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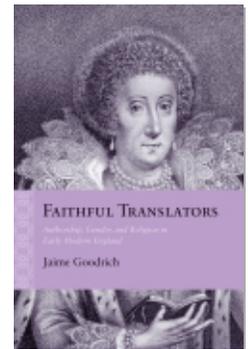
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CHAPTER THREE



Princely Counsel

Mary Sidney Herbert, Elizabeth I,
and International Protestantism

In late December 1545, Elizabeth Tudor marked the New Year's festivities by presenting her father, Henry VIII, and her stepmother, Katherine Parr, with a complementary pair of manuscript translations. For her father, Elizabeth had translated Parr's *Prayers or Meditations* (1544) from English into Latin, French, and Italian; for Katherine, she had turned the first book of Calvin's *Institution de la religion chrestienne* (1541) from French into English. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the source texts for these translations were carefully selected to demonstrate Elizabeth's humanist education. Yet the material characteristics of these presentation copies also offered Elizabeth another means of self-fashioning. Elizabeth had embroidered matching covers that handsomely displayed her skill in the traditionally feminine art of needlework.¹ The background to the cover of her translation of Parr is worked in a scarlet stitch laced with silver thread, a striking background for monograms in light blue and heavy silver thread that are the center of attention: the intertwined letters of both parents' names with an *H* for "Henry" both above and below.² Four pansies at the corners worked in dark and light yellow indicate the learned work within by punning on *pensées* (thoughts).³ The cover for her translation of Calvin mirrors that of the Parr, except that Elizabeth reverses the colors (using a blue background with red monograms) and substitutes a *K* for "Katherine" above and below the central monogram. While these embroidered bindings highlighted Elizabeth's facility with needlework, her use of gold and silver thread implied that the gift had special value. Furthermore, Elizabeth transcribed the texts in a beautiful italic hand associated with humanist learning.⁴ These translations therefore exhibited Elizabeth's mastery of aristocratic skills as well as her unusual erudition.

Yet Elizabeth's translations of Parr and Calvin were not merely decorative, as she took advantage of the mediatory nature of this activity to position herself as an intercessor between these texts' original authors and their dedicatees. In the dedicatory preface of Parr's *Prayers* presented to Henry, Elizabeth confidently states, "I do not doubt, indeed, that your fatherly goodness and royal prudence . . . will judge that this divine work, which is to be esteemed of more value because it has been assembled by the most serene queen, your spouse, ought to be held in slightly greater regard because it has been translated by your daughter."⁵ Of course, Henry could already read Parr's *Prayers* in English, but Elizabeth carefully aligns herself with her stepmother here, appealing to her father's devotion to Katherine as a means of legitimating her work and of negotiating her own relationship with him. While the dedicatory preface accompanying her translation of Calvin fails to mention the author's name (perhaps in recognition of Henry's conservative religious views), Elizabeth nonetheless praises Calvin in a manner that privileges the text and consequently its translator: "Seeing the source from which this book came forth, the majesty of the matter surpasses all human eloquence, being privileged and having such force within it that a single sentence has power to ravish, inspire, and give knowledge to the most stupid and ignorant beings alive, in what way God wishes to be known, seen, and heard."⁶ The multiple authorial positions inherent in translation allowed Elizabeth, as translator, to share in both the texts' authorship and, in turn, the authors' prestige. Only recently reintroduced into the line of succession and rehabilitated at court, Elizabeth utilized the material and literary aspects of her translations to evoke her education and navigate her liminal status at court.

This chapter will consider the ways that manuscript translations by two women, Mary Sidney Herbert and Elizabeth I, represented the female translator as a counselor. Both male and female courtiers frequently presented manuscript translations to powerful patrons on occasions such as New Year's Day, hoping to curry favor and advance their political agendas. Presentation copies of translations tangibly demonstrated the translator's erudition even as lavish material features such as decorative hands, colored or precious ink, illuminations, and elaborate bindings reinforced the value of that learning. In dedicatory prefaces, translators suggested that the texts had political or religious value, drawing on the reputation of their sources to authorize their own agendas. The cultural capital inherent in translation—that is, knowledge of foreign languages—could thus be leveraged into a form of social capital that legitimated the political and religious stances of the

translator. This process of self-authorization is significant for redressing one of the primary critical complaints regarding early modern Englishwomen's translations: the translator's apparent subordination to the (generally) male author of her source text.⁷ Sidney Herbert and Elizabeth took advantage of the authority associated with their sources to compose manuscript translations that established their own political wisdom during times of crisis. While Sidney Herbert's *Psalmes* covertly advised Elizabeth on diplomatic relations with Spain, Elizabeth translated Boethius as a form of self-counsel after Henry IV of France became Catholic. If the act of translation itself displayed the female translator's erudition, the authorial multiplicity involved in translation permitted her to exploit the authority of her source text and, as a result, to cultivate her own political and religious agency. The ways that Sidney Herbert and Elizabeth bent their source material to their own purposes suggest new paradigms for thinking about the female translator's relationship to both the work's original author and the resulting translation.

The Treasures of Knowledge: Manuscript Translations and Cultural Capital

Manuscript translations played an important, but largely unremarked, role in the culture of gift exchange that operated at the Tudor court. Each New Year, members of the court presented one another with costly gifts, including jewels and clothing, that created political ties and reinforced patronage networks.⁸ Courtiers with advanced linguistic skills gave patrons translations of texts that sought to transform their knowledge into a form of social capital. While dedicating his translation of Gregory Nazianzen's "On the Theophany" (1560) from Greek to Latin to Elizabeth I, Anthony Cooke presents his work as a worthy alternative to typical New Year's gifts: "I sende your highnes this remembraunce of the newe yere not of golde or silver, whereof ye have plentie as apperteineth, and I litle in comparison and yet with that readie to serve, but suche as I thinke more fitt for you to receive and for me to give having respecte to the treasure of knowledge that dothe more excell, where-with god hath plentifully endowed you."⁹ Pierre Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital is a useful tool for understanding Cooke's presentation of his translation's value. Bourdieu defines cultural capital as "the cultural goods transmitted by the different family P[edagogic] A[ctions]"; that is, individuals obtain cultural capital through schooling ("pedagogic

actions”) that provides them with “cultural goods.”¹⁰ While Cooke possesses an embodied cultural capital by virtue of his education, his translation of Nazianzen transforms that capital into an objectified state: the manuscript itself. Yet as Bourdieu observes, objectified cultural capital has power “only insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon and a stake in the struggles which go on in the fields of cultural production . . . and, beyond them, in the field of the social classes.”¹¹ By composing dedicatory prefaces to a patron, translators, in Bourdieu’s terms, “implemented and invested” their work within contemporary issues. As the previous chapter demonstrated, both Elizabeth and her brother Edward VI, whom Cooke himself had tutored, received advanced humanist educations from tutors who leaned toward religious reform. Consequently, Elizabeth’s education had included study of church fathers such as Cyprian, and Cooke’s suggestion that Nazianzen is a fit addition to this “treasure of knowledge” evokes the religious imperatives that informed her scholarship. For men and women at the Tudor court, manuscript circulation of translations functioned similarly as a means of self-authorization, as the translator’s preface converted his or her linguistic knowledge into a source of cultural or political commentary.

Male translators of religious works often framed their translations as direct interventions in ongoing spiritual controversies, parlaying the prestige of their own educations and the reputations of the original authors into a source of authorization for their counsel. In 1541, Cooke presented Henry VIII with a translation of Cyprian’s “On the Lord’s Prayer” from Latin into English. By praising the king’s recent breach with Rome, Cooke reveals his own support for Henry’s religious reforms: “Where ye founde them [the English] overwhelmed with most deepe darkenes of ignorance . . . [you] hath delyvered them from all that mysery most sagely and honorably, and caused them to be fedde with spirituall ffoode, that ys the worde of God, and the trewe knowledg of his Lawe.” After highlighting Cyprian’s adherence to biblical tenets, Cooke depicts his translation as a means of reforming English attitudes toward prayer: “This Sermon often redde of the multitude, I put no doubttes wolde be a greate occasyon to set prayer in his olde place agayne.”¹² Similarly, Henry Parker, Lord Morley, presented Henry with a translation of Paolo Giovio’s “Comentarys of the Turke,” so “that your hyghe wysdome myght counsell with other Christen kynges for a remedye agaynste so perlouse an ennemye to oure feythe.”¹³ In 1574, John Rainolds dedicated his translation of Plutarch’s “How to Profit by One’s Enemies” to Elizabeth, praising her for reforming the English church (“Christianam fidem

propagasti, Pontificias faeces ejecisti”; You have propagated the Christian faith, you have cast out the pontifical mire) and describing Plutarch’s text as especially fit for a Christian prince: “Nullum autem occurrit, aut brevitatem aptius, ut ad Reginam; aut usu commodius, ut ad Christianam” (Moreover nothing presented itself either more fitting in brevity, as for a queen, nor more convenient in use, as for a Christian one).¹⁴ Rainolds, a staunch Calvinist, gestures at the application of Plutarch’s treatise to the external enemies Elizabeth faced, including Catholic powers such as Spain, while perhaps even encouraging her to undertake further religious reform. Male translators could therefore advance their political and religious agendas by counseling the ruler on how best to govern. While printed translations also often served an advisory function (as in the case of Thomas Wilson’s English translations of Demosthenes, which warned Elizabeth to act against Philip of Spain), manuscript translations had a singularity that enhanced their value, which was also signaled by material markers such as bindings, calligraphy, and illumination. Due to their externalization of the text’s value, presentation copies of manuscript translations uniquely conveyed the cultural capital symbolized by the act of translation.

Female translators also presented patrons with translations as New Year’s gifts to evoke their education and to establish their own religious credentials in relation to contemporary politics. As the previous chapter noted, Elizabeth Tudor presented Katherine Parr with an English translation of Marguerite de Navarre’s *Le miroir de l’âme pécheresse* (*The Glasse of the Synnefull Soule*, 1544) from French verse into English prose. Around 1547, she also gave Edward VI a Latin translation of an Italian sermon by Bernardino Ochino (“Che cosa è Christo”). As in the case of Elizabeth’s translation of Parr, the material nature of these manuscripts signaled the inherent value of the texts themselves. Elizabeth’s rendering of Navarre still retains her intricately embroidered cover, featuring Parr’s initials worked in silver and gold thread within a larger pattern of lovers’ knots. While Elizabeth’s Ochino has lost its cover, she transcribed the text in a decorative italic hand further ornamented by red ruling and capitals. The dedicatory prefaces to these texts asserted the devotional value of the translations, demonstrating how the cultural capital Elizabeth had gained from her education could be applied to her reader’s spiritual welfare. Of course, Elizabeth was in her teens when she translated these works, and she probably did not have complete control over the choice of her source texts or even the composition of the dedicatory prefaces. Anne Lake Prescott has argued, for example, that Marguerite de Navarre’s text was assigned to Elizabeth by a tutor or

perhaps even Parr herself.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Janel Mueller and Joshua Scodel contend that Elizabeth's tutor Jean Belmaine was responsible for suggesting that Elizabeth translate Calvin and for overseeing her preface to this work.¹⁶ Elizabeth's Ochino is less clearly associated with her schoolroom, yet this work follows a similar template. Elizabeth had depicted her translation of Calvin as an appropriate tribute to Parr's interest in religious reform, aiming to advance the queen's "fervent zeal and perfect love . . . towards the selfsame God who created all things."¹⁷ Elizabeth's Ochino shows that she continued to use translation to demonstrate her religious views, for she concludes her dedication of this translation to Edward by praising Ochino's Protestantism: "if nothing else commended the work, the reputation of the writer would adorn it enough: who, expelled from his homeland on account of religion and Christ, is driven to lead his life in foreign places and among unknown men."¹⁸ Thomas Cranmer had recruited Ochino and other Continental reformers in order to advance the Edwardian Reformation, and Elizabeth's reference to Ochino's exile shows her tacit approval of this effort. By the time Elizabeth composed her translation of Ochino, then, she was well aware of the ways in which translation could signal the translator's political and religious stances.

As Elizabeth's careful portrayal of Calvin and Ochino suggests, while women's translations frequently had as much political resonance as those of male translators, female translators gestured at that potential in a much more subtle way than their male counterparts. If women were traditionally barred from the masculine public sphere, then they could not serve as political counselors in any official sense. Nevertheless, women often acted as unofficial counselors, and piety provided a culturally approved platform for their political intervention, particularly given Protestant emphasis on the spiritual equality of men and women.¹⁹ Rather than providing specific advice to their dedicatees, female translators—like Elizabeth—evoke a shared religious viewpoint that subtly invests their translations with contemporary meaning. For example, Jessica L. Malay has shown that Jane Seager's 1589 presentation of an English translation of Filippo Barbieri's *Sibyllarum de Christo vaticinia* to Elizabeth took advantage of the millenarian associations of Sibyls to advance a militantly Protestant agenda, yet Seager only obliquely refers to religious matters by pointing out that her source text's "divine prophetesies" are appropriate for Elizabeth as "cheife Defendress" of the Christian "faith."²⁰ Likewise, during Edward's reign Mary Basset presented Mary Tudor with an English and Latin translation of Eusebius that praised the work's depiction of church history to support Mary's

defiance of current religious reforms: “Well maye I in dede, and with good right call thys storye notable, syth (onely scrypture excepted) no one worcke ys ther, that entreateth of more high, more pleasaunt, more profytable matters or thinges more mete and worthy to be redd, studyed, and knowen of every good chrysten man and woman.”²¹ Female translators also intervened in courtly intrigue, albeit obliquely. In 1550 Mildred Cooke Cecil presented Anne Seymour, Duchess of Somerset, with an English translation of Basil the Great’s homily on Deuteronomy 15:9 (“Homilia in illud, Attende tibi ipsi”). The duchess and her husband were enmeshed in a web of courtly conspiracy and could have benefited greatly from the homily’s admonitions to beware hidden enemies, yet Cecil’s dedication underplays this coded message by concentrating instead on the duchess’s reformist interest in church fathers such as Basil: “I trust the Author whose commendation my wordes can smally enlarge, will cleame suche favor that my labor commyng in his companye be thought as welcome for his sake.”²² While these translations offer political and religious counsel, the translators present themselves as fellow believers rather than advisers. By suggesting a shared religious viewpoint that was relevant to the current political climate, female translators actualized the cultural capital inherent in their knowledge of foreign languages. As a result, these women could function as sources of approved religious and political commentary, becoming in effect unofficial counselors.

Revising Philip Sidney’s Legacy: Mary Sidney Herbert’s *Psalmes* and Anglo-Spanish Relations

For Philip Sidney and Mary Sidney Herbert, translation was a natural outgrowth of their support for international Protestantism. As an activity that bridged cultural and linguistic divides, translation of foreign Protestant texts into English revealed common political and religious interests that might help strengthen English support for beleaguered Dutch and French Protestants. After Philip Sidney’s death, Mary Sidney Herbert turned to translation to fashion herself as a political counselor who could extend her brother’s legacy to contemporary events. While critics have recognized that these translation projects were spurred by Sidney’s death, little attention has been paid to their connections with Sidney’s own turn to translation of Huguenot texts during his final years. Like her brother, Mary Sidney Herbert translated religious works with political ramifications that demonstrated her knowledge of foreign languages

(French, Italian, Latin), using her cultural capital to advance the international Protestant cause. Among these translations, the presentation copy of the Sidney Psalter is notable for its attempt to realize that capital in relation to Elizabeth herself. Scholars have already shown that Sidney Herbert became her brother's representative and developed her own literary abilities by finishing the Sidney Psalter, but the unique presentation copy prepared for Elizabeth's intended visit to Wilton gestured at the political ramifications of translation to offer the queen advice consonant with the Sidney family's agendas.²³ Mary Sidney Herbert's translations, then, did not simply memorialize or mourn her brother: they developed her political credibility by building on contemporary perceptions of Philip Sidney's own translations.

Philip Sidney's translations of religious works were directly related to his attempts to develop diplomatic alliances between England and Continental Protestants.²⁴ In 1572, Sidney represented his uncle Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and leader of the militant Protestant faction at court, on a minor embassy to France, where he met Hubert Languet and Philippe de Mornay (known as Duplessis-Mornay), both Huguenots and proponents of cementing ties among Protestants of all nationalities. Sidney's sympathies with this circle may have been further reinforced after he witnessed the Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre in which Catholic mobs indiscriminately murdered Huguenots. From this point, Sidney actively worked to further Languet's idea that Protestants throughout Europe should join forces against Catholic countries, particularly Spain. In a 1577 Continental embassy, Sidney tried unsuccessfully to lay the groundwork for a league of Protestant countries, and he died in 1586 while participating in an English military campaign aiding Dutch Protestants who opposed Spanish control of the Netherlands. During his final years, Sidney imitated and translated French Huguenot works that later appeared to offer literary evidence of his political and religious sympathies: Clément Marot and Théodore de Bèze's *Les Pseaumes de David* (1562), Duplessis-Mornay's *De la verité de la religion chrestienne* (1581), and Guillaume de Salluste Du Bartas's *La sepmaine ou création du monde* (1578).²⁵ Sidney's translations of Du Bartas and Duplessis-Mornay were clearly linked to the Languet circle and its ideals. Duplessis-Mornay may have introduced Sidney to Du Bartas's work, since Du Bartas and Duplessis-Mornay admired each other.²⁶ Meanwhile, the Languet circle made a concerted effort during the early 1580s to disseminate Duplessis-Mornay's work internationally through translation. Lucas de Heere translated Duplessis-Mornay's *Traicté de l'église* (1579) into Dutch (*Tractaet ofte handelinge van de Kercke*, 1580), and in 1581

Duplessis-Mornay himself translated *De la verité* into Latin at the urging of Languet (*De veritate religionis Christianae*).²⁷ Alan Sinfield has noted that *De la verité* had an anti-Catholic agenda, which may explain the Languet circle's interest in translating this work.²⁸

During the final years of his life, Sidney undertook a related project, creating versifications of the Bible's first forty-three psalms in imitation of the Marot-Bèze Psalter popular among French Huguenots.²⁹ While Sidney's interest may have been sparked by his familiarity with the Huguenots, who sang psalms as battle hymns, Sidney had closer models for the politicization of psalms, which had become linked with English religious reform during the Henrician era.³⁰ Both Thomas Wyatt and Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, had turned to the psalms as a means of veiled political commentary during imprisonment.³¹ Similarly, two of Sidney's Dudley uncles—John Dudley, Earl of Warwick, and Robert Dudley—composed adaptations of psalms that may have served as a means of political protest while the two were imprisoned in the Tower of London after their father's 1553 attempt to crown Lady Jane Grey.³² Certainly John Dudley's version of Psalm 55 could easily be read as a commentary on his incarceration: "Breake downe the wicked swarming flockes/that at mye fall rejoyce/whose cruell ravening myndes/to work my bane are bent." Robert Dudley's version of Psalm 94 pointedly criticizes "those hawltie men" who "so lordlye us disdayne" and laments his lack of allies: "When the wicked rulde/and bare the swaye by might/No one wolde preace to take my parte/or once defend my right."³³ As a typical devotional exercise, psalm reading and translation might seem innocuous enough, yet within the English tradition pioneered by Wyatt, psalms functioned simultaneously as a display of Protestant credentials and as a political statement. Sidney's own interest in the politicization of the psalms can be glimpsed in his sources. Besides drawing from the Book of Common Prayer, he turned to versions associated with religious reform: Marot-Bèze, the Geneva Bible, and Bèze's *Psalmorum Davidis* (1580).³⁴ All of Sidney's translations, then, bear the mark of his religious and political agendas, particularly his deep interest in advancing the ideal of international Protestantism associated with Languet.

Sidney may have died before capitalizing on the possible applications of these works, but his contemporaries were not hesitant to exploit their latent potential. In 1587 Arthur Golding dedicated his own supposed completion of Sidney's unfinished Duplessis-Mornay to Leicester, reminding readers that Sidney died "of manly wounds received in service of his Prince, in defence of persons oppressed, in maintenance of

the only true Catholick & Christian Religion.”³⁵ This elegiac evocation of Sidney’s saintly death on the battlefields of the Netherlands informs Golding’s presentation of the unfinished translation itself as part of Sidney’s militant Protestantism, a “peece of service which he had intended to the Muses or rather to Christes Church and his native Countrie.”³⁶ Fulke Greville, one of the greatest proponents of Sidney’s reputation as a Protestant martyr, also viewed Sidney’s translations as evidence of his religious sympathies. In November 1586, Greville wrote to Sir Francis Walsingham to block the publication of Sidney’s *Old Arcadia* and, very probably, Golding’s forthcoming translation of Duplessis-Mornay: “He hath most excellently translated among divers other notable workes monsieur du plessis book against atheisme, which is since donn by an other, so as bothe in respect of the love betwen plessis & him besyds other affinities in ther courses but espetially sir philips uncomparable Judgement, I think fit ther be made a stev of that mercenary book to[o] that sir philip might have all thos religious honors which ar worthely dew to his lyfe & deathe, many other works as bartas his semeyne, 40 of the spalms [*sic*] translated in to myter . . . requyre the care of his frends.”³⁷ Greville suggests that Golding’s imminent publication is an affront to Sidney’s martyrlike death even as he evokes the shared piety of Duplessis-Mornay and Sidney by mentioning their “affinities.” As these reactions suggest, contemporaries retroactively perceived Sidney’s religious translations as evidence of his devotion to the Protestant cause and, in turn, as part of his legacy as a Protestant martyr.

When Mary Sidney Herbert chose to translate religious works into English, she participated in a political activity that extended her brother’s legacy. While critics once saw Sidney Herbert’s translations as the products of her mourning for Philip Sidney and other family members, recent work has emphasized the political connotations of these texts, especially the 1592 publication of her translations of Duplessis-Mornay’s *A Discourse of Life and Death* (*Excellent discours de la vie et de la mort*, 1575) and Robert Garnier’s *Antonius* (*Marc Antoine*, 1585).³⁸ Margaret Hannay has observed that Sidney Herbert’s translation of Duplessis-Mornay evokes Philip Sidney’s Continental contacts.³⁹ More recently, Danielle Clarke has contended that Sidney Herbert’s *Antonius* relayed her concerns about the English succession, while Victor Skretkovicz has situated the publication of these works in relation to Duplessis-Mornay’s 1592 embassy, which sought Elizabeth’s financial and military support for the civil war between Henry IV of France and his Catholic subjects.⁴⁰ Strikingly, the volume’s title page identifies Sidney Herbert as the translator without any prefatory disclaimers of modesty, serving as a reminder

of the Sidney family's religious and political views. By turning to translation in the wake of her brother's death, then, Mary Sidney Herbert undertook a politicized activity that developed her own authority as an advocate of international Protestantism.

Elizabeth's proposed visit to Wilton during the summer of 1599 gave Sidney Herbert a special opportunity to apply the cultural capital of translation to a recent development within English foreign policy: the potential end of England's military involvement in the Netherlands. Critics have noted that the Psalter has political relevance to the international Protestantism espoused by the Sidney family, yet the question of why Sidney Herbert would want to present the work—first drafted by 1594—to the queen in 1599 remains unanswered.⁴¹ During this summer, Elizabeth was poised to begin peace negotiations with Spain, represented by Archduke Albert, signaling a possible shift in Anglo-Spanish relations that had obvious relevance to the Sidney family. Elizabeth had long supported Dutch Protestants in their efforts to end Spanish control of the Netherlands, and France had served as a crucial ally in this enterprise. Yet in May 1598, Henry IV negotiated peace with Spain in the Treaty of Vervins, forcing his Dutch and English allies to decide whether they should continue to wage war against Spain.⁴² While the Cecil faction maintained that Elizabeth should pursue peace with Spain, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, argued that the war should continue, most infamously in his manuscript letter to Francis Bacon, which saw scribal publication in 1598. For Essex, religion was a key factor in determining English foreign policy: "It is with out all doubt that there can be no peace concluded, except popish religion, be either universally established, or else freely exercised in the townes and provinces where nowe it is banished, Allowe the first, that they banish Gods true service, to bring in idolatrie, the[y] leave truth to receive falshood. . . . Allowe the second you bring in a pluralitie of religions, which is no lesse crime."⁴³ Characteristically, Elizabeth chose a middle course, lowering England's financial support for the war in a December 1598 treaty that arranged for the Dutch to repay some of their debts to England and to assume financial responsibility for English troops serving in the Netherlands.⁴⁴ Elizabeth also successfully argued that the six-month grace period granted to her by Vervins for negotiations with Spain should be extended until Albert returned to the Netherlands with his new bride, the Infanta Isabella. The archduke was not expected to return until late 1599, making that summer an ideal time to petition the queen on behalf of the Dutch.

Letters from Robert Sidney indicate that he—and very likely his sister as well—supported Essex’s advocacy of continued military involvement in the Netherlands. On January 25, 1598, Sidney wrote to Essex with an update about the movements of the Dutch envoys heading to the Vervins negotiations, expressing his hope that Elizabeth would not abandon the Dutch: “If they can persuade the King of France and her Majesty to continue the war, it is that which they most desire. If they cannot, yet surely they will go on and once more, of themselves, sustain the weight of the King of Spain’s forces. But I trust her Majesty will not forsake them, nor enter into a peace with him of whom she can expect no faith.”⁴⁵ Sidney’s distrust of the Spanish king (“him of whom she can expect no faith”) is further evidenced by another letter reminding Essex of the precedent of 1588, when Spain used peace talks as a diversionary tactic even as it prepared its armada: “An army there is surely there in providing, and such as cannot be but to our cost, except that our reasons this year can prove of more force than they did the year ’88.”⁴⁶ Sidney was not alone in worrying about another armada. Even Elizabeth attempted to use these fears as a bargaining chip in the Vervins negotiations, instructing Robert Cecil to inform Henry IV of recent rumors: “Wee are still in eminent expectation of invasion by the Spaniard (a matter wherwith the whole world is filled).”⁴⁷ Yet Robert Sidney eventually resigned himself to the idea of peace with Spain, writing to Robert Cecil on April 26, 1599, about his absence from his command at Flushing: “Perhaps the Queen may think it right for me to be at Flushing because of the treaty of peace now on hand. Last year I was noted to have opposed it to my power. . . . But I know I can neither further nor hinder it. If I am bidden, I can say my opinion and follow what the Queen shall command.”⁴⁸ Sidney’s grudging acceptance of the situation probably reflected the waning fortunes of Essex—who had alienated the queen in June 1598 by reaching for his sword after she boxed his ears—and, in consequence, anti-Spanish policy. By March 1599 Essex had left for Ireland to deal with the insurrection led by the Earl of Tyrone and thus was preoccupied with more immediate concerns than the Spanish. Mary Sidney Herbert was probably aware of the precarious state of the Dutch cause, as Robert Sidney visited her at Wilton on May 31, just a month after his pragmatic letter to Cecil.⁴⁹ The queen’s proposed visit to Wilton that summer would give Sidney Herbert an opportunity to remind Elizabeth of the Sidney family’s fervent anti-Spanish stance. Not only was Wilton itself strongly linked to Philip Sidney, who had retired there while in disgrace with Elizabeth, but the *Psalmes* would be an ideal text, coauthored with her brother and, as an imitation of Marot-Bèze, easily linked to the Protestant cause for which Sidney had died.

Mary Sidney Herbert oversaw the preparation of a presentation copy whose aesthetic appeal would immediately indicate the special value of the *Psalms* and, as a result, hint at its political capital. William A. Ringler Jr. proposed MS A as the presentation copy, an identification made probable by its unique material features.⁵⁰ John Davies of Hereford transcribed the poems in a distinctive calligraphic hand, florid with ornamental otiose strokes that elevate the text above a merely functional purpose. Davies enhances the work's decorative charm and suggests its value by using gold ink for most capital letters and by gilding the lobes and clubs of lowercase letters such as *d*, *b*, *f*, and *h*. The manuscript also has a complex scheme of red ruling that indicates the overall emphasis placed on presentation by creating multiple inset panels. Not only is every page ruled lengthwise and widthwise along each side to create a large rectangle, but each psalm's Latin incipit and number are separately underlined in red. Further ruling along the left side of every page sets off the initial capital letter of each verse, already highlighted in gold, from the psalm itself by creating a sizable margin of up to an inch and a half. Meanwhile, every psalm is boxed in with red ruling above its first line and below its last line. This intricate system of ruling situates the psalms within substantial empty spaces, indicating little need to be concerned with wasting paper. The work's original binding of crimson velvet, now lost, must have only further accentuated the overall presentation.⁵¹ The elaborate hand, striking gold ink, and complex ruling ultimately create a larger effect of lavishness that reflects the value of the work itself, a text initially composed by a king and now presented to a queen. As the accompanying dedicatory poem "Even Now That Care" notes, the Psalter was particularly appropriate to Elizabeth, perhaps especially so given Sidney Herbert's possible belief that Elizabeth herself had translated Psalm 13: "A King should onely to a Queene bee sent."⁵² The text's material features thus insist upon the regal nature of this gift, suggesting that this unique copy of the *Psalms* was well worth a queen's attention.

The prefatory poems written by Sidney Herbert accentuate the cultural capital implied by these unique features by first connecting the work to English Protestantism and then more specifically to Philip Sidney. While the first leaves of MS A have been torn out, scholars agree that the text was most likely prefaced by two poems extant in MS J, a copy of MS A: "Even Now" and "To the Angell Spirit."⁵³ The first of these poems, "Even Now," simultaneously politicizes the Psalter and appeals to Elizabeth's well-known interest in translation by describing the text as a naturalized English citizen with a new set of clothing, imagery associated with translation:

. . . hee [Philip] did warpe, I weav'd this webb to end;
 the stuffe not ours, our worke no curious thing,
 Wherein yet well wee thought the Psalmist King
 Now English denizend, though Hebrue borne,
 woold to thy musicke undispleas'd sing,
 Oft having worse, without repining worne.

(*PTC*, pp. 102–3, lines 27–32)

Sidney Herbert pointedly disclaims responsibility for the content of the Psalter: “the stuffe not ours.” She and Philip have merely fashioned the shape, or English form, which is depicted as “A liverie robe to bee bestowed by thee [Elizabeth]” (*PTC*, p. 103, line 34). This elaborate metaphor presents the Psalter as “liverie” for David, now an Englishman who sings in the queen’s service. Similarly, in “Angell Spirit” Sidney Herbert notes that “heavens King may daigne his owne transform’d/in substance no, but superficiall tire” (*PTC*, p. 110, lines 8–9). Although critics have noted Sidney Herbert’s use of translation imagery, its full importance has yet to be explored, perhaps because of the tendency to categorize the *Psalmes* in terms that emphasize her creativity.⁵⁴ Neither Sidney nor Sidney Herbert followed modern translation practices, as both drew upon sources in French, Latin, and English rather than the Hebrew primary source text.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, as Hannibal Hamlin has pointed out, modern conceptions of translation do not apply particularly well to early modern psalms, which blurred the line between translation and paraphrase.⁵⁶ Certainly, title pages for metrical psalms by authors such as Francis Bacon suggest that the term “translation” could be applied even to the act of versifying psalms.⁵⁷ If some manuscripts of the Sidney Psalter refer to the work as being “translated” or “metaphrased” (that is, “to translate, esp. in verse”), both John Donne and John Harington punningly referred to the *Psalmes* as translations.⁵⁸ Donne’s laudatory poem describes the Sidneys as “translators” now “translated” to heaven, while Harington’s “In Prayse of Two Worthy Translations” praises both Mary, Countess of Shrewsbury, and Sidney Herbert: “A Colledge this translates, the tother Psalmes.”⁵⁹ Sidney Herbert’s own use of imagery associated with translation in these dedicatory poems may have been calculated to appeal specifically to Elizabeth, whose reputation for Protestant piety had been established by Bale’s publication of her translation of Marguerite de Navarre.

“Even Now That Care” offers a more specific political context for the psalms by alluding to contemporary European history. The poem opens by questioning whether Elizabeth has leisure for “receiving Rimes,” given the current political climate:

One instant will, or willing can shee lose
 I say not reading, but receiving Rimes,
 On whom in chiefe dependeth to dispose
 what Europe acts in these most active times?
 (*PTC*, p. 102, lines 5–8)

Sidney Herbert's use of polyptoton ("acts," "active") helps cast the queen as a Protestant monarch since "active" suggested the action-oriented stance of militant Protestants (*PTC*, p. 100). These lines may more pointedly refer to the aftermath of Vervins, when Elizabeth's decision regarding Spain would determine "what Europe acts." The third stanza, which answers this initial question, is evocative of the lull in negotiations during the archduke's absence: "Cares though still great, cannot bee greatest still,/Busines most ebb, though Leasure never flowe" (*PTC*, p. 102, lines 17–18). Sidney Herbert presents the Psalter as fit reading for such an "ebb" in "Busines" by noting the parallels between the careers of David and Elizabeth: "ev'n thy Rule is painted in his Raigne" (*PTC*, p. 104, line 65). Just as David withstood heathen enemies, so Elizabeth has triumphed over Catholic "foes of heav'n" (*PTC*, p. 104, line 70), including the Spanish Armada: "The very windes did on thy partie blowe/and rocks in armes thy foe men eft defie" (*PTC*, p. 104, lines 77–78).⁶⁰ Given ongoing fears of another armada mentioned by Robert Sidney and Elizabeth herself in 1598 and 1599, this allusion to the armada may have evoked the consequences of peace talks with Spain. The poem concludes with an idealized description of Elizabeth dictating European policy:

Kings on a Queene enforst their states to lay;
 Main-lands for Empire waiting on an Ile;
 Men drawne by worth a woman to obay;
 one moving all, herself unmov'd the while:
 Truthes restitution, vanitie exile,
 wealth sprung of want, warr held without annoye.
 (*PTC*, p. 104, lines 81–86)

While Elizabeth "mov[es] all," bringing "Kings" and "Main-lands" to "obay" her power, England itself experiences prosperity even as it conducts "warr . . . without annoye," perhaps a reference to England's engagement in military actions outside its borders, as in the Netherlands. "Even Now" thus places the Psalter within the political discourse cultivated by Sidney, offering an argument that England should continue its active opposition to Spain and, as a result, its support of international Protestantism.

The second prefatory poem, “Angell Spirit,” provides further justification for anti-Spanish policies by invoking Philip Sidney himself. Although “Even Now That Care” clearly presents the Psalter to Elizabeth, “Angell Spirit” indicates that the work possesses a second dedicatee: “To thee pure sprite, to thee alone’s addres’t/this coupled worke” (*PTC*, p. 110, lines 1–2). This initial description of Philip as a “pure sprite” offers a punning reference to both his virtue as well as his demise, as without a body he is now only “sprite,” or spirit. Given the legendary status of Sidney’s death, this opening reference conjures up his reputation as a Protestant martyr, which is reinforced by the third stanza’s lamentation of his untimely end: “Had that soule which honor brought to rest/too soone not left and reft the world of all/what man could showe” (*PTC*, p. 110, lines 15–17). The “honor” of Sidney’s death in turn allows him to reap a heavenly reward that further politicizes the *Psalmes* to follow:

Thy Angells soule with highest Angells plac’t
 There blessed sings enjoying heav’n-delights
 thy Makers praise: as farr from earthy tast
 as here thy workes so worthilie embrac’t
 By all of worth, where never Envie bites.

(*PTC*, p. 111, lines 59–63)

As Hannay has noted, these lines may obliquely refer to Elizabeth’s refusal to support Sidney’s political career due to her concerns over his flourishing international reputation.⁶¹ Although this “Envie” prevented Sidney from advancement on earth, no such limitation bars his progress in heaven, where his “Angells soule” fittingly enjoys the sphere of “highest Angells.” Sidney Herbert thus obliquely chides Elizabeth for hindering her brother’s career by giving way to “Envie.” In doing so, she presents the Psalter as evidence of the “worth” Sidney held while alive, linking the text to his thwarted political ambitions. Finally, Sidney Herbert positions herself as the current public representative of Sidney’s pro-Protestant politics, signing the work, “By the Sister of that Incomparable Sidney” (*PTC*, p. 112). “Angell Spirit” therefore links Philip Sidney’s dashed political hopes to the Psalter, transferring Sidney’s cachet to Sidney Herbert as the completer of her brother’s unfinished work.

Rumors about the “Invisible Armada” of 1599 led Elizabeth to cancel her planned visit to Wilton, and MS A in turn remained there. While Sidney Herbert continued to update the manuscript, Davies never finished the elaborate system of ruling and gilding that distinguishes the majority of this copy. As a result, comparison of MS A’s physical characteristics

with the textual transmission of the Psalter reveals that Sidney Herbert was still revising the conclusions to five of her brother's Psalms while Davies prepared the presentation copy. The creation of MS A required several stages: after the psalms had been transcribed, Davies returned to the text to add in numbers, Latin incipits, gold capitals, and gilding.⁶² The ruling of the psalm's numbers, incipits, and concluding lines must have also occurred during this second stage. Psalms 16, 22, 23, and 26 all end with final stanzas that lack concluding ruling and gilding, suggesting that Davies was unable to transcribe these psalms in their entirety during both the first and second stages.⁶³ He may not have completed these embellishments because Elizabeth's canceled visit had altered the text's purpose. In fact, Psalm 16 concludes not in Davies's calligraphy but with a more utilitarian hand also tentatively ascribed to Davies.⁶⁴ The textual transmission of the Psalter offers further evidence that these psalms remained incomplete up to this point. Sidney Herbert made three rounds of revisions to the Psalter, and MS A and its copies F and J represent the second round.⁶⁵ Tellingly, the manuscripts preserving the first set of revisions, now known as the δ tradition, generally omit the revised conclusions found in MS A or offer preliminary versions of these stanzas, indicating that these changes were part of the second round of revisions.⁶⁶ Yet most of Sidney Herbert's secondary revisions are incorporated seamlessly into MS A, implying that these changes to Psalms 16, 22, 23, and 26 occurred fairly late in the revision process. Additional support for this conclusion can be found in MS B, Samuel Woodford's partial copy of Sidney Herbert's working papers.⁶⁷ The final stanzas of these psalms were crossed out, with an accompanying note instructing that space be left for corrections: "Leave room for this staff" (Psalm 16), "leave space for this" (Psalm 22), "leave space for six lines" (Psalm 23), and "Leave space" (Psalm 26).⁶⁸ While transcribing MS A, Davies did just that, copying and gilding the earlier portions of these psalms but leaving space for new versions of the final stanzas to be inserted. Psalm 1 also belongs to this group of unfinished psalms as it is missing in the δ tradition but preserved in MS J, a copy of MS A. Significantly, MS B contains a notation indicating that this psalm was not finished, "these altered. Q[uaere]."⁶⁹ Thus Mary Sidney Herbert was in the process of finishing the final stanzas of Psalms 1, 16, 22, 23, and 26 while Davies was copying MS A. She probably revised these psalms because they ended with incomplete stanzas, which she had already decided not to use in her own work.⁷⁰ Scholars have primarily considered Sidney Herbert's revisions of her brother's psalms in terms of her development of poetic abilities.⁷¹ These later revisions, however, underscore the political

sentiments expressed in “Even Now” and “Angell Spirit,” reframing Philip Sidney’s psalms as a source of counsel applicable to current English relations with Spain.

As the commentary in the Geneva and Bishops’ Bibles indicates, early modern readers viewed Psalm 1 as an introduction to the entire Book of Psalms, which meant that this psalm had special significance. Philip Sidney’s original version of verses 4 through 6 offered a loose paraphrase focusing on the psychology of the wicked:

Such blessings shall not wycked wretches see:
 But lyke vyle chaffe with winde shal scattered be.
 For neither shall the men in sin delighted
 Consist, when they to highest doome are cited,
 Ne yet shall suffred be a place to take,
 Wher godly men do their assembly make.

For God doth know, and knowing doth approve,
 The trade of them, that just proceeding love;
 But they that sinne, in sinfull breast do cherish;
 The way they go shal be their way to perish.⁷²

Sidney’s version melded Marot and Bèze (“Such blessings” approximates “telles vertus”), the Book of Common Prayer (“they are lyke the chaffe which the wynde scattereth away”), and Bèze’s *Psalmorum* (“Consist” renders “consistent” while “approve” translates “approbat”).⁷³ Sidney Herbert, in contrast, grounds her revisions in the Calvinist-oriented Geneva Bible:

Not soe the wicked; Butt like chaff with wind
 scatt’red, shall neither stay in Judgment find
 nor with the just, bee in their meetings placed:
 for good mens waies by God are knowne & graced.
 Butt who from Justice sinnfully doe stray,
 the way they goe, shall be their ruins way.⁷⁴

This revision carefully compresses Sidney’s original, condensing his portrayal of the Lord’s approval of “godly men” to refocus the psalm’s conclusion on God’s just punishment of sinners. By beginning the stanza with the negative adverb “not,” Sidney Herbert simultaneously echoes the Geneva Bible’s phrasing (“The wicked are not so”) and more strongly emphasizes the psalm’s turn from the virtuous man to the evildoer than

Sidney had done.⁷⁵ Sidney Herbert may have found the Geneva Bible a particularly apt source because of its emphasis on the eventual downfall of the “wicked.” The Geneva Bible’s argument to Psalm 1, for example, states “that the wicked contemners of God, thogh they seme for a while happie, yet at length shal come to miserable destruction.” Sidney Herbert’s interest in this interpretation of the psalm can be seen in her echo of the Geneva Bible’s version of verse 5 (“the wicked shal not stand in the Judgement”), as the marginal note for “Judgement” explains that the wicked will “tremble, when they fele Gods wrath.” Since “Even now” had paralleled David’s enemies with the “foes of heav’n” that threatened Elizabeth, the “wicked” men of this first psalm could possibly include Catholic Spain. The skillful enjambment separating “wind” and “scatt’red” offers a visual demonstration of the wicked man’s inability to endure God’s “Judgment” even as it might evoke the description of the Spanish Armada’s fate in “Even Now”: “The very windes did on thy partie blowe” (*PTC*, p. 104, line 77). Within the context provided by the prefatory poems, Psalm 1’s concluding lines may serve as a warning against allying with God’s foes, especially as “stray” echoes Sidney’s praise of the virtuous man’s rejection of poor advice at the Psalm’s start: “He blessed is, who neither loosely treads/The straying stepps as wicked Counsel leades.”⁷⁶ Sidney Herbert thus alters her brother’s version of this psalm so that it offers coded political guidance about the dangers of joining forces with the wicked, whose destruction is inevitably assured.

The new version of Psalm 26 provides another warning about evil counsel with additional poignancy due to its potential link to Sidney’s stunted courtly career, which “Angell Spirit” had attributed to “Envie.” Sidney’s versions of verses 4 and 5 could be read as a personal rejection of courtly vanity: “I did not them frequent/Who be to vaineess bent,/Nor kept with base dissemblers company.”⁷⁷ Similarly, his rendering of verses 10 through 12 emphasizes David’s rejection of corruption:

Whose hands do handle nought,
But led by wicked thought
That hand whose strength should help of bribes is full.
But in integrity
My stepps shall guided be,
Then me redeem Lord then be mercifull.
Even truth that for me sayes
My foot on justice staves,
And tongue is prest to publish out thy prayse.⁷⁸

While Sidney largely relied on the Book of Common Prayer and the Geneva Bible for this versification, he also included several elements from Bèze: “wicked thought” derives from “male cogitata” while “integrity” translates “integer.”⁷⁹ Sidney Herbert uses Bèze even more extensively, basing her version on the 1580 English translation by Anthony Gilby:

With handes of wicked shifts
with right hands stain'd with gifts
But while I walk in my unspotted waies
redeeme and show mee grace
so I in publique place
Sett on plaine ground will thee Jehovah praise.⁸⁰

While “wicked shifts” rephrases Gilby’s “wicked devises,” “publique place” also originates in his translation: “I . . . will magnifie thy name in the publique congregations.”⁸¹ Furthermore, Sidney Herbert probably derives “stain’d” from Gilby’s translation of Bèze’s argument:

It is a very hard thing in the court to retain true Religion & uprightnesse of life & conversation chiefly when wicked men do reigne, and their flatterers do rage partly open by violence, partly by false accusations, & an other sort doth sing in their eares that they must frame their wits to serve all turns and purposes, even as the fish called Polipus doth change himself into the colour of the stone whereunto he cleaveth. . . . But David . . . still continueth to abhorre the counsels & the examples of the wicked.⁸²

In paraphrastically translating the Greek proverb “Take the mind of a polyp,” Gilby adds new information about the chameleonic nature of this fish. His source text reads, “ac quibusdam etiam prophanum illud proverbium specie prudentiae occinentibus, polypodos noon esche [*sic*]” (and also some crying that pagan proverb with the semblance of wisdom, “take the mind of the polyp”).⁸³ As Gilby’s focus on color is not found in any of Sidney Herbert’s other known sources, his simile may explain her use of “stain’d,” a clever pun on two of the verb’s meanings: “to alter the colour of” and “To defile or corrupt morally.”⁸⁴ If Bèze’s argument suggests that “stain’d” had political connotations as a symbol for the changeability of the immoral courtier, the substitution of “gifts” (taken from the Book of Common Prayer) for “bribes” evokes the politicized sphere of Tudor gift exchange. These oblique references to courtly corruption reframe Sidney’s marginalization at court as a sign of

his righteousness even as they reinforce the warning contained in Psalm 1 regarding evil counselors. If David—and implicitly Philip Sidney—is a model for Elizabeth, then this psalm suggests that she should reject courtly guile and embrace an unpopular but godly course, a sentiment with personal and political relevance given the militant stance of “Even Now.”

Sidney Herbert’s revision of Psalm 23 also takes advantage of the Psalter’s authorial multiplicity to reiterate Sidney’s saintly legacy as depicted in “Angell Spirit.”⁸⁵ Sidney had elaborated on the metaphors of hospitality implicit in verses 5 and 6:

With oyle Thou dost anoynt my head,
 And so my cup dost fill
 That it doth spill.
 Thus thus shall all my days be fede,
 This mercy is so sure
 It shall endure,
 And long yea long abide I shall,
 There where the Lord of all
 Doth hold his hall.⁸⁶

As before, Sidney relies on sources associated with Calvinism while composing his version. Besides following the phrasing of the Geneva Bible (“thou doest anoint mine head with oyle”), he may draw upon Bèze, who alone among his sources explicitly develops the theme of hospitality: “The . . . similitude is taken from them that keepe good hospitalitie, which most liberally receive those travellers that come unto them.”⁸⁷ Sidney Herbert retains this elaboration while also adding fresh material from Bèze that subtly reshapes the psalm’s conclusion:

Thou oil’st my head thou fill’st my cupp:
 nay more thou endlesse good,
 shalt give me food,
 To thee, I say, ascended up,
 where thou the lord of all,
 dost hold thy hall.⁸⁸

Sidney Herbert probably drew upon Bèze’s argument in substituting “To thee I say ascended up,” a description of heavenly translation, for “abide I shall,” a reference to living in the house of the Lord. Of her known sources, only Bèze specifically mentions this idea of climbing to heaven:

“It teacheth us that wee ought to rise [assurgere] from those transitorie benefites to those everlasting and heavenly blessinges.”⁸⁹ While referring to this idea in a highly compressed manner, Sidney Herbert uses the past participle “ascended.” Since this tense could suggest that the speaker’s flight has already taken place, Sidney Herbert’s revision may have evoked “Angell Spirit” and its description of Sidney’s place in heaven: “Thy Angells soule with highest Angells plac’t/There blessed sings enjoying heav’n-delights/thy Makers praise” (*PTC*, p. 111, lines 59–61). This new conclusion to Psalm 23 allows the voices of David and Philip Sidney to coexist, reinforcing the paratextual depiction of Sidney’s heavenly reward as a Protestant martyr who had died while fighting against Spain and for the Dutch.

Within the context established by MS A, Sidney Herbert’s revisions could be read as promoting the political aims of the Sidney family, particularly its support of international Protestantism. While Essex had turned his attention to Ireland and Robert Sidney had diffidently accepted the idea of peace with Spain, Sidney Herbert offered a warning that reiterated their earlier concerns about allying with England’s foes even as she reminded Elizabeth of her family’s sacrifices for this cause. Indeed, the Psalter provided a particularly convenient means of commenting on England’s foreign policy due to the apparent connection between Philip Sidney’s translations of Protestant texts and his death in the Netherlands. The authorial multiplicity of the work—whose authors include God, David, Sidney, and Sidney Herbert—thus allowed Sidney Herbert to portray the Psalter as an important source of godly political counsel. Addressed to Elizabeth during a delay in negotiations with Spain, the Sidney Psalter encouraged the queen to identify with the militant Protestantism of its authors and to maintain the anti-Catholic stance of her earlier years.

Book and Scepter: Elizabeth’s Boethius and the Conversion of Henry IV

As queen, Elizabeth I received numerous dedications of manuscript and print translations that participated in the courtly system of gift exchange. Although Elizabeth herself had little need for patronage at this point, she continued to compose translations that displayed her linguistic abilities. Yet instead of translating Protestant vernacular works, Elizabeth turned to Latin texts reminiscent of her humanist education: Boethius, Cicero, Horace, Plutarch (via Erasmus’s Latin translation), Pseudo-Seneca,

Sallust, and Seneca. Elizabeth thus utilized classical literature to display a humanist education typically associated with men, both counteracting stereotypes of feminine weakness and demonstrating her ability to govern.⁹⁰ Elizabeth's later translations, however, require further scrutiny on their own terms, for Elizabeth used this activity in a distinctive manner separate from the translation practices of her courtiers: to construct her public and private personae as a queen and a woman. It is a critical commonplace that Elizabeth and her subjects adroitly adapted the medieval conception of the king's two bodies to counter misgivings about her gender.⁹¹ As judges in a 1561 court case stated, "the King has in him two Bodies, *viz.* a Body natural, and a Body politic. His Body natural (if it be considered in itself) is a Body mortal, subject to all Infirmities that come by Nature or Accident. . . . But his Body politic is a Body that cannot be seen or handled, consisting of Policy and Government, . . . and this Body is utterly void of Infancy, and old Age, and other natural Defects."⁹² Common wisdom held that women—as the "weaker" sex—should be ruled by men, making Elizabeth's role as queen both anomalous and potentially subversive. Yet Elizabeth's body politic was free from all "Infirmities" present in her body natural, presumably including her femininity, as Elizabeth herself suggested in her famous speech at Tilbury: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king and of a king of England too."⁹³ As Carole Levin's insightful account of this phenomenon reveals, the queen and her advisers also performatively displayed the queen's "weak" body natural for political purposes such as explaining her refusal to marry.⁹⁴ Elizabeth's later translations can further advance our understanding of her deployment of the king's two bodies. Never meant for public circulation and therefore ostensibly private, Elizabeth's translations showed her personal interest in the continued acquisition of cultural capital. Yet the link between translation and political commentary meant that Elizabeth's efforts could be viewed as a form of self-counsel. Her translations therefore became a pivot point around which her personae as private woman and queen moved. As Elizabeth schooled her body natural with translation, itself a humanist pedagogical tool, she positioned herself as a counselor worthy of governing the body politic.

Throughout her reign, Elizabeth allowed select members of her court to become spectators of her ongoing self-education by participating in learned activities that were apparently private yet that provided the raw materials for her pose as a knowledgeable queen. For example, Roger Ascham begins *The Scholemaster* (1570) with an account of his ongoing

reading with the queen in 1563, long after he had formally ceased to be her tutor: "After dinner I went up to read with the Queenes Majestie. We red than together in the Greke tonge, as I well remember, that noble Oration of Demosthenes against Aeschines, for his false dealing in his Ambassage to king Philip of Macedonie. Syr Rich[ard] Sackvile came up sone after: and finding me in hir Majesties privie chamber, he tooke me by the hand."⁹⁵ Ascham's anecdote depicts Elizabeth sharing her personal enjoyment in classical literature with the tutor of her school days in her "privie chamber," the queen's private room within her castle at Windsor as well as the very center of her court. Although Ascham presents reading as evidence of Elizabeth's personal inclinations, Sackville's interruption is a reminder that this room was also a public area occupied by her privy counselors and ladies-in-waiting, among others.⁹⁶ By reading classical texts with Ascham, Elizabeth could adroitly use the privacy suggested by her privy chamber to indicate her personal grounding in humanist ideals. Even as late as 1601, Elizabeth was publicly reading Latin, although she required some assistance with vocabulary.⁹⁷ During these nominally private displays, Elizabeth reverted to the subordinate position of a student, schooling her body natural with classical texts deemed relevant to governance.⁹⁸

In her official capacity as queen, Elizabeth drew on the cultural capital acquired through this private study to establish her own political power as an adviser and ruler. In 1563 she published her *Sententiae*, a collection of concise maxims from classical writers, church fathers, and the Bible that she had arranged thematically around topical subjects including rule, counsel, and war. Not only did Elizabeth's *Sententiae* gesture at the queen's learning, but it also suggested that that knowledge could be utilized within her day-to-day governing.⁹⁹ Furthermore, Elizabeth incorporated classical quotations into letters and speeches to fashion herself as a counselor worthy of respect. In 1564 Elizabeth gave a Latin oration at Cambridge that began with a modest deprecation of her femininity: "Feminine modesty, most faithful subjects and most celebrated university, prohibits the delivery of a rude and uncultivated speech in such a gathering of most learned men." Elizabeth then revealed her own erudition by citing Demosthenes as a precedent for her royal authority: "The words of superiors, as Demosthenes said, are as the books of their inferiors, and the example of a prince has the force of law."¹⁰⁰ Similarly, Elizabeth warned James VI of Scotland in 1583 about his councillors' treachery in a letter that alluded to Isocrates: "I would Isocrates' noble lesson were not forgotten, that wills the Emperor his sovereign to make his words of more account than other men their oaths, as meetest ensigs to show

the truest badge of a Prince's arms."¹⁰¹ Susan Frye has persuasively noted that this allusion allowed Elizabeth to occupy a doubly male position as James's "schoolmaster" and fellow "prince."¹⁰² Perhaps most famously, Elizabeth deftly proved her competence in 1597 with an impromptu Latin rebuke of a Polish ambassador, Paul Dzialynski, thereby asserting her own ability to rule.¹⁰³ Throughout her reign, then, Elizabeth consistently used her knowledge of classical languages as a basis for presenting herself as a prince with masculine learning.

Elizabeth's translations, like her reading and citation of classical authors, symbolized her personal interest in humanist knowledge that could be applied to governing the realm. Indeed, the material features and limited circulation of her later translations characterize these works as private productions linked to Elizabeth's personal, rather than royal, inclinations. Unlike Elizabeth's early translations, the majority of her later translations were not presentation copies bestowed as gifts. Only two translations can be definitively identified as presents: two letters given to her godson, John Harington (Seneca's *Epistula* 170 and Cicero's *Ad familiares* 2.6). Neither of these texts survives in manuscript, but scholars have speculated that her translation of *Pro Marcello* was presented to an unknown Oxford don during the queen's 1592 visit.¹⁰⁴ *Pro Marcello*, like Elizabeth's other extant holograph translations from this period, differs considerably from the lavish presentation of her early translations. Rather than the neat italic of Elizabeth's earlier presentation copies, these texts are written in her late italic hand, a loose scrawl. The presentational value of Elizabeth's *Pro Marcello* is limited to two features: her holograph handwriting and a royal watermark (the monogram *ER* surrounded by knotwork and surmounted by a crown). Rather than demonstrating the importance of her work through features such as decorative handwriting, ruling, and embroidery, Elizabeth's *Pro Marcello* gains worth in its appearance of being dashed off during a fleeting moment of spare time. Extant holograph copies of Elizabeth's Boethius, Horace, and Plutarch are similarly functional rather than ornamental. Of these, Elizabeth's Boethius is a foul copy in a particularly messy state (see figure 7). The queen dictated the majority of this translation to Thomas Windebank, her secretary, adding the work's verse sections in her own hand and occasionally correcting Windebank's transcription. Although the text is composed on paper bearing royal watermarks, Windebank used a variety of papers cut to different sizes, further suggesting the text's improvisatory and private nature. As a result of these physical characteristics, scholars have generally read Elizabeth's later translations as personal efforts intended for her eyes alone.

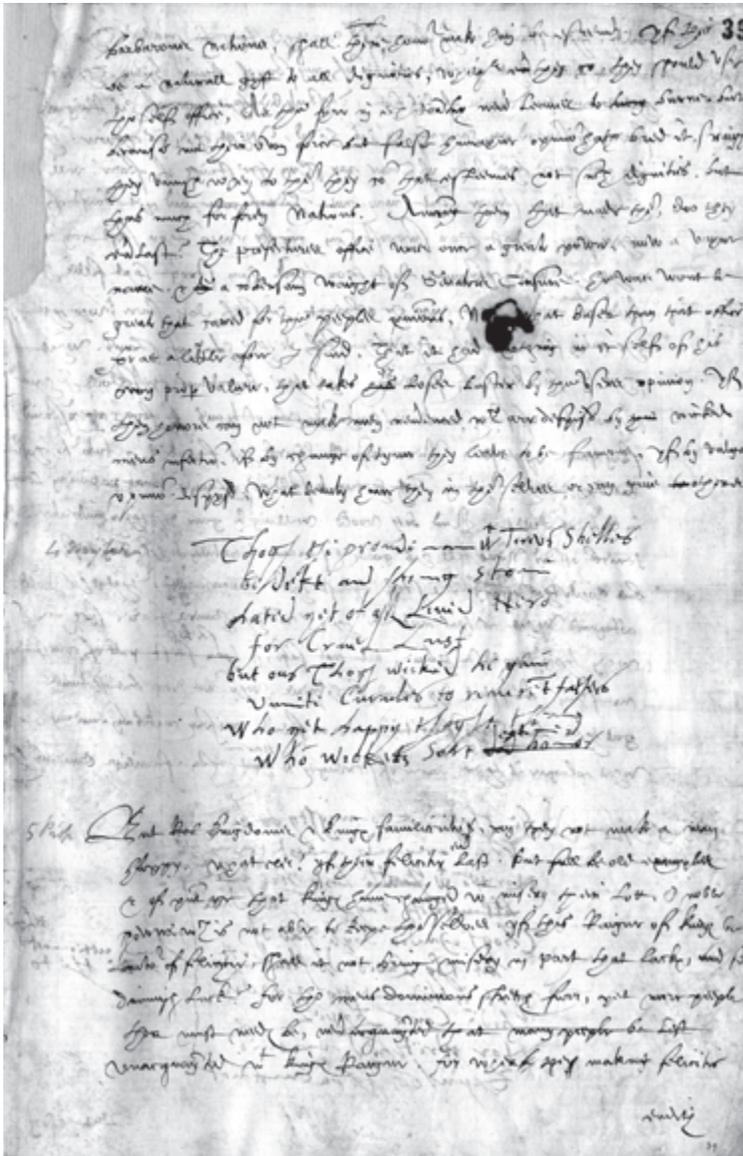


Figure 7. Folio 39 recto of *The Consolation of Philosophy* (1593), Elizabeth I's translation of Boethius. The National Archives of the UK: State Papers 12/289, 39r.

Nonetheless, contemporary responses to Elizabeth's translations indicate that courtiers knew of her translations and—in some cases—read them. In 1591, Henry Savile hyperbolically described the queen's work as "most rare and excellent translations of Histories (if I may call them translations, which have so infinitelie exceeded the originals)."¹⁰⁵ Although Savile's praise does not provide definitive proof that he read the queen's translations, others certainly did. Windebank, for example, both wrote the Boethius at the queen's dictation and complied with Elizabeth's directive to make fair copies of the Boethius, Horace, and Plutarch.¹⁰⁶ Even if Elizabeth did not intend Windebank's fair copies to circulate, her secretary was an eyewitness of and possible informant about the queen's translation activities to the court at large. Elizabeth may have presented her translations of Cicero and Seneca to John Harington and possibly an Oxford don, but she was also eager to control the circulation of her work. On August 24, 1593, Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, wrote a letter to Francis Bacon that referred to Elizabeth's translations: "I told her [Elizabeth] that [the position] I sought for you was not so much your good, though it were a thing I would seek extremely and please myself in obtaining, as for her honour, that those excellent translations of hers might be known to them who could best judge of them."¹⁰⁷ Although it is impossible to determine which "translations" Essex mentions, this letter provides a tantalizing glimpse into how courtiers approached and utilized her translations. At this time, Essex was unsuccessfully seeking to elevate Bacon into the vacant position of attorney general. Apparently Essex had received Elizabeth's translations and forwarded them to Bacon, setting the ground for Bacon to flatter Elizabeth or even assert his familiarity with her to others. However, Essex's reference to the queen's "honour" suggests that Elizabeth was none too pleased with this tactic. Essex's letter supports Leah Marcus's assertion that Elizabeth translated "to be publicly known to be translating" rather than to share her work, so that translation became "a form of political assertion."¹⁰⁸ Elizabeth's translations were another means of demonstrating the cultural capital that she had gained through her humanist education and on which she drew in her role as queen. By translating works intended primarily for her own eyes, Elizabeth reworked the paradigm in which courtiers like Mary Sidney Herbert advised their social superiors through elaborate presentation copies of their translations. Instead of advising others, Elizabeth counseled herself through classical books whose wisdom validated her ability to rule England.

In 1593, Elizabeth embarked on a translation of Boethius's *De consolatione philosophiae* (*The Consolation of Philosophy*, c. 524 CE) in

response to the conversion of Henry IV, king of France, from Protestantism to Catholicism.¹⁰⁹ This translation both evoked Elizabeth's personal grief at Henry's actions and suggested that her humanist training was a necessary means of mitigating her response. Boethius remained a popular text in the humanist curriculum because humanist scholars valued the work for its philosophical worth.¹¹⁰ As a result, the *Consolation* was well suited to serve as a reminder of Elizabeth's education. Boethius composed this text in prose and meter to console his own grief as he awaited execution on false charges of treason. To Elizabeth's contemporaries, Boethius's exploration of sorrow suited the queen's mind-set in the wake of Henry's change of religion. In 1615, William Camden claimed that Elizabeth's translation of Boethius was one means of dealing with her personal sorrow: "In this her griefe shee sought comfort out of the holy Scriptures, the writings of the holy Fathers, and frequent conferences with the Archbishop, and whether out of the Philosophers also I know not. Sure I am that at this time, she daily turned over Boetius his books, *De Consolatione*, and translated them handsomely into the English tongue."¹¹¹ Windebank composed a set of memoranda to the translation, indicating that Elizabeth completed the work in a remarkable twenty-four to twenty-seven hours from October 10 through November 5 or 8, just as she was deciding whether to continue providing military aid to Henry.¹¹² In the wake of Windebank's dating and Camden's account, critics have generally read Elizabeth's translation as a personal meditation on the tragedy of Henry's actions, focusing solely on the correspondence between the grief felt by Elizabeth and Boethius. Yet *The Consolation of Philosophy* is a dialogue between the characters of Boethius and Lady Philosophy, and their conversation mirrors Elizabeth's canny deployment of her two bodies to address the political crisis sparked by Henry's conversion.¹¹³ Between July and November, Elizabeth privately grieved over Henry's choice to abandon Protestantism, even as she publicly gave him pragmatic counsel on a military strategy that she viewed as misguided. In doing so, Elizabeth used her apparent personal grief over the situation as a means of explaining her increasing lack of support for Henry. The characters of Boethius's text had relevance to this distinction between Elizabeth's twofold position as a private woman and a queen. Lady Philosophy, a female ruler who counsels Boethius to accept heavenly truth as he awaits execution, parallels Elizabeth's self-appointed role as Henry's preceptor. Meanwhile, Elizabeth's distress over Henry's Catholicism corresponds to Boethius's despair over the impermanence of worldly goods and honors. As Elizabeth dictated the text to Windebank, she alternately took on the role of mourner and counselor, creating a split

form of self-representation that transformed her personal emotions into philosophical justification for abandoning Henry.

The relationship between Elizabeth and Henry had been cordial up to this point, allowing England and France to build an alliance that provided a counterbalance to Spanish power within Europe. Due to their shared religious beliefs, Elizabeth had supported Henry even before his 1589 accession to the French throne, and once Henry became mired in a civil war against the Catholic League that was also sponsored by Spain, Elizabeth offered both financial and military aid for Henry's cause. Despite Elizabeth's own distaste for war, English involvement in the French civil wars allowed the queen to support the Huguenots and to keep the Spanish at bay. After four years of civil war, however, Henry converted to Catholicism on July 13, 1593, a move that appeased the majority of his subjects and, more important, allowed Henry to retain his crown.¹¹⁴ Elizabeth and her courtiers had received reports hinting at Henry's possible change of religion as early as May 1592, and English opinion of the best strategy to take was divided.¹¹⁵ On July 10 William Cecil, Lord Burghley, drew up several minutes exploring potential responses to the king's rumored shift to Catholicism, recommending that Elizabeth focus on defending Brittany from the Spanish, since that would be an ideal spot to launch an invasion of England. Yet he also noted that the queen "can not accord with the Fr[ench] kyng in such bondes of amety as she hath doone," as the Pope was "hir Maj[esty]'s mortall ennemy."¹¹⁶ Burghley's recommendation, then, offered a middle course that limited English aid to France even while it protected English interests. Elizabeth followed Burghley's counsel, first threatening to remove her troops from areas outside Brittany on August 24 even as Henry called for more soldiers. That October, while the queen continued to think about recalling English forces from the majority of France, someone—perhaps Essex, who was a staunch supporter of Henry's cause—drew up a memorandum endorsing continued intervention for both political and religious reasons: besides preventing an alliance between the French and Spanish, Elizabeth could take the moral high road as a defender of the faith. After painting a grim picture of the Huguenot soldiers' likely persecution or extermination at the hands of Catholics, the writer concludes with a dire warning: "How greatlie they wilbe at this time disconforted to see the Q[ueen] of Englande withdrawe her succours, even at the time that they expected by the contenance thereof to have obtained good Conditions for their safties, I leave to the imaginacion of the wisest."¹¹⁷ Despite these concerns, Elizabeth finally confirmed her decision to recall English troops from France (excluding Brittany) on November 13.¹¹⁸

Between July and November, Elizabeth manipulated the duality between her body natural and her body politic to frame her growing disinterest in aiding Henry as a spiritual and political necessity. While Elizabeth's unofficial letters to France dwelled on her deep personal grief, her official letters to Henry presented Elizabeth as a shrewd political counselor. Elizabeth's first letter to Henry after learning of his decision opens with a theatrical lamentation whose anaphoric repetition highlights the queen's pain: "Ah que douleurs, O quelz regretz, O que gemissementz Je sentoys en mon Asme par le sonn de telles Nouvelles que Morlains m'a compté" (Ah what griefs, O what regrets, O what groanings felt I in my soul at the sound of such news as Morlains has told me).¹¹⁹ After this point, however, Elizabeth confined her personal grief to unofficial correspondence that nevertheless continued to exert political pressure. In July, Elizabeth wrote to Henri de la Tour, Duc de Bouillon and a fellow Protestant, to commiserate "ce disgracee accident de la perversion de vostre Maistre" (this disgraceful accident of the perversion of your Master): "Dieu tournera, s'il luy plaist, ses misericordes yeux à si signale offense, et de sa bonte, non par merite, supportera la foiblesse d'un si monstreux acte" (God will turn, if it pleases him, his merciful eyes to such a remarkable insult, and of his goodness, not by merit, will endure the weakness of such a monstrous act). Besides condemning Henry's conversion, Elizabeth endorses Protestant theology by denying that God will forgive this act due to any "merite" (merit) on Henry's part. Notably, Elizabeth concludes the letter by slipping into Latin: "je me trouve si à fyn de mon françois que je ne sçay que dire si non avertat Deus malum a quo lavabo manus meas" (I find myself so at the end of my French that I do not know what to say *except may God avert the evil from which I will wash my hands*).¹²⁰ Here Elizabeth's strong emotions, evident in her description of this change in religion as a "perversion" and "disgraceful accident," appear to put her at a loss for French words, causing her to take refuge in Latin. Yet as Elizabeth moves into Latin, itself a diplomatic language, she threatens to withdraw English support of Henry by signaling her willingness to "wash [her] hands" of this "evil." Even more significant, a day after Elizabeth recalled English troops with the exception of those in Brittany, she wrote yet another despairing letter to Henry's sister, Catherine of Navarre: "Si mon papier eust le tamt ressemblant a mon coeur, Je ne le vous oserois presenter, le couleur noir sc[a]yant trop mal aux jeunes gents" (If my paper had any resemblance to my heart, I would not dare to present it to you, knowing that the color black is too much disliked by young people).¹²¹ While this and other protestations of sorrow contextualized and mitigated

Elizabeth's decision to limit English aid to Henry, her official correspondence portrayed the queen as a pragmatic counselor with a political rationale for disavowing Henry's cause. For example, in a letter to Henry from October 7, 1593, Elizabeth notes that she only conveys "vos plus necessaires advis" (your most necessary advice) before alluding to Matthew 7:20 to warn him against counselors offering poor military advice: "Voyez les par leurs fruitz; et, par la, Jugez en quelle Racine ilz meritent avoir aux Jardins de vos plaisirs" (See them by their fruits; and, by that, judge what root they deserve to have in the gardens of your pleasures).¹²² By indicating her personal grief in private letters and sharing her queenly counsel in official correspondence, Elizabeth deftly invoked her two bodies to legitimate her decreasing support for Henry.

Elizabeth never mentions Boethius in her official correspondence, yet her translation of this text created another venue for performing the public and private personae that she was using to deal with Henry's actions. Furthermore, by translating Boethius, Elizabeth applied her humanist education to the issues raised by Henry's Catholicism and transformed her knowledge of Latin into philosophical guidance that might support her final decision. While the text's depiction of the fictional Boethius allowed Elizabeth to explore her personal grief, the figure of Lady Philosophy permitted her to assume the role of a counselor with access to divine knowledge. Elizabeth generally provides a close rendering of Boethius's language, yet she also adapts the text to her own purposes through subtle alterations to its content and style. The resulting translation suggests that Elizabeth was well aware that this work had relevance to her current position vis-à-vis Henry. Elizabeth's portrayal of Boethius, for example, heightens his grief while eliding his initial mental stupefaction, making the character a more suitable stand-in for the queen. If Elizabeth's initial letter in the wake of Henry's change of religion had strategically used repetition to convey her mental distress, her translation likewise utilizes poetic language to emphasize the sorrow experienced by Boethius. For example, her rendering of Lady Philosophy's initial description of Boethius employs sound devices and small shifts in meaning to heighten the text's presentation of his grief: Boethius "downe Lies, of mindz Light *bereved* [effeto],/With brused Nek by overhevny Chaines/A bowed Lowe Looke."¹²³ Elizabeth renders "effeto" (exhausted) as "bereaved," a participle that punningly reinforces Boethius's despondency in its signification of loss. Furthermore, Elizabeth's use of alliteration and consonance in the phrase "bowed Lowe Looke" gives this passage a halting quality that matches Boethius's despair. At the same time, Elizabeth carefully omits moments in which Boethius

demonstrates complete mental bewilderment. Boethius introduces the previous verses as Lady Philosophy's comment on "mentis perturbatione" (the disturbance of his mind), but Elizabeth renders this phrase as "my mynd's pane," replacing his distraction with another reference to grief (*T*, 78; *CP*, book 1, prose 1.51).¹²⁴ Likewise, when Boethius first sees Lady Philosophy, he states, "I was stupefied" (*obstupui*; *CP*, book 1, prose 1.46), yet no equivalent to "*obstupui*" appears in Elizabeth's translation of this moment (*T*, 76–78). As a result, Elizabeth presents Boethius as a character deeply affected, but not weakened, by grief, paralleling her own display of sorrow and disdain in response to Henry's Catholicism.

Just as Elizabeth's official correspondence with Henry presented the queen as a counselor, so she alters the character of Lady Philosophy to heighten her regal bearing and pedagogical role. Lady Philosophy enters bearing symbols relevant to Elizabeth's own self-presentation as a learned queen: "Her right hand held a booke the Left a sceptar" (*T*, 76). While translating Boethius's description of Lady Philosophy, Elizabeth makes several small alterations emphasizing the way in which Lady Philosophy's heavenly knowledge (the "booke") provides the basis for her power (the "sceptar"): "Over my hed to stand a Woman did apere Of *stately face* [*reverendi vultus*] with flaming yees [*eyes*] of insight above the Comun worth of men" (*T*, 74; *CP*, book 1, prose 1.2–5). By translating "*reverendi vultus*" (a face to be revered) with the phrase "stately face," Elizabeth indicates Lady Philosophy's nobility and also constructs a sequence of alliterative "s" and "f" sounds that links Lady Philosophy's rule ("stately face") with her heavenly knowledge ("flaming yees of insight above the Comun worth of men"). Elizabeth more overtly presents Lady Philosophy as a ruler analogous to herself by translating Boethius's description of her "*imperiosae auctoritatis*" (mighty authority) as "imperius rule" (*T*, 76; *CP*, book 1, prose 1.46). If Lady Philosophy's divine knowledge legitimates her power, it also allows her to act as a counselor during Boethius's time of need, and Elizabeth carefully emphasizes Lady Philosophy's role as an instructor in divine learning. When Boethius calls Lady Philosophy "magistra," Elizabeth initially translates this term as "maistres" (*T*, 82; *CP*, book 1, prose 3.7), but in a later revision she substitutes the word "pedag[og]ue," a gender-neutral term that lacks the erotic connotations of "mistress" even as it emphasizes Lady Philosophy's pedagogical purpose.¹²⁵ Elizabeth also represents Lady Philosophy as a counselor whose heavenly precepts trump the secular advice provided by the Muses. When Lady Philosophy first arrives, she orders the Muses to leave Boethius to her healing care, causing the Muses' exodus: "The Checked rabel with Looke downe Cast with Wo, with blusche

Confessing shame, doleful out of doores the[y] Went, but I Whose sight drowned in teares Was dim[m]ed, Could not knowe What she Was" (*T*, 76; *CP*, book 3, prose 1.42–45). Perhaps taking inspiration from the repeated use of "m" and "s" sounds in "lacrimis mersa" (drowned in tears), Elizabeth crafts an alliterative pattern of "d" sounds emphasizing the source text's suggestion that secular literature (represented by the Muses) cannot provide consolation for such deep-rooted sadness ("doleful out of doores," "drowned in teares Was dim[m]ed"). Thus Elizabeth presents Lady Philosophy as both a powerful female ruler and a counselor, creating a figure parallel to her own self-construction as an adviser to Henry.

The lessons that Boethius learns from Lady Philosophy also relate to Elizabeth's French correspondence, particularly her warnings to Henry about the dangers of renouncing Protestantism solely for worldly gain. In her first letter to Henry after his conversion, Elizabeth asks a rhetorical question that implicitly urges Henry to reconsider his decision: "Mon dieu est il possible que mondain respect aulcun deut effacer le terreur que la crainte Divine nous menace" (My God, is it possible that any worldly respect should efface the terror with which the fear of God threatens us).¹²⁶ Throughout *The Consolation of Philosophy*, Boethius learns to recognize that true happiness accompanies spiritual, rather than earthly, advantages. Elizabeth explicitly extends this message to royal power by making several crucial alterations to Lady Philosophy's comments on kings: "But Kingdomes and Kinges familiarities, can they Not make a Man *happy* [potentem]. What els? yf their felicitie ever Last. But full be old examples and of present age that kinges have changed With *Misery* [calamitate] their Lott. . . . Thus Must it Needes follow that *greatest* [majorem] portion of Myserye Kinges have" (*T*, 194; *CP*, book 3, prose 5.1–5, 13–15). By translating "potentem" (powerful) as "happy," Elizabeth links this passage with Lady Philosophy's larger message about the false happiness of earthly things. Elizabeth then contrasts this emotion by translating "calamitate" (misfortune) as "Misery," anticipating the statement that kings have "the greatest portion of Myserye." As a result, Elizabeth's use of the term "happy" creates a trajectory in which rulers experience a fleeting happiness that must end with "misery," thereby insisting on the fickle nature of worldly joy. Indeed, Elizabeth heightens this idea by substituting a superlative ("greatest") for the comparative adjective "majorem" (greater) in the phrase "greatest portion of Myserye Kinges have." Likewise, Elizabeth reinforces Boethius's rejection of earthly glory: "Thou thysself knowest that *No ambition* [minimum ambitionem] of mortall thinges did Rule Us[.] *We were Not guided by the*

pride of Any Mortall glory [added]” (T, 160; CP, book 2, prose 7.1–2). While Boethius had registered his distaste for glory by stating that he had “minimum ambitionem” (little ambition), Elizabeth makes Boethius’s disinterest more absolute by rendering this phrase as “no ambition.” Furthermore, she adds a recapitulation of the idea (“We were Not guided by the pride of Any Mortall glory”), thereby suggesting that both “mortall things” and “Mortall glory” are unimportant. As a result, both Boethius and Lady Philosophy agree that worldly success has little significance, an opinion concurring with Elizabeth’s pointed reminder to Henry that spiritual matters should precede political maneuvering.

While Lady Philosophy presents religious truth as the source of human happiness, Elizabeth’s translation is infused with a subtle Protestantism suggesting that reformed faith alone can lead to true felicity. As before, this tweaking of Boethius’s message corresponds with Elizabeth’s response to Henry’s decision. Before learning that Henry had fully committed himself to Catholicism, Elizabeth had hoped to convince him of the superiority of Protestantism by emphasizing its undeniable truth. Instructions approved by Elizabeth and given to Sir Thomas Wilkes on July 14 ordered her ambassador to remind Henry of his past allegiance to Protestantism: “It shall please him to understand that in no wise we can allow, nor thinke it Good before God, that for any worldly respectes, or any cunning persuasions, he should yeld to chaunge his Conscience, & opinion in Religion from the truth wherein he hath bin brought up from his Youth.”¹²⁷ Just as Wilkes’s instructions present Protestantism as the only path to salvation (“the truth”), so Elizabeth puts Protestant code words in Lady Philosophy’s mouth in order to align the text’s piety with Protestantism. For example, Elizabeth adds a Protestant tinge to Lady Philosophy’s contrast between good and evil: “See you Not in What a *great* [quanto] slowe [slough], Wicked thinges be Wrapt in, and With how *great* [qua] a light, *godlynes* [probitas] shyne” (T, 270; CP, book 4, prose 3.1–2). Notably, Elizabeth translates both “quanto” (how much) and “qua” (what) as “great,” using the rhetorical device of antithesis to contrast the “great slowe” of wickedness and the “great . . . light” of “godlynes.” As Mueller and Scodel observe, this moment is also one of several in which Elizabeth inserts a reference to reformed piety into her translation by translating “probitas” (goodness) as “godlynes.”¹²⁸ Similarly, Elizabeth adds a Protestant tone when Lady Philosophy notes the debasement inherent in abandoning “probitas”: “since that *true pietie alone* [sola probitas] May lift Up a man, it followes that Whom wickednes hath throwen downe from state of Man, hath cast him downe beneth the Merit of Man” (T, 272; CP, book 4, prose 3.51–54). By

rendering “sola probitas” (only goodness) with “true pietie alone,” Elizabeth not only indicates the primacy of Protestantism but also implies that deviating from reformed faith leads to complete degeneration (“beneth the Merit of Man”). Elizabeth’s version of the text specifically comments on those who decide to abandon the truth and thus suffer this debasement, taking a path that Henry will presumably also follow thanks to his conversion. In the source text, Lady Philosophy states, “The fortune of those who indeed are either in possession of virtue, or making progress in it, or attaining to it, whatever that fortune may be, is all good, but for those who persevere in wickedness every kind of fortune is very bad” (*CP*, book 4, prose 7.33–37). Elizabeth’s version, however, limits Lady Philosophy’s comments to those who are aware of truth and ignore it, a category that would presumably include Henry: “Worsse is the state of them that be eyther in the possibilitie, or in the advaunce or obtayning of Vertue And yet byde in their iniquitie” (*T*, 312). While lapsed Protestants such as Henry have the “possibilitie” to “advauce” or “obtain . . . virtue,” they willingly “byde in . . . iniquitie” by refusing to reject Catholicism. Thus Elizabeth’s alterations of the text add a Protestant slant that may have allowed her to meditate on Henry’s rejection of Protestant truth. In turn, the text reinforces her own predisposition, as demonstrated in her instructions to Wilkes and her July 13 letter to Henry, to view his change of religion as a cynical political game.

As Elizabeth negotiated with Henry, translating Boethius’s *Consolation of Philosophy* offered a potentially useful means of converting the cultural capital of her education (specifically her knowledge of Latin) into a source of relevant spiritual and political counsel. Though this translation was not necessarily meant to be circulated among Elizabeth’s subjects, it gave the queen an unofficial means of enacting the personae that she was already deploying to address the political dilemma created by Henry’s newfound Catholicism. Through the figure of Boethius, Elizabeth could express her grief at Henry’s decision even as she reinforced her own predisposition to abandon Henry’s cause by translating Lady Philosophy’s advice to put spiritual matters above political affairs. Furthermore, this translation offers a glimpse into the myriad small ways in which could Elizabeth manipulate her image. As Elizabeth dictated her text to Windebank, she demonstrated her learning, and in the process of translation, she altered the text in a manner that applied her classical education to the political crisis at hand. Yet because the translation was ultimately not meant for public consumption, Elizabeth limited her work to an audience of two: herself and Windebank. As Camden’s account reveals, contemporaries could interpret even Elizabeth’s private

autodidacticism as a political activity. By using translation to channel the grief of her weaker body natural into a source of counsel applicable to her body politic, Elizabeth considered the ramifications of her final decision to revoke English troops from France. In the process, she may have found a model that reinforced her self-presentation as both a private woman who reacted emotionally to Henry's Catholicism and as a pragmatic queen who refused to continue supporting a losing battle.

Conclusions

The cultural and social capital inherent in the manuscript translations of Mary Sidney Herbert and Elizabeth I shows that women could use unique copies of their translations to fashion themselves as political counselors. The Sidney Psalter circulated fairly widely, but the presentation copy prepared for Elizabeth bore special political significance. Sidney Herbert's paratextual poems emphasized the potential applications of the Psalter by reminding Elizabeth of Philip Sidney's legacy and by situating the psalms within the context of Anglo-Spanish relations. In describing the Sidney Psalter with the language of translation, Sidney Herbert associated the work with the posthumous politicization of Philip Sidney's translations, and she also carefully revised the conclusions of several psalms originally written by Sidney in ways that may have been applicable to the current political landscape. These alterations indicate that far from slavishly submitting to male authority, Sidney Herbert co-opted her brother's literary and political legacies to serve her own ends. Elizabeth, meanwhile, was well aware of the potential uses of manuscript presentation copies of translations, as in her youth she had given lavish copies of her religious translations to powerful relatives at court: Henry VIII, Katherine Parr, and Edward VI. After becoming queen, Elizabeth modified this precedent by composing utilitarian translations of Latin works to remind her courtiers of her unusual humanist training and to assert her status as a learned prince. The very lack of polish in these later translations suggested the queen's profitable use of leisure time, allowing her to practice a form of self-counsel legitimating political decisions that might otherwise be dismissed as the caprices of her weak body natural. In the case of Elizabeth's Boethius, the doubled subject positions of the source text mirror the queen's deployment of her two bodies as she negotiated the political fallout from the French king Henry IV's conversion to Catholicism. By aligning herself both with Boethius and Lady Philosophy, Elizabeth could display the humanist credentials associated with

her body politic and find support for a decision that was not uniformly popular among her Privy Council.

These case studies suggest the need for new critical models that better reflect the ways that women interacted with authoritative source texts, particularly as translators. Female translators had the ability to endorse or alter the ideas put forward by their sources and to shape the ways in which the original author was received or interpreted. While this interpretive potential may have been circumscribed at times, it nonetheless permitted female translators a means of developing their own credibility as learned counselors with the ability to convey approved wisdom to their readers. The linguistic skills required of any translator meant that this activity allowed the female translator a unique means of demonstrating the cultural capital imparted by her education. As an executive author recognized for her role in producing the final text, a female translator could transform that cultural capital into social capital with public implications by linking the text and its author with contemporary political or religious agendas. Through translation, women might therefore associate themselves with respected source texts to substantiate their own views on political, religious, and literary matters. While it might be tempting to view translation as an activity that automatically subordinated women to patriarchal power, the cases of Sidney Herbert and Elizabeth reveal that when female translators turned to highly esteemed works, they could use the resulting authorial multiplicity to enhance their own reputations, political influence, and religious credentials.

