

Early Modern Communi(cati)ons:
Studies in Early Modern English Literature
and Culture

Edited by

Kinga Földvály and Erzsébet Stróbl

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P U B L I S H I N G

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THE QUEEN AND DEATH: AN ELIZABETHAN BOOK OF DEVOTION

ERZSÉBET STRÓBL

In an early Elizabethan prayer book of 1569¹ one's eyes meet with the depiction of a queen being led off by a skeleton. The verse lines accompanying it warns the reader "Queene also thou doost see: As I am, so thou shall be," and the bottom border illustration further increases the threat by an effigy of a queen inscribed "We that were of highest degree; Lye dead here now, as ye do see."² The prayer framed by this margin is a Latin language composition speaking in the persona of a queen. It asserts her unworthiness, gives thanks for God's protection and asks for his help: "Extend, O Father, extend, I say, to Thy daughter from thy sublime throne those things Thou judgest to be necessary for her in such an arduous and unending office."³ The Queen's words and the image of Death appeared in close proximity on the same page. Could it be a coincidence, or was it an editorial choice?

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Latin* was popularly known as Queen Elizabeth I's prayer book, and the section where the Dance of Death sequence appeared contained the foreign language prayers speaking in the Queen's personalized voice. Although this arrangement is conspicuous, no attempt has been made yet to study the reading of the text of the prayers and the border images together as a complex means of communication. The following article argues that this prayer book needs to be analysed in the way early modern books—especially devotional books—were read, that is,

¹ Richard Day, *Christian Prayers and Meditations in English, French, Italian, Spanish, Greek, and Latin* (London: J. Day, 1569).

² Ibid., Oo3r.

³ "Porrige pater, porrige inquā è sublime solio filiæ tuæ, quæ illi ad tam arduū necessaria esse iudicas," ibid., Oo4v. The translation is from the edition of the prayers in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, ed. Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 159–60.

we have to take into consideration the implications suggested by the possible connection between the image of the Queen fashioned in the prayers and the illustrations depicting the figures of Death. The aim of the present paper is to look at this visual aspect of the printed page—illustrations, arrangement, and the medium—in order to enrich the understanding of the cultural significance of the text and to enfold the multiple layers of meaning inherent in this unique prayer book.

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* (1569) was published by John Day, a printer of important devotional books composed in a Reformation spirit. It is a compilation of prayers for private use and relies heavily on Henry Bull's *Christian Prayers and Holie Meditations*⁴ published a year earlier. However, it contains additional prayers, among them some English language prayers scattered in the volume and a bunch of foreign language prayers printed together at the end of the book that address God in the first person singular spoken by the persona of the Queen. The book itself stands out among contemporary devotional writings by using figurative border illustrations throughout the entire volume. The richness of the illustrations reflects the influence of the Catholic private prayer books, the Books of Hours. While the Reformation launched an attack on religious images, John Day's book is an example of the contrary process. Instead of purging his work from pictorial representation an attempt was made to establish a relevant Protestant visual imagery for private prayers. A degree of official approval of the project is expressed by the allusions to the Queen's person. A portrait of Elizabeth I in prayer opens the volume, and her prayers end the book. The final position of the Queen's compositions enhances the role of the *danse macabre* theme of the border decoration which also appears at the end of the work. Could this layout have any religious or political overtones on the eve of the Catholic Northern Rebellion and in the climate of severe disputes in Parliament about the Queen's succession?

The following study renders a cultural reading of the pages of *Christian Prayers and Meditations* where the image of the printed page is "understood as a cultural agent rather than a passive medium"⁵ and the significance of the layout of texts and borders are treated as important ingredients of the compiler's intentions. The analysis of the visual experience of the reader, the pre-existing cultural, social and political formations and the text of the prayers shed light on one of the aspects of

⁴ Henry Bull, *Christian Prayers and Holie Meditations* (London: Thomas East, 1568).

⁵ Evelyn B. Tribble, *Margins and Marginality: The Printed Page in Early Modern England* (Charlottesville; London: University Press of Virginia: 1993), 3.

this early modern devotional writing, the message inherent in the dramatic juxtaposition of the image of the English Queen and the figure of Death.

A Book of Devotion: Re-Forming a Catholic Tradition

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* is a collection of devotions for private use in the tradition of the medieval Books of Hours. The Book of Hours (in Latin “Horae,” in English “Primer”) was the single most popular book of the late Middle Ages representing the “innermost thoughts and most sacred privacies of late medieval people.”⁶ Modelled on the Latin books used by the clergy it contained a simplified version of the seven daily offices, the Gradual Psalms, the Penitential Psalms, the Litany of Saints, and the Office of the Dead. While the richly illustrated manuscript versions cost a fortune, with the arrival of printing cheap editions were available for a broad layer of society including not just the prosperous aristocracy, but also the gentry, the mercantile classes, shopkeepers and even domestic servants.⁷ This laicisation of the clerical forms of prayer was typical of the heightened seriousness of interior religious life that penetrated late medieval society. By 1530, there were at least 760 editions of Books of Hours, among them 114 produced for England.⁸ These books appeared also on many portraits⁹ to accompany a rich sitter and became icons of an age where private and public beliefs were the subject of the highest political importance. Books of Hours represented not just a valuable possession to be bequeathed in legal testaments, but they were in use for several generations containing notes about their owners as well as remarks about the births and deaths of family members.

After the Reformation the practice of using primers did not cease in England in spite of the concern to enforce communal observance rather than the suspect forms of private prayer.¹⁰ As the devotional life of people

⁶ Eamon Duffy, *Marking the Hours: English People and their Prayers, 1240–1570* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 4.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 4, 19, 25, 28, 30.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

⁹ See the *Portrait of a Young Man* (National Gallery, London) by Petrus Christus, the *Portrait of Mary Wooton, Lady Guildford*, 1527 (St Louis Art Museum, Missouri) and *The More Family*, 1527 (Öffentliche Kunstsammlung, Basel) by Hans Holbein. The portrait of *Princess Elizabeth*, 1546–47 (The Royal Collection at Windsor) attributed to William Scrots represents the English princess with a similar book to the one appearing in the Holbein portraits.

¹⁰ There was a primer printed or reprinted nearly every year between 1534 and 1559 by printers such as N. Bourman (1540), John Byddel (1534, 1535, 1536),

is by nature conservative,¹¹ even official primers were produced to cater for the unchanged demand for this type of devotional literature. In 1534 a Protestant primer was produced under the patronage of Thomas Cromwell where the denounced doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church (e.g., the rubrics referring to indulgences, or the Office of the Dead) were cut. In 1539 the bishop of Rochester compiled an official primer in Latin and English, and in 1545 an official royal primer was issued where only the doctrinally incorrect prayers (for indulgences, or the Office of the Dead) were left out, but other old prayers used by a broad layer of society remained untouched. During the early reign of Elizabeth primers also continued to be printed¹² and the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* fits into this tradition by its content and layout. Among the old forms of prayer it contained were the Litany, the Seven Penitential Psalms, the arrangement of prayers according to the hours of the day, scriptural prayers and meditations. John Day, its printer and perhaps compiler, who was one of the champions of the Reformation printing trade, realized the continued demand to furnish people with such prayers. The layout of the book, with its sumptuous border illustrations from the life of Christ, the Dance of Death and the Last Judgement furthermore associated the work with primers and catered for the unchanged visual appetite of people.

From the earliest times primers contained a rich selection of illustrations. There were elaborate borders, initials as well as full-page images. A Book of Hours by the sixteenth century in most cases started with the calendar that was accompanied by a set of twelve prints containing the twelve different ages of man, and a depiction of the Anatomical Man. The opening of each of the hours was also illustrated by a set of standardized scenes from the life of Christ, as well as powerful single images, among them a reference to death by the depiction of the

Robert Clay (1555), Arnold Conings (1559), R. Copland (1540), John Day (1557), T. Gaultier (1550), T. Gibson (1538), Thomas Godfray (1535), Richard Grafton (1540, 1542, 1545, 1546, 1547, 1549, 1551), Richard Kele (1543, 1548), John Kyston and Henry Sutton (1557), John Mayler (1539, 1540), John Mychell (1549), Thomas Petyt (1540, 1542, 1543, 1544, 1545), J. Le Prest (1555, 1556), R. Redman (1537, 1538), Francis Regnault (1535, 1538), C. Ruremond (1536), Wilhelm Seres (1560, 1565, 1566, 1568), Robert Valentin (1551, 1554, 1555, 1556), John Wayland (1539, 1555, 1558), Edward Witchurche (1545, 1546, 1548).

¹¹ About the reluctance of the population to conform to regulations demanding the burning or defacing of images during the early Elizabethan period see Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: Traditional Religion in England, 1400–1580* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2005), 565–92.

¹² It was only by the late 1570s that the form became old-fashioned. Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 171.

Legend of the Three Living and Dead. Another allusion to the topic of death was the Dance of Death series, which appeared mostly with male characters, though could contain a separate male and female sequence, as for instance in the primer printed in Paris in 1502 by Philippe Pigouchet (STC 15896). Books of Hours for English use were printed not only in England, but on the Continent as well, where their layout was much more elaborate than that of their insular counterparts.

After the Reformation—despite the attack of certain images (those about Mary, Thomas Becket or other saints)—visual representation was not altogether abandoned. Although numerically being slightly less than in other parts of Europe, between 1536 and 1603 more than five thousand images were catalogued in England, and with a moderate estimate of two hundred copies for each volume, over one million images had been in circulation throughout the country by the end of the sixteenth century.¹³ Speaking about early modern images Patrick Collinson pointed out that by the later reign of Elizabeth I the mode of representation shifted towards the emblematic, exempting the visual experience from popular culture and making it “terse, cryptic, and allegorically bookish.”¹⁴ Instead of the “sacramental gaze” of late-medieval piety, images were looked upon with the “cold gaze” of the reformers that assessed “images in a more didactic and doctrinal way.”¹⁵ No such tendency appeared in the books published by Day, which set out to establish a popular visual tradition within the Protestant faith.

John Day was one of the earliest publishers of Reformation polemics. During the Catholic Marian years, he was presumably the printer of the radical Protestant tracts published by the clandestine press under the name of Michael Wood.¹⁶ With the reign of Elizabeth his reputation as a printer of the new faith grew further by becoming the publisher of John Foxe’s *Acts and Monuments*. While Day’s Protestant allegiances cannot be disputed, it is obvious from his works that he was no puritan iconoclast. Foxe’s volume showcased Protestant faith and devotion not just by its text but also by its memorable images. In the various editions of Foxe’s martyrology Day created a visual propaganda of the English Reformation

¹³ David Jonathan Davis, *Picturing the Invisible: Religious Printed Images in Elizabethan England* (PhD diss., University of Exeter, 2009), <https://eric.exeter.ac.uk/repository/bitstream/handle/10036/85653/DavisD.pdf?sequence=2>, 33.

¹⁴ Patrick Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society 1559–1625* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2001), 236.

¹⁵ Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 39.

¹⁶ Elizabeth Elveden, *Patents, Pictures and Patronage: John Day and the Tudor Book Trade* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 30–34.

and laid the foundations of a Protestant religious imagery. In the first 1563 edition fifty-three illustrations with fifty-seven occurrences appeared, while in the enlarged 1570 edition 105 illustrations with 149 occurrences were published.¹⁷ Far from rejecting visual representation, Day's work demonstrates a deliberate attempt to continue the long pictorial tradition of Christianity, creating memorable images about the life and struggle of the church. Day's other work, attempting a similarly ambitious task, his *Christian Prayers and Meditations* also attests to his attempt to produce visually pleasing, deluxe editions of writings that advocate the new faith in order to popularize its beliefs not by refusing visuality but by re-forming it. The volume's association with the Queen, both through her personalised voice in some writings and by the royal approval proclaimed in the two full-page royal arms (depicted at the beginning and the end of the book), granted him a chance to explore the possibilities the old medium offered for the new material.

One of the copies of the book, which was specially prepared for the Queen as a presentation copy with hand-coloured illustrations,¹⁸ shows that the taste of the Queen was not against such editions. In 1578 a very similar prayer book with the foreword by John Day's son Richard was published under the title *A Book of Christian Prayers*.¹⁹ In its content this book is usually regarded as a separate work rather than a new edition of the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* as it drastically rearranged its material, deleted and added parts, omitted the foreign language prayers of the Queen, and changed her English language prayers from the first person to the third. However, in its scheme of illustrations it continued John Day's earlier program of using a parallel visual narrative on its borders. The scope of illustrations was largely extended: in addition to the representations of the Life of Christ cycle, the male and female sequences of the Dance of Death and a Last Judgement scene appearing in the 1569 prayer book, it included spectacular new sequences on the Signs of Judgement, the Works of Mercy, the Five Senses, and a procession of Virtues accompanied by their corresponding Vices.²⁰ This magnificent prayer book was far from unpopular and was reprinted in 1581, 1590, and 1608. However, one may wonder why the Queen's prayers were left out

¹⁷ Ibid. 100–101.

¹⁸ This copy is in the Lambeth Palace Library. It was hand-coloured presumably by artists in the workshop of Archbishop Matthew Parker at Lambeth Palace for the personal use of the queen.

¹⁹ Richard Day, *A Book of Christian Prayers* (London: John Day, 1578).

²⁰ See Samuel C. Chew, "The Iconography of *A Book of Christian Prayers* (1578) Illustrated," in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 8, no. 3 (May, 1945): 293–305.

from these later versions. But before seeking an answer to this question, it is worth considering what importance the margins—in which such illustrations appeared—had in early productions of the printing press and in the reading process of the early modern public.

Texts and Margins

In modern editions early modern works appear as abstract texts detached from the actual visual form in which they were presented to their original audiences. Yet books, especially scriptural ones, were often accompanied by extensive commentary and illustration in the margins which formed part of the experience of reading and added further layers of meaning to their study. For instance, the annotation of scripture was a common practice in Catholic works from the earliest times. Their importance over the interpretation of the core text was decisive, and Reformation theologians, fearing the influence the glosses exerted over the Word of God, often condemned the use of them. In England, a royal proclamation of 1538 explicitly banned all marginal annotations in devotional texts,²¹ which shows that the margins were estimated as an important place of communication to the reader. In spite of the prohibition, the practice continued and even in Protestant editions of devotional works compilers often added their own comments on the margins.²² Illustration as a means to extend the appeal of the text also survived in books after the Reformation and was used extensively both in religious and secular contexts. For instance, in Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) both the images preceding the eclogues of the individual months and the glosses of E. K. added valuable aspects to the comprehension of the lines of the *Calendar*. Such works provide a clue to the reading methods of the early modern period and justify the comparative analysis of margin and text as parts of a single concept.

James A. Knapp described the early modern reading process as a “movement back and forth—between text and image—[. . .] to merge the effects of a book's verbal and visual information to produce a totally complex and hybrid object.”²³ He pointed out that illustrations were “related to the words in a way that drew on prevailing cultural tastes while simultaneously capitalizing on the power of images to convey a variety of

²¹ Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 150.

²² Tribble, *Margins and Marginality*, 9–12.

²³ James A. Knapp, “A Bastard Art: Woodcut Illustration in the Sixteenth Century,” in *Printing and Parenting in Early Modern England*, ed. Douglas A. Brooks (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 165.

messages” and “images opened the text to multiple and sometimes contradictory readings (and viewings).”²⁴ D. J. Davis also reached a similar conclusion when writing on early modern religious images. He claimed that images appearing on the borders of a page “illustrate the text, but often they represent a parallel narrative to the text and usually act as guides for the reader.”²⁵ The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* contains both text and images in its margins and invites readers to such a parallel reading. Though it has been examined many times by those interested in the iconography of one of the most richly illustrated books of the Elizabethan period,²⁶ and by those examining the change and purging of religious practices in the early reign of Queen Elizabeth,²⁷ and also by those writing about the literary achievements of England’s female monarch,²⁸ in all approaches, the text and the illustrations were divorced from each other, appearing as autonomous entities in two different genres and their complementary relationship and significance were disregarded.

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* used two themes to illustrate its contents. There were seven sequences of the scenes from the Life of Christ represented in a typological layout, with the image in the middle of three marginal compartments containing the New Testament scene and the two Old Testament types shown below and above it. There were also three sequences of the *danse macabre*, two with male and one with female characters, each page containing two episodes. Appropriate verses accompanied all images, thus it was possible to flip through the pages and just enjoy the reading and viewing of the margins. Both of these themes were common in book illustration and though the woodcuts were presumably designed and cut for this volume (perhaps by foreign workmen living in the vicinity of John Day’s workshop)²⁹ they presented

²⁴ Ibid., 161, 151–52.

²⁵ Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 36.

²⁶ Chew, “Iconography,” 112–15.

²⁷ Duffy, *Marking the Hours*, 171–74.

²⁸ Jennifer Clement, “The Queen’s Voice: Elizabeth I’s *Christian Prayers and Meditations*,” in *Early Modern Literary Studies* 13, no. 3 (January, 2008): 1.1–26, <http://purl.oclc.org/emls/13-3/clemquee.htm>; Steven W. May, “Queen Elizabeth Prays for the Living and the Dead,” in *Elizabeth I and the Culture of Writing*, ed. Peter Beal and Grace Ioppolo (London: The British Library: 2007), 201–11.

²⁹ John Foxe, whose *Acts and Monuments* was printed by John Day too, made a request to William Cecil, that the number of foreign workmen working for Day should be allowed to be raised. This fact shows the increased amount of work Day was facing in the 1560s. Evenden, *Patent, Pictures and Patronage*, 96–108. Twenty-one of the Life of Christ designs in the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* bear the initials “I C,” while in about half of the Dance of Death images the initial

well-known narratives to their audience, and were more or less free copies of illustrations from France.³⁰

It was a common practice in early modern print that woodcuts appeared in more than one book. This recycling of images “created numerous messages by being re-contextualized”³¹ and mapped out an interesting iconographic, religious, cultural and commercial interrelationship between widely different texts.³² The design of the individual cuts was often not original, but imitated postures and gestures of figures in a long line of tradition of religious iconography. However, the arrangement of text and image was always unique to a volume, mostly not even repeated in the different editions of the same work. Thus, the recycling of the woodcuts meant a repetition of images, but not a repetitive pattern of reading as this depended on the complex layout of the page.

The representation of the scenes of the life of Christ was a common topic for Books of Hours. In the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* the series contained thirty-eight plates appearing in all the seven repetitions of the cycle, and some additional episodes in certain sequences. Samuel C. Chew’s iconographical analysis of the border illustrations concentrated on the chronological misplacements in the sequences and carefully enumerated the “errors” in the line of events and the instances where these were set right. He blamed Day’s business where “there was not very alert supervision of the press-men [. . .] who unintelligently returned to the original wrong order and had to be corrected again.”³³ However, he failed to realize a possible connection between the structural units of the prayer book and the corrections, and missed the examples where the misplacement of a scene could have been deliberate to reflect the meaning or the structure of the text.

A marked adjustment to the content of the prayer book is the fitting of the beginning of the fourth sequence of the Life of Christ to the new material introduced in the book. Up till that point Day’s compilation contained prayers selected from Bull’s *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, but there it continued with an old form of prayer, not included in Bull’s compilation but part of the Catholic primer tradition, the Seven Penitential

“G” appears. Most scholars agree that the craftsmanship exhibited on the woodcuts was above the level of the native workmen. Ibid., 96, Chew, “Iconography,” 395.

³⁰ Chew mentions that the design for the Last Judgement scene that concludes the Dance of Death is practically identical with one used by Pigouchet. Chew, “Iconography,” 294–95.

³¹ Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 65.

³² Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 34.

³³ Chew, “Iconography,” 296.

Psalms. While the second sequence of the Life of Christ started during a meditation, and the beginning of the third was also unmarked, this fourth sequence commenced with new material within the book. To enable a fresh start of the episodes of the Life of Christ, the editor inserted the first English language prayer of the Queen at this point, and, as this ran just beyond the last scene of the sequence used so far, he included additional cuts (chronologically misplaced) to fill in the space. These new images (the Miracle of the Pool at Bethesda, Christ and the Canaanite Woman, the Walking on the Water) celebrated God's power over sin, sickness and nature that rhymed with the words of prayer "how [. . .] shall I thy handmaide, being by kinde a weak woman, have sufficient abilitie to rule [. . .] unless thou [. . .] doe also in my reigning endue and help thy heavenly grace, without which, none, even the wisest among the children of men, can once think a right thought."³⁴

This section break of the book was also marked by an interrupted pagination. After P4 it started afresh with A1. Furthermore, in the central textual unit of the page layout on the top corner of the pages Arabic numerals (from 41 to 88) appeared, which may point to a possible borrowing of the typeset of the middle section from an older work. While the continuity of the layout of border illustrations gives a unified impression, the transition from one type of prayer to another was definitely stated by pictorial means in the margins.

Another similar break in the pagination occurs after the second N2, which continues with Aa1, and which again uses Arabic numerals (from 1 to 48) in the top corners of the central section of the page. The episodes of Christ's life are also interrupted here: the line of the sixth sequence being at the scene of the Transfiguration reverts to the Flight into Egypt. Once again, new content is introduced here: a Mirror for Princes ("Of the kingdome of God, and how all kinges ought to seeke his glory," "Promises, admonitions and counsels to good kinges with examples of their good successe," "Sentences of threatening to evill kinges and examples of their evill successe"). It is interesting to notice that in these two sections, marked by a definite break both in the illustration and the pagination, the confused order of the episodes of the Return from Egypt and the Baptism of Christ within the sequence of the Life of Christ (noticed by Chew in his analysis as an "error") is corrected. While Chew was right that these corrections reflect a more alert supervision of pressmen, he did not notice that the enhanced interest in these parts resulted

³⁴ *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, P4r.

from the content of the prayers. The new material introduced in these parts was emphatic as it addressed the Queen directly or indirectly.

A further example of adjustment of the borders to the content of the prayers can be seen in the conclusion of the fifth sequence of the Life of Christ, where the second English language prayer of the Queen is placed. Here again, to enable a prominent ultimate position, additional images were used (thus extending the set of the Life of Christ to forty-three cuts, the most complete within the book). Furthermore, while Chew pointed out the chronological misplacements of the scenes, these can be explained by the editor's intention to match the prayer's words about relief in sickness by scenes depicting Jesus's power to heal the sick in body and soul. The Queen's prayer "In Time of Sicknes" appears next to three scenes (used already next to the first prayer of the Queen) about three miracles of Christ and new scenes on sin (Woman taken in Adultery), power to work miracles (Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes) and redemption (Healing of the Sin of the Palsy).

According to Chew's study the Life of Christ sequences are followed by the Dance of Death "with casual abruptness and no relation to the text of the prayers."³⁵ However, again the content of the prayer book changed with the new set of illustrations. This part of the book contained the foreign language prayers of the Queen. Although the Queen's first, and part of the second French language prayer was illustrated by the last scenes of the last Life of Christ sequence, the great majority of her prayers appear next to the images of the *danse macabre*. As there is a correspondence between image and prayer both in structure and in content at the most important parts of the compilation, this proximity of the words of the Queen and the representation of death must not be overlooked or dismissed.

The Motif of the Dance of Death

The dramatic juxtaposition of the living with the dead was an ancient motif in western culture. In the Middle Ages the theme received a growing attention with several literary genres exploiting its associations. From the thirteenth century representations of the legend of the Three Living and the Three Dead, in which three young men on a hunt met three dead men, served as a warning for the right manner of living.³⁶ The medieval *vado*

³⁵ Chew, *The Iconography*, 297.

³⁶ "Quod fuimus, estis; quod sumus, vos eritis" (Where we were, you are; what we are, you will be). About the legend see István Kozáky, "A haláltáncok struktúrái,"

mori poems, where individual representatives of society lamented the coming of death in a monologue, were also widespread. However, the drastic experience of the Black Death of 1348 and the recurring outbreaks of the epidemic throughout Europe caused a heightened awareness of sudden death and mutability in the fourteenth century. Books on the art of dying well (*ars moriendi*) became popular and were published in several languages in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. A further genre connected to mortality and appearing in both literature and the visual arts was the Dance of Death, where death figures engaged in dance or dialogue with members of the social scale. Kings and paupers, queens and simple maids were equated in the perspective of the new genre, and the grotesque combination of music and dance with the imminence of death created an emotionally shocking *memento mori*. The sequence usually started with a person of the highest social rank (the pope in the clerical hierarchy, or the emperor in the secular one) and depicted figures on the descending social scale, combined with variations on the ages of men and representatives of various professions. While the *danse macabre* appeared in the verse of Jehan le Fèvre in 1376 for the first time, the first pictorial representation of a Dance of Death was painted on the wall of the churchyard Cimetière des Innocents in Paris in the year of 1425 during the period of the English occupation of the city. The murals were accompanied by French verses that were translated within a few years by John Lydgate into English. A wealthy citizen of London, John Carpenter commissioned that Lydgate's translation should be transformed and incorporated into a pictorial representation of the Dance of Death in the churchyard of Old St Paul's cathedral.³⁷ This series became the model of many further frescos throughout England, and can be frequently found in texts which refer to it just as Paul's dance.³⁸ Lydgate added six additional episodes to the Paris sequence, among them four female figures. The Paris

[“The Structures of Dances of Death”] in *Mauzóleum: A halállal való foglalkozás [Mausoleum: Preoccupied with Death]*, ed. Lajos Adamik, István Jelenczki and Miklós Sükösd (Budapest: ELTE BTK, 1987), 217–37; and Gert Kaiser, *Der Tanzende Tod: Mittelalterliche Totentänze [The Dancing Death: Medieval Death Dances]* (Frankfurt am Main: Insel Verlag GmbH, 1982).

³⁷ Sophy Oosterwyk, ‘Fro Paris to Inglond’? *The Danse Macabre in Text and Image in Late-Medieval England*, (Unpublished PhD diss., Leiden University, 2009), <https://openaccess.leidenuniv.nl/handle/1887/13873>, 34–36.

³⁸ It was destroyed together with other monuments of the churchyard in 1549. John Stow in his famous *Survey of London* (1598) describes the *danse* in detail together with its destruction by the order of the Duke of Somerset. *Stow's Survey of London* (London: J. M. Dent & Sons, 1956), 293.

set was probably an all-male series, similar to the one shown by Guyot Marchant's publication of 1485, the first printed *danse macabre*. Marchant printed a female set only a year later in 1486. English manuscripts used both versions, some following Marchant, and some mixing female and male figures.³⁹ From the late fifteenth century the Parisian printers Antoine Vérard, Simon Vostre, and Thielman Kerver published several Books of Hours containing a Dance of Death in the margins.⁴⁰ Yet it was only in a Book of Hours produced for the English market in 1521 that the illustrations were accompanied by verse lines (by Lydgate).⁴¹

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* also contained both text and image, and incorporated a female series as well. This Dance of Death illustration is exceptional, as it is the only known representation of a *danse macabre* in an English Protestant prayer book (apart from the later version of the book in 1578). There were only two other Dances of Death printed in the period by English presses. Both were one-page broadsides, combining text and image to please a wide audience of a secular interest. One of them, *The Daunce and Song of Death*,⁴² (published in the same year as the *Christian Prayers and Meditations*) emphasized the carnivalesque nature of the genre, with the figure of sickness acting as minstrel and skeletons leading a dance around an open grave with pairs of the king and beggar, the old man and the child, and the wise man and the fool. A similar popular print, arranged as a ballad was published in 1580 beginning with the line "Marke well the effect, purtreied here in all."⁴³ The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* contained nothing of the popular lore and humour of the theme mirrored in these broadsides. It made no reference to music, dance or instruments but sounded a serious tone, a moralizing warning to its readers. The characters depicted in contemporary costume were taken by surprise and were reluctant to follow the skeletons. The bottom border illustrations further increased the threatening atmosphere of the *danse macabre*. They depicted images copying cadaver effigy tombs,⁴⁴ that is, dead bodies in different states of decomposition of

³⁹ Leonard P. Kurtz, *The Dance of Death and the Macabre Spirit in European Literature* (New York: Columbia University, 1934), 139–46.

⁴⁰ Oosterwyk, 'Fro Paris to Inglond,' 105.

⁴¹ *Hore beate Marie Virginis ad usum in signis ac preclare ecclesie Sarum cum figuris passionis mysterium representatibus recenter additis Paris* (London: Johan Bignon, 1521).

⁴² *The Daunce and Song of Death* (London: J. Awdely, 1569).

⁴³ *Marke Well the Effect Purtreied* (London: S. n., c. 1580).

⁴⁴ On the tradition of the cadaver effigy see Oosterwyk, 'Fro Paris to Inglond,' 222–54.

the flesh. The grimness of the representation was increased by the ominous lines of warning:

As we were, so are ye: / And as we are, so shell ye be. (Kk3v)

Tyme do passe, and tyme it is, / Do use well tyme, least tyme do misse.
(Kk4r)

From earth to earth, so must it be, / From lyfe to death, as thou doest see.
(Kk4v)

Thus, next to the text of the foreign language prayers written by the persona of the Queen there was a visual message in the margins to inspire personal contemplation and meditation about the worthlessness and finality of worldly might and power. Before looking at the possible connection between the *danse macabre* and the words of the Queen, I would like to address the question of the authorship of these prayers.

Prayers of a Queen: Identity and Image Making

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* contains two English, seven French, four Italian, three Spanish, three Latin, and two Greek prayers addressing God in the voice of the Queen. Though the book was referred to popularly as the Queen's Prayer Book,⁴⁵ nowhere does it claim that any of its content was composed by Queen Elizabeth. While there is no factual proof for the Queen's authorship, many scholars are inclined to accept it on the basis of stylistic evidence.⁴⁶ However, there is a strong argument for the authenticity of the prayers that critics overlooked so far. The two English language prayers written in the persona of the Queen and placed at the end of two important structural units of the book are the rough translations of their Latin originals appearing under the name of Queen Elizabeth in 1563 in *Precationes privatae*.⁴⁷ These are not new prayers

⁴⁵ Both the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* (1569) and *A Book of Christian Prayers* (1578) were referred to as the Queen's Prayer Books.

⁴⁶ Leah S. Marcus, Janel Mueller, and Mary Beth Rose, the editors of Elizabeth I's *Collected Works* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), and Jennifer Clement in "The Queen's Voice" all argue for this interpretation.

⁴⁷ "A prayer for wisdom to governe the Realm" (P2v-P4v) is edited and translated in Elizabeth's *Collected Works* under the title "Prayer for the Wisdom in the Administration of the Kingdom," and "In time of sicknes" (K2v-L2v) appeared as "Thanksgiving for Recovered Health," 139-43. In *Precationes privatae. Regiae E. R.* (London: T. Purfoot, 1563) they are between A2r-F1r.

then, but have the personalized voice of the Queen and specific references to her because they are prayers written by the Queen, even though the question of who the translator was remains unclear.

The use of different languages for prayer also points to the possible authorship of the Queen. Elizabeth's knowledge of languages, as part of her Humanistic education, was well propagated and was part of her public image of the well educated monarch. There is another prayer book, a manuscript one, that contains prayers in foreign languages (Latin, Italian, French and Greek) attributed to Queen Elizabeth and decorated by her miniature.⁴⁸ The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* also bears the visual signs of authorization: the Queen's portrait and her coat-of-arms. Jennifer Clement supported the official nature of the prayer book by analysing the connection between the use of each language and the content of the prayer. She claimed that the choice of a particular language reflected a conscious act of aiming at a specific international audience with the issues presented within the prayers being tailored for that specifically addressed group of speakers.⁴⁹ If we accept her argumentation, then this is further evidence to support that these writings were either by the Queen or were composed in her individualized voice.

In the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* the Queen is subjected to a public gaze through the prayers given into her mouth. An image of a godly monarch is drafted in them, one who was specially elected through God's grace alone to the English throne. This definition was a cornerstone of the early years of Elizabethan propaganda, as it justified the Queen's rule in the language of Protestant polemics. After the succession of Elizabeth to the throne of England, next to the sensitive question of the legitimacy of her mother's marriage and thus her own right to rule, her gender as a monarch posed a further problem that was advocated in the Scottish reformer's John Knox's pamphlet *The First Blast of the Trumpet Against the Monstrous Regiment of Women* (1558). Elizabeth's unofficial apologist, John Aylmer answered the attack on female authority by pointing out that the Queen rules by the special providence of God, selected individually by

⁴⁸ *A Book of Devotions composed by Her Majesty*, transl. Adam Fox (London: Colin Smyth Gerrards Cross and The Cornerstone Library and Studio Rome, 1977). The book contains two miniatures by Nicholas Hilliard that suggest a date in the late 1570s. The original copy has been lost and the book survives in the form of a photocopy. Patrick Collinson disputes the authorship of the queen in "Window in a Woman's Soul: Questions about the Religion of the Queen," in *Elizabethan Essays*, ed. Patrick Collinson (London and Rio Grande, Ohio: Hambledon Press, 1994), 90–91.

⁴⁹ Jennifer Clement, "The Queen's Voice."

him for the throne.⁵⁰ The prayers in the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* echo this line of thought:

Thou hast of thine own liberalitie, without my deserving and against the expectation of many, given me a kingdom and made me reign. (P3r)

I do not hold royal rule by my own merit, but receive it from Thee as a handmaid and servant. (Pp4r)

In acknowledging her feminine weakness and God's merit in raising her to rule a country, the Queen was presented to the public in an appropriately gendered role, which all the same left no place to dispute her royal position.

A full-page illustration of Queen Elizabeth⁵¹ kneeling in her closet at her devotions also associates the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* with the Queen. Yet this representation shifts the emphasis from the Queen being the author of some texts of the book to her role as reader and user of the book. So let me now turn to the reading of the prayers composed by or in the name of or the Queen. How exactly was the Queen to interpret the lines of these prayers presented to her in this early modern book of devotion (one copy of which was emphatically decorated for her)? How was she to interpret the parallel narrative presented by the text and the margins depicting the Dance of Death? What message can the threatening figures of death bear in relation to the Queen?

The Politics of the *Danse Macabre*

From the two English language prayers by the Queen the second is entitled "In Time of Sicknes" and the text refers to a recent illness of the Queen and her thanksgiving for recovery. The borders illustrate the Resurrection of Christ, and its two Old Testament prefigurations (Samson and Jonas—one escaping from his enemies, the other emerging from the belly of the fish), all referring to deliverance. Text and margins both draw

⁵⁰ John Aylmer *An harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subiectes, against the late blown Blast, concerning the Government of Women, wherin be confuted all such reasons as a stranger of late made in that behalf, with a brief exhortation to Obedience*. Strasborowe: S.n. [i.e. London, printed by John Day], 1559. Ov^oO2r. The printer of the apology was the same John Day who published the *Christian Prayers and Meditations*.

⁵¹ The woodcut is attributed to Levina Teerlinck in Roy Strong, *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 57.

the attention of the reader to the tenet that the only cure for sickness and sin is through the grace of God. In such a context the prayer is a warning to all mankind, but its individualized voice points to a particular event in the reign of Elizabeth:

[. . .] though hast stricken me with a grievous sicknes of my body, and very daungerous unto my life, and also troubled and abashed my minde with terrours and anguishes of my soule: and withal thou hast by my daunger sore flighted and amesed thy people of England, whose safetie and quietnes next after thee, seemeth to stay upon me above all other worldly creatures, and upon my life and continuance amongst them. (K4v–L1r)

The text refers to Queen Elizabeth's near fatal attack of small pox in 1562, and is the rough translation of a Latin text published under the name of the Queen a year later in *Precationes privatae* (see above). As the quoted lines show, her illness created dismay among her courtiers who were faced by an unsettled succession and a possible civil war in case of the Queen's death. In the aftermath of the crisis the question of Queen Elizabeth's succession and marriage became of acute political importance. The House of Commons and the House of Lords separately handed in a petition to urge the Queen to name a successor in 1563; and in 1566 a joint effort was made by both houses to force an answer from the Queen. But the Queen reacted by a heated oration in front of the delegations of Parliament;⁵² she refused to act, and banned all discussion of her succession.⁵³ Yet many godly gentlemen, that is, Protestant radicals, who felt a vested interest in the commonweal of the country and believed to have a right to counsel the Queen,⁵⁴ were not satisfied with such a decision. A tract entitled *A Common Cry of Englishmen Made to the Most Noble Lady, Queen Elizabeth, and the High Court of Parliament* (1566) speaking about the succession turned to the Parliament to take action instead of the Queen:

⁵² See her speeches of April 10, 1563; November 5, 1566; January 2, 1567. Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 79–80, 93–98, 105–8.

⁵³ This ban resulted in the famous incident of Peter Wentworth questioning whether such an act on behalf of the queen was not “a breech of the liberty of the free speech of the House.” See “Peter Wentworth's Question on Parliamentary Privilege, November 11, 1566,” in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 100.

⁵⁴ About the question see A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth, 1558–1585* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 134–60.

And if the Queen [. . .] should seem not to be willing to hear and help [. . .] then we turn our cry to you our Lords and Commons [. . .] as you do know what your authority is, so beshow your wisdom and power to put your country out of such peril.⁵⁵

The passage shows that among the Protestant elite there was a belief in the importance of counsel delivered to the Queen as part of the concept known as the “mixed monarchy.”

The concept of the mixed monarchy was a theory in support of legitimizing female rule in the sixteenth century. It denoted a special relationship between crown and parliament, and was described by Sir Thomas Smith’s book *De Republica Anglorum*⁵⁶ circulated in a manuscript form from the mid-1560s. When defining the commonwealth Smith considered only freemen and excluded women “whom nature hath made to keepe home and to nourish their familie and children, and not to meddle with matters abroade, nor to beare office in a citie or common wealth no more as children or infants.”⁵⁷ Yet Smith made an exception in case the “authoritie is annexed to the bloud and progenie, as the crowne, a dutchie, or an earldome for the blood is respected, not the age nor the sexe [. . .] for the right and honour of the blood [. . .] is more to be considered, than either base age as yet impotent to rule, or the sexe not accustomed (otherwise) to intermeddle with publick affaires, being *by common intendment understood*, that *such personages never do lacke the counsel of such grave and discreete men as be able to supplie all other defaultes*” (emphasis mine).⁵⁸ In other words the *De Republica Anglorum* asserted that “the most high and absolute power of the realm of England, is in the Parliament”⁵⁹ and there is no threat in having a female monarch as long as she is surrounded by the counsel of her Parliament. Counselling the Queen was regarded thus not only a possibility but as the duty of “grave and discreete men.”

⁵⁵ Quoted in McLaren, *Political Culture*, 149–50.

⁵⁶ The book was published only posthumously. The date for the first publication is usually cited as 1583, yet McLaren claims that there was an earlier edition of 1581, of which no copies survived. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I*, 201n13. The book was republished in 1583, 1584, 1589 and 1601, showing its popularity during a period which threatened the principles of mixed rule and depended in a growing extent on more absolutist modes of government.

⁵⁷ Sir Thomas Smith, *De Republica Anglorum* (1583; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 64.

⁵⁸ Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, 64.

⁵⁹ Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, 65.

This voice of ‘godly’ counsel is heard when the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* includes biblical texts about “how all kinges ought to seeke his glory,” “counsels to good kinges,” and “threatening to evill kinges,” which were placed right before the Queen’s foreign language prayers.⁶⁰ Furthermore, these foreign language prayers ask not just for wisdom and prudence from God to help the Queen to govern, but reiterate several times her wish to have good councillors:

Give us also prudent, wise and virtuous councillors, driving far from us all ambitious, malignant, wily, and hypocritical ones.⁶¹

Strength, counsel, doctrine sound to me provide / That well I may Thy people rule and guide.⁶²

May the mind of Thy handmaid be clear and just, her will sincere, her judgements fair and pious. Grant me, O Lord, help, counsels, and sufficient ministers, just and capable, full of piety and of Thy most holy fear.⁶³

Thy Holy Spirit, [. . .] the Spirit of counsel and of fortitude, the Spirit of knowledge and of Thy fear, by whom I, Thy maidservant, may have a wise heart that can discern between the good and the bad [. . .] [a]nd in this manner may justice be administered in this Thy kingdom [. . .]. Since for this Thou hast constituted magistrates and hast put the weapon of authority in their hands, vouchsafe it.⁶⁴

Thou hast granted councillors; grant unto them to use counsel rightly. Grant them, moreover, a pious, fair, sound mind and truly industrious diligence, that these may be employed for the people placed under me, and

⁶⁰ *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, Aa1–Gg4v.

⁶¹ “Donne nous aussi des Conseillers prudens sages & vertueux, chassant loing de nous, tous ambitieux, malins, cauteleux, & hypocrites.” *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, li2v. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 147.

⁶² “Force, Conseil, avec saine doctrine, / Pour bien guider, le peuple que domine.” *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, Ll1v. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 152.

⁶³ “Sia l’ intelletto della tua serva chiaro & giusto, la volontà sincera, i giudici equi, & p̃y. Dammi Signore aiuti, consigli, & ministri abbastanza, retti, & sufficienti, pieni di pietà, & del tuo santissimo timore.” *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, Mm2r–v. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 154.

⁶⁴ “Con tí sancto Espiritu, el qua les [. . .] Espiritu de cõsejo y de Fortaleza, Espiritu de sciencia y de temor tuyo, para que yo tu sierva tẽga coraçon entendido que pueda discernir entre lo bueno y lo malo: y desta manera sea en este tu Reyno administrada iusticia, [. . .] Pues que para esto tu has constituido el Magistrado y le has puesto el cuchillo en la mano.” *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, Nn2r–v. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 156.

that they may be willing and able both to make provision under Thy direction and to give counsel.⁶⁵

The Queen also acknowledges the mode of governing with the help of counsel in the sixth French prayer, which was written with the specific purpose of being used before consulting about the business of the kingdom:

Thou sustainest and preservest under the guidance of Thy providence the state and government of all kingdoms of the earth, and that to Thee it belongs to preside in the midst of princes in their councils.⁶⁶

The placement of the Queen's prayers next to the scenes of the Dance of Death in the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* seems to be a form of counsel offered to the Queen on behalf of one of the most important Protestant printers, John Day, his patrons and the anonymous compilers of this pretentious prayer book of the new faith. While the Queen was viewing the images and reading the accompanying lines

Queen also thou doost see: As I am, so shalt thou be. (Oo3r)

We that were of highest degree; Lye dead here now, as ye do see. (Oo3r)

We that sate in the highest seate; Are layd here now for wormes meat. (Oo3v)

Beauty, honour, and riches avayle no whit, For death when he commeth, spoyleth it. (Oo4r)

she was reminded of her near-fatal illness and the threat her death would have posed to the country. The succession question being still unsettled, Protestant godly gentlemen were indirectly offering counsel to the Queen by reminding her of human mortality through the *danse macabre*. This highly sensitive issue was addressed with the means of the intertextuality of early modern print.

⁶⁵ "Dedisti consiliarios, da dextrè eorum uti consiliis: illis autem & piam & æquam, & sanam mentem, industriam vero sedulam, ut quæ mihi subditoque; populo usui sint, & providere sub tuo præsidio, & consulere velint ac queant." *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, Oo4v. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 160.

⁶⁶ "Tu soustiens & conserve sous la conduite de ta providence l'estat & gouvernement de tous les Royaumes de la terre, & que c'est à toy de presider au milieu des Princes en leur conseil." *Christian Prayers and Meditations*, K4r. Translation in Elizabeth I, *Collected Works*, 150.

Such freedom to express a voice of counsel was a unique phenomenon of the 1560s and 1570s. With the growing Spanish threat of the 1580s a more autocratic governmental form was introduced.⁶⁷ This change is demonstrated well by the fate of another illustration that placed the Queen in close proximity to the figure of Death. In the year the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* was published, Henry Denham printed a late fifteenth-century poem *The Travayled Pylgrime* (1569)⁶⁸ with images from a Spanish book. He added only one extra woodcut, one that depicted the Queen in triumph.⁶⁹ In the background above the Queen's figure drawn in a chariot appeared Death enthroned, and while the verses accompanying the image rang with the praise of the Queen's unmatched qualities, the context into which it was inserted served as a *memento mori* to humankind. The lines "Beholde also the ougly corps, that bony figure hee, / Is Thanatos [Death] which endes the life of every degree"⁷⁰ stood right after the eulogy of the English queen, delivering a threatening warning to all mankind. The free coupling of the figure of the Queen and death in both *The Travayled Pylgrime* and *Christian Prayers and Meditations* in the year 1569 is remarkable. Its significance can be further understood if one looks at how the image of *The Travayled Pylgrime* was recycled in the printing industry. Eleven years later, it was reused for another text, Anthony Munday's *Zelauto: The Fountaine of Fame* (1580),⁷¹ but the figure of death was clearly erased. Davis, an expert on religious printed images, pointed out that the amendment was not because of damage made to the woodcut, but was in connection with the stricter censorship that was introduced in the 1580s.⁷² The text above the picture read "Let all true English harts, pronounce while they still have breath, God save and prosper in renown, our Queen Elizabeth,"⁷³ and eliminated all reference to

⁶⁷ John Guy, "The 1590s: the second reign of Elizabeth I?" in John Guy, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–19.

⁶⁸ Olivier de La Marche, *The Trauayled Pylgrime* (London: Henrie Denham, 1569). It was freely translated from the original by Stephen Bateman. About the work see Marco Nievergelt, "Stephen Bateman, *The trauayled Pylgrime* (London: Henry Denham, 1569; STC 1585)" in *The EEBO Introduction Series*, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.proxy.library.nd.edu/intros/htxview?template=basic.htx&content=intro99840252.htm>.

⁶⁹ I am indebted to Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 188–89 for drawing my attention to this image.

⁷⁰ La Marche, *The Travayled Pylgrime*, M3r.

⁷¹ Anthony Munday, *The Fountaine of Fame* (London: J. Charlewood, 1580), E1v.

⁷² Davis, *Picturing the Invisible*, 189.

⁷³ Munday, *Fountaine of Fame*, E1v.

mutability. Any form of allusion to the Queen's possible death, or pertaining to her private matters, as for instance public discussion of her marriage was severely punished by this time. In 1579, the year after the rearranged version of the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* was published, John Stubbs released a pamphlet criticizing Queen Elizabeth's proposed marriage to Duke of Anjou.⁷⁴ The counsel of Stubbs was unwanted: the pamphlet was prohibited, burnt, and a trial was held at Westminster which resulted in a punishment of cutting off Stubbs's right hand. It is then no wonder that the prayers of the Queen next to margins depicting a Dance of Death were omitted from the later version of the prayer book. In contrast to this later edition, in the *Christian Prayers and Meditations* one can still witness a freedom of expressing opinion on questions concerning the Queen, which included also the free access to her most personal thoughts in prayer. In the new edition of the prayer book the Queen's voice was cut out and never again during Elizabeth's reign was such a personalized image of her offered to her subjects.

Conclusion

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* (1569) received far less notice up till today than it deserves. While the foreign language prayers it contains have been mostly attributed to the Queen and examined as her writing, it has not been noticed that two English language prayers can also be firmly assigned to her. The placement of these compositions within the prayer book and their relation to the border illustrations mark them out as important ingredients of the compilation.

The *Christian Prayers and Meditations* occupies an emphatic place in the history of Protestant devotional literature. On the one hand, it represents a piece of writing that continued and revitalized a long standing religious tradition of private prayer books, thus underpinning the view of many historians who regard the Reformation in England not as a drastic change of religion but as a gradual process of adoption, selection and incorporation. On the other hand, Day's compilation of prayers by using the form of the Book of Hours exploited the visual, intertextual aspect of the medium to confer a new understanding of royalty as surrounded by godly councillors.

⁷⁴ John Stubbes, *The 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 maiestie see the sin and punishment thereof* (London: H. Singleton, 1579).