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THE POWER OF WORDS

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HATVANADIK SZÜLETÉSNAPJÁRA

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"PRAYERS PENNED BY THE GODLIE LEANED TO BE PROPERLY USED OF THE QUEENES MOST EXCELLENT MAIESTIE"

Erzsébet Stróbl*

"Prayers Penned by the Godlie Leaned" says the front page of "The Third Lamp of Virginity" published in Thomas Bentley's *The Monument of Matrones: Conteining the seven Severall Lamps of Virginity* (1582),[1] an encyclopaedic compendium of prayers, meditations, and scriptural passages with a special emphasis on texts for and about women. "To be Properly Used of the Queenes Most Excellent Maiestie," that is, especially written for Queen Elizabeth I – within a work dedicated to her – with the purpose of showing the Queen and the public in what manner she should address God. Such a title inevitably raises the curiosity of the scholar interested in the image-formation of the last Tudor monarch, in the nature of feminine discourse of the 16th century, and in issues of religious controversy of the Elizabethan reformation.

The Monument of Matrones, a volume of 1,600 pages, can be regarded as a ground-breaking project as the first prayer book for women and as one made with the aim to mould female devotion. Yet, it is conspicuous that in most parts it contains meditations written by men. It is often regarded as the first anthology of women writing as its *Second Lamp* contains the compositions of 16th century women, among them three queens, Catherine Parr, Lady Jane Dudley-Grey, and Elizabeth Tudor, or martyrs as Anne Askew, and the gentlewoman Elizabeth Tyrwith. While this part of the book is frequently studied, I would like to examine the Third Lamp which contains prayers for Queen Elizabeth, yet omits prayers composed by the Queen. Through the analysis of the texts included in this *Third Lamp*, the following essay will argue that in the context

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1 Thomas Bentley, *The Monument of Matrones, Conteining Seven Severall Lamps of Virginity* (London: H. Denham, 1582).

of 16th century private devotions this collection is highly political, exhibits features different from the queen's own feminine voice, and the examination of the precepts set out for the Queen by the male author(s) shed light on the aspirations of those "godlie learned" who encouraged further religious reform within the Church of England and contributed to the Queen's emerging cult as a virgin.

By the time *The Monument of Matrones* was published, the Queen was well-known to the public as a translator and author of devotional works. Her translation at the age of eleven of Marguerite de Navarre's *Le Miroir de l'ame pécheresse* made as a present to her stepmother, Katherine Parr, was published in 1548 by John Bale and was reissued by James Cancellar in 1568 and in 1580;[2] her private prayer book in Latin *Precationes privatae* was printed in 1563;[3] also, a set of foreign language prayers – included in *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Latin* (1569) – was associated with her name.[4] Thus both as a princess and later as a queen one of the elements of her public persona was her skill of creating and translating texts, especially devotional texts that were deemed by contemporaries an appropriate material for female authorship. Yet, while Elizabeth's translation was incorporated into Bentley's *Second Lamp*, the prayers she wrote in her own name were left out of *The Monument of Matrones* and thus the *Third Lamp*, which consisted only of prayers composed by men for her. Such a substitution of her own voice with that of a "goodlie learned" male voice prompts the inevitable questions of what the aim of the compilation was and what difference exists between the public image advocated by the *Third Lamp* of *The Monument of Matrones* and that of her own previous prayers.

The content of the *Third Lamp* of virginity can be divided into three units according to their formal properties. In the first part, more conventional material appears: within a frame of scriptural texts, five prayers are placed in the personalized voice of the queen. This is followed by two elegant sets of acrostic prayers and meditations upon the name of Queen Elizabeth, and finally the

[2] *A Godle Medytacion of the Christen Sowl* (Wesel: Dirik van der Straten, 1548). For a modern edition see Elizabeth I, *Translations, 1544–1589*, ed. Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 40–128. *A godly medytacyon of the Christen sowle* (S.l.: H. Denham, 1568) and *A godly meditation of the soule, concerning a loue towards Christ, our Lorde* (London: J. Charlewood for H. Denham, 1580). James Cancellar brought out these two editions with his own prefatory material, and this version was included in the *Second Lamp* of *The Monument of Matrones* in 1582.

[3] Regiae E.R., *Precationes privatae* (London: T. Purfoot, 1563).

[4] *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek and Latin* (London: J. Day, 1569).

book ends with a peculiar form of heavenly dialogue, the "Heast" of God and the "Vow" of the Queen.

However, the examination of the royal image propagated by this *Lamp* must start at the ornate title page, on which the queen appears kneeling in prayer on the border accompanied by Bathsheba, Debora, and Judith.[5] While Debora, the saver of her nation from Sisera, and Judith, who delivered her people from Holofernes, are often used as types for Queen Elizabeth, her pairing with Bathsheba, who committed adultery with King David and whose sin was punished by the death of her firstborn son, is an unusual choice. Yet, the *Third Lamp*'s program is to delineate an ideal royal image in a religious context, so Bathsheba stands – or more correctly kneels – on the title page as the mother of Solomon, the Old Testament model king who is associated with Queen Elizabeth.[6] Solomon's father, David – the type for Elizabeth's father Henry VIII – is a key authority with regard to prayers: as the author of the Psalms, he occupies an important role in all private devotion of the 16th century as the psalms "provided a nucleus for the private prayer of the laity."[7] The words of the psalms addressed God directly and spoke about the most secret and deep emotions of humans, making them suitable for private prayer where their lines and imagery were quoted and paraphrased. *The Third Lamp of Virginity* was no exception, and its content included psalms, psalm meditations, and free prayers emulating the psalms.

The Third Lamp is introduced by two paraphrases on Psalm 18 and Psalm 118; the topic of both is David's thanksgiving to God on the occasion of becoming king. Thus, these two pieces illustrate the intention of the book, which mentions on the title page that its material should be used "especially on the seventeenth day of November," the accession day of Queen Elizabeth[8] and a widely celebrated national feast day by the early 1580s.[9] The title claims Theodore

[5] On the title pages of the *Second*, *Third*, *Fourth* and *Fifth Lamps* the Queen appears on the upper left side of the page accompanied each time by different royal or biblical women in a similar posture. The first five *Lamps* were published by Henry Denham, whose page layout, initials, and border illustrations are much more elegant than those of the last two books which were published by Thomas Dawson.

[6] See Colin. B. Atkinson and Jo B. Atkinson, "Subordinating Women: Thomas Bentley's Use of Biblical Women in '*The Monument of Matrones*,'" *Church History* 60.3 (1991): 289–300. 297–298.

[7] Rivkah Zim, *English Metrical Psalms: Poetry as Praise and Prayer, 1535–1601* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 3.

[8] The title page identifies this day as "the memorable feast of her [Queen Elizabeth's] coronation," a claim not true in fact as the Queen was crowned eight weeks later on January 15th 1559.

[9] About the various forms of celebration and the development of the feast from the mid-1560s onwards see Roy Strong, *The Tudor and Stuart Monarchy: Pageantry, Painting Iconography II: Elizabethan* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 125–131.

Beza as the author and the source of the two texts is the English translation completed by Anthony Gilby of Beza's *The Psalms of David* and published just two years earlier.[10] There are only minor changes within the text, such as the modification of genders to the feminine, or the name of King David to Queen Elizabeth. Yet, on one occasion, the compiler adds some personal touch from the Queen's life with his reference to Elizabeth's captivity in the Tower: "I called upon my God […] and he heard my voice, […] the crie that I made onto him *in the prison*" (emphasis added).[11]

The paraphrases are followed by five prayers of thanksgiving and supplication in the voice of the queen. These free prayers are the best suited to be compared with the prayers written by Queen Elizabeth and published in earlier collections. However, there are four differences to be mentioned: the voice of these prayers is more official and propagates a powerful position for the queen as God's elect and the governor of her country; they echo the psalms and the Old Testament lacking allusions to the practicalities of Queen Elizabeth's everyday experience as a ruler; they enhance Elizabeth's importance as a religious leader; finally, they contain less feminine sensitivity or expression of the yearning for peace and unity than Elizabeth's prayers.

The first and most conspicuous hallmark of the prayers of the *Third Lamp* is their official voice. While in Queen Elizabeth's prayers she appears as a simple subject, seeking forgiveness and grace with occasional hints at her worldly status as queen, these five prayers written for her always confirm her royal might and refer to the heavenly justification of her rule. Instead of appearing as a simple handmaid, a term used by Elizabeth, the male author in the Queen's voice gives thanks for "this excellent state and roiall dignitie of a Prince" for having been clothed "with the garments of honour, […] crown of gladnesse, and diadem of dignitie, […] sceptre of righteousness, the globe of glorie, and the sword of thy [God's] power."[12] Elizabeth's own meditations never boast of magnificence, her voice is that of humility and self-abasement.

Generalized concepts of sinfulness, forgiveness, and celebration of God's omnipotence are expressed in the prayers instead of actual references to personal difficulties and concrete problems that a queen might face. The male authors used the technique of accumulation so as to make the prayers applicable in a wide range of situations:

[10] Theodore Beza, *The Psalmes of David,* trans. Anthony Gilby (London: J. Harison and H. Middleton, 1580) and a year later *The Psalmes of David* (London: H. Denham, 1581). The work was dedicated to Lady Catherine Countess of Huntington, showing how such a collection for private devotion was thought to be fit especially for ladies.

[11] Bentley, *Monument*, 254.

[12] Bentley, *Monument*, 262.

> I yield thee now most humble and hearty thanks […] first, to suffer for thy glorious truth much extreme miserie, fear, care, imprisonment, peril of body, trouble of mind, hazard of life, and danger of death, by sicknesse, fire, conspiracie, and sword; and afterward blessedlie protecting and preserving me from manifold dangers.[13]

This official tone and generalized language is coupled with the vocabulary emulating the psalms and other parts of the Old Testament with some images of God's terrible might presented in monumental visions:

> Thou high and mighty God, whose Majestie may not be comprehended, whose word is true, whose commandement is strong, thou that ridest upon the Cherubins, and fliest with the wings of the wind […] before whom the hosts of heaven stand with trembling, whose ordinance is dreadful, whose looks drie up the depths, whose hands rule the starry firmament, […] whose wrath makest the mountains melt, and consumeth the wicked.[14]

In this context, Elizabeth becomes the daughter, virgin, anointed and elect vessel of honor of God,[15] or in another figure she is the heavenly bride and spiritual spouse of Christ. Her father, Henry VIII, is addressed as David, and she becomes a second Solomon.[16]

As opposed to Queen Elizabeth's own compositions, these prayers highlight especially her duty in securing true religion within England. She is anointed as queen in order to "bee the principall member and chief instrument to advance thy [God's] glory, and further thy [God's] Gospel," to provide "like a loving mother, and tender nurse, giving [her] foster milke, the food of [God's] word and Gospell aboundantlie to all, in all places."[17] Elizabeth is assigned the role of "the establishing and planting of thy religion," and "building, enlarging and finishing" God's church.[18]

Finally, it is worth looking at those aspects which are missing from these prayers, such as feminine traits of sensibility to the poor and helpless, yearning for peace and unity instead of strife and war, attention to the practical aspects of ruling instead of general ideals of authority, and contrasting the male duties of government with the physical female body. While Elizabeth prays for

[13] Bentley, *Monument*, 261–262.
[14] Bentley, *Monument*, 277.
[15] Bentley, *Monument*, 265.
[16] About Henry VIII as David see John N. King, *Tudor Royal Iconography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), 74–90.
[17] Bentley, *Monument*, 268, 272.
[18] Bentley, *Monument*, 271.

assistance "in governing the common weal" and instruction to "lovingly defend the innocent, liberally to cherish the painfull and profitable members of the common weal,"[19] the prayers in the *Third Lamp* lack this social sensitivity and attention to the commonwealth and instead advocate only the need of personal royal traits such as wisdom, judgement, godliness, and need of good counsel. Her use of the phrase "nurse" and "mother" of her nation goes beyond calling herself thus; it finds practical application in the supplication for the pity of God for those who are afflicted with "poverty, prison, illness, banishment, or other of Thy [God's] rod, either in body or in spirit."[20] Another feminine hallmark is her preoccupation with peace and unity of her people at least in four different prayers, while these concepts are completely absent in *The Monument of Matrones*. Typically, Elizabeth does not ask for the mighty destruction of her enemies, but rather in a more merciful and passive phrase she begs only for the avoidance of harm: "Let enemies who want war with Thee be scattered; let those who adore idols be ashamed and convert."[21] Elizabeth also emphasizes in her petitions the practical concerns of a feminine ruler, such as obedience of her people,[22] and acknowledges her handicap of being a woman in speaking about her "unwarlike sex" and the burden to govern England and Ireland, "an innumerable and warlike people."[23] One of the most interesting aspects of Elizabeth's female voice is her understanding and keen awareness of the general frailty of the human body,[24] her readiness to ask for not just princely virtues, but also for the health of her body:

> [F]irst O heavenly Physitian, I besech thee heale my soule, pardoning my unkindness towards thee. […] Heale my minde, reforming and instructing me with thy heavenly grace, that I may take this sicknes […] contentidly and patiently. […] And withal heale my body also making it sound and pure from all infirmities and remnants of sickness, that I may be thoroughly cured by the having of a whole minde in a whole body.[25]

[19] *Christian Prayers*, P3^{v}.

[20] "[…] povreté, prison, maladie, bannissement, ou autres tes verges, soit en leurs corps ou en leurs esprits," *Christian Prayers* Kk1^{r}. The translation is from Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2000), 143.

[21] "Dissipentur hostes tui qui bella volut: qui adorant sculptilia pudefiant & convertantur." *Christian Prayers*, Oo2^{r}. The translation is from Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 158.

[22] *Christian Prayers*, Pp4^{v}.

[23] Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 142.

[24] See Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 141 for her argument about the deformity of the body in general, and about her own body in particular.

[25] *Christian Prayers*, Ll1^{r}–Ll2^{r}.

No such physical and practical realities are depicted in the *Third Lamp of Virginity* which always shows Queen Elizabeth in a majestic and scriptural setting.

The five meditations are followed by the prayer of Solomon (Wisd. 9), strengthening the biblical image of Solomon as a type for Queen Elizabeth. The text is taken from the Geneva Bible, with slight alterations, such as switching the gender from male to female, and substituting "handmaid" instead "son of thy handmaid." The most conspicuous change is the rewriting of verse eight, in which Solomon speaks about God's command to build a temple. In the version for the Queen she is not entrusted with the creation of the church, but is given the duty of "maintaining" the church, that is, her role in the governance and fate of the Church is underlined again. In 1569 Solomon's prayer was already associated with Elizabeth by John Day when he placed it to precede the foreign language prayers of the Queen in *Christian Prayers and Meditations,* but verse eight was cut and the editor left out the reformist allusion to the Church, which in the *Third Lamp* received such an emphasis.

The second unit of the *Third Lamp of Virginity* consists of two sets of acrostic meditations on the name of the Queen. The title specifically recommends them to be used by the Queen, and the layout is very elegant. The first set was printed as an appendix in the 1568 and 1580 editions of Queen Elizabeth's translation of Marguerite de Navarre's *Miroir.* The editor, James Cancellar, may be responsible for the text,[26] as he already published a similar acrostic tribute to Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, in 1565 in a book under the title *The Alphabet of Prayers, verye fruitefull to be exercised and used of every Christian Man.*[27] The formal ingenuity of such a device fitted well into the program of the *Third Lamp of Virginity* to celebrate the feast of Elizabeth's accession to the throne.

The inclusion of this set may shed light upon the methods how the *Third Lamp* was compiled and upon the identity of the people involved in the compilation. *The Alphabet of Prayers* was printed by Henry Denham, the same person who published the *Monument of Matrones*, thus the idea of a collection of prayers explicitly gathered for men may have inspired the program of the *Monument of Matrones,* which is a similar collection but for women. Denham was also responsible for the printing of *A Godly Medytacyon of the Christen Sowle*, in which the acrostic verses on the name of Elizabeth appeared in 1568, thus it is highly probable that he had access to the text and had the means to

[26] Elizabeth I, *Translations*, 34.

[27] James Cancellar, *The Alphabet of Prayers* (London: H. Denham, 1565).

republish it in the *Monument*. Certainly, the influence of the printer on the project must not be underestimated.

The third unit of the *Third Lamp* contains "The Kings Heast, or Gods familiar speech to the Queene" and "The Queenes Vow, or selfe-talke with God"– both claimed to be collected out of the psalms of David as "paraphrasticallie expounded" by Beza. In the "Heast" the author of the text lectures the Queen, in the name of God, about the virtues of a godly prince and about the commandments she should follow. There is a note of warning in the "Heast" ("Beware therefore that yee abuse not this authoritie given unto you by me, under certain laws and conditions"),[28] but it finishes with the image of Elizabeth's mystical marriage to Christ and her sitting on the Father's right hand side:

> Here in my house of the Church thou shalt see thy children and offspring (who by publishing and promoting my gospel, thou hast borne after a manner unto thy husband Christ) flourishing, and spred both abroad and at home. […] But at home chieflie, even in heaven, with me thy father, and with thy husband Christ, thou shalt sit at my right hand, beautified with all my gifts, and most richlie beedecked all over with glorious garments, broidered with gold, having a crowne of most pure gold upon thy head.[29]

The "Vow" of the Queen is nearly three times the length of the "Heast" and consists of several prayers on similar themes. The voice of the Queen acknowledges God's power and mercy, gives thanks for the benefits conferred on her, and promises to consecrate her life to the true worship of God and to follow the "Heast." Its language is scriptural, its tone zealous and reformist, with deeming the "doctrine of salvation and holie word" the chief benefits received by Elizabeth from God.[30]

The imagery and tone of the "Heast" and "Vow" are similar to the five prayers inserted within the scriptural frame at the beginning of this *Lamp*, except for the more emphasized use of the metaphor of virginity. The status of Queen Elizabeth as the bride of Christ becomes one of the most pronounced themes of these texts. While according to the conventional interpretation of this image of the Song of Songs the Church – and ultimately every Christian – is described as the bride of Christ, the texts carry an unmistakable message about Elizabeth staying a perpetual virgin:

[28] Bentley, *Monument*, 309.
[29] Bentley, *Monument*, 318.
[30] Bentley, *Monument*, 336.

> Thee I saie, O Daughter Elizabeth, have I raised up, and chosen out a pure and perfect virgin from the rest of the whole people […] to the intent I might always use thy diligent service, faithfull ministerie, and dutifull endeavour in this great business, and high office of a Queen. […] Now then O deer daughter, consider diligentlie with thy self awhile, what maner of husband thou art coupled and conioined unto: learne of him alone, (thy spouse Christ mine onlie Son I meane) to whom as this daie I married thee, what he requireth of thee: namelie, that thou shouldest forget thine owne Nation, thy fathers house, and all other wordlie things, now that thou art come under his authoritie, and into the familie and spirituall society of thy heavenlie Bridegroome.[31]

The voice of God proclaims that her elected status requires the service of God alone, and there is no room left for a probable marriage for Elizabeth. Such a text receives a highly political note at the date of 1582, just a few months after the break off of the marriage negotiations with the Catholic Francis Duke of Anjou which were going on between 1579 and late 1581.[32] While *The Monument of Matrones* is often treated as a sign of and contribution to the Queen's emerging cult of virginity, yet I would like to argue that it is more than an early piece of propaganda, it is a political agitation in favor of the radical Protestant cause.

The marriage to the brother of Henry III of France was highly unpopular among Protestants who were afraid of the possible consequences of allowing a Catholic to marry the Queen. Unrest swept the country and the Protestant clergy preached against the marriage, until it was prohibited to say anything about the matter from the pulpit. Yet pamphlets, ballads, and verses were printed in opposition to the planned wedding, and John Stubbs published a treatise about the perils of such a match under the title *Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is like to be swallowed by an other French marriage, if the Lord forbid not the banes, by letting her Majestie see the sin and punishment thereof* (1579). In a very unpopular move, he was punished with the loss of his right hand, yet measures could not stop the opposition of both members of the Privy Council and the Parliament, until at last Elizabeth decided that she could not marry against the will of her people.[33] In such a climate the claims of the "Heast" and "Vow" become politically very sensitive; and coupled with requirements about how the Queen is expected to rule her country, this section emerges as the most controversial part of the book.

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[31] Bentley, *Monument*, 308.

[32] About the details of the marriage negotiations with Francis Duke of Anjou see Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London: Routledge, 1996), 154–194.

[33] Bentley, *Monument*, 185–189.

To legitimize its contents the title claims that the texts were "collected out of the Psalmes of good King DAVID, as they are learnidlie expounded by Theodore BEZA."[34] There is no known treatise by Beza in such a form, yet the mention of his name is significant, as it shows the author's association with an international branch of Presbyterianism. Beza, who after Calvin's death took over the leadership of the congregation in Geneva and preached for decades to the multinational community of exiles from all over Europe, [35] was also acquainted with the English reformers who had settled in Geneva during the reign of Queen Mary, participated in the translation of the Geneva Bible, and later returned back to England and pressed for further church reforms. Beza's works were highly popular in England, and translations of his books appeared nearly every year from 1562 onwards with fifteen editions of various treatises being published between 1578 and 1582. In 1582, the year of the publication of *The Monument of Matrones,* he dedicated his *Meditations upon Eight Psalms* to Anne Bacon, widow of Nicolas Bacon, the Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, whose son Anthony visited him, and whose other son Francis was a fellow student of Thomas Bentley at Gray's Inn. Furthermore, the translator was the same John Stubbs who had his hand cut off for opposing the Queen's marriage, thus Beza's connections to radical Protestants in England appear to be apparent. While further research on the topic is still needed, Beza's direct influence on the project of the *Third Lamp* must not be ruled out, as his name is so dominant on the "Heast" and "Vow," and as the authorship of the "godlie learned" is proclaimed on the title page of the *Third Lamp*. His ideas on establishing the true doctrine, highlighting the grace of God and the centrality of the words of Scripture are strongly underlined within the book. Furthermore, the choice of the use of the Geneva Bible instead of the Bishop's Bible in the *Third Lamp* also points to an author sympathetic to the theology of Beza. The compiler, Thomas Bentley, is generally regarded as the author of this part of *The Monument of Matrones,* yet it is unlikely that someone who calls himself a student of Gray's Inn on the title page of his work fits the claim to be "godlie" and "learned." Additionally, for a long time Bentley's identity was obscure, and even with the discovery that he was a churchwarden at St. Andrew Holborn,[36] it seems unlikely that he would have been able to publish

[34] Bentley, *Monument*, 306.

[35] Scott M. Mantesh, *Theodore Beza and the Quest for Peace in France, 1572–1598* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 3–5.

[36] On the identity of Thomas Bentley see Colin. B. Atkinson and Jo B. Atkinson, "The Identity and Life of Thomas Bentley, Compiler of *The Monument of Matrones* (1582)," *Sixteenth Century Journal* 31.2 (2000): 323–348.

such a monumental work including politically delicate material without the support of other leading figures of Protestantism.[37]

The *Third Lamp* of *The Monument of Matrones* finishes with the woodcut about the apotheosis of Katherine Parr. On the lower half of the engraving the dead queen is laid out on earth, but a promised New Jerusalem appears in the background. Above it, heaven is depicted with God in the center and a Virgin praying in the company of David and Solomon on his right hand side. The frame of the image displays the royal virtues associated with Elizabeth on the 1569 title page of the Bishop's Bible.[38] Thus, the woodcut is at once a celebration of a reform-spirited queen, Katherine Parr, but at the same time a warning to the new Queen, Elizabeth, about the Day of Last Judgement, and a reminder to heed the words of the Heast and keep her Vow.

The *Third Lamp* of *The Monument of Matrones* renders a public image of Queen Elizabeth in private devotion, but it also deliberately bypasses her previous self-fashioning by omitting her own prayers and substituting them with texts of the "godlie learned." In comparing these two different sets of prayers, those by Elizabeth and those by a male voice, it can be substantiated that a radically new Protestant identity is created by the *Third Lamp* for the Queen, one that is not absorbed in humble self-abasement, but one that depicts her – in accordance with an emerging Protestant militarism – as a mighty ruler justified by the Scripture, elected by God's special grace, entrusted with the protection of true religion, and placed on the throne of England as a virgin.

[37] About the reformist discourse of *The Monument for Matrones* see also Patrick Collinson, "Windows in a Woman's Soul: Questions about the Religion of Queen Elizabeth I," *Elizabethan Essays* (London and Rio Grande: The Hambledon Press, 1994), 87–118.

[38] John N. King, "Thomas Bentley's *The Monument for Matrones*, The Earliest Anthology of English Women's Texts," in *Strong Voices, Weak History: Early Women Writers & Canons in England, France & Italy*, ed. Pamela Joseph Benson and Victoria Kirkham (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 2005), 222.