Introduction

In the early modern period, men (and women) thought, wrote and spoke
in a cultural context predicated upon the assumption that social order
depended upon both hierarchy and patriarchy.[1] As a consequence they
read the human male body as an analogue of human experience.[2] And
because they regarded hierarchy and patriarchy – social order and male
primacy – as interdependent propositions, they did not even, always,
distinguish between the two in the way that we would do.[3] As the
sixteenth century progressed, reformation ideology brought these as-
sumptions to a level of self-consciousness which led to their articulation
and contest, in a debate that permeated European culture, broadly
defined.[4] Reformation ideology carried a universal promise: of a new
relationship between God and man that would redeem every individual
– man and woman, high and low. For contemporaries it posed the
simultaneous threat of a profoundly disordered society on the way to the
New Jerusalem; one that, for good or ill, would no longer sustain

---

[1] Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Columbia,
   N.Y., 1988), pp. 180–3. Merry Weisner, *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, New Approaches
   to European History (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 1–7, 239–41. For the French case see Sarah Hanley,
   'The Monarchic State in Early Modern France: Marital Regime Government and Male Right'
   in *Politics, Ideology and the Law in Early Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of J. H. M. Salmon*, ed. Adrianna
   E. Bakos (New York, 1994), pp. 107–20 and 'Engendering the State: Family Formation and State
   Building in Early Modern France', *French Historical Studies* 16, no. 1 (1989), pp. 4–27.
[2] Louis Montrose, 'The Elizabethan Subject and the Spenserian Text' in *Literary Theory/Renaissance
   Texts*, ed. Patricia Parker and David Quint (Baltimore, Md., 1986), pp. 303–40, pp. 307–8; Paul
   Archambault, 'The Analogy of the "Body" in Renaissance Political Literature', *Bibliothèque
   d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 29 (1967), pp. 21–53. See also David Freedberg, *The Power of Images:
   Studies in the History and Theory of Response* (Chicago, 1989).
[3] Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically* (London, 1996), pp. 70–1, 114–15; Susan Dwyer
   Amussen, '"The Part of a Christian Man": The Cultural Politics of Manhood in Early Modern
   England' in *Political Culture and Cultural Politics in Early Modern England: Essays Presented to David
   Underdown*, ed. Susan D. Amussen and Mark A. Kishlansky (Manchester, 1995), pp. 213–33, pp.
   215–16.
[4] For a similar dynamic operating in the context of Enlightenment see Penny Weiss's analysis of
   Rousseau's thought, *Gendered Community: Rousseau, Sex and Politics* (New York, 1993).

hierarchy or patriarchy and hence any known form of social order.[5] The challenge to any conceivable *status quo* posed by the political doctrine of anarchy, in its late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century manifestations, must be the nearest modern secular equivalent.

Clearly, these conceptual parameters shaped the conduct of politics, especially in the sixteenth century, and particularly in countries that – like France, Scotland and England – experienced both Protestant reformation and female rule. And England, of course, experienced not only an unusually complex reformation process, but fifty years of female rule, under both a Catholic and a Protestant queen. This book began when I read some correspondence between several of Elizabeth's Privy Councillors and prominent ecclesiastics. The letters concerned religious reform and dated from the first decade of the reign. What struck me was their peculiar tone – a kind of baffled frustration that vied with the more conventional obeisances to princely power and authority. These letters summoned up a compelling image of a young woman surrounded on every side by powerful men; men who would presume, on the basis of their status and their gender, that they would have incontestable claims not only to counsel the queen, but also for their advice to be heeded.[6] What happened, I wondered, when a woman succeeded to the imperial crown, that potent symbol and instrument of the Henrician Reformation?[7] What would the political consequences be at this stage in European history, when humanism and religious reformation made Europe a battleground of competing conceptions of social order – but invariably privileged patriarchy as its *sine qua non*?[8]

This book tries to provide some of the answers. In what follows I attend to a range of speakers – the queen, councillors, bishops, parliament men and men 'out of doors', as well as men conventionally and

[5] Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order,* Ideas in Context (Cambridge, 1987); Mary Potter, 'Gender Equality and Gender Hierarchy in Calvin's Theology', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 11, no. 4 (1986), pp. 725–39. For the counter-reformation response see John M. Headley, *Church, Empire and World: The Quest for Universal Order, 1520–1640*, Variorum Collected Studies Series (Aldershot, Hampshire), 1997.

[6] See Louis Montrose's seminal depiction of the cultural consequences of this situation, when all positions of authority – cultural, political, ecclesiastical, familial – were occupied by men, uneasily and intensely aware of their subjection to a woman, in his '"Shaping Fantasies": Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture' in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley, Calif., 1988), pp. 31–64.

[7] J. G. A. Pocock, 'A Discourse of Sovereignty: Observations on the Work in Progress' in *Political Discourse in Early Modern Britain*, ed. Nicholas Phillipson and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 377–428.

[8] See, for example, Donald R. Kelley, *The Beginning of Ideology: Consciousness and Society in the French Reformation* (Cambridge, 1981).

canonically defined as political theorists – as they battled to preserve Protestantism and the imperial crown.[9] Cross-cutting in this way is instructive. First, it shows that in the Tudor polity political discourse, even at the rarefied level of what has subsequently been deemed to be 'political theory', is never gender neutral. In fact it is rarely free from gender-specific references and immediate political application. In Elizabeth's reign these latter can often be recaptured through comparison with 'speech acts' performed by other speakers, in other contexts. This analysis also reveals that the conjunction of consensually shared attitudes towards women, in the ideological context of the godly nation experiencing female rule, and in the age of print, extended the boundaries of the political nation to an extent that would be surpassed only during the English Revolution. Two terms of political debate defined in this way are particularly important to the version of monarchy invented to secure England's Protestant identity under the reign of a queen: 'mixed monarchy' and 'commonwealth'.

Faced with the problem of legitimating a female ruler as holder of the imperial crown, theorists and apologists in Elizabeth's reign drew on and referred to a history of conceptions of political authority that dated from Henry VIII's reign. These conceptions, inseparable from their reformation context, were implicitly – and, in the work of the so-called 'resistance theorists' of Mary Tudor's reign, increasingly explicitly and controversially – imbued with gendered readings of political authority. These readings problematised Elizabeth's claim to 'supreme headship' and made a providential identity, of queen and nation, necessary to her political legitimation. This history also provided a genealogy for the 'mixed monarchy' that was inaugurated at Elizabeth's accession, first articulated and explored in the work of John Aylmer, but, as it transpires, the *lingua franca* of the reign. The 'mixed monarchy' was defined as a corporate body politic; one in which the wisdom of the many (a contested, but gender-specific identity during this period) 'bridled' and imparted grace to a female prince, and thereby preserved both Protestantism and national autonomy. It conjoined the three estates – now

[9] In so doing I am following a methodology theorised by J. G. A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner. For Pocock see especially 'The Concept of a Language and the *Métier d'historien*: Some Considerations on Practice' in *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe*, ed. Anthony Pagden (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 19–38; *Politics, Language and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History* (New York, 1973); 'The State of the Art' in *Virtue, Commerce, and History* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 1–33. For Skinner see 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, ed. James Tully (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 29–67 and 'Motives, Intentions, and the Interpretation of Texts', *New Literary History* 3 (1972), pp. 393–408.

queen, lords and commons, or queen-in-parliament – in a mystical marriage effected at the queen's coronation; a 'marriage' in which, during Elizabeth's reign, both halves vied for the role of 'head' in a cultural context that defined headship as a male role and marriage as a means by which women were made whole through their incorporation in their husbands.[10]

The Elizabethan conception of the mixed monarchy also drew on and appealed to a commonwealth ideology, initiated in the reign of a minor king, Edward VI, that presented godly and patriotic Englishmen as having a vested interest in the 'common weal' as 'citizens' of the True Church. G. R. Elton, in iconoclastic form, refuted altogether the idea that there existed a 'party of commonwealthmen' in Edward VI's reign.[11] But, if we take away his anachronistic use of 'party', we are left with the unexceptionable recognition that evangelical Protestantism (like Erasmian humanism) promoted notions of human spiritual equality – at least among men; even, speculatively and at the fringes, including women as individual creatures in their own right.[12] Men committed to a new Christian order, in Edward's reign as in Elizabeth's, sought to create a society in which all men might be 'brothers' in Christ, and therefore promoted social and economic, as well as ecclesiastical, re-form, in England as in other parts of Europe.[13] In a strongly hierarchical society the equation between Christian equality and the progress of reformation proved profoundly disquieting, not least because of the intimation that **all** might refer to women as well as to men. But the fact remains that during Elizabeth's reign what Patrick Collinson has use-fully dubbed the 'Protestant ascendancy' largely accepted its necessity, in a True Church alternatively identified as the 'Christian common-weal' and increasingly assimilated to English national identity.[14]

---

[10] Frances E. Dolan, *Dangerous Familiars: Representations of Domestic Crime in England, 1550–1700* (New York, 1994), pp. 27–9.

[11] G. R. Elton, 'Reform and the "Commonwealth-Men" of Edward VI's Reign' in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, 4 vols. (Cambridge, 1983), vol. 3, pp. 234–53. Margo Todd's *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* is a good corrective, as are G. J. R. Parry's *A Protestant Vision: William Harrison and the Reformation of Elizabethan England* (Cambridge, 1987) and Annabel Patterson's *Reading Holinshed's Chronicles* (Chicago, 1994).

[12] Margo Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order*.

[13] See Werner O. Packull, 'The Image of the "Common Man" in the Early Pamphlets of the Reformation (1520–1525)', *Historical Reflections* 12, no. 2 (1985), pp. 253–77, and, for the gender dimension, Lyndal Roper, "The Common Man", "The Common Good", "Common Women": Gender and Meaning in the German Reformation Commune', *Social History* 12, no. 1 (1987), pp. 3–21.

[14] For 'Protestant ascendancy', see Patrick Collinson, 'Puritans, Men of Business and Elizabethan Parliaments', *Parliamentary History*, 7 no. 2 (1988), pp. 187–211, p. 190. For 'Christian common-weal' see the entry under 'commonweal' in *The Oxford English Dictionary (Second Edition) on Compact Disc*, Oxford University Press.

These fears and hopes, allied to contemporary convictions about the power balance between men and women, inform the formulation of 'queen-in-parliament' which signalled the mixed monarchy in Elizabeth's reign. This political creation was not narrowly equivalent to the notion of the imperial king ruling *regaliter et politice*, in his own person and conjoined with his realm in parliament, that buttressed Henry VIII's claims to sovereign authority.[15] Instead, 'queen-in-parliament' privileged the potential for political virtue of the body of the realm – (male) inhabitants of the common weal, or 'country', whose zeal and rectitude secured the realm – and of parliament, the institutional means of its expression. Indeed, one of the most significant linguistic developments in this period, which proved to be such a formative one for the English language, was the gradual transition over the second half of the sixteenth century from the interchangeable use of 'common weal' and 'commonwealth' to mean both the general good and (in a secondary sense) the whole body of the people, to the predominant use of 'commonwealth' to signal the latter, potentially a place as well as a people – a gender-specific use that also contained latent antimonarchical implications.[16]

In the context of female rule, the conceptualisation of the commonwealth as potentially socially inclusive, inaugurated in Mary I's reign, led to renewed attention to 'natural' (and God-ordained) differences between men and women, in part as a means of excluding women from direct participation in this political configuration, in part as a concomitant of the ongoing reformation debate about the nature of kingship.[17] On the one hand, therefore, distinct gender identities were articulated, with women allocated a separate and inferior identity as 'other'. This move then allowed, even forced, men to reassess the legitimacy of competing distinctions of status, specifically among men who might be considered 'fellows' and 'brothers', in Christ – and potentially as countrymen and patriots. Here we can see the genesis of the contest over definitions of nobility which acquired political significance in Elizabeth's reign and continued into the reigns of her Stuart successors.[18]

This reinterpretation of Elizabeth's reign throws up a complex of

---

[15] J. G. A. Pocock, 'A Discourse of Sovereignty'.
[16] 'common weal', 'commonwealth': *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971), vol. 2, p. 696.
[17] Rebecca W. Bushnell, *Tragedies of Tyrants: Political Thought and Theater in the English Renaissance* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1990), pp. 64–9.
[18] Lisa Jardine, *Reading Shakespeare Historically*; Mervyn James, *Society, Politics and Culture: Studies in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1986), esp. 'The Concept of Order and the Northern Rising, 1569', pp. 270–307; 'English Politics and the Concept of Honour, 1485–1642', pp. 308–415; and 'At a Crossroads of the Political Culture: The Essex Revolt, 1601', pp. 416–65.

words whose meanings were contested in politically significant ways, as the queen and her commonwealth jostled to gain political advantage and to preserve the imperial crown. In addition to 'commonweal/commonwealth', 'policy', 'necessity' and 'effeminacy' were debated in relation to political authority. Another trinity, related to the common-wealth, consists of 'sovereignty', 'state' and 'absolute', with reference to monarchy. This vocabulary expresses some of the 'essentially contested propositions' to which J. G. A. Pocock refers in his description of political languages, and which map Elizabethan political culture.[19] Some, like 'absolute', I use with inverted commas, to insist upon the divergence of the Elizabethan reading of this concept from our own, and, I think, from its meaning in earlier Tudor reigns. For throughout Elizabeth's reign, until the late 1590s, the fear it expressed within the political nation was that Elizabeth would become 'absolute' in pos-session of the imperial crown; a formulation that alerts us to both the continued disquiet over female rule and the corporate identification of 'sovereignty' that evolved as a solution to its perceived dangers.[20]

Interpreting Elizabeth's reign in this way also sheds new light on the Stuart experience of kingship, from the point at which James VI and I attempted to turn his back on nearly fifty years of English history in order to position himself as the immediate imperial heir to Henry VIII. For, as he announced to his first parliament, 'Precedents in the times of minors, of tyrants, or women or simple kings [are] not to be credited.'[21] The experience of female rule in the context of reformation culture gave men a vocabulary with which to contest 'absolute' kingship in the reigns of James I and Charles I. It also proved to be a necessary precondition for the eventual repudiation of kingship itself, a promise fulfilled when, in 1649, godly Englishmen emerged from the 'country' to execute a tyrannical king and inaugurate the English Commonwealth.

Reassessing Elizabeth's reign by attending to its gender dynamics thus takes us to the heart of early modern English political culture. It also has implications for our understanding of the 'monarchy of coun-cil', which began with the Henrician Reformation and lasted until the

---

[19] J. G. A. Pocock, 'The State of the Art', p. 9. He is quoting the philosopher William Connolly.
[20] Katherine Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen: Refusing Female Rule in *Henry V*', *English Literary History* 61 (1994), pp. 523–50, esp. pp. 528, 542; Carole Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I and the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 1994), ch. 5, 'The Return of the King', pp. 94–118.
[21] Quoted in J. P. Kenyon, 'Queen Elizabeth and the Historians', in *Queen Elizabeth I: Most Politick Princess*, ed. Simon Adams (London, 1984), pp. 52–5, p. 52.

execution of Charles I in 1649.[22] Yet, surprisingly, Tudor historians have
been slow to recognise its centrality.[23] To dismiss this gender dimension
by describing Elizabeth I as an early modern version of Margaret
Thatcher, as Patrick Collinson has done, does little more than update
J. E. Neale's conclusion that Elizabeth's womanly charms solved the
problem posed by a woman ruling in a man's world. Reflecting on
Elizabeth's relations with her councillors, Collinson writes that 'when
we read John Aylmer's apology for Elizabeth's fitness to rule, composed
in 1559, along the lines that the government of a woman was tolerable
because in England it would not be so much her government as
government in her name and on her behalf, we feel sorry for the poor
man . . . One might as well justify the government of Mrs. Thatcher on
the grounds that her cabinet can be trusted to keep her in order.'[24] The
analogy, and the thinking behind it, also limit our understanding of the
world that Collinson has so richly described in other works and in other
ways. We need to recognise that John Aylmer's achievement, in the
tract to which Collinson refers, lay in theorising England as a 'mixed
monarchy', and that he did so in direct response to what he perceived as
the dangers of female rule. Tellingly, in that tract Aylmer amplifies his
definition of the mixed monarchy by describing Elizabeth herself as a
'mixed ruler', by which he meant that she carried within herself el-
ements of the (male) political body as a function of a mystical marriage
effected at her coronation and directly superintended by God.[25] Like
other apologists – like Sir Thomas Smith, whose concept of a 'monar-
chical republic' Collinson also draws on – Aylmer wrote to preserve
England's Protestant identity, which he saw as inseparable from the
imperial crown and threatened by female rule. Men such as Smith and
Aylmer translated classical and humanist conceptions of a mixed polity
into the context of female rule, with the specific intention of preserving
the imperial crown against the return of a king. Their success changed
the 'rules of the game' which governed the conduct of monarchical

[22] J. G. A. Pocock, 'A Discourse of Sovereignty', p. 408.
[23] To date, attention to gender in this period has been more the province of literary critics,
especially Stephen Greenblatt, Richard Helgerson, Lisa Jardine, Louis Montrose, and, in a
different vein, Annabel Patterson. Blair Worden is one notable recent exception, in *The Sound of
Virtue: Philip Sidney's 'Arcadia' and Elizabethan Politics* (New Haven, Conn., 1996).
[24] Patrick Collinson, 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I', *Bulletin of the John Rylands
University Library of Manchester* 69, no. 2 (1986–7), p. 399. John Guy has recently, and rightly,
defined this article as seminal and reprinted it in his edited volume *The Tudor Monarchy* (London,
1997). But he lets the analogy go unchallenged: it is 'superb', he concludes in one of his own
contributions to the collection, 'Tudor Monarchy and Its Critiques', pp. 78–109, p. 94.
[25] John Aylmer, *An Harborowe for Faithfull and Trewe Subjects* (Strasbourg, 1559), fol. B2.

authority in England in ways that defined political culture even when a king came again to the throne.[26]

Similarly, John Guy recognises that William Cecil, Elizabeth's chief minister, arrived at a self-definition as a 'public servant of the state' which justified defiance of the queen to preserve the Protestant state of the realm, and did so by recourse to 'quasi-republican' principles. Parenthetically he concludes (quite rightly) that 'probably [Cecil's] line of argument could only have been attempted under a female ruler'.[27] But his formulation – the parenthetical glance at gender – gets the emphasis the wrong way around. In Elizabeth's reign, increasing numbers of men had recourse to 'quasi-republican principles' precisely because their position in reformation history, and in the context of female rule, required them to invent themselves as 'citizens'. The articulation of these 'quasi-republican principles' was allowed for because 'citizen' came to be interpreted as an ambiguous (but specifically male) identity which pointed towards the City of God as much as it did towards Roman republics. The Elizabethan polity achieved a certain stability under these conditions precisely because it allowed men – and **not** women: the exclusion is important – to image themselves as both citizens and subjects; again, in the context of female rule. Over the course of the reign exploration of these identities pushed political engagement in a more socially inclusive direction, and this was one reason for the authoritarian character of the latter years, as well as the politically significant longing for a 'king' – a godly male ruler – to stabilise the body politic.[28] Once more, we see how gender identities and polarities were central to Elizabethan politics.

Guy argues that Elizabeth's reign falls into two parts: the 'first reign' from her accession in 1558; the second (the rather long 'last decade') the period from the late 1580s until her death in 1603.[29] I too see Elizabeth's reign as divisible into two distinct phases. My reasons for arriving at a similar periodisation arise from my reintepretation of the reign, however, and therefore differ from his. In my reading, the 'first reign'

---

[26] For this understanding of political engagement see Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' and J. G. A. Pocock, 'The Concept of a Language and the *Métier d'historien*'.

[27] John Guy, 'Tudor Monarchy and Its Critiques', p. 97. For Cecil's self-identity as a councillor see Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Johnson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Berkeley, Calif., 1983) and Stephen Alford, 'William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis of the 1560s', Ph.D. Dissertation, University of St Andrews (1996).

[28] Katherine Eggert, 'Nostalgia and the Not Yet Late Queen', p. 546.

[29] John Guy, 'The 1590s: The Second Reign of Elizabeth I?' in *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade*, ed. John Guy (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 1–19. Guy emphasises social and economic factors as precipitants in 'Tudor Monarchy and Its Critiques', p. 99.

attempted to legitimate Elizabeth as a providential ruler, her sex counterweighed by God's immediate intervention in English affairs and by the mediate efforts of godly men engaged in political affairs on His (and her) behalf. The latter part of the reign – the period after 1585 – witnessed attempts to renegotiate that settlement, the radical potential of which had been revealed as a concomitant of the increasingly desperate attempts to secure the imperial crown against the likely succession of the Catholic Jezebel, Mary Queen of Scots.[30]

I would identify the 1584 Bond of Association as the watershed between the two periods. It represented the culmination of processes that caused the transition to what Guy rightly identifies as the embattled, authoritarian culture of the later Elizabethan period. The Bond enabled godly Englishmen from the ranks of the political nation to declare their allegiance to the commonwealth, on the queen's behalf and against her will. It encouraged political action that might extend to the assassination of a ruler judged – by the regime but not by the queen – to be ungodly; in this case Mary Stuart, Elizabeth's cousin, deposed queen of Scotland, and heir presumptive to the English throne. It called up the political *virtù* of godly Englishmen: their ability to act in a military capacity, as individual men and as members of the commonwealth, to preserve their own and other men's liberty, simultaneously religious and political. And it culminated, in 1587, with the execution of Mary Queen of Scots by the regime: a God-ordained event, according to Elizabeth's chief secretary William Cecil, Lord Burghley, 'whose minister this state was in the execution thereof'.[31]

Instance Collinson and Guy as Tudor historians because their work over the past fifteen years has transformed our understanding of Elizabeth's reign and continues to set the standard for others working in the field. We now need to investigate that field anew, using what Anthony Fletcher has called the 'lens of gender', in order fully to comprehend not only the Elizabethan body politic, but also the wider European debate about monarchical authority which so engaged men and women during the early modern period.[32] The present study is a first attempt at that project.

---

[30] I take issue with his assessment that the 'drift to authoritarianism' which characterised the 1590s was 'irrational' ('Tudor Monarchy and Its Critiques', p. 99). Instead, it represented an entirely understandable response to the comprehensive threat to order implicit in the political configuration that allowed for Mary's execution.

[31] John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion and other various occurrences in the Church of England during Queen Elizabeth's Happy Reign*, 7 vols. (Oxford, 1824), vol. III.i, p. 549.

[32] At an Institute for Historical Research conference, 'Gendering History', held in York, September 1996.

A NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

Throughout the book I distinguish between 'councillor' and 'counsellor' and their related forms. I do so in order to formalise a distinction that, although important to English political discourse of the period, is often implicit or masked by variable early modern orthography. In the sixteenth century a new distinction began to appear between 'councel' (later 'council') and 'counsel'.[33] The former corresponded to the ecclesiastical *concilium*, extended to cover all cases in which the word meant a deliberative assembly or advisory body. 'Councillor', as in 'Privy Councillor', represented an alteration of the earlier word 'counsellor' through assimilation to 'council', with a new, implicit reference to office-holding that became definitive over the course of the century. At the same time 'counsel' began to be used more generally for the action of providing advice. In the context of reformation England, and especially from Edward VI's reign, 'counsel' carried intimations of its theological definition as any of the advisory declarations of Christ and the apostles, considered not to be universally binding but rather provided as a means of attaining greater moral perfection. The resulting distinction between 'council' and 'counsel' does not correspond to either Latin or French usage. The development points to the politicisation of 'counsel' which occurred in Elizabeth's reign, and which I chart as one of the themes of the book. It provides further evidence that England's debate about monarchical authority was in many ways *sui generis* among European monarchies, not least because of its intersection with contemporary beliefs about gender.

I also use the word 'regime' as Wallace MacCaffrey has defined it: to refer to a cluster of men including but not restricted to Privy Councillors who were drawn together by shared ideological convictions. MacCaffrey rightly sees these counsellors as at least partially responsible to emergent Protestant opinion specifically within the elite but more generally throughout the nation, and as reflecting, in their political initiatives, the changed relations between the crown and councillors which came into being during Elizabeth's reign.[34] I then use 'government' to denote the queen and the regime, on the many occasions when they worked in tandem, in an extraordinary and politically innovative *mariage de convenance*, to maintain Elizabeth's tenure of the crown.

[33] 'council', 'counsel': *The Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 1971), vol. I, pp. 1050–4.
[34] Wallace MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (Princeton, N.J., 1969), pp. 22, 39, 310, 313.