
Alciato, celebrated legal scholar of early sixteenth-century Italy, was known for his work in philology and ancient law. Emblems, for him, were a diversion. His *Emblemata* influenced the arts throughout the Continent and England, including the French Court. Marie de Guise adopted the emblem of the phoenix rising from the flames; her daughter, Mary Queen of Scots, adopted the emblem of the marigold (Daly, 1988).

In England, the library of Sir Thomas Knyvett of Ashwellthorpe (ca. 1539-1618) held Alciato’s 1551 and 1573 editions (the latter seen here). His *Emblemata* provided iconographic sources for Thomas Palmer’s 1566 *Two Hundred Poosées*, for Geoffrey Whitney’s 1586 *A Choice of Emblems*, for the carved oak panels in the Summer Room at University College, Oxford, and for the borders of the “Four Seasons” tapestries at Hatfield House where the “Rainbow” and “Ermine” portraits of Elizabeth I also hung (Dundas, 1993; Daly, 1988).


Sir Francis Bacon, known primarily for his role in the development of science in the seventeenth century, also served as Solicitor General for Elizabeth I.

In this collection, Bacon lauded the Queen as *anima legis* (the soul of the law), heir to Edward I, and principal law-giver of England. He noted that both the Queen’s royal policies and the foresight of her Council Table and Star Chamber had restrained the corruption and decay of the age. Bacon, who had relied on the patronage of Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, was nevertheless instrumental in securing a guilty verdict against his former patron, who rebelled against the Queen in 1601.

Bacon’s *Sylva Sylvarum* was to be part of his *Instauratio Magna*, begun early in the seventeenth century. This volume on natural history was published by William Rawley in 1626, after Bacon’s death.

Here, Bacon tried to dispel alchemical notions of the making of gold, and to rely instead on inductive reasoning:

*For to say, that Nature hath an intention to make all Metals Gold; and that, if she were delivered from Impediments, she would perform her own work; and that, if the Crudities, Impurities, and Leprosies of Metal were cured, they would become Gold, and that a little quantity of the Medicine in the Work of Projection, will turn a Sea of the baser Metal into Gold by multiplying. All these are but dreams, and so are many other Grounds of Alchymy. And to help the matter, the Alchymists call in likewise many vanities, out of Astrology, Natural Magick, Superstitious Interpretations of Scriptures, Auricular Traditions, Feigned Testimonies of Ancient Authors, and the like.*


Bede’s *Historia Ecclesiastica Gentis Anglorum* provided a valuable source for both Protestants and Catholics, each of whom claimed to be the legitimate heir to the primitive church of England.

Thomas Stapleton, who translated Bede’s work in 1566, was educated at New College, Oxford. On Elizabeth’s accession, he left England with his family rather than repudiate the Pope’s authority and conform to Protestantism. He participated in the founding of the English College at Douai, which educated recusant English Catholics from its founding by Phillip II in 1559 until the French Revolution (*Catholic Encyclopedia*).


*The Book of Common Prayer* was instituted first under Edward VI in 1549 and revised in 1552, bringing “Protestant” changes to the religious landscape of England. Use of the prayer book was abolished under the Catholic Queen Mary I. It was reinstated under Elizabeth I, who adopted a conservative approach to religious change. Elizabeth’s 1559 version endured for nearly 100 years, when it was temporarily abolished during the “Puritan Revolution” of 1645.
Elizabeth I’s *Book of Common Prayer* made concessions to both Protestant and Catholic populations who had endured a generation of religious change. A number of saint’s days and festivals were added by the Queen in 1561, such as that of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary and Saint Mark’s Day, seen here.

**Breviary. England, 15th century. S. Harrison Thomson Collection 37.**

A breviary is a book of prayers, hymns, and psalms to be read throughout the day, created for monks, nuns, or clergy. This breviary’s small size suggests that it was created for a monk’s private use. These leaves exhibit decorated initials and musical notation. Many English manuscripts were looted or sold from monastic libraries during the Dissolution of the Monasteries under Henry VIII. John Aubrey, writing in the late seventeenth century, recalled the loss of manuscripts at the Dissolution:

*In my grandfather's dayes the manuscripts flew about like butterflies. All musick bookes, account bookes, copie bookes, &c. were covered with old manuscripts as wee cover them now with blew paper or marbled paper; and the glovers at Malmesbury made great havock of them; and gloves were wrappt up no doubt in many good pieces of antiquity.*

This breviary, which may have met with the same fate, was put to secondary use as a cover for a book of receipts. Inscribed here:

*A boke of receipts from my Brother Cole 1626.*

**William Camden. Annales Rerum Anglica*carum et Hibernicarum Regnante Elizabeth, ad Annum Salutis MDLXXXIX. London, 1615. DA 350 1615a.**

William Camden (1551-1623), English historian and antiquarian, wrote *Britannia*, a geographical survey of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and *Annales of Elizabeth* (1615). His *Annales* were written under the patronage of Lord Burghley (William Cecil), from whom the author gained access to the minister’s papers.

Camden said that in 1581 Elizabeth was faced with the decision of marriage to the French Duke of Anjou, later Henry III, King of France. Camden wrote:

*In so much as in the moneth of November, as soone as shee had with great pompe celebrated her coronation day, the force of modest love amongst amorous talke carried her so farre that shee drew off a ring from her finger and put it upon the duke of Anjou’s …. At home the courtiers minds were diversely affected, some leaped for joy, some were astonished, and*
some were cast downe with sorrow. Leicester [Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester] who had begunne to enter into a secret conspiracie to cross the marriage, Hatton Vice-Chamberline, and Walsingham, fretted as if the Queen, the Realme, and Religion were now undone…. The next day shee sent for the Duke of Anjou, and they two, all standers by being removed had long talke together. He at length withdrawing himself to his Chamber, cast the ring from him, and soone tooke it againe, taxing with one or two quippes the lightnesse of women, and the inconstancy of Ilanders.

While many feared the marriage of the Queen to a Catholic prince, the Earl of Leicester had his own reasons. In spite of his own two marriages, he had courted the Queen for decades and a romantic relationship had been rumored (Sutton, 2001; Levin, 1994).


Camden’s Britannia, first published in 1586, examined the history, antiquities, and geography of the British Isles. He drew both from Roman accounts of early inhabitants and from his own antiquarian research into the history of the Roman, Saxon, and Norman eras.

Camden related the history of the inland county of Berkshire, bordered on the north by the Thames and home to Windsor Castle. The Marriage of Thames and Isis celebrated Elizabeth I’s court, set on the bank of the Thames. The personification of the River Thames praised the monarch as, “the Queen, the Saint, the Goddess of our Isle.”

Baldassar Castiglione. The Covrtyer of Covnt Baldassar Castilio Devided into Foure Bookes, very Necessarie and Profitable for Yong Gentlemen & Gentlewomen Abiding in Court, Palace, or Place, Done into English by Thomas Hobby. London, 1577. BR 1604 C43 1577.

Thomas Hobby dedicated his translation of The Courtier to Lord Henry Hastings, son and heir apparent to the Earl of Huntingdon, one of the older nobility descended from the House of York through the Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV and Richard III. When Elizabeth contracted smallpox in 1562, members of the Council considered Hastings a possible successor; others argued for Katherine Grey, who was closer in blood (Rowse, 2003; Levin, 2002).

Castiglione authored his 1528 treatise on etiquette and intellectual accomplishments while serving as envoy to Pope Leo X. His work influenced court behavior throughout Europe, and was read by such Englishmen as Thomas Cromwell, Sir Christopher Hatton, and Francis Bacon.
Richard Curteys. *Sermon preached at Greenieviche before the Queenes Maiestie, by the Reuerend Father in God the Bishop of Chichester, the 14. Day of Marche, 1573.* Uncataloged 94-7-80.

Curteys served as chaplain to Elizabeth I and as Bishop of Chichester. He incorporated references to bad teeth as a reminder to serve God in youth, before the trials of old age, “… and the grinders do cease being fewe in number” [Ecclesiastes, xii, 1-7]. Although Elizabeth was famous for her poor dental health, she reportedly admired the sermon so much that Curteys had copies printed for the nobility.


Samuel Daniel was tutor to Lady Anne Clifford (Countess of Pembroke) late in the reign of Elizabeth I, and, later, court poet to James I. Daniels’ *The Tragedie of Philotas* stirred controversy. His sympathetic portrayal of the conspiratorial commander under Alexander the Great was said to represent Robert Devereaux, second Earl of Essex, who had led the 1601 rebellion against Elizabeth. Upon the 1605 publication of his tragedy, Daniel was brought before the Privy Council and charged with making seditious comments on the trial and execution of Essex. Daniel’s letters of apology to Cecil and Mountjoy argued that his play was, in fact, written well before the rebellion and had been read by the Master of the Revels prior to 1600 (Rees, 1964; Seronsy, 1967; Michel, 1970).

Here, the talented but vain Philotas wondered at reading his father’s letter:

*Make thy selfe lesse Philotas than thou art?*
*What meanes my father to write to mee?*
*Lesse then I am, in what? how can that be?*
*Must I then be set underneath my hart?*
*Shall I let goe the holde I haue of grace*
*Gained so hard aduentures of my bloud,*
*And suffer others mount into my place?*


John Donne was an important member of England’s literary society. After serving in Robert Devereux’s naval expedition against Cadiz, Donne returned to England and became a member of the household of Thomas Egerton, Lord Ellesmere, the Queen’s last Lord Keeper. He had a promising career ahead of him before he fell in love and secretly married Egerton’s niece, for which he was dismissed. His fortunes did not improve until he became Royal Chaplain during
the Reign of James I. This volume was edited by John Donne, Jr. after the poet’s death. It contains a handwritten note by Deane Swift (1707-1783), cousin and biographer of Johnathon Swift (author of *Gulliver’s Travels*), describing the tomb of Donne as recorded by William Dugdale:

> Doctor Donne’s monument at St. Paul’s is the most remarkable I ever saw. *The Draught of it by Dugdale* [The History of St. Paul’s Cathedral in London from its Foundation until these times, 1658] is now before me, but the Original perished with the auncient Church [the burning of St. Paul’s Cathedral in the Great Fire of London, 1666]... *To this Statue the first Poem in the Book refers.*


William Dugdale’s *Short History* covered the period 1639-1659 and expressed his disdain for the destruction of the English Civil War.

Dugdale wrote that Elizabeth, too, had viewed the growing demands of Puritan interests as “dangerous to kingly rule; every man according to his own censure, making a doom of the validity, and privity of his Princes’ Government, with a veil and a cover of God’s word.” Here, Elizabeth is shown visiting the camp at Tilbury to rouse the troops in preparation for battle with Spain. It was here that she made her well-known, but perhaps apocryphal, speech:

> I know that I have the body of a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart and stomach of a king, and of a king of England too, and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain or any other prince of Europe should dare to invade my realm; to which, rather than any Dishonour grow by me, I myself will take up Arms, I myself will be your General.


Thomas Elyot served Henry VIII as diplomat, traveling to the Continent to argue in the King’s favor regarding his impending divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and to attempt to apprehend William Tyndale. He was recalled in 1532, having failed at both assignments. Elyot noted in the preface to the 1541 edition of *The Image of Gouvernance* that he might have risen higher had he not spent so much time reading and writing books (Lehmberg, 1960).

Thomas Elyot’s *Image of Governance* drew on the Roman Emperor Alexander Severus (222-235) as a model of good rule. A sixteenth- or seventeenth-century reader has noted the Emperor’s loathing of flattery in the margins.

John Foxe spent the reign of Mary I in exile in Germany and Switzerland, where he wrote his controversial survey of the persecution of Protestant reformers. His completed *Acts and Monuments* looked at the persecution of the early Christians under Rome, the persecution of the “proto-Protestant” followers of Wycliffe, and finally the execution of Protestants under the Catholic Queen Mary. The 1571 Convocation of the English Church ordered Foxe’s “Book of Martyrs” to be displayed in all cathedrals. While Foxe’s book was read nearly as often as the Bible by Protestants, Catholics, including contemporary Jesuit scholars, argued that it was libelous (Collinson, 2003).

Humanist William Tyndale, shown in this woodcut from Foxe’s book, printed the first English Bible in 1525-6. He was tried for heresy in Antwerp and put to death.


Gerarde was Master of the Company of Barber-Surgeons and superintendent of the gardens of William Cecil, roles that facilitated his interest in the natural healing properties of plants. His *Herbal,* first published in 1597, drew heavily from Dioscorides’ *Materia Medica* and Dodoen’s *Stirpium Historia Pentades Sex.* Gerarde was influenced, too, by New World discoveries; his description of the potato was provided by Sir Francis Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh.

The *Herbal* includes remedies for the plague, smallpox, and the King’s Evil, the latter a disease which the monarchs of France and England, including Elizabeth, were purported to heal. He also attempted to debunk some folkloric tales and remedies. Here, for example, Gerarde notes the “ridiculous tales” surrounding the mandrake:

*There hath been many ridiculous tales brought vp of this plant, whether of old wiues, or some runnagate Surgeons or Physicke-mongers I know not, (a title bad enough for them) but sure some one or moe that sought to make themselues famous and skilfull aboue others, were the first brochers of that errour I speake of. They adde further, That it is neuer or very seldome to be found growing naturally but vnder the gallowes, where the matter that hath fallen from the dead body hath giuen it the shape of a man; and the matter of a woman, the substace of a female plant; with many other such doltish dreames. They fable further and affirme, That he who would take a plant thereof must tie a dog thereunto to pull it vp, which will giue a great shreeke at the digging vp; otherwise if a man should do it, he should surely die in short space after.*

William Gilbert, Court Physician to Elizabeth I and President of the Royal College of Physicians, was the first to distinguish between electricity (static electricity or the “amber effect”) and magnetism. In *De Magnete*, Gilbert argued that magnetism was the “soul of the earth” and that a spherical lodestone would spin on its axis just as the earth spins every twenty-four hours. His research provided material for Galileo, Kepler, and Newton, and remained the most important work on magnetism until the early nineteenth century.

Gilbert’s *De Magnete* illustrates his design for an instrument with which to measure magnetic declinations of the earth.


Henry VIII’s * Assertion of the Seven Sacraments* was first printed in London in 1521 and 1526. The King’s thoughts are published here with those of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester (1459-1535, canonized in 1936), who argued against the reasoning of Martin Luther. Fisher later incurred the wrath of the King, both by his stance against the King’s divorce from Catherine of Aragon, and his refusal to take an oath of succession acknowledging any offspring of Anne Boleyn (mother of Elizabeth I) and the King. Fisher, like Sir Thomas More, was charged with treason and beheaded.


Raphael Holinshed’s vivid history of England, Scotland and Ireland drew from Geoffrey of Monmouth’s *Historiae Regum Britanniae*. In turn, it provided an historical framework for some of William Shakespeare’s plays.

Holinshed recounted the history of King Lear [Leir]. The King, who had willed his kingdom to be divided between his two eldest daughters and their husbands, was betrayed. He lost both throne and kingdom to his unfaithful kin. Lear fled to Gallia and the safety of his youngest daughter Cordelia and her husband. They gathered an army, defeating the usurpers. Holinshed’s Cordelia was a “woman of manly courage” who, like Elizabeth I, served as “supreme governor.” At the death of her husband, however, Cordelia’s nephews rose up and imprisoned her, precipitating her heroic suicide. Shakespeare departed from Holinshed’s account with his own equally tragic ending.

Richard Hooker’s *Laws*, written 1593-97, provided the classical defense of the Elizabethan settlement of the Church against Puritan attacks over such sensitive issues as the celebration of the Eucharist and other ceremonies preserved by the Church. The Oxford-trained theologian was lauded in Izaak Walton’s *Life of Richard Hooker* (1665), as a “most Learned, most Humble, holy Man.” (Novarr, 1958; McGrade, 1997).


In the early years of the reign of Elizabeth I, John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, authored this classic defense of the Church of England against Thomas Harding’s criticism of the English Protestant position. Harding, treasurer of Salisbury and chaplain and confessor to Gardiner during the reign of Mary, was imprisoned upon the accession of Elizabeth and subsequently fled to Louvain. Jewel and Harding continued their disputation until the death of Jewel several years later.


Ben Jonson once killed a fellow actor in a duel, but pleaded benefit of clergy by reciting the Latin Bible, thereby escaping execution. He converted to Roman Catholicism after the ordeal. Jonson was the first early modern playwright to pull together a collection of plays into one volume (1616). This inflamed contemporary critics, who argued that plays in English did not merit a “collection of works” in the same manner as those of classical authors. *Cynthia’s Revels* was among the works anthologized. It was first performed in 1600 by the Children of Queen Elizabeth’s Chapel. Court patronage provided support for children’s acting companies such as the Children of the Chapel, the Children of Windsor, and the Children of the Queen’s Revels.

*Cynthia’s Revels*, a dramatic, satirical masque created for the court by Jonson, compared Elizabeth to the goddess Cynthia, “Huntresse, chaste and faire,” virgin goddess of the moon. This comparison was taken up not only by playwrights and poets such as Jonson and John Davies, but also by artists. Court miniaturist Nicolas Hilliard portrayed Elizabeth as the youthful Cynthia with the crescent moon in her hair in the last decade of her reign (Frye, 2003; Strong, 1986).
Here, Jonson defended the Queen as Cynthia, against those critics who thought her ordering of the execution of the Earl of Essex too harsh (Evans, 1989):

To brave a deitie? Let morals learn
To make religion of offending heaven;
And not at all to censure powers divine.
To men, this argument should stand for firme,
A Goddess did it, therefore it was good:
We are not cruel, nor delight in blood.

**Thomas Kyd. The Tragedie of Solimon and Perseda.** London, 1599. PR 2654 S58 1599.

Thomas Kyd, actor and playwright in the first generation of professional theater in London, once shared a room with Christopher Marlowe. Kyd’s works very likely provided inspiration for aspects of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*.

The Tragedie of Solimon and Perseda, seen here, is generally attributed to Kyd on the basis of style. The allegorical figures of Love, Fortune, and Death moderate this tangled tragedy of thwarted love between Erastus, a knight of Rhodes, and Perseda. Set against the sack of Rhodes by Turkish forces, the tale ends with the triumph of Death, as Perseda “sawst her lips with deadly poison,” to kill the tyrant Solimon (Erne, 2001).


John Leland’s *Itinerary* was begun in 1538 at the request of Henry VIII. The antiquarian provided an illuminating record of the state of towns, villages, and the remains of monastic communities in the process of dissolution. Leland’s work influenced antiquarians and historians for centuries to come, as evidenced by this eighteenth-century edition of the *Itinerary*. Later authors followed Leland’s lead, contributing accounts of Roman and Saxon antiquities to this edition.

In this selection, Leland wrote of Reculver Abbey, Kent, which had been recently dissolved by Henry VIII. By the time of Leland’s visit, the abbey church was in use for parochial services; the monastic ruins were in use for a vicarage. The church retained a cross and paintings of Christ and the apostles.

**Gerhard Mercator. Atlas, sive Cosmographia de Fabrica Mundi et de Fabricate Figura.** Amsterdam, 1630. Oversize Uncataloged.
Mercator matriculated in humanities and philosophy at the University of Louvain in 1530, but shifted his focus to geography and astronomy. He worked with John Dee. Dee advised the Muscovy Company on geometry and cosmography in their search for a Northeast Passage to India, and later became astrologer and advisor to Elizabeth I.

Mercator’s map of Anglia, Scotia, and Hibernia recorded important cities, ports, and churches.

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**Thomas Middleton.** *A Tragi-coomodie, Called the Witch.* London, 1778.
Uncataloged 95-2-1.

Middleton’s play, *The Witch*, has been dated to between 1602 (the earlier part of the playwright’s career) and his death in 1627. He weaves three plots of love and revenge together with supporting scenes of witchcraft, the main sources of which were Reginald Scot’s *The Discouerie of Witchcraft* (London, 1584) and the popular imagination of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. While there are certain similarities between Middleton’s play and that of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, scholars disagree on the question of which play influenced the other. *The Witch* existed only in manuscript until its first printing in 1778. This is the first printed edition (Esche, 1993).

Here, the witch Hecate sings:

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Now I goe, now I flie,
Malkin, my sweete spirit, and I.
O, what a daintie pleasure tis
To ride in the aire
When the moone shines faire,
And sing and daunce, and toy and kiss.
Over woods, high rocks and mountaines,
Over seas, our mistris fountaines,
Over steepe towers and turretts,
We fly by night ‘mongst troopes of spiritts
No ring of bells to our eares sounds,
No howles of wolves, no yelpes of hounds;
No, not the noyse of water ’s-breache,
Or cannon’s throat, our height can reache [Act III Sc. iii]
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**John Nichols.** *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth Among Which are Interspersed Other Solemnities, Public Expenditures, and Remarkable Events During the*
One of the many manuscripts published in Nichol’s *Progresses and Public Processions* was that of Paul Hentzner (1558-1623), whose narratives of his travels in England included this description of Windsor Castle. He explained the history of the chivalric Order of the Garter in St. George’s Chapel, founded by Edward III, whose companions were chosen for military virtue and antiquity of family:

*They are styled Companions of the Garter, from their wearing below the left knee a purple garter, inscribed in letters of gold, with Honi soit qui mal y pense, i.e. Evil to him that evil thinks. This they wear upon the left leg, in memory of one which, happening to untie, was let fall by a great lady, passionately beloved by Edward, while she was dancing, as was immediately snatched up by the King, who, to do honour to the Lady, not out of any trifling gallantry, but with a most serious and honourable purpose, dedicated it to the legs of the most distinguished Nobility. The ceremonies of this society are celebrated every year at Windsor, on St. George’s day, the tutular Saint of the Order...*

In spite of religious reform, Elizabeth I maintained the medieval tradition; both chapel decorations and outward ceremonies were kept with few changes. A number of foreign sovereigns were elected to the Order during her reign, including Maximilian II and Rodolphus II of Germany and Charles IX, Henry II, and Henry IV of France (Beltz, 1973).


The Palace of Richmond was built by Henry VII along the Thames after the old palace of Sheen burned in 1498. Elizabeth I was a frequent visitor to Richmond; she died at the palace in 1603.


Elizabeth visited Lord Chancellor Hatton at Ely Place, seen here, in 1590. While the Chancellor was a favorite of the queen’s, he owed her money which he could not repay. He became despondent and ill. Thomas Fuller (1608-1661) wrote that the queen:

*…afterwards did endeavor to do what she could to recover him, bringing, as some say cordial broths unto him with her own hands; but all would not do. Thus no pullies can draw up a heart once cast down, though a*
Queen herself set her hand thereunto. He dyed anno Domini 1591; and is buried, under a stately monument, in the quire of St. Paul’s.


John Calvin, Protestant reformer and establisher of Geneva as a center of religious reform, incorporated the church into city government, imposing a strict moral code. Many foreigners, including English Protestants fleeing the reign of Mary I, were attracted to the city, which had developed into the most important Protestant center of sixteenth-century Europe. These English Protestants returned home upon the accession of Elizabeth I, bringing Calvinist practice back with them.

Calvin’s commentaries on the Bible reflected his theological, political, and social philosophy. This commentary on the Psalms, published in English, is signed on the title page by John Duncombe. It contains the following personal inscription:

my sonne Duncumbe was borne vpon Tuesdaye beinge the vi\textsuperscript{th} of Septembre, about vi at the clocke in after none A° Regni Regime Elizabethe xxvij’ and Christened the [ ] of the same monethe followinge. The same daye sevenight before, about 4 at the clocke was Faustine Cuppidge borne

And, in a later hand:

Susanna Simpson Book lord be mursuful to her a pore sinnerr


Vincentio Saviolo arrived in England in 1590, published *His Practice* in 1595, and taught fencing at Court for most of the decade. Saviolo’s work treated the use of the rapier and dagger, but also the ideals of honor and the nobility of women. Laying aside Biblical and mythological heroines, Saviolo looked at more recent historical examples of the valiant nature of women in defense of their own: a young maid’s stand before the Turkish forces; Ursina’s defense of their castle in the absence of her husband Guido; and Margaret’s leadership of a company to rescue her husband, King Henry of England, from his captors. Elizabeth, in particular, drew praise as:

most glorious Princess Elizabeth our gracious Queene, whose fame hath built her towers of triumphes, even in Countries farthest remoued from her, and forced her very enemies in the storme of their malice and spite, to praise her mercifullness and wisedome, and to feare her power: this is
such a manifest and worthy example of womanly worthines and feminine perfection....


This Fourth Folio edition of William Shakespeare’s work includes the famous engraved portrait of the playwright seen here, posthumous praises by contemporaries such as Ben Jonson, lists of actors in his company, and a list of plays (including some clearly not his). The Friends of the University Libraries raised funds for this purchase by selling the Colorado Cook Book.

Two of Shakespeare’s plays are known to have been performed before the Queen. Love’s Labour’s Lost, written around 1594, was not performed at Court until the Christmas of 1597 or 1598. The play drew from the contemporary French religious wars, with subtle references to Henry of Navarre. His renunciation of Protestantism in 1593 in order to take the French throne disappointed Elizabeth, who had sent both money and military forces. This is reflected in the perjury of Shakespeare’s “Ferdinand” of Navarre. The Merry Wives of Windsor was performed at the Feast of the Garter celebrated at Westminster in 1597. While there is no firm evidence that Elizabeth saw A Midsummer Night’s Dream, any association between the Queen and the figure of Titania, the Fairy Queen, was not entirely complimentary (Hibbard, 1990; Ziegler, 2003; Frye, 1993).


Edmund Spenser, trained in the tradition of Christian humanism, was heavily influenced by a neo-Platonic model of reality in which the poet creates another world analogous to that created by God. Spenser’s Faerie Queene drew from medieval ideals of chivalry, while at the same time promoting a militant, Protestant state. This work honored both Queen and court. It supported the cult of Elizabeth as Tudor heir to Britain’s King Arthur, the Fairy Queen Gloriana, the heroic figure of St. George (patron saint of Britain, protector of the kingdom against the Antichrist), and the classical figure of Cynthia (Waller, 1994; Wells, 1983).

While the Fairy Queen remains off-stage, Spenser explains her presence:

In that Fairy Queen, I mean Glory in my general Intention; but in my particular conceive, the most excellent and glorious Person of our Sovereign the Queen, and her Kingdom in Fairy-Land. And yet, in some places else, I do otherwise shadow her. For considering she beareth two Persons, the one a most Royal Queen or Empress, the other a most virtuous and beautiful Lady; this latter part in some places, I do express Belphoebe; fashioning her Name according to your excellent Conceit of
Cynthia; Phoebe and Cynthia both being names of Diana…. (Spenser’s Works, 1715: “A Letter of the Author.”)


John Stowe’s *Annales*, first published in 1570 and amended in later publications, followed the historical and antiquarian work of William Camden.

Here, Stowe’s *Annales* demonstrates the evolution of English identity under Elizabeth I as both insular and Protestant, set in opposition to Spain. This 1583 prophesy by Master Thomas Rogers was seen to anticipate the final confrontation between the two powers in 1588. Preparation for battle with the Spanish Armada is seen in Stowe’s account of the Queen’s royal ships.


Puritan poet George Wither borrowed plates for engravings from Gabriel Rollenhagen (1611) and added English verses for this collection of emblems. Wither’s collection formed part of the first generation of English emblem books, which also featured the work of Geoffrey Whitney’s 1586 *A Choice of Emblemes* and Henry Peacham’s 1612 *Minerva Britannica* (Daly, 1988).

The “Rainbow Portrait,” a late depiction of Elizabeth I dated between 1600 and 1603 and attributed to Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger, is notable for the cloak of eyes, ears, and serpent, an allusion to Prudence and the goddess Minerva (Strong, 1987).

Wither’s serpent, seen here, is lauded by Wither as emblematic of wisdom.