chapel was "lame."<sup>10</sup> Whatever it was, whether great art or shallow, it was expensive. On his parents' final resting place, Henry VIII spent seven years and fifteen thousand pounds.<sup>11</sup>

It was architecture, along with tombs, which first introduced Renaissance art to England. During the reign of Henry VII, architecture had thrived; economic stability and peace allowed the wealthy of the island to devote time and money to their homes and churches. Although most of what is today called Tudor architecture did not begin until after 1535, there was patronage and interest in that art for half a century before that time.<sup>12</sup>

Again, wood was the prominent characteristic of English Renaissance architecture. Two examples of what is recognized as above-average structures in wood are Wolsey's Closet at Hampton Court, and the altar screen at King's College.<sup>13</sup> Another famous wood-dominated structure is Sutton Place, built for Henry's Privy Councillor, Richard Weston.<sup>14</sup> One of the new homes built for Thomas Kytson had a bay window created by John Sparke.<sup>15</sup> Wolsey's Christ's Church at Oxford

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<sup>9</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 29.    <sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 29.    <sup>12</sup>Ibid., p. 34.    <sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 45.    <sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

is another of the early Renaissance structures. It was described at its completion as "a stately work indeed."<sup>16</sup>

None of these homes or churches rivaled the architecture that was occurring in France at the time. There was no Fontainebleau or Chambord built for Henry VIII in England. Nothing so modern or so splendid as to concern François I was even attempted on the island kingdom. There was one possible exception. It was Wolsey's personal estate, Hampton Court.

Hampton Court was built as a private domain by Henry's chief minister, Cardinal Wolsey, outside of London. It first entertained the king and queen in 1516, and was a magnificent structure to their eyes. The home was huge, as if to scale with the chancellor's importance in the realm. Hampton Court had one thousand rooms. Two hundred eighty of those were guest rooms; one had to be ready for an entire court of unexpected visitors. There was a staff of four lawyers, sixty priests, sixteen doctors, and five-hundred servants.<sup>17</sup>

In the play Wolsey, by Thomas Churchyard, the leading character says of his home, "My buildings sumptuous, the roofs with gold and byse, Shone like the sun in the midday sphere."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 45.    <sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 44.    <sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 43.

John Skelton, in his manner of biting wit, said of Wolsey's palace,

The Kynges Court Should have the excellence  
But Hampton Court Hath the Pre-emyence.<sup>19</sup>

There is no doubt that Wolsey's one great tangible passion was home. Not only did he spend years and a large fortune on the house and grounds, but on the furnishing and displays inside, as well. Wolsey loved art and was a prolific collector. According to Guistinian, it was a difficult task in itself to find Wolsey's offices there because of the eight rooms of tapestries he had to wander through.<sup>20</sup> As the tapestries were constantly changed with new ones replacing old, it was made more confusing. Wolsey himself said, "My galleries were fayer both large and long to walk in them when that it liked me best."<sup>21</sup>

To keep his galleries "fayer," Wolsey not only spent his own money, but let it be well known what gifts he appreciated from foreign ministers.<sup>22</sup> It was a wise idea for those seeking the powerful chancellor's help in a matter to present him with fine velvets, beautiful tapestries, woven carpets, or paintings by the great Renaissance artists. Wolsey's own room was described as filled with furniture

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 44.    <sup>20</sup>Lewis Einstein, Tudor Ideals, p.20.

<sup>21</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 44.    <sup>22</sup>Ibid.

covered in white cloth of gold, blue cloth of gold, crimson and tawny velvet.

The other striking features of Wolsey's Hampton Court --the gardens were not his making--were the brickwork and the roof. The brickwork was built with imperial roundel, created by an Italian noted as G. da Maiano.<sup>23</sup> The splendid roof was the work of an English architect, Richard Rydge.<sup>24</sup>

In 1525, the Cardinal gave his prized possession to Henry VIII, knowing how the monarch loved it. Wolsey did not vacate the palace, though, until 1529, when he fell from power and surrendered the keys to an unforgiving king.

Painting was one Renaissance art that nearly skipped England. Patronage was an important part of Renaissance display art, but in the opinion of the Renaissance scholar, Lees-Milne, the English were too stingy to patronize.<sup>25</sup> The only things the English enjoyed spending lavishly on were good food and elegant clothing. Most Englishmen able to afford it did not consider art important enough to encourage its popularity.

Artists of any form were not accepted as men of genius and the profession was not considered to be an occupation for the high born.<sup>26</sup> Architects in Henry's England

<sup>23</sup>David Piper, p. 58.    <sup>24</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 39.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 11.    <sup>26</sup>Lewis Einstein, p. 272.



were still called surveyors. Artists were "paynters." There was hardly a native artist known in England during the fifteenth century, and the sixteenth century saw only a few exceptions to that established rule. Most English art was of poor quality if present at all. Stained glass, for example, was so inferior to other nations' that at the building of Warwick Chapel, instructions specified not to use any glass made on the island.<sup>27</sup> Artists were rarely given the respect they received in the rest of Europe. As the cleric Latimer noted,

Painters paint death like a man without a skin . . . they bungle what ever at it, they come nothing near it. But this is no true painting; no painter could paint hell unless he could paint the torment and condemnation both of body and soul.<sup>28</sup>

It was probably the wealthy merchants, anxious to establish their worth, who finally began limited support of Renaissance painting. Perhaps, for the same reason, so did Henry VIII.

Henry VII had not encouraged art patronage in his son. Once he had been offered Raphael Santi's "St. George and the Dragon," and he had had such limited interest that that painting of England's patron saint is today the property of the Soviet Union.<sup>29</sup> His only apparent patronage was,

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<sup>27</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 15.      <sup>28</sup>Lewis Einstein, p. 278.

<sup>29</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 14.

according to Horace Walpole, the tomb which was eventually his own.<sup>30</sup>

Henry VIII, unlike his father in this respect, did enjoy art and did patronize talented men. His father had introduced him to Italian art through his friendliness with several Italian dukes. It was Italian artists who had the greatest influence on English art. With their skill and creativity, they left an indelible mark on British art.<sup>31</sup> Henry VIII invited numbers of Italian artists to England, but was turned down by the greatest of them. Raphael and Titian both declined, as did many lesser known artists.<sup>32</sup> England was too provincial and too unenlightened to interest men who were used to wealth and position.

A few Italians did accept. Henry VIII, through lucrative invitations and persistence, was able to gather into his court some outstanding artists. One was Toto del Nunziata. He painted for the king and for the chancellor, too. His interest was primarily religious art, and he did some architectural designing as well.

Another Italian artist-architect was Giralano de Treviso, who was especially appreciated by the king. The panelist, Nicolas de Modena, created an effigy for Henry VIII,

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<sup>30</sup>Ibid., p. 13.    <sup>31</sup>Lewis Einstein, p. 201.

<sup>32</sup>Henry Lucas, The Renaissance and the Reformation, p. 397.

and also did work for Wolsey. An Italian sculptor, Benetto da Rovezzano, did the tomb for Wolsey, which later was used, instead, for the body of the king. The artist took twenty years to complete the work because he kept making journies back to his home. England must have been a difficult environment for the talented southerners.

Benvenuto Cellini declined Henry's invitation to come to England and went to work in France instead. But his friend, Pietro Torrigiani, spent several years as Henry's employee. Known for his temper as well as his talent--it was he who gave Michelangelo his crushed nose--the Italian had some hectic years of service on the island. His greatest work while in England was the tomb of Henry VII. He was commissioned in 1518 to build a tomb for Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon; his designs for it were splendid. It was to have "whit marbill and black touchstone wt. ymages figures."<sup>33</sup> It would have cost over two thousand pounds. For reasons of state and changing events at court, it was never built. Torrigiani did create several effigies; one was of Margaret Beaufort. He designed some display work for the court. One of his loveliest was the medallion for Sir Thomas Lovell.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 31.

<sup>34</sup>David Piper, p. 46.

The king was thoroughly pleased with his Italian artists. The Italian minister, Savorgnano, noted, "He [Henry] was glad to see them and especially the Italians."<sup>35</sup> While this was surely true, not all Englishmen shared the king's high opinion of the foreigners. London merchants were concerned about the Italians, as a group and as individuals, and pamphlets against their "squint-eyed tricks," were common.<sup>36</sup>

The monarch employed English artists as well as foreigners, and even patronized a few females. One woman, Alice Carmellian, painted miniatures for the king and his court.

One group of foreigners, though, appealed not only to the king but to the population as a whole. They were the Flemish artists. There were several who made their home in England during those years of Henry's reign. There were men like Gossaert and Massys. There were others who simply worked for the famous as assistants. But there was one of tremendous importance in Renaissance art in England. That one was Hans Holbein the Younger.

Hans Holbein came from a family of painters. His father was already well known in the Lowlands. Holbein, himself was first a sign painter, then an illustrator, finally a

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<sup>35</sup>Lewis Einstein, p. 185.    <sup>36</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 25.

recognized artist. He lived in the Lowlands, and in Basel, Switzerland. It was in Basel, a crossroads for Italian trade, that Holbein came into direct contact with the Italian Renaissance. He became known for his sketches, his Bible drawings, and his illustrations of literature. He was noted for his rich use of color and for his meticulous care in execution. It is very possible he would never have come to England at all had not the religious problems surfacing in the Holy Roman Empire and the Swiss cantons ruined the market for his work.

Holbein was first introduced to England through Erasmus of Rotterdam. Holbein had decorated the humanist's great satire, In Praise of Folly, and was very popular, both as an artist and a man with the pundit. Through Erasmus, Holbein was introduced to England. He worked for wealthy merchants and appeared to enjoy being with them more than with men of title. Also, he illustrated books, created altar pieces, and designed some stained glass. But it was through his employment by the nobility that the artist left his mark on the English Renaissance. He had expected that working in England for the nobility would make him wealthy. It did not. As Thomas More warned Erasmus, "Your painter dearest Erasmus is a markable artist, but I am afraid he will not find

England as fertile . . . as he expected."<sup>37</sup>

Holbein was, without a doubt, the greatest portrait painter of his time. It was as a painter of great men that he became famous and that he preserved for all time the faces of his contemporaries. His portraiture was highly finished, with clear, true lines and splendid execution. A master of composition, his treatment of those he painted was somber, harmonious, careful. He used his oils with restriction and used clear, true colors. Although he was never photographic in his work, he drafted some of the most honest representations of reality of his age. Holbein was frank and truthful in his art. He had the accuracy and insight of a careful historian.

Although his friend Erasmus, viewing a drawing Holbein made of the humanist in In Praise of Folly, commented that if he really looked like Holbein's sketch he would not "lack a wife," the artist was really very factual in his portrayals.<sup>38</sup>

Holbein himself, according to the art historian Kenyon Cox, had the attitude that he could paint anyone the way that person wanted to appear, because he was receiving

<sup>37</sup>Epistles of Erasmus, Vol. II, p. 164.

<sup>38</sup>Kenneth Clark, Civilisation, p. 147.

his money.<sup>39</sup> Most historians, though, would not agree with Holbein if he indeed did feel this way. He is today, as then, recognized as a master in portraying people as they really were. He saw not only their exteriors, their physical looks, and their manner of dress, but he had the ability to expose their personalities as well. In the view of the historian Henry Lucas, Holbein was "the first painter north of the Alps to belong entirely to the Renaissance."<sup>40</sup>

Holbein was not appointed official Court Painter until 1537, but for long before that he was well received at the Tudor court. Much of the artist's work has been lost to history. Enough, though, remains to establish his worth at the English court. One of his first commissions in England was given by Thomas More. With the recommendation of More's close friend Erasmus, More hired the painter to create a portrait of More's assembled family. That painting was later burned, under questionable circumstances, but the sketches for it remain.<sup>41</sup> The drawing shows Holbein's care for detail and accuracy, but lacks his gentle detail of skin and cloth.<sup>42</sup> A copy of the painting was sent to Erasmus. Seeing his dear friends assembled by the artist in

<sup>39</sup>Kenyon Cox, Painters and Sculptors . . ., p. 79.

<sup>40</sup>Henry Lucas, p. 393. <sup>41</sup>Kenneth Clark, p. 143.

<sup>42</sup>E. E. Reynolds, p. 2.

the natural surroundings for a family of scholars, their library, Erasmus was reminded of how much he missed their company. He graciously expressed his sentiment to Margaret Roper, More's beloved daughter.

I cannot find words to express the joy I felt when the painter Holbein gave me the picture of your whole family, which is so completely successful that I should scarcely be able to see you better if I were with you.<sup>43</sup>

Later, Holbein did some drawings for an account of More in Boethius's de Consolatione. He also has left the famous portrait of the scholar-statesman, caught in the drama of the times, in his painting of More in the garb of Chancellor.

Holbein's drawings of Erasmus are well known. His portrait of the humanist in his study shows an old, worn man who still possesses that outlook on life and the world around him that made Erasmus great. It was a triumphant Erasmus, a man who knew his work would remain even as his body was decaying, who is captured on that Holbein canvas.

It is a man unsure that his life's work has achieved anything lasting that is portrayed in the Holbein drawings of Archbishop Warham. The ex-Chancellor and leading English primate appears old and broken, with no hope showing on his wrinkled face. The same appears true of Bishop Rochester.

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<sup>43</sup>Ibid., p. 1.



He looks sad, almost tragic; surely he is not a man pleased with what he has wrought. The later portrait of Thomas Cromwell reveals the cold and ambitious man history has proven him to have been.

Although the painting Holbein did of Anne Boleyn has been lost, the sketches he prepared remain. From these, and the portrait painted from the drawings by one of his students, Anne is shown as the sparkling, confident woman she was. There is nothing very revealing in the famous portrait of her successor, Jane Seymour, and art historians have differing opinions as to whether this painting is Holbein's. His famous Anne of Cleves, the "False Portrait," is a plain woman decorated to the hilt in gold and jewels and splendid headgear. The stories of this inaccurate representation are varied. Some feel Holbein dressed her beautifully considering her so unattractive herself that she warranted help. Others claim Holbein was so impressed with the intelligent woman of like culture and faith as his own that he wanted to show her in her best form. Whatever was true, the regal painting that hangs in the Louvre is a worthy representation of Holbein's ability.

Holbein's drawings of himself and his wife and children are also worthy of his best. He shows himself to be confident and observant. His wife and babies are loving and

gentle. Many biographers of Holbein and critics of his work deem his family portraits his best; truly a man famous for the representation of the soul in his painting could be expected to show the character and personality of those he loved most.

His paintings of the English merchants whose company he enjoyed so much are credits to his talent. "The Ambassadors," "The Merchants of Steelyard," and his numerous portraits of individual English men of commerce are excellent. The colors are rich, the style graceful, the surroundings appropriate. In these pictures, as in those of his family, he has used dark shadows and much contrast. In many of his portraits of nobles, he has presented only a blank background and a prevalence of dark tones. Possibly the man in the artist came through.

Certainly the most famous of the Holbein paintings is his portrait in regal splendor and absolute confidence of Henry VIII. Of the several portraits Holbein did of the king, this painting is the most famous, showing Henry wearing a heavy, embroidered jacket lined with fur and set off in jewels. The portrait is so associated with the monarch that it is nearly impossible to find a biography that does not include it, most often on the cover. Here, Holbein has shown his employer as a man of will and determination. There is

nothing youthful or compromising in his stance, on his face. He is viewed by the centuries as the man he had become, all absolute, all powerful. It was surely a portrait the Henry of the thirties and forties must have relished as factual and accurate. Holbein, true to his nature, has not made Henry handsome of face or figure, not young of age and body, but a man in the prime, sure of his worth and confident of success. It is probably the one great example of all that Holbein was as an artist. In this portrait of Henry VIII, Holbein has declared his style, his mastery of color and form, his insight into the soul of his subject. He has proven himself the greatest painter of the English Renaissance. No one who came before him or after him could rival that distinction.

## CHAPTER VIII

### HUMANIST LITERATURE IN THE COURT

Of all the Renaissance arts which thrived in the early years of the reign of Henry VIII, literature with its rise of humanist thought was the most important. Under the protective eye of an interested monarch, English men of letters and English works prospered. Long after the king was dead, long after the talented men and women who participated in this aspect of the Renaissance were gone from the scene, the legacy begun under Henry VIII would continue. The England which produced Marlowe and Jonson and Shakespeare half a century later was shaped in those early years of Henry's reign. That literary heritage was one of her greatest gifts to the world and the future.

Scholarship, beyond literacy, was rare before the reign of Henry VIII. During his father's day, noblemen had had little concern for literature as an art. According to Skelton, the aristocracy of England enjoyed their ignorance:

But noble men borne to lerne they have scorne  
But hunt and blow an horne  
Lepe over lakes and dykes,  
Set nothing by politykes.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, p. 14.

There were very few exceptions. The Duke of Gloucester had been very interested in modern literature, and had given from three to four hundred books by Renaissance authors to Oxford University. Included in these were the works of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio. He himself was respected among the Italian authors so much that the Milanese scholar, Pier Candido Decemrio, dedicated his edition of Plato's Republic to the Englishman. But Gloucester had no literary company in Henry VII's England. He would have had in that of Henry VIII.

During the early years of the reign of Henry VIII, the old idea that noblemen could be uneducated and ignorant began to change. Because of the interest and support given men of letters and the arts by the youthful monarch, English gentlemen found that earlier attitude would no longer suffice. Men who had heretofore been above literature, considering its advocates weak and unfitted for the role of aristocrats, began to show obvious interests in the written word. Sons, and daughters as well, were reared with more appreciation of literature than had been their fathers. Literacy, uncommon even in the last years of Henry VII's England, became a necessity in the court of Henry VIII.

The new king and his queen were great patrons of works and men of literature. Henry's enthusiasm for the ideas and

attitudes of the early Renaissance was genuine. His wife had been reared in the Spanish courts, which were called the most celebrated intellectual courts in Europe. Henry and Katherine invited learned men into their intimate circle and read all the great works being produced in the south. Their court soon became famous as a haven of enlightened thought and intellectual spirit in the barren north. In the words of the greatest intellectual writer of the age, Erasmus, to his friend Richard Pace, "Your King's court in Britain is brilliant indeed."<sup>2</sup>

Among the humanist thinkers and writers who came to visit Henry's England during his early reign were several noted Italians. Andriano Castelli de Corneto, the papal nuncio, so enjoyed his stay that after his return to Rome he continued to support Britain. Always he remained one of her greatest defenders and spokesmen, helping her position in the Holy City.

Another papal minister was Andrea Ammonio, a friend of Erasmus'. He served as papal collector in Britain and later as Latin secretary to the king. A surgeon of some fame, Antonio Ciabo, was Henry's personal doctor. Educated on the new medical ideas of Italy, he paved the way for English doctors to study in his homeland. Polydore Vergil,

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<sup>2</sup>Enistles of Erasmus, Vol. III, p. 345.

originally employed by Henry VII to write a history of England, which he called Historia Anglicana, was still in court. Henry VIII's librarian was the Frenchman, Aegidias Dewes.

Besides these foreigners, the king received native scholars as readily. Several of those who influenced his court were men who had been supported by his father.

William Grocyn was probably the most famous of these.

William Grocyn had graduated from Magdalen College in Oxford and furthered his education in Italy. He traveled through Rome, Padua, and the Cradle City of the Renaissance itself, Florence. In 1491, he had returned to England to begin teaching at Exeter College, Oxford. He stayed in the eye of the humanist movement, encouraging the study of Greek and giving Greek-language lectures until his death in 1519.

One of the men who studied under Grocyn was William Latimer. He, too, traveled to Italy, and he became known for his fine translation of Aristotle's works.

Another English scholar of those years was Thomas Linacre. Educated at All Souls, he traveled after graduation to Italy to study medicine. He returned to England in the 1490's to begin teaching Greek studies and medicine at Oxford. He set up a like medical branch at Cambridge and

later established the London College of Physicians. His scholarship and careful medical research earned him great respect among his colleagues. Erasmus said, "What could be more searching than the judgement of Linacre?"<sup>3</sup>

In addition, there was John Skelton, the wit and tutor of the king in his youth. Erasmus called Skelton the "incomparable light and ornament of British Letters."<sup>4</sup> A cleric in name if not in spirit, Skelton was sarcastic and humorous, and always welcomed in Henry's court. Perhaps due to his early influence on the young monarch, Skelton was able to criticize and expose situations at the Tudor court without ever fearing retribution. His little ditties were rarely kind and were often embarrassing to the subject of his wit. Although he ridiculed all he considered out of balance, he never suffered from his attacks on the great men and great institutions. His poem about Cardinal Wolsey's influence was one of his most biting. Parts of it were very caustic:

Why come ye not to court?  
To which  
To the King's court  
Or to Hampton Court?<sup>5</sup>

Another struck out in jest at Mary Tudor, briefly widow of the king of France:

<sup>3</sup>Arthur S. MacNalty, Henry VIII, Difficult Patient, p.15.

<sup>4</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>Mary Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 198.



Widows so soon wed  
 After their husbands be dead  
 Having such haste to bed  
 Saw I never.<sup>6</sup>

Skelton received financial and personal support from the mother of another English poet. Henry Howard, Lord Surrey, was more serious a writer than his friend Skelton. He knew Skelton as a result of his mother's patronage of the court wit and must have enjoyed his company. But Surrey was a scholar more than a humorous wit, so his poetry was probably not influenced very much by Skelton's.

Surrey was well educated. He spoke and wrote Spanish, Greek, Latin, Italian, French, as well as his own native tongue. He translated with skill and studied Italian verse with enthusiasm. It was Surrey who first introduced blank verse to England in the translation of Aeneid.<sup>7</sup> He, along with Thomas Wyatt, introduced the Petrarchan sonnet to the island.<sup>8</sup> He not only wrote fine verse but his musical ability was seen in the rhymatic meter of his poetry.<sup>9</sup>

The other great English poet in Henry's early reign was Thomas Wyatt. A wit and a writer, talented and

<sup>6</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, Mary Tudor, the White Queen, p. 128.

<sup>7</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup>Henry S. Lucas, The Renaissance and the Reformation, p. 437.

<sup>9</sup>Hester Chapman, Two Tudor Princesses, p. 23.

versatile, Wyatt survived happily into the turbulent world of Henry's later years. Wyatt served as the king's Esquire of the Body and later as an official minister to Italy. But it was his poetry which kept him popular with the monarch. He, like the young king in a few years hence, had the questionable fortune of desiring Anne Bullen (Boleyn). His whimsical "Of His Love, Called Anna," was about that lady, though not published until years after the romance between the two had cooled. It read,

What word is that, that changeth not  
 Though it be turn'd and made in twain?  
 It is my Anna, God be wot,  
 And eke the causes of my pain,  
 Who love rewardeth with distain;  
 Yet is it loved; what would ye more?  
 It is my health, and eke my sore.<sup>10</sup>

His most famous poem about Anne was written after the king became interested in her as well. Entitled "The Lover Despairing to Attain Unto His Lady's Grace, Relinquisheth the Pursuit," it told with prophetic insight of Anne's personality:

Who list her hunt, I put him out of doubt  
 As well as I, may spend his time in vain!  
 And graven with diamonds in letters plain  
 There is written her fair neck round about:  
 "Noli me tangere; for Caesar's I am,  
 And wild for to hold though I seem tame."<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 106.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

Wyatt and Surrey were England's first genuine Renaissance poets.<sup>12</sup> Through them, the way was paved for the giants who were to follow.

"When I listen to my friend Colet, it seems like listening to Plato himself."<sup>13</sup> That is how Erasmus described the humanist educator the king called his own doctor, John Colet. Coming from a successful, politically active family--his father had been the mayor of London--Colet was well education, as befitting an intelligent son. Colet received his Master of Arts degree after his study of Greek, law, and some religious instruction. Although he did not receive a theology degree, religion was always to be his chief interest. He traveled to Italy and furthered his humanist education. After his return to England, and because of his father's death, Colet established St. Paul's School in London.

With the inheritance of his family's fortune, Colet was able to employ all the talents and institute the new philosophies he considered worthy. His school was staffed by laymen scholars, a very unusual thing in Henry VIII's England, and administered not by the church but by the London Company of Mercers. Modeled after the Italian schools, St. Paul's was influential in establishing

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<sup>12</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup>Arthur MacNalty, p. 15.

humanist and Renaissance thought throughout scholastic circles.

Dean Colet was considered one of the greatest religious philosophers of the day. His translations of Biblical works, which were strict and not interpretive, were very popular. His religious lectures and original writings combined Roman Catholic and humanist thought. Dean Colet would be the catalyst for the English Reformation of decades to come.

Colet's religious ideas and desire for reform within the church exposed the weaknesses he saw in the English Holy Church in the early reign of Henry VIII. Like his school's namesake, he felt marriage was the condition reserved for the weak. (Thomas More believed this idea as well, and acknowledged his need for marriage to save his soul from damnation for carnal lust.) Celibacy was the ideal state for intellectual persons who should, he believed, be above physical desires.

So, too, should the Church. Colet labeled the Roman Church of Europe as corrupt and vile. He lectured on the topic of greed within the faith: "The Church, the spouse of Christ, has become foul and deformed . . . the faithful city Rome . . . a harlot."<sup>14</sup> He received support in

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<sup>14</sup>Francis Hackett, Henry the Eighth, p. 47.

this attack from his friend in learning, Erasmus. Erasmus claimed that the only thing his own travels in Rome had revealed was "old gold, young girls, short masses."<sup>15</sup>

Colet's aim was reformation within the established church. Like most humanists of the early Renaissance, he had faith in the ideal of Christian oneness. The Church Universal, according to Colet, had to change its corrupt practices or it would be destroyed. He challenged Englishmen to make the reforms: "Consider the miserable state. . . of the Church and bend your whole minds to its reformation!"<sup>16</sup> Colet held that the Scriptures, while the treasury of all truths, must "be unlocked with the key of learning."<sup>17</sup> But in the same sense, reason alone was not enough. Colet declared that "ignorant love has a thousand times more power than cold reason."<sup>18</sup>

The popularity Colet received throughout England was possible because of the uniqueness of British Catholicism. As James Lees-Milne explains, the English had little trouble agreeing with Colet because their Roman conformity was only a type of "spiritual insurance" for them.<sup>19</sup> They only acted

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 37.    <sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

<sup>17</sup>J. D. Mackie, The Earlier Tudors (1485-1558), p. 245.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., p. 243.

<sup>19</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 12.

Catholic. Yet, as an extraordinary educator, Colet was a man of tremendous influence in Renaissance England.

Another man of equal influence was Desiderius Erasmus. The recognized humorist and humanist of his age, Erasmus first came to England in the last days of the fifteenth century. In this and his following visits to England, Erasmus grew to love England and his English friends. As he told Robert Fisher, "I have never liked anything so much before."<sup>20</sup>

Erasmus did love friendship and valued it among his most precious possessions. Each time he left England for a visit to the Continent, he noted his mixed emotions about leaving the island where so many persons close to him made their homes. Of course, Erasmus knew he was loved in return. His letters to friends leave little doubt of that.<sup>21</sup>

Henry VIII's accession gave Erasmus the chance to move to England and ride the wave of the king's Renaissance enthusiasm. At the first of his reign, Henry's queen requested Erasmus as her personal teacher. Archbishop Warham invited Erasmus to spend the remainder of his early days in England. Warham, highly recommending Adagia to his king, encouraged the monarch to call the Citizen of the World to England.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>20</sup>Epistles of Erasmus, Vol.I, p. 226.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., Vol.II, p. 145.

<sup>22</sup>Letters and Papers . . . Henry VIII, Vol.I, p. 27.

Erasmus returned Warham's personal respect and dedicated his Jerome to the primate.

It was in England that Erasmus wrote his greatest original work. In Praise of Folly, with typical humanist form and atypical Renaissance humor, was tremendously popular with citizens of every group. Erasmus wrote it, as he claims, in one week in the home of Thomas More--its Latin name Moriae Encomium is an obvious reference to his friend. Folly, the questionable heroine, is the daughter of Wealth and Youth. She sees herself as others see her, popular and amusing. From her pulpit she attacks and criticizes everything important to society--birth, love, marriage, schools, games, and the state; all things she explains are given by her to mankind. Her children are Industry, Wisdom, and Valor. All persons should follow her as her followers are all fools, and fools are always happy!

Erasmus was the first humanist fully to use the printing press as an instrument of expression. Kenneth Clark calls him the first journalist.<sup>23</sup> Through Erasmus' wit and scholarship, the humanist movement known as the Oxford Reformers spread throughout England. The pioneer of great literature and modern education, the movement was evident, not just at Oxford, but on campuses and the courts of the king,

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<sup>23</sup>Kenneth Clark, Civilisation, p. 145.

all over the island. The king was very impressed with the movement and encouraged its spread.

Erasmus received a post at Cambridge with the help of Bishop Fisher. He taught Greek and was unhappy that he did not receive the student numbers nor the money he felt he deserved.<sup>24</sup> His salary was only twenty pounds a year and he complained that his wine was always being stolen, causing him to have to drink beer.<sup>25</sup> But, in all, Erasmus continued to enjoy England and praised her king. He wrote to Henry, "I think it in itself no small distinction that so insignificant a person as myself is recognized and loved by so great a sovereign."<sup>26</sup> Although no one, surely not the king, could take his humility seriously, Erasmus was to be certain "recognized and loved" by the monarch. The wit dedicated his fine translation of Plutarch to Henry.

But England could not contain this traveling lecturer, and he soon had to journey again. As his friend Piso had warned him when he moved to Henry's England, "it is a fine thing to be rich, but a finer to be free."<sup>27</sup> So, Erasmus left England. Although he was robbed of his meager profits at the coast by legal barriers, Erasmus continued to feel close to

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<sup>24</sup>J. D. Mackie, p. 256.    <sup>25</sup>Ibid.

<sup>26</sup>Epistles of Erasmus, Vol.III, p. 48.

<sup>27</sup>Letters and Papers . Henry VIII, Vol.I, p. 46.



England and her sovereign.<sup>28</sup> The island and its court continued likewise to respect Erasmus and always had faith in his writings. He was the sort of man men could trust; no one ever considered that the Prince of the Humanists could tell anything but the truth.

By this ability to inspire confidence and promote ideas, Erasmus paved the way intellectually as Colet was doing religiously for the English Reformation. Out of his thought and his teaching were born the minds which shaped that great event. Thomas Cranmer, the first Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury, was a product of Erasmus' influence in English thought.<sup>29</sup>

But one man surpasses all others as the spearhead of the Renaissance thought in Britain. He was Henry VIII's "beloved teacher," Thomas More. As early as 1517, long before his martyrdom, More was described as the most respected man in English intellectual life. Erasmus said of him, he was so popular that Englishmen were "even surpassing me in their respect for his divine genius."<sup>30</sup>

Born into a successful family in London, his father trained in the law, More was well educated and exposed to

<sup>28</sup>Henry S. Lucas, p. 425.    <sup>29</sup>J. D. Mackie, p. 257.

<sup>30</sup>Epistles of Erasmus, Vol.III, p. 21. (For further reading concerning More, see Epistles, Vol.II, p. 387.

politics at an early age. Cardinal Morton, Henry VII's chief minister, had been so impressed by More that he sent the young student to Oxford himself. As Erasmus comments, "From his earliest years he followed after good learning."<sup>31</sup> Appointed Under-Sheriff in 1510, More made himself well known and popular for his justice and his integrity. His job was permanent and gave him a chance to give and shape legal decisions. Later, Henry VIII sent him on a mission for the state to the Lowlands. At that time of his life, More had no political ambitions, if indeed, he ever did.

Erasmus and More met at the home of a mutual friend. Their first meeting revealed the personality which would captivate the royal circles for years to come. In Latin Erasmus asked, "Either you are More or no one.", to which More replied, "And you my good fellow are either God or the Devil or my Erasmus."<sup>32</sup> They were from that meeting onward the closest of friends. The two were to share authorship on several translations and comradeship on nearly all ideas. Erasmus said of More after their first experience of friendship that More was the champion of English learning.<sup>33</sup>

Erasmus stayed several times in More's home. He was so impressed by the lawyer-scholar's children and the

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<sup>31</sup>E. E. Reynolds, St. Thomas More, p. 19.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid., p. 17.    <sup>33</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 17.

atmosphere of enthusiasm and curiosity he found there that he declared "Plato's academy was revived there."<sup>34</sup>

More, it was true, was very proud of his intelligent son and daughters. In a letter of instruction to his friend Gonell, More demanded of the tutor,

And thus you will bring about that my children who are dear to me by nature, and still more by learning and virtue, will become most dear by that advance in knowledge and good conduct.<sup>35</sup>

More, as an author, was almost earthshaking. His translations were excellent, his histories more accurate and more interesting than most of his day, but it is his great dialogue, his Utopia, that was to influence thought and create curiosity throughout all Europe. A master of irony and satire, in Utopia More exposed all he thought unappealing, all he felt immoral about the state of human life in Renaissance England. Though obviously about and for his native land's benefit, it could well have been universal in its scope and criticism of injustice. The hidden meanings of Utopia are not very hidden after all.

Utopia is a platonic dialogue, and as in Plato's works, it is often difficult to know what is the author's or someone

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>35</sup>E. E. Reynolds, p. 111. (For further information on education of his daughters, see St. Thomas More, Selected Letters, Ed. by Elizabeth Rogers, p. 103.)

else's idea. It is an excellent exchange of opinions. The title simply put is "Not-Place," a land and people not present in More's world. The present day connection with a perfect state of the world was probably not More's intention, since, at the end of the work, he sets down his criticisms of the nation, something not necessary of a state deemed perfect.

Utopia is a land far away in a new world. It is inhabited by persons who are intellectual and human. It is a state "guided by unaided human reason," where men have Christian ideals without Christian faith. It is a city where all things are reasoned and patterned. The cities, fifty-four, as in Britain, are completely planned and full of gardens for the enjoyment of people. The streets are wide and straight. The children have large tracts of natural environment given them for their pleasure and exercise. There are six thousand persons per city, and the communal families are sixteen in number. The prince of Utopia is elected.

In Utopia men and women are respectful of each other and not condescending or bitter about their lot. No one is overly aware of the drive for gold, for in Utopia all citizens are provided for by the state. All work six hours a day, and all distribute goods produced communally. Meals are taken in common. There is no fashion consciousness. All

religions are tolerated, all ill cared for. Prisoners of war are set free with the invitation to remain and become Utopians. Criminals are not killed for the crimes men die for in other lands. No hungry man is ever hanged for stealing bread. (More was often critical of the theft laws of Britain.) Culture is stressed, virtue is demanded, laws are few. In Utopia, men and women are free to be all they have the right and obligation to be.

Utopia and its interior, commercial, heart city of Amanrote were challengers to Britain and Londoners of More's time. Because of its controversial assertions and its obvious political undertones, it was not published in England until several years after Henry VIII's death. Written in Latin and published in Belgium, it was probably not well known in his homeland until long after his death. Utopia is, nonetheless, the greatest piece of humanist criticism to be created in the early English Renaissance--possibly in the whole English era.

The scholar James K. McConica evaluates Utopia and More on the highest level:

The greatest achievement of More's spirit, perhaps the most original creative achievement of the whole European Renaissance was the Utopia. For here in addition to the satire and common critique of contemporary society there is a gravity, an intellectual depth and suggestiveness through paradox, which has recalled More's work to every generation since.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

The imagery, the mixing of fiction and fact, the irony, have kept More's Utopia as a classic of Renaissance literature. In it, More's intellectualism, political knowledge, and his mastery of Latin are all seen. The mind of the man is revealed in the masterpiece of his work.

Thomas More wrote all his life. Among his collected works are a number of poems, translations of Lucian, The Life of Pico della Mirandola, dedicated as a model of worthy life to a close friend of his, Joyce Leigh, a nun. His most popular poem was a love poem called "Gratulator Quod Ean Reperit Encolumen Quam Olim Ferme Puer Amaverat!"

But More was not the man to neglect what he considered his duty, and by the middle of the 1520's, he was in permanent service for the king. He did not accept his service joyfully. As Erasmus explained to a friend, "He was formally disinclined to a court life . . . having always a special hatred for tyranny and a great fancy for equality."<sup>37</sup> He could well have noted his love of private beliefs.

More was a special minister to the king on several occasions. He later won election to the House of Commons. In 1522, he served as go-between for the king and his Parliament. The following year, More was elected Speaker of the House. Henry VIII then appointed him to the Council, and

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<sup>37</sup>Epistles of Erasmus, Vol.II, p. 390.

finally to the post that eventually ended his illustrious career, Lord High Chancellor of the Realm. But More was not a man to sacrifice his principles for advancement or maintenance of position. As he had told his old friend Thomas Howard, the Duke of Norfolk, when warned by the duke that princes are fickle and "the wrath of the King is death," "Is that all? Then in good faith between your Grace and me is but this, that I shall die today and you shall die tomorrow."<sup>38</sup> Later he warned Thomas Cromwell, the unworthy successor to the Chancellor's chain, not to help the monarch twist the English law to his will. Cromwell would find, said More, prophetically, that all would bend before the royal anger. "For if the lion knew his strength, hard would it be for any man to rule him."<sup>39</sup> Both men should have listened. Cromwell allowed Henry the power to execute him for non-treason, and Norfolk, longtime and dear friend to the king, was, by the king's timely death, saved from the block by a mere six hours.

Hall noted that More was always saying things in ambiguous ways which could get him in grave trouble. He recorded that "Lord Chancellor was given too much to mocking."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>38</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 199.    <sup>39</sup>E. E. Reynolds, p. 207.

<sup>40</sup>James Lees-Milne, p. 18.

With the king's marriage to Anne Boleyn, More retired from public service. His friendship with Katherine of Aragon, and his sense of personal justice, made nothing else possible. The Act of Succession, with its demand that all sign in support, was his downfall. Trusting the protection of English laws of silence, he did not sign. In the manner of his humanist training, he was cautious and careful and unclear. He never refused to sign, he simply never signed. But the law was not strong enough to save him and the Parliament not able enough to withstand the powerful vengeance of the king.

More did not intend to die for his conscience; those who believe he desired his fate seem in genuine error. Even after his illegal imprisonment, after his public humiliation, his poverty, and his family's dilemma, he appears to have believed he would come through it all, if poorer and weaker, alive. But he did not compromise. He did not relent.

Everyone tried to make him sign the Act. His wife sobbed, his favorite daughter pleaded, his political friends begged. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Cranmer, told him it was only a question of duty, nothing more. His friend Latimer requested his signature for the sake of those for whom he cared. Probably none wished the brilliant scholar and statesman to surrender his resistance as much as did his old pupil, Henry VIII.



None who loved him as a teacher, a thinker, or a friend could have expected him to "surrender his conscience on account of any law,"<sup>41</sup> as he had oft commanded persons not to do. So, following a long and bitter imprisonment, and a trial before many of his closest friends, he was sentenced to death for treason against the lord and the state.

Even facing death, More remained the kind, gentle man he had always been. He told the judges he would see them in happier days in heaven, and wrote one last letter to his daughter Margaret saying he would welcome the end of the earthly life.<sup>42</sup> On the morning of July 5, 1535, More walked to the scaffold. In typical manner, More spoke to his guard, "I pray you, Master Liutenant, see me safe up and for my coming down let me shift for myself."<sup>43</sup> On that summer morning, the life of the man who was "the king's good servant, but God's first"<sup>44</sup> ended.

It is not as a humanist, or a writer of masterful literature, or as a judge or lawyer that More is remembered to history. It is as a martyr, a man who died a traitor to his state and a hero to his conscience. It was the politician who died for the sake of his personal truths, the man of

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<sup>41</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 266.    <sup>42</sup>E. E. Reynolds, p. 294.

<sup>43</sup>William Roper, The Life of Sir Thomas More, p. 254.

<sup>44</sup>E. E. Reynolds, p. 299.

prominence and wealth whose head rotted on a spike over the Thames for his soul, who had always inspired admiration and demanded respect from the generations which have followed. It was his fatal belief that men of intellect owed service to their fellow citizens and their state that killed Thomas More.

It would be folly to claim that More was always a man who did not compromise, and expected it of no one else. He had, after all, sat in judgment of heretics. Still, his character and death were in keeping with his life's beliefs in individualism, in intellectualism, and in doing what is morally right.

The greats and the near-greats of his era lamented the death of the English humanist. Charles V said of More, "We would rather have lost the best city in our dominions than to have lost so worthy a councillor."<sup>45</sup> Erasmus wrote of More, "Thomas More whose soul was more pure than snow, whose genius was such as England never had--yea and never will have again, mother of good wits though England be."<sup>46</sup> His son-in-law, Roper, called him "a man of singular virtue and of clear unspotted conscience."<sup>47</sup> Henry VIII's comments are unrecorded. Perhaps in some measure the vengeance with

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid., preface i.    <sup>46</sup>Ibid., preface ii.

<sup>47</sup>William Roper, p. 197.

which he turned on his second wife, she who he believed had destroyed so many whom he loved, is an indication of his repressed guilt.

The humanist ideas and characteristics sponsored by men like Colet, Erasmus, and Thomas More, and no less than by the young king, did not die with those men. They would grow and foster traditions which would be reaped aplenty in the decades that followed. The early Renaissance of the second of the Tudor monarchs became the mother of the Golden Age of the last.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE CLOSE OF THE RENAISSANCE IN THE COURT OF HENRY VIII

For all practical purposes, the Renaissance in England was dead by 1530. At first, Henry VIII had fostered and encouraged the arts, but the forces of time and fate ended his creative exuberance. The Henry VIII of 1510 was not the Henry VIII of 1530. Too much had happened; too many things had changed. It was not until the reign of Elizabeth Tudor, The Golden Queen, that the arts and attitudes so prevalent in the early court of her father again emerged in the island kingdom.

After his accession, the new king Henry VIII had devoted almost all his energies and efforts to the Renaissance cause. He had spent hours and fortunes on patronage and men of talent. While he was building his splendid setting, he had left the politics of the nation to other men. The most prominent of these other men was Thomas Wolsey. In his hour of greatest strength, Thomas Wolsey ruled the nation. Everyone, probably even the king, knew it. He was described by an Italian in 1519 as "the person who rules both king and

kingdom."<sup>1</sup> The son of a "prosperous grazier," educated for the church at Oxford, Thomas Wolsey was already well respected as a cleric at Henry's accession.

In the beginning of Henry's reign, Wolsey had been appointed to the Council. As his importance grew in accordance to the king's faith in him, he added to his credentials. He was ordained Archbishop of York when Cardinal Bainbridge died suddenly in Rome in 1514. Wolsey, naturally, would have been happier to have received the primal see of Canterbury, but he feared Archbishop Warham would live for years to come and the seat would remain occupied. The following year, he was appointed Chancellor of the Realm, and the acknowledged chief advisor to the throne. In fact, by that time he was almost the only advisor whom Henry acknowledged. As the king said, "Myne awne good cardinall, I recommede me unto you as hartely as hart can thynke."<sup>2</sup>

Wolsey received his appointment as cardinal in 1515, and was later even a candidate for pope. Although Guistinian noted that Wolsey was a fine and cautious diplomat, and extremely just to the poor,<sup>3</sup> he had many enemies. Hall notes that he acted "so that all men almost hated hym, and disdayned

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<sup>1</sup>Maurice Ashley, Great Britain to 1688, A Modern History, p. 205.

<sup>2</sup>J. J. Scarisbrick, Henry VIII, p. 66.

<sup>3</sup>James Lees-Milne, Tudor Renaissance, p. 41.

hym."<sup>4</sup> The Duke of Suffolk claimed that "Times were merrier in England before there were cardinals."<sup>5</sup> A popular ditty of the day was heard throughout the cities:

A great carl is he and fat  
Wearing on his head a red hat.<sup>6</sup>

But Wolsey and king had much in common and Wolsey knew it well. As the historian J. J. Scarisbrick explains, both men were ". . . vigorous, extroverted . . . intelligent . . . greedy for the flamboyant and vainglorious."<sup>7</sup> It is a fact that Wolsey kept Henry interested in foreign affairs and promoting culture for nearly twenty years. He had almost absolute power and almost total control of the political attitudes of the monarch. When he fell, he fell with the swiftness and completeness of the giant he was.

Another obvious factor in the patronage of the early reign of Henry VIII was his wife. His early devotion to her and his recognition of her abilities helped him shape his first twenty years as king. As recorded by Cardinal Pole at his marriage in 1509, Henry ". . . desired her above all women, above all he loved her and longed to wed her; before

<sup>4</sup>Edward Hall, The Triumphant Reign of Henry VIII, p.149.

<sup>5</sup>Maurice Ashley, p. 218.

<sup>6</sup>Neville Williams, Henry VIII and His Court, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup>J. J. Scarisbrick, p. 43.

they were married he often declared this."<sup>8</sup> He told his friends he would have wanted no other than his Katherine. Had he been free to chose a wife, he would have chosen her only. He wrote to her, "If your remembrance is according to my affection, I shall not be forgotten in your daily prayers, for I am yours, Henry R, forever."<sup>9</sup> Perhaps she, as much as he, even believed that.

Despite the problem of her marriage to his brother, the only cleric who appears not to have approved of the marriage between the two was the Archbishop of Canterbury. Warham had severe doubts as to its legality, but giving in to the will of his young sovereign and his pope, he married the couple at Westminster Abbey within weeks of the death of Henry VII. Katherine looked every bit the perfect mate for the handsome, energetic young king. In less than a month, she was pregnant.

In retrospect, the child conceived in that early love set the stage for the years that were to follow. It was a girl, stillborn at seven months. Henry, at eighteen, showed such compassion and concern for his wife that Katherine said she thanked God for such a husband. But she confided in her father, months later, that the birth was thought to be a bad

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<sup>8</sup>Mary Luke, Catherine the Queen, p. 101.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 119.

omen by the populus and was "considered unlucky."<sup>10</sup> She told her father not to be angry with her for "it is the will of God."<sup>11</sup>

On January 1, 1511, she was delivered of her second child, a boy. As Hall noted, "And on Newyeres day, the fyrst day of January, the Quene was delivered of a Prince to the great gladness of the realme."<sup>12</sup> Undoubtedly, she and her husband shared an equal joy. But the child was weak. The preparations had been made for his birth months in advance, as the records of the king's purchasing show. As early as March before his birth, the king ordered his fount and cradle.<sup>13</sup> When he was born, the bells pealed out the joyful news for weeks. At nineteen, Henry had the joy of fatherhood, the shared elation at his own virility, the heir to his throne. It was possibly the most innocent joy of his life. In the middle of February, the baby was dead. Hall recorded, "The kyng lyke a wyse Prynce toke this dolorus chaunce wonderous wysely, and the more to confort thw Quene he dissimuled the matter, and made no great mourning outwardly."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Letters and Papers . . . of Henry VIII, p. 44.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid. <sup>12</sup>Edward Hall, p. 22.

<sup>13</sup>Letters and Papers . . . Henry VIII, p. 185. (This must have been a false alarm, for their son was not conceived until May.)

<sup>14</sup>Edward Hall, p. 27.



And again, "After this the great joye came sorowful chaunce, for the young Prynce whiche was borne upon newyeres day last past . . . departed this worlde at Rychmond and from thense was carried to Westmynster and buryed."<sup>15</sup> It cost the king ten thousand pounds to buy his dead hopes of the future.<sup>16</sup>

In September of 1513, Katherine delivered a stillborn male. In June of the following year, the "kyngs new son" was born and died within days. In November of that same year, a premature dead son was delivered.

On February 18, 1516, Mary Tudor was born. Though she was a female, she was alive and healthy. Henry acted publicly, at least, as if his faith was renewed. But a girl could not, he thought (incorrectly), inherit the throne, and that misgiving made the succession still in doubt. Giustinian echoed this same belief when he wrote that he was to go the next day to congratulate the king on Mary's birth. He noted "and had it been a son, I should have done so already."<sup>17</sup>

After Mary there was a miscarriage and at least one other stillborn child. Then the pregnancies ceased. Henry might have deemed it his misfortune and nothing more, except

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. <sup>16</sup>A. F. Pollard, Henry VIII, p. 140.

<sup>17</sup>Sebastian Guistinian, Four Years in the Court of Henry VIII . . ., p. 181. (Legal research in the later years of Henry's reign proved there was no English law forbidding female succession.)

that he could not blame himself for the failure. St. Augustine had long before defined barren women as "defective and malbegotten."<sup>18</sup> Bess Blount, probably Henry's first mistress, the sister of his good friend Lord Mountjoy, had delivered a live son in June of 1519. Katherine had handled it bravely and attended the bastard child's christening. Henry Fitzroy, later Duke of Richmond, was described as a "goodly manchild," and to Henry VIII, it must have been living proof of his own capability to sire a son.

At the same general time Henry had taken Bess Blount to bed, he had begun seeing Mary Bullen (Boleyn). Bess was seventeen, Mary sixteen. Katherine of Aragon was in her middle thirties, broken in body by successive and unsuccessful pregnancies. Several years later, Henry exclaimed that his wife was over forty and "had been given every chance."<sup>19</sup>

Meanwhile, the troubles on the continent had become worse. Henry had lost several conflicts, both of arms and statesmanship, and the most powerful king in Europe was his Spanish-Flemish rival, the Holy Roman Emperor, Charles Hapsburg V. With the English dissatisfaction of the church growing yearly, and Charles' control of the papacy supreme, the situation abroad was becoming as upsetting to Henry as the one at home.

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<sup>18</sup>Walter Cecil Richardson, p. 76.

<sup>19</sup>Maurice Ashley, p. 215.

By the early 1530's, all these problems were at a head. Henry was desperate to secure his succession and determined to advance his weakening position on the continent. He was bound to a course which would change the history of England forever.

In 1529, Wolsey failed the king in securing Henry's desired annulment from Katherine. It was the one major failure of his career. But Wolsey had done the work of ten men, as G. R. Elton explains, "and not surprisingly, he failed."<sup>20</sup> Henry VIII, he further comments, could have done nothing but destroy him whom he had allowed to govern, totally, for so long. As Elton says of Henry, "Where he trusted, he trusted without reservation. When trust ceased, it ceased at a blow."<sup>21</sup>

Wolsey's fall determined that Henry had to become the political leader of his nation in fact as well as name. He was too old and too willfull ever to allow such a concentration of power in another's hands again.

His wife of twenty-three years suffered the like--betrayal and banishment--from him whom she had served devotedly. Wolsey died in 1530 on his way to London for his trial, with the tragic explanation that "Had I but served my God . . .

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<sup>20</sup>G. R. Elton, England Under the Tudors, p. 87.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 76.

as I have done my king, he would not have given me over in my grey hairs."<sup>22</sup> Katherine died alone, without even her daughter, in 1536. No woman would ever have such influence on Henry again.

Within five years of 1530, Henry VIII would establish himself as the absolute power in England. He would bend the Royal Council, the Parliament, and even the law itself to his will. He would become head of state and head of church. He would assure himself of control in every action he took. He would be the first to be called "majesty" and the first to be addressed by his nobles on bended knee.<sup>23</sup> The Henry who emerged to command that power and place in the history of England would never again have the time to be a truly Renaissance monarch.

Nothing, though, could diminish the past he had left behind him. As J. J. Scarisbrick explains, "He crowned a world of lavish allegory, mythology and romance."<sup>24</sup> He had led a splendid court with insight and with assurance. He had befriended the greats and encouraged the creative. He had begun the modern English state and changed its character and culture. He had been all that Renaissance England could have

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<sup>22</sup>A. F. Pollard, p. 199.

<sup>23</sup>L. F. Salzman, England in Tudor Times . . . , p. 6.

<sup>24</sup>J. J. Scarisbrick, p. 20.

desired. In the words of the cultural historian L. F. Salzman, Henry VIII ". . . was for the first one-half of his reign the ideal of an Englishman and every inch a king."<sup>25</sup> England, for better or worse, would never have a Henry VIII again.

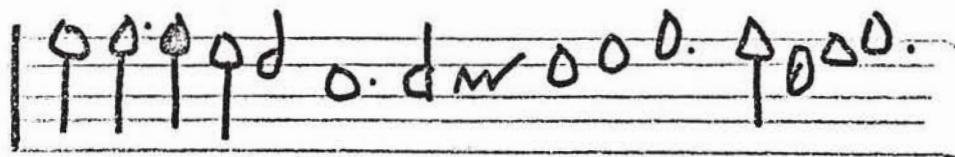
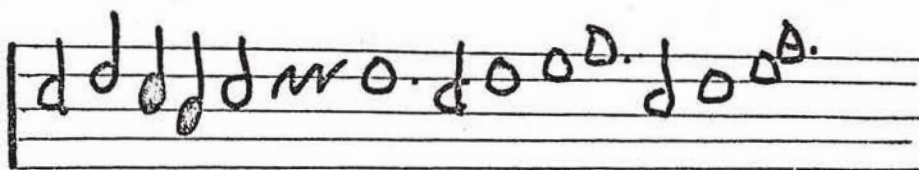
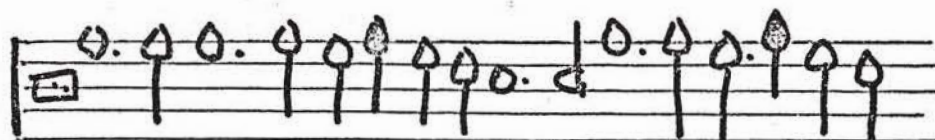
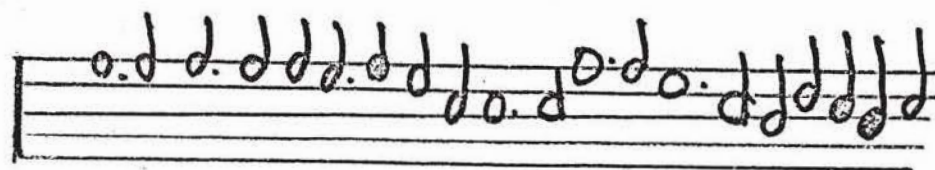
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<sup>25</sup>L. F. Salzman, p. 3.

APPENDIX A

ORIGINAL SCORE OF "PASTANCE WITH GOODE COMPANY,"

By  
Henry VIII



APPENDIX B

HÉLAS MADAME

By

Henry VIII

Hélas Madame celle que

J'ai me tant Souffres que

Soie votre humble servant

J'ai me tant Souffres que.

Je s-rai à vous toujours

Et tant que je vi vrai

Autre n'aime rai que vous

Et tant que je vi vrai.

## APPENDIX C

Portion of a letter from Erasmus to John of Louvain  
concerning criticism of In Praise of Folly.

I have never blackened any man's character, while I have tilted in a playful way at the common and most notorious vices of mankind. And yet for the future I intend to act with still greater moderation; and if there are some persons whom I cannot possibly satisfy, I shall console myself with the example of St. Paul, who through evil report and good report, followed that which was right. At any rate I go so far as this, that if I have not the approbation of all, I have at any rate that of the greatest and the best. And perhaps the others at last will praise the same person when dead, whom they censure while he is living.

Farewell, good Father, and commend me in your prayers to Christ.

Louvain, 2 January, 1518.



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