In Europe, an unprecedented number of female rulers came to power during the period when religious reformation transformed early modern society and culture. The coincidence prompted men, in England and elsewhere, to debate and contest authority relations in strongly gendered terms. In this major contribution to Ideas in Context, Anne McLaren explores the consequences for English political culture when, with the accession of Elizabeth I, Protestant imperial kingship came to be invested in the person of a queen. She looks at how Elizabeth managed to rule, in the face of considerable resistance, and demonstrates how opposition to female rule was articulated and enacted by parliament, by preachers, by councillors and by favourites. Dr McLaren argues that during Elizabeth’s reign men were able to accept the rule of a woman partly by inventing a definition of ‘citizen’, one that made it an exclusively male identity, and she emphasises the cultural and political continuities between Elizabeth’s reign and the outbreak of the English civil wars in the seventeenth century. A work of cultural history informed by political thought, Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I makes a significant contribution to Tudor historiography and offers a convincing reinterpretation of the political dynamics of the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

A. N. McLaren studied at Washington University and Johns Hopkins University. She is now a Lecturer in the School of History at the University of Liverpool.
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POLITICAL CULTURE
IN THE REIGN OF
ELIZABETH I
Queen and Commonwealth 1558–1585

A. N. McLaren
University of Liverpool
For Jennifer, Andrew and Melissa, with much love
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