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Erasmus and Machiavelli in the education of Edward VI

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In the first two decades of the sixteenth century Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) and Desiderius Erasmus (c.1469-1536) witnessed the triumph of hereditary princely government over much of the Italian peninsula and the rise of belligerent, expansionist and dynastically ambitious royal houses on both sides of the Alps. The humanists both responded with contributions to the mirror-for-princes genre, which were written less than three years apart. Machiavelli urged the scions of the Medici to revise their understanding of princely rule and to hire him as a counsellor. Erasmus, already an honorary adviser to the future Charles V (1500-1558), appealed to both his patron and subsequently to Henry VIII of England (1491-1547) to reject this model of monarchy.[1]

Of course, the nature of Machiavelli's counsel in *Il Principe* (*The Prince*, written 1513, published 1532) differed widely to Erasmus' prescriptions in the *Institutio principis Christiani* (*The Education of a Christian Prince*, 1516). Indeed on the critical subjects of the nature of princely power and its relationship to military conquest, the humanists were diametrically opposed. Erasmus adapted a Platonic and Biblical metaphor, which compared tyrants with wild beasts, to argue that a schoolmaster's role was to tame the prince's passionate, animal qualities into abeyance. In contrast Machiavelli devoted his famous eighteenth chapter in *The Prince* to inverting the authority of Cicero: rulers must learn to use the bestial side of their natures and to 'imitate both the fox and the lion'.[2] Machiavelli claimed that a prince's capacity to maintain his state and accrue glory for posterity depended heavily on military prowess. For Erasmus vainglorious attempts at conquest were not just

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[1] *Il Principe* was originally intended for Giuliano de' Medici but after Guiliano's death in 1516, Machiavelli rededicated the work to his nephew, Lorenzo, also the nephew of Pope Leo X. Erasmus dedicated the *Institutio* to Prince Charles, subsequently Habsburg emperor Charles V. In September 1517 he also sent a hand-illuminated presentation copy to Henry VIII: Cecil H. Clough, 'Erasmus and the pursuit of English royal patronage in 1517 and 1518', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, 1 (1981): 126-40; Harry R. Burke, 'Audience and intention in Machiavelli's *The Prince* and Erasmus' *Education of a Christian prince*', *Erasmus of Rotterdam Society Yearbook*, 4 (1984): 84-93. Erasmus left it to Guillaume Budé to advise Valois king François I in French: Guillaume Budé, *De l'Institution du Prince* (Paris: Abbaye dudict Seigneur, 1547) though the work was written in 1519.

[2] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, trans. Neil M. Cheshire and Michael J. Heath, ed. Lisa Jardine (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 11, 27, 30 drawing on Plato, *Republic*, IX. 588-90 and Proverbs 28:15; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, ed. and trans. Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p.61 drawing on Cicero, *de Officiis*, I, 13, 41.

impious and immoral, but likely to threaten a prince's security at home.[3] Indeed apart from their shared suspicion that hereditary monarchy was far from the best form of government, the only point on which the humanists agreed was that a prince needed to take the advice of sober, prudent and disinterested counsellors (like them) very seriously.[4]

Both texts were radical interventions in the history of princely advice literature. *The Prince* systematically inverted the assumptions and authorities of the genre and described a secular, morally relative realm of political activity. Certainly Machiavelli would have dismissed Erasmus' *Education of a Christian Prince* as one of those treatises which described how rulers ought to live, rather than how they did behave. Yet to a sixteenth-century monarch, Erasmus' precepts may have seemed as challenging as the Florentine's. Erasmus claimed, for instance, that monarchical government operated on the basis of its subjects' consent. He required princes to jettison the magnificence of their courts, and the trappings and recreations of chivalry, and to rely instead on piety, justice, moderation and wisdom to maintain their royal authority. He also insisted that princes achieve much greater knowledge of the *bonae litterae* (ancient Greek and Roman authors and scripture) than his contemporaries required of their patrons, and specified an extensive course of reading for the good Christian prince.[5]

Questions as to what precisely Machiavelli and Erasmus were prescribing for princes (or indeed alleging against them) have fruitfully engaged generations of commentators. This paper, however, makes no claim to further knowledge on such well-advanced fronts. Instead, it proposes to investigate the more historical problem hinted at in the previous paragraph: how might a sixteenth-century prince have engaged with these texts? And how influential were Erasmus' and Machiavelli's advice books in shaping his or her political ideas? Beyond Machiavelli's failure to gain another public office in his lifetime little evidence for the Medici's view of *The Prince* has survived. Beyond some pleasantries from Charles and Henry VIII, who also gave Erasmus the small sum of £20, we have little more to go on for

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[3] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 103-10; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 20-22, 42-43, 51-54.

[4] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 54-60; Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 80-82.

[5] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 36, 42-43, 89 (government by consent); pp. 15-17, 46-47, 50-51, 69, 75 (jettisoning magnificence and chivalry); pp. 61-64 (the *bonae litterae*). David Rundle, "Not so much praise as precept': Erasmus, panegyric and the Renaissance art of teaching princes', in *Pedagogy and power: rhetorics of classical learning*, edited by Yun Lee Too and Niall Livingstone (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp.148-69.

The Education of a Christian Prince.[6] Yet the unusually rich sources for the education of Henry's only legitimate son, Prince Edward, later Edward VI (1537-1553), demonstrate his engagement with the political thought of Erasmus, and more surprisingly for Tudor historians, of Niccolò Machiavelli.

I: The English Faces of Erasmus and Machiavelli

Rich evidence does not always trump methodological and historiographical challenges. In this case, one is issued by those intellectual historians who have argued against the possibility of sustaining any coherent account of how Erasmus or Machiavelli were read in sixteenth-century England. Of the two, Machiavelli's 'English face' is harder to sketch. One early commentator claimed his ideas 'could have been of singularly little use' to the Tudor polity. If we consider the *Discorsi supra la prima di Tito Livio* (*Discourses on the first decade of Livy*, written 1515-1518/19, printed 1531) alone, however, J. G. A. Pocock has provided historians with a sweeping landscape rather than a mere portrait. He painted the *Discourses'* role in shaping republicanism in seventeenth-century England and eighteenth-century North America. Markku Peltonen has subsequently argued that Machiavelli's civic face had been present in England since 1585 at least.[7] Yet when Felix Raab considered the reception of a broader range of Machiavellian writing in sixteenth-century England, including that of *The Prince*, he arrived at a different conclusion: the 'most vocal and by far the most widespread reaction to the teachings of Machiavelli among Elizabethan Englishmen was horror'. Raab acknowledged that a few individuals (Francis Bacon above all) were sufficiently capable of shucking their 'Augustinian world-complex' to 'swallow Machiavelli in detail' yet even they failed to admit 'his secular presuppositions'. [8] Surveying the same body of evidence Émile Gasquet concluded to the contrary. Machiavelli's earliest English readers showed a

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[6] Clough, 'Erasmus and the pursuit of English royal patronage in 1517 and 1518', pp. 126-40.

[7] L. Arnold Weissberger, 'Machiavelli and Tudor England', *Political Science Quarterly*, 42 (1927): 589-607, p. 607; J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian moment: Florentine political thought and the Atlantic republican tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); Vickie B. Sullivan, *Machiavelli, Hobbes, and the formation of a liberal republicanism in England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Markku Peltonen, *Classical humanism and republicanism in English political thought, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

8 Felix Raab, *The English face of Machiavelli: a changing interpretation 1500-1700* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 56, 50, 51 respectively.

'reasoned, just, intelligent and dispassionate appreciation' for his works.[9] Both these interpretations, of course, depend on whether one can identify such readers—let alone their thoughts—with any certainty. As the debate regarding the authorship of one mid-century attempt to apply Machiavellian principles to the English principality, the *Ragionamento dell'advenimento delli Inglesi, e Normanni in Britannia* (c.1555), demonstrates this is not necessarily the case.[10] Indeed, in his comprehensive study of sixteenth-century responses to Machiavelli, Sydney Anglo brazenly confessed to his inability to perceive any pattern to them.[11] It may be fruitful, therefore, to consider the specific historical context in which a single reading of Machiavelli was conducted particularly, perhaps, one which involved that more problematic text, *The Prince*.

A strong case for Erasmus' influence on the form of English humanism has been made by James McConica and others. While Alistair Fox has cast doubt on the overall shape of Henrician humanism, even he concedes Erasmus' broad and direct influence on Tudor pedagogical theory and classroom curriculum.[12] As Richard Rex has pointed out, many English humanists who knew Erasmus or who were directly influenced by his writing stayed loyal to the old faith. Yet Erasmus the pedagogue, alongside 'Erasmus the biblical scholar and spokesman for vernacular scripture', was happily claimed by Henrician, Edwardian and Elizabethan reformers.[13] Not only were Erasmus' works on grammar and rhetoric widely

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9 Émile Gasquet, *Le courant Machiavelien dans la pensée et la literature Anglaises du XVIe siècle* (Montreal: Didier, 1974), p. 113.

[10] Stephen Gardiner has been named as the author by: Peter S. Donaldson, *A Machiavellian treatise by Stephen Gardiner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) and *Machiavelli and mystery of state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 36-85. Against Gardiner's authorship is: Sydney Anglo, 'Crypto-Machiavellism in early Tudor England: the problem of the *Ragionamento dell'advenimento delli Inglesi, et Normanni in Britannia', Renaissance and Reformation,* 2 (1978): 182-93 and *Machiavelli—the first century: studies in enthusiasm, hostility, and irrelevance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 109-114.

[11] Anglo, *Machiavelli—the first century*, pp. 3-6 and *passim*.

[12] James K. McConica, *English humanists and reformation politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965); Joan Simon, *Education and society in Tudor England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), pp. 73-80; Craig R. Thompson, 'Erasmus and Tudor England', in *Actes du Congres* Erasme (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Company, 1971), pp. 29-68, esp. pp. 36-39; Maria Dowling, *Humanism in the age of Henry VIII* (London: Croom Helme, 1986); Jean-Claude Margolin, *Érasme précepteur de l'Europe* (Paris: Éditions Julliard, 1995), pp. 25-55; Alistair Fox, 'English humanism and the body politic', in *Reassessing the Henrician age: humanism, politics and reform 1500-1550*, eds. Alistair Fox and John Guy (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), pp. 34-51.

[13] Richard Rex, 'The role of English humanists in the Reformation up to 1559', in *The Education of a Christian society: humanism and the Reformation in Britain and the Netherlands* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 1999), pp. 19-40.

used in classrooms but the course of studies he prescribed in his *de Ratione studii* (1512) shaped the statutes of a number of Tudor grammar schools.[14]

The more serious question relating to sixteenth-century humanist education, then, is the extent to which its practice actually forwarded the pedagogues' stated aims. Following Anthony Grafton's and Lisa Jardine's provocative account of the transition *From humanism to the humanities* (1986), a number of scholars have pointed to the gap between the political and moral training which humanist pedagogues claimed to be providing for their students and the uninspired, mechanical nature of their schoolroom methods. Humanism did not triumph over scholasticism in European courts because it was intrinsically superior, they have argued, but because it cultivated 'a docile attitude towards authority' in its students. [15]   Even those modern readers who have taken a more optimistic view of the potential of a liberal education to foster certain mental habits—such as the capacity to argue *in utramque partem*— or to develop 'confidence in a self, one's own self', have been reluctant to presuppose any link between these capacities and a set of political commitments.[16]

Indeed Edward VI has often been seized on as a pitiful example of what the unimaginative, pedantic and desiccating humanist schoolroom was capable of achieving (or destroying).   There is a broad scholarly consensus that Edward=s schooling left him extremely well-drilled in Latin and Greek grammar and rhetoric—the sort of erudition which Erasmus had claimed would shape a prince for rule. Yet historians have often concluded that hot-housing Edward had done little but contribute his early death. Even Thomas Baldwin,

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[14] Thomas Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine and lesse Greeke*, 2 vols. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944) I, pp.75-133. There were also multiple English translations of a number of Erasmus' pedagogical works, see E. J. Devereux, *English translations of Erasmus: a bibliography up to 1700* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983); Nicholas Orme, *Medieval schools: From Roman Britain to Renaissance England* (New Haven, Yale University Press), pp.126-27 has reminded us not to exaggerate the speed at which these Erasmian reforms percolated through English schools.

[15] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, *From humanism to the humanities: Education and the liberal arts in sixteenth-century Europe* (London: Duckworth, 1986), p.xiv. See subsequently: Rebecca Bushnell, *A Culture of teaching: Early modern humanism in theory and practice* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1996); Jean Meyer, *L'éducation des princes en Europe du XVe au XIXe siècle* (Paris: Perrin, 2004) has also put princely education in the service of absolutism.

[16] Quotation from Robert E. Proctor, 'The *Studia humanitatis*: Contemporary scholarship and Renaissance ideals', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990): 813-818, p. 815; Charles G. Nauert, Jr 'Humanist infiltration into the academic world: Some studies of northern universities', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 43 (1990): 799-812; Kenneth Gouwens, 'Perceiving the past: Renaissance humanism after the "cognitive turn"', *American Historical Review*, 103 (1998): 55-82; Peter Mack, *Elizabethan rhetoric: Theory and practice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

argued that Edward=s tutors left him a >king of dust=.[17] In order to evaluate Edward's engagement with Erasmus and Machiavelli and their influence on his political development it will be necessary to examine the pedagogical foundations of his schooling as well as his early attempts to formulate policy and participate in political life.

II: Pedagogical Prescriptions for the Education of Princes

First, however, it may be useful to consider precisely how Erasmus and Machiavelli proposed princes should be educated. What curriculum did they argue would cultivate a good ruler? Erasmus was particularly ambitious in the claims he made on behalf of the *bonae et divinae litterae*. Without a liberal education designed to make them philosophers, he insisted, rulers were merely tyrants and likely to fall.[18] By contrast the well-read prince would rule moderately and improve his subjects' physical, moral and spiritual welfare, by providing for things like their education.[19] Additionally he would be a moral *exemplum* for his subjects' imitation. If he was pious, just, temperate, honest and wise, this would encourage his subjects to pursue such virtues also.[20] The qualities Erasmus wished to inculcate in his ruler were those to which any Christian might aspire.

These virtues were to be imprinted on the future king by careful cultivation: the books he read during his childhood would later serve as his honest counselors.[21] Erasmus argued that the prince should learn Latin and Greek grammar through morally-improving tales, such as Aesop's Fables and the teachings of Christ (probably the parables) 'gathered together in some convenient form'.[22] He recommended that the prince be offered relevant sections of the

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[17]Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine and lesse Greeke,* I, p. 256. Grafton and Jardine cite his conclusion with glee: *From humanism to the humanities*, p. 156. See also: Hester Chapman, *The Last Tudor king: a study of Edward VI* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958) p. 50; and W. K. Jordan, >Introduction= in *The Chronicle and politicalpPapers of King Edward VI* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1966), p. xxiv.

[18] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, p. 1. Erasmus makes reference to Plato, *The Republic*, 473d-e and 499b-c.

[19] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 72, 85, 98.

[20] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 5, 78.

[21] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, pp. 7, 70.

[22] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince,* pp. 12, 13. He may have been referring to the *Concio de puero Iesu in schola Coletica Londini institua pronuncianda* and *Eiusdem expostulatio Iesu ad mortales* which were

proverbs of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus and the Book of Wisdom, followed by the Gospels.[23] These Christian works were to be followed by pagan texts which applied moral philosophy to the concerns of political leadership: Plutarch's *Apophthegms*, *Moralia* and the *Lives;* the works of Seneca; Aristotle's *Politics* and Cicero's *de Officiis* were also recommended, though Erasmus thought that Plato had 'the purer message' on the duty of the philosopher-king.[24] Finally, he encouraged the prince to draw on his own work, *de Copia,* which aimed to train students in Latin grammar and the early stages of rhetoric through literary material on moral topics.[25] In short, Erasmus' prescriptions for the Christian prince were not dissimilar from the curriculum that he recommended for John Colet's students at St Paul's.[26] Studying grammar, scripture, moral philosophy and rhetoric, was meant to render the student prince an exemplary Christian and therefore, a good monarch.

The extent to which Erasmus privileged the *bonae litterae* over specific 'princely' learning can be seen in his attitude to *historia.* In dedicating his edition of Livy's *Ab urbe condita*, entitled *Latinae historiae* (1531), to Charles Mountjoy, Erasmus acknowledged the widely held opinion 'that no reading is more suitable for great men than that of histories' and claimed that Henry VII and VIII were both great enthusiasts.[27] Yet in *The Education of a Christian prince,* Erasmus warned Charles and Henry that unless Greek and Roman *historiae* were carefully mediated they could prove unreliable cultivators. While some prudential *exempla* could be culled from the histories of Herodotus, Xenophon, Livy and Sallust, a prince might 'also take in the most destructive ideas from these same writers'. Erasmus pointed to the poor examples that 'great raging bandits' like Achilles, Xerxes, Cyrus and Julius Caesar offered rulers. He concluded that trying to find a straight example of princely

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published alongside *De ratione studii* in some early editions.

[23]Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, p. 61.

[24] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian Prince*, p. 62.

[25] Erasmus, , *Education of a Christian prince*, p. 61.

[26] Erasmus, *de Duplici copia verborum ac rerum commentarii duo* and *de Ratione studii ac legendi interpretandique auctores* (1511) in *Collected works of Erasmus: literary and educational Writings 2*, translated by Betty I. Knott, edited by Craig R. Thompson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), p. 286.

[27] 'Itaque quum scirem magnatibus viris nullam esse lectionem magis accommodam quam historicorum': Erasmus, Letter to Charles Mountjoy, in *T. Livii Patavini Latinae Historiae* (Basel: Froben, 1531), printed in *Opus epistolarum Desiderii Roterodami*, ed. P. S. Allen, 12 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906-47), IX, ep. 2435, ll. 73-74.

virtue in a history was like rescuing *gemma e sterquilinio* 'a jewel from a dung-heap'.[28] The humanist's opinion seems to have been that the precepts which overflowed from the cups of scripture and classical moral philosophy were clearer, ethically superior and more universally applicable in a Christian world than the variable example of pagan leaders.

In contrast, the only classical knowledge or study to which Machiavelli laid claim in *The Prince* was an expertise in ancient history, the fruit of continual reading (*la cognizione… imparata con… una continua lezione delle antique*).[29] It was also the exercise *con la mente* that he recommended to princes in chapter fourteen. Machiavelli followed Polybius in arguing that histories shed light 'on the actions of eminent men' and enabled one 'to find out how they waged war, to discover the reasons for their victories and defeats, in order to avoid reverses and achieve conquests and above all, to imitate some eminent man'.[30] The 'eminent men' recommended by Machiavelli were, quite naturally, many of Erasmus' 'great raging bandits'.

In his *Discourses on… Livy*, Machiavelli similarly argued that the point of reading *istorie* was to learn to imitate the 'highly virtuous actions performed by ancient kingdoms and republics'. He urged men in public life to compare 'ancient and modern events', as he had done, to understand their causes and to extract 'those practical lessons which one should seek to obtain from the study of history'. History, for Machiavelli, was both the course of constitutional change and the actions of individuals who were attempting to survive within it. Precepts in law and medicine were little more than the collected wisdom of ancient decisions in particular cases, he explained, so why did so few civic leaders repair to the examples of antiquity?[31] In his opinion their failure to do so caused even greater damage to civic life than the contemporary state of religion. Not only was Machiavelli quite clear that rulers required specific expertise to maintain their state, but he was adamant that it could only be derived from the comparative examination of the particular. Machiavelli's pedagogical method differed as greatly from Erasmus' as his account of princely *virtú*.

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[28] Erasmus, *Education of a Christian prince*, p. 62.

[29] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 3.

[30] Machiavelli, *The Prince*, pp. 52, 53. Polybius, *Histories*, XII, 25b, 1-3.

[31] Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, trans. Leslie Walker and Brian Richardson, ed. Bernard Crick (London: Penguin Books, 1970), pp. 98-99.

III: Edward VI's education under John Cheke

When the early years of Edward VI's education are examined, Erasmus emerges as the dominant pedagogical influence on the prince's tutors and curriculum. Prince Edward's schooling began in around July 1544 and continued until July 1552, when the king composed the last of his weekly orations in Latin and Greek.[32] The care and attention bestowed on Edward=s education tends to refute Jean Meyer=s claim that minority government attenuated princely learning in the early modern period.[33] If anything the king's programme was intensified after the death of Henry VIII in January 1547.

As Edward himself wrote: 'at the sixth year of his age he was brought up in learning by Mr. Dr. [Richard] Cox, who was after[ward] his Almoner, and John Cheke, ~~Bachelor of Arts~~ Master of Arts, two well-learned men, who sought to bring him up in the learning of tongues, of the scripture, of philosophy, and all liberal sciences. Also John [Jean] Belmaine, [a] Frenchman, did teach him the French language'.[34] In addition to providing Edward with training in letters the king's schoolmasters were advisers who had the right to address their pupil more didactically than a mere counsellor would.[35] As becomes clear from Edward's school exercises, Jean Belmaine (*fl.*1546-1559) used their French lessons to encourage the prince's study of Calvinist theology.[36] Richard Cox (c.1500-1581), who had been involved in the early stages of Edward's foray into Latin grammar, took a more supervisory role later,

[32]Edward, >Oratio=, in British Library, Additional MS 4724, fol. 155r. This final oration is clearly dated, rendering Jordan=s claim that Edward=s education was completed in the spring of 1551 unlikely: Wilbur K. Jordan, *Edward VI: The Young king, the protectorship of the Duke of Somerset* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968) , p. 22 and *Edward VI: the Threshold of power, the dominance of the Duke of Northumberland* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970) p. 402. Indeed, a few pages further into the second work (p. 407) Jordan contradicts himself to say that the king=s formal education finished on 4 June 1552 since one of his later Greek exercises was composed on this date.

[33]Meyer, *L'Éducation des princes du XVe au XIXe siècl^e*, pp. 14, 20, 25, 27-29.

[34] British Library, Cotton MS Nero C.X printed in *The Chronicle and political papers of Edward VI*, ed. W. K. Jordan, pp. 3-156, p. 3

[35] For a clear statement of this distinction, see *His Majesties answer to the XIX propositions of both Houses of Parliament* (London: Robert Barker, 1642), p.7 : >And though we shall... always weigh the Advices both of our Great and Privy Council, yet we shall also look upon their Advices as Advices, not as Commands or Impositions; upon them as our Counsellors, not as our Tutors and Guardians, and upon our self as their King, not as their Pupil or Ward.=

[36] For instance Edward VI, 'Alencontre les abus du Monde' (December 1548-March 1549), British Library, Additional MS 5464, shows correction marks made by Belmaine: Diarmaid MacCulloch *Tudor church militant: Edward VI and the protestant reformation* (London: Allen Lane, the Penguin Press, 1999), pp. 26-31.

though he maintained a keen interest in the king's religious education.[37] It was John Cheke,
however, who took primary responsibility for Edward=s progress in the 'tongues', 'liberal
sciences' and for his personal piety.

When Henry VIII established Edward=s schoolroom he had employed Cheke as the
junior >suppliment= to Cox.[38] Nevertheless, Cheke was already an impressive humanist in
his own right.[39] He joined St John=s College, Cambridge in 1526 and came to prominence
during the 1530s though the investigations which he and Thomas Smith were making into
classical Greek philology and phonetic pronunciation based on Erasmus' *de Recta Latini
Graecique sermonis pronuntiatione* (1528). In 1540 Cheke became Regius Professor of
Greek in Cambridge but two years later Stephen Gardiner, the Chancellor of the university,
alleged that Cheke was using his office autocratically to impose the Erasmian
pronunciation.[40] Like Erasmus, Cheke's expertise in Greek led him to scriptural translation.
In 1549 Cheke translated the Gospel of Matthew (which he simultaneously set Edward to
mine for commonplaces) and some of Mark into the vernacular. Much has been made of
Cheke's preference for English vocabulary 'unmixt and unmangled' with Latinate terms.[41]

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37 For Cox's early involvement see his letter to Paget, 10 December 1544, Ashridge, printed in Baldwin,
William Shakespere's small Latine and lesse Greeke, I, pp. 203-4. Having presided over the debate on the
Eucharist at Oxford Cox seems to have read over the proceedings with Edward: Peter Martyr, *Tractatio de
sacramento Eucharistiae, habita in celeberrima universitate Oxoniensi in Anglia... Ad haec Disputatio de
eodem Eucharistiae sacramento, in eadem Universitate habita* (London: R. Wolfe, 1549). Edward's copy of the
tract is in the British Library C.37.e.2.

[38]Paper of resolutions taken at the king=s departure to France, 7 July 1544, Westminster, calendared in *L & P*,
IX.i, no. 864, p.537.

[39]This account is largely drawn from Paul S. Needham, 'Sir John Cheke at Cambridge and Court', unpublished
dissertation, 2 vols (Harvard University, 1971) and Alan Bryson, >Cheke, Sir John (1514-1557)=, *Oxford
Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) www.oxforddnb.com/ view/
article/5211, accessed 12 August 2005.

[40]For Cheke's letters to Gardiner, see *de Pronuntiatione Greacae potissimum linguæ disputationes cum
Stephano Vuintoniensi* (Basel, 1555). See also:Thomas Smith, *de Recta et emendata linguae Graecae
pronuntiatione* (1568) in Sigebertus Haverkamp, ed. *Sylloge altera scriptorum, qui de linguae Graecae vera et
recta pronunciatione commentarios reliquerunt, videlicet D. Erasmi, Stephani Vintoniensis episcopi* (Leiden:
Gerard Potuliet, 1740), pp. 554-74, 556-8; Needham, >Sir John Cheke at Cambridge and court=, I, pp. 136-149.

[41] For Edward's commonplaces drawn from the first seven books of Matthew, see: British Library, Arundel MS
510, fols. 39r-52r. For Cheke's theory of English linguistic purity see his letter to Thomas Hoby, 16 July 1557,
Woodstreet printed in Baldesar Castiglione, *The Courtyer diuided into foure bookes*, trans. Thomas Hoby
(London: William Seres, 1561). On Cheke's vernacular vocabulary, see: Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Thomas
Cranmer* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), pp. 426-27; Cathy Shrank, 'Rhetorical constructions of a
national community: the role of the king's English in mid-Tudor writing', in *Communities in early modern
England: networks, place, rhetoric*, eds A. Shepard and P. Withington (Manchester: Manchester University
Press, 2000), pp. 180-98 and Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric and courtliness in early modern literature* (Cambridge:
Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.70.

Yet Cheke's marginal glosses in his English Matthew also reveal that, like Erasmus, he had used the etymological and philological aspect of the exercise to leap into doctrinally significant biblical annotations. The word Θυσία (animal sacrifices), for instance, led Cheke to propound on the importance of neighbourly charity in the profession of faith, rather than the excessive veneration of 'sacramental ynges' which may have been 'ordeind for certain godli purposes' but which were 'not for daili exercises'.[42] One modern reader has determined that such glosses reveal Cheke's fashionably reformed theology,[43] but the humanist's concern with overzealous attention to the externals of faith was no recent acquisition.

Upon the New Year following Cheke's appointment to Edward's schoolroom the schoolmaster had recommended himself to Henry VIII by presenting the king with a Latin translation of Plutarch's *de Superstitione*. In his extensive preface Cheke argued that superstition consisted of excessive and misdirected zeal in religious worship. Cheke expressed concern with acts done nominally 'for the worshiping and reverence of God' but which deserved to be 'totally ejected and eliminated' from demonstrations of faith. Like Erasmus, he was also perturbed by 'mediocre and minute matters being placed higher than is fit in honour and worth', or things which 'are bent and twisted from the other [meaning] that is proper and for which they have been instituted'.[44] Indeed, as Jacques Chomarat has demonstrated, Plutarch's *de Superstitione* was the very work which Erasmus himself had drawn on to define 'superstition' as an extreme religious fear, manifested in the obsessive performance of ceremonies.[45] Historians have debated whether Henry VIII was aware in

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[42] Corpus Christi College Library, Cambridge, MS 119 in *Gospel according to Saint Matthew and part of the first chapter of the Gospel according to Saint Mark translated into English from the Greek*, trans. John Cheke, ed. James Goodwin (Cambridge: J. and J. J. Deighton, 1843), p. 44.

[43] Jeremy M. Smith, 'Marginal glosses in a translation of the Bible', in *The Medieval book and a modern collector: Essays in honour of Toshiyuki Takamiya*, eds. Takami Matsuda, Richard A. Linenthal and John Scahill (Woodbridge: D. S. Brewer and Yushodo Press, 2004), pp. 371-380.

[44] 'vel… quod res omnino eijciendae atque exterminandae ad colendum vernerandumque Deum adhibentur, vel mediocres minutaeque res maiori quam par est in honore pretioque collocantur, vel alio quam oportet & institutae sunt, flectuntur atque torquentur': Plutarch, *De Superstitione*, translated with preface by John Cheke, 30 December 1544/45?, University College, Oxford MS 171, p. 42 deposited in the Bodleian Library. See John F. McDiarmid, 'John Cheke's Preface to *De Superstitione*', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 48 (1997): 100-120.

[45] Jacques Chomarat, 'Superstitio, religio et impietas', *Moreana,* 21 (1984): 151-55. See also McConica, *English humanists*, p. 21.

1544 that he was leaving his son (and the nation) in the hands of religious reformers.[46] Yet Cheke's philological, grammatical and scriptural commitments reveal that above all, Henry had intended to place Edward under an Erasmian pedagogue.

After 1547 of course Cheke ran his religious colours proudly up the mast of the ship of state. As Stephen Alford has pointed out, however, the Erasmian ideal of the good Christian prince was broadly congruent with the notion of godly monarchy articulated by Edwardian preachers. Drawing on Deuteronomy 17:19, for instance, the 1547 book of Homelies had insisted that princes were 'here diligentely taught, to apply themselves, to knowledge & wisedom, necessary for the orderynge of Gods people, to their governaunce committed'.[47] Nicholas Udall expressed this synthesis of Erasmian pedagogy and Protestantism in the prefatory material to the English translation of *The Paraphrases of Erasmus upon the new Testament*. Udall argued that kings who forwarded the reformed faith proved their commitment to the 'due knowelage of God, to the discipline of vertue, and to the upright execucion of their office'.[48] While the imprisoned Bishop Stephen Gardiner tried to point out to Edward's protector, the duke of Somerset (c.1500-1552) that Erasmus' attitude to the royal supremacy and his insistence on rule by consent were hardly friendly to reformers, protestant preachers and polemicists insisted that their godly monarch was an Erasmian Christian prince of the reformed hue.[49]

Edward's studies reflected Cheke's allegiance to this model of kingship, and indeed, the curriculum prescribed by Erasmus for future rulers. Edward began with Aesop=s fables, proverbs from the Bible, and Erasmus= own *de Copia* and *de Conscribendis epistolis*.[50] By

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[46] For this debate, see Christopher Haigh, *English reformations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) , pp. 161-62; Richard Rex, *Henry VIII and the English Reformation* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993) 169-70; McDiarmid, 'John Cheke's preface to *de Superstitione*', p.119; Diarmaid MacCulloch, *The Reformation* (New York: Viking, 2003) pp. 247-48, 707n.59; McConica, *English humanists*, p. 214; and Jordan, *Edward VI: the Uoung king*, p. 41.

[47] *Certayne sermons, or Homelies appoynted by the Kynges Maiestie, to bee declared and redde, by all persons, vicares, or curates, euery Sondaye in their churches, where they haue cure* (London: Richard Grafton, 1547), sig. R2r, cited by Stephen Alford, *Kingship and politics in the reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 44, and more generally pp. 44-46.

[48] Nicholas Udall, 'To the moste puissaunt prince... Edwarde the sixthe', in Erasmus, *The First tome or volume of the paraphrase of Erasmus upon the New Testament* (London: Edward Whitchurche, 1548), sig. A2r-v.

[49] Stephen Gardiner, Letter to Somerset, 14 October 1547, the Fleet, in Stephen Gardiner, *The Letters of Stephen Gardiner*, edited by James Muller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1933), pp. 381, 385.

[50] Describing this curriculum: Cox, Letter to Paget, 10 December 1544, Ashridge, in Baldwin, *William

1550 Edward was reading ten chapters of the New Testament each day, *Ecclesiasticus* and the Book of Solomon, as Erasmus had recommended. With respect to profane literature, he was digesting Cicero=s *de Officiis*, Plato's *Republic* and Aristotle=s *Ethics* and *Politics*.[51] Indeed in 1552, when Cheke thought that he was dying, he appealed to Edward to keep reading those books of the Bible and Aristotle=s *Politics* above all, especially chapters ten and eleven in the fifth book, 'the one *de mutatione regni* and the other *per quae regna servantur*=.[52] These were the chapters in which Aristotle argued (among other things) that by moderating his exercise of power, a king would extend its duration. By 1550 Edward was also using his reading to compose weekly orations in Latin then Greek, often on the opposing sides of the same topic.[53] While Edward proceeded more quickly though this curriculum than his grammar school contemporaries and probably attained greater facility in Greek than most of them, the content of his studies mirrored the statues of John Colet's school at St Paul's, Richard Cox=s Eton and the early stages of the university.[54] Like Erasmus, then, Cheke testified to his sense that the education of a Christian prince should follow broadly the same pattern as the cultivation a Christian man; Edward just had a greater moral responsibility to

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Shakespere=s small Latine and lesse Greeke, I, pp. 203-4; Cox, Letter to Thomas Cranmer, 13 January 1546, in *Literary remains of King Edward the sixth, edited from his autograph manuscripts with historical notes and a biographical memoir,* ed. John Gough Nichols, 2 vols. (London: Roxburghe Club, 1857) I, p. 3. Edward cited Erasmus' *de Copia* when describing Cicero's eloquence in a letter to George Day, 25 January 1547, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, I, p. 37. He also had a copy of Erasmus' *de Conscribendis epistolis* (Antwerp: J, Crintius, 1546) now held in the British Library, 1083.e.6 noted by Baldwin, *William Shakespere's small Latine and lesse Greeke*, I, pp. 210-11.

[51] Martin Bucer, Letter to Brentius, 15 May 1550, Cambridge in Hastings Robinson, ed. *Original letters relative to the English Reformation, written during the reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward IV and Queen Mary: chiefly from the archives of Zurich,* 2 vols. (Cambridge: Parker Society at Cambridge University Press, 1847) II, p. 543; Roger Ascham, Letter to Sturm, 14 December 1550, Augsburg, in *Whole works of Roger Ascham*, edited by J. A. Giles, 4 vols. (London: J. R. Smith, 1864-65) I.ii, p. 226. For Edward's notebooks confirming their reports: Bodleian Library, Oxford MS Arch.F.e.26, previously catalogued as MS Autog.e.2 (mainly notes on Cicero's *de Officiis*) and MS Bodley 899; British Library, Arundel MS 510, (notes on various works of Cicero and Aristotle's *Ethics*). Edward gave an oration on Plato's *Republic* in February 1551. His preperatory notes are in: Bodleian Library, Oxford, MS 899, fol. 17r and British Library, Additional MS 4724, fol. 220r while the oration itself is on fols. 120r-121r: Needham, 'Sir John Cheke at Cambridge and court', I, pp. 214-16.

[52] Cheke, Letter to Edward, May 1552, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, I, p. clx. Edward's notes on the *Politics* do not survive.

[53] For a careful reconstruction of Edward's compositions, see Needham, 'Sir John Cheke at Cambridge and court', I, pp. 187-219.

[54] Alford, *Kingship and politics*, p. 44; Needham, 'Sir John Cheke at Cambridge and court', I, pp. 175, 226 have thoroughly refuted the claim in M. L. Clarke, 'The Education of a prince in the sixteenth century: Edward VI and James VI and I', *History of Education*, 1 (1978): 7-19, p.13 that Edward's education bore little resemblance to that of his grammar school contemporaries.

apply its lessons than 'meane men' did.[55]

In 1549 Cheke explained what this responsibility entailed in a letter he sent from Cambridge to Edward=s protector, the duke of Somerset. Edward, he explained, required the intellect of 'an Academike'. His education would leave him 'slow to iudge, gladd to here all men mistrusting his owne reason, taking trouthe to be hidden' and would make him eager to seek the counsel of 'men of experience'. Edward, Cheke concluded, had learnt from his exhaustive reading of *De Officiis* that the 'sure safeguarde' of good rule was to avoid to mistaking things which have not been ascertained for those that have.[56]

In the following year Cheke elaborated on this reasoning process to his friend and pupil, Roger Ascham. In answer to Ascham's question as to why Cheke had given Edward Aristotle to read over the Greek historian Xenophon, the schoolmaster explained that those who were 'first instructed in the universal and infinite precepts and divisions of vice and virtue' by reading philosophy tended to develop >firm judgement in singular examples of moral questions= quite naturally. They could then add 'apposite examples' to illustrate his findings. It was >almost impossible=, however, >for the edge of wit, once blunted and softened by the sweetness of reading history, to penetrate to those deeper truths which, though abstruse and far from obvious, are absolutely necessary for judging of specific questions=.[57] The tendency in Cheke's own writing to combine a humanist's grammatical interests with the divisions and definitions typically found in scholastic logic deserves more scholarly attention.[58] For our purposes here, however, it suffices to say that Cheke's understanding of 'universals' was not sufficiently independent of considerations of time or

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[55] Cheke, Letter to Somerset, undated but probably from 1549, Cambridge, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, p. ccxlvi.

[56] Cheke, Letter to Somerset, undated but probably from 1549, Cambridge, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, p. ccxlvi. The fault Cheke refers to is: 'Ne incognita pro cognitis habeamus hisque temer assentiamur, quod vitium effugere qui volet': Cicero, *De Officiis*, I.18.

[57] 'Respondet, ut mens, inquit, eius prius universis illis et infinitis virtutum vitiorumque praeceptionibus ac partitionibus instructa, firmum iudicium adferat ad singula quotidianorum morum exempla, quae in historiis latissime sese fundunt. Et quia vix fieri potest, ut ingenii acies, in initio, dulcedine historiarum emollita et obtusa, penetret in abstrusas illas et reconditas, sed pernecessarias ad corroborandum iudicium finitae quaestionis comprehensiones: quanquam nullum praeceptum sine appositione insignis exempli tradi cupio=: Ascham, Letter to Sturm, 14 December 1550, Augsburg in Ascham, *Whole works of Roger Ascham*, I.ii, p. 226.

[58] McDiarmid, 'John Cheke's Preface to *de Superstitione*', p.104 refers to this synthesis.

space to qualify as rigorous scholasticism.[59] Indeed for Edward's schoolmaster, 'universals' seemed to consist largely in the classical and biblical commonplaces of Protestant godly monarchy.

In Cheke's 1552 'deathbed' letter to Edward, for instance, alongside reading the *Politics*, Cheke urged the king: to keep the fear of God before his eyes; to remember the great charge He placed in kings; and to prefer critical advice to flattery. In other words, he offered scriptural and moral precepts.[60] Like Erasmus, the prince's schoolmaster gave his charge some modern and ancient 'stories' to read along the way but he thought a ruler needed these sort of 'universals'—moral rules—to make virtuous decisions. History only provided particulars.

Rather than cultivating a 'king of dust' or docile rhetorician, then, Cheke shaped Edward using a curriculum which thoroughly substantiated Erasmian princely pedagogy. It was an ideology which Edward absorbed sufficiently to reproduce in his 1551 discourse on 'The governance of this realm', which stressed the importance of: a learned and devout clergy; '1. Good education; 2. Devising of good laws; 3. Executing the laws justly, without respect of persons; 4. Example of rulers' among other things'.[61] Yet it might still be asked whether Cheke's methods actually fashioned Edward's moral and political character as impressively as they cultivated his grammatical and rhetorical capacities. Edward's early attempts at making decisions and formulating policy offer a potential testing-ground.

IV: Edward=s early attempts at decision-making

Edward's earliest attempts to involve himself in the political fray should be examined against the context of the conclusion of England's wars with Scotland and France, the October 1549 downfall of Somerset in the wake of widespread and trenchant civil revolt, and the rise of John Dudley, earl of Warwick (1504-1553), who became lord president of the Privy Council in February 1550 and the duke of Northumberland in October 1551. Arguably these were matters concerning which Edward himself took too little notice in these early forays into

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59 As John Pocock has pointed out, Cheke was not alone here. 'Universals' were often little more than unverifiable assertions of belief: *Machiavellian moment*, pp. 4-21.

60 Cheke, Letter to Edward, May 1552, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, I, pp. clx-clix.

61 British Library, Cotton MS Nero C. X, fols 113r-117v, printed as Edward, 'Discourse on the reform of abuses in church and state', in *Chronicle and political papers of King Edward VI*, ed. Jordan, pp. 159-67.

decision-making.

Edward VI had the opportunity to reflect on the nature and purpose of his kingship in the spring of 1550 when he began his attempts to reform the statutes of the Order of the Garter. The Order of St George, as it was originally known, consisted of twenty-five 'knights' under the leadership of the English sovereign. These noblemen were mainly drawn from the English nobility but there were also a handful of foreign statesmen, including Henri II of France, who was elected in 1551. It was, therefore, an internationally recognised emblem of English piety and nobility.[62] The piecemeal nature of religious reform under Somerset, who was anxious not to offend Holy Roman Emperor Charles V while England was fighting Scotland and France from September 1547, meant that the order's ceremonies remained untouched for the first two years of Edward's reign. In 1549, however, Somerset used an act of the Privy Council to alter the order's practices of procession, festival, reverence and offerings. After Somerset's fall in October of that year, Warwick's more thoroughly protestant Council pushed ahead with religious reform. Committees of the order's companions were appointed by chapter meetings in 1550 and 1551 to consider the issue.[63]

This was a subject close to Edward's heart. He himself called for the correction of the Book of Statues at the meeting on 23 April 1550 and at least six manuscripts of his personal attempts to reform the order exist, variously dateable to the period from spring 1550 to 28 September 1552.[64] In his first draft, Edward proposed changing the name from 'th'ordre of S. George' to the catchy appellation 'th'orre of the gartier or defence of the truthe holly

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[62] John Anstis, *The Register of the most noble Order of the Garter*, 2 vols (London: John Barber, 1724) II, p. 447; Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan portraiture and pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), pp. 176-78 and MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant*, p. 31.

[63] Anstis, *The Register of... the Order of the Garter*, II, p. 438.

[64] Elias Ashmole, *The Institutions, laws and ceremonies of the most noble Order of the Garter*, 2 vols (London: Nathanael Brooke, 1672) I, p. 194. Edward's first MS is dated to >the fourth year of our reign=, meaning 28 January 1550 to 27 January 1551: British Library, Cotton MS Nero C. X, fols. 102r-107r. The next two MSS, which probably date from the middle of 1551 resemble each other in content and also bound in British Library, Cotton MS Nero C. X, fols. 98r- 101r (in English) and fols. 108r-111v (in Latin) respectively. These three revisions are printed in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, II, pp. 519-38. A fragment, also in Latin, which contains corrections in another hand, is in British Library, Additional MS 6298, fols. 77r-78r. It has not been published. There was a further Latin version, which may represent the statutes which Edward submitted to the chapter on 24 April 1552. William Cecil, however, has made several alterations. A similar set of proposals exist in English. Both are held in the Royal Library at Windsor, printed by Edward Maunde Thompson, 'The Revision of the statutes of the Order of the Garter by King Edward the sixth', *Archaeologia*, 54 (1894): 173-198.

contained in scripture' on the grounds that by worshipping a 'saint' (a word he crossed out in favour of >creature=) the order was failing to show due reverence to God. The king also insisted that knights of the order, even foreign ones, should swear to >fight in [their] countreis cause= against the Pope 'and his erronious and pestilent heresies'.[65] Edward tried to reframe the statutes so that they forwarded Erasmian ideas of good government. He proposed, for instance, that the revenues of the Order of the Garter should be used to support poor scholars in Cambridge and Oxford and on the maintenance of highways and river banks by erstwhile 'vagabunds'.[66] Edward mimicked Erasmus= Christian prince in championing the pedagogic, material and spiritual welfare of his subjects.

It seems as though Edward's plans were put off at the chapter meeting of 23-24 April 1551, when a further committee was nominated to peruse the statutes. The difficulty may well have related to the election of Henri II of France as a knight of the order at the same meeting.[67] Having signed the Treaty of Boulogne on 24 March 1550 to end Somerset's ruinously costly wars with France and Scotland Warwick was keen to cement the Anglo-French entente. The next month the marquis of Northampton (one of the companions responsible for amending the order) was scheduled to deliver the garter to France and begin negotiations for a marriage between Edward and Elizabeth, the daughter of Henri II. One of Northampton's concerns was that the French would demand religious concessions from Edward.[68] It was not the moment to be insisting that the King of France should concede Catholicism's 'erronious and pestilent heresies'. Edward respected the idea of taking counsel sufficiently to relinquish some of the particulars of his plan. By his third draft he even conceded that the chapter's name might remain >ordo Garterii=, as long as the odious >sancti Georgii= was omitted. Yet he remained attached to the importance of the universal principle of Christian charity. Following the 1551 chapter meeting he replaced funding for poor scholars with provisions for maintaining old soldiers and redistributing chantry livings to

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[65] Edward, >Scheme for the Order of the Garter=, in *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, II, pp. 520, 522, 526. In January 1553, St George=s day was one of the traditional holy days abolished by parliament: MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant*, p. 30n.52.

[66] Edward, >Scheme for the Order of the Garter=, in *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, II, p. 532.

[67] Anstis, *The Register of... the Order of the Garter*, II, p. 447.

[68] David Loades, *John Dudley: duke of Northumberland, 1504-1553* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 152-56; Ashmole, *The Institution, laws and ceremonies of the most noble order of the garter*, p. 194.

itinerant preachers.[69]

These amendments notwithstanding, Edward's plan does not seem to have been popular with the committee of companions and Warwick's young secretary, William Cecil, was appointed to assist the king, playing Sir Humphrey Appleby to Edward=s Jim Hacker. While Cecil let Edward=s fiery, reformist prologue to the draft statutes stand he either removed or damped down the potentially incendiary provisions which followed it. The secretary insisted, for instance, that foreign knights like Henri II should continue to wear the old insignia of the George—that non-existent saint—if they preferred it.[70] Edward proudly punned that the order was 'holli altered' on 24 April 1552, yet Cecil continued to tinker.[71] The statutes which were finally enacted on 17 March 1553 were considerably longer and more traditionally militaristic than those which Edward had proposed. As a reward, one might think for his services in handling the zealous young king, Cecil was made Chancellor of the order on 12 April 1553.[72] The next month he wrote to Northumberland asking what he should wear to chapter meetings. In an early demonstration of the capacity, honed in Elizabeth's reign, of attributing his own thoughts and deeds to his sovereign, Cecil claimed that since Edward VI had had the order 'purged of superstition and made of a religious order a military order' he did not know what robes were required. 'The less congruence be of this apparel with priestly, the better it is' Cecil concluded with 'a weary hand'.[73] Edward=s education had taught him to think that being a good king was synonymous with being a good Christian prince of the reformist hue. The other knights of the garter, however, recognised that it involved considerations of prestige, militarism and diplomacy.

When it came to reforming the Order of the Garter, Edward=s youthful insistence on judging particulars according to (what Cheke might have termed) the universal principles of Christian kingship had been a mild inconvenience. When it came to Princess Mary's (1516-1558) right to hear mass, however, the king's determination to act on principle became

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[69]Edward , >Scheme for the order of the garter=, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, II, pp. 521, 535.

[70]Thompson, >Revision of the statutes of the order of the garter=, pp. 196, 197.

[71] Regrettably the spelling is modernized in Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p.120.

[72] MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant*, p. 32.

[73] Cecil, Letter to Northumberland, 14 May 1553, Inner Temple Library, London, Petyt MS 538, vol. 47, fol. 529r-v, cited by Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 48. I am grateful to Dr Alford for sending me this reference prior to his book's release.

politically dangerous. During Somerset's protectorship Mary's conservative religious practices were generally tolerated. She had been exempt from the Act of Uniformity (1549), for instance, to appease her cousin, Charles V. Indeed William Paget, then English ambassador in Brussels, had allegedly given the emperor personal assurances on this score.[74] Warwick, however, had needed the support of Thomas Cranmer, firmly protestant nobles such as Henry Grey, marquis of Dorset, and Edward's protestant tutors to succeed to the Lord Presidency of the council in February 1550.[75] He threw his lot in with the reformers and doctrinal change advanced briskly. Edward, under Cox's, Cheke's and Cranmer's watchful eyes, was more than comfortable with the removal of altars in November 1550 and the Second Act of Uniformity (1552), which instituted Cranmer's radical Second Book of Common Prayer.[76]

The only canker was the behaviour of Princess Mary. Not only did she cling to the old ways but through her so-called 'private' Mass, she had made her household a centre for Catholic worship in England.[77] Edward wrote to the princess on 24 January 1551 and when he had no satisfactory reply, the thirteen-year-old king summoned his thirty-five-year-old sister to Westminster on 18 March 1551. He insisted that there be >some short amendment= to her religious practice. When Mary replied that she would not change her faith or >nor dissemble her opinion=, Edward >willed her [not as a king to rule] but as a subject to obey=.[78] Initially Edward=s protestant Council backed the king. They issued a warrant for the arrest of Mary's chaplain, Francis Mallet, and other household officers. On 9 August the council formally resolved to prohibit her household from conducting any divine service, save

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[74] Richard Moryson, >Discourse... shewing the godly & vertuous Resolution of Kinge Edward the six upon the Emperours demaund to have the Ladie Mary the Kinges sister to be allowed libertie of her conscience in Englande=, 1553, Strasbourg, in British Library, Harleian MS 353, fols. 130r-38v printed in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, I, pp. ccxxiv-ccxxxiv, p. ccxxv.

[75] Dale Hoak, 'Rehabilitating the duke of Northumberland: politics and political control, 1549-1553', in *The Mid-Tudor polity, c.1540-1560* (London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 29-51, p. 47; Loades, *John Dudley: Duke of Northumberland*, pp. 142, 146-149; David Loades, *The Mid-Tudor Crisis, 1545-1565* (London: Macmillan, 1992), pp. 32-33.

76 MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant*, p. 35.

[77] David Loades, *Mary Tudor: a life* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), p. 152.

[78] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, 55. The words in brackets were inserted by Edward above the line.

that prescribed by the laws of the realm.[79] On 28 August a delegation of counsellors was sent to her at Copped Hall, Essex, to insist on the princess's compliance with the order. Mary continued to protest that 'she would rather die on the block than use any services other than those in use at her father's death'.[80] The council persisted, thinking that as Charles V 'did cloakedly begin war'[81] with the French that his cousin, Mary, was temporarily friendless.

In the early autumn of 1551, however, they realised their error. The Imperial ambassador in London, Jean Scheyve, claimed that his master was threatening war with England unless Edward and his council backed down over Mary=s masses.[82] The Council took Scheyve=s hectoring seriously and urged caution in pursuing the princess.[83] Edward, however, refused to budge. He did not doubt Charles's hostile intent but he claimed that by denying the princess mass and imprisoning her officers he 'had done nothing but according to a king's office herein'.[84] In an attempt to change Edward's mind, Warwick solicited opinions from Cranmer and Nicholas Ridley, the recently appointed bishop of London. According to Richard Moryson, the resident ambassador to Charles V, both clergymen had been briefed to believe that England was in immediate peril from imperial attack and counselled the king to accede to Mary's and Scheyve's demands. Edward replied to the bishops by quoting a precept he had learned during a recent sermon on God's wrath at the Israelites. The king=s first duty, Edward said was to obey God=s law. Kings may >in vaine require obedience at their subjectes hands, yf.... they therfore will refuse to obaye God the Kinge=, he reasoned.[85] At that, the bishops departed wondering at Edward=s learning and his recalcitrance. The council was left to bully him fruitlessly. Fortunately for Warwick, Charles V soon became

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[79] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, 56, 60, 76; Dale Hoak, *The King's Council in the Reign of Edward VI* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 68.

[80] Lord Rich, Lord Chancellor, Sir Anthony Wingfield, Comptroller of the Household and Sir William Petre, Secretary, Report to the Privy Council of their message to Princess Mary, 29 August 1551, calendared in *CSP, Domestic, Edward VI*, no. 534, p. 200.

[81] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p.79.

[82] For Mary=s early complaint that her right to hear mass was being threatened, see Jean Scheyve, Letter to the Queen Dowager, 1 March 1551, calendared in *CSP Spanish*, X, pp. 230-37. For the ambassador=s account of the September meetings see Jean Scheyve, Letter to the Emperor, 12 September 1551, calendared in *CSP Spanish,* X, pp. 356-64.

[83] MacCulloch, *Tudor church militant*, pp. 38-39 and *Thomas Cranmer*, pp. 496-497.

[84] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p. 80.

[85] Richard Moryson, >Discourse=, in Edward, *Literary remains*, ed. Nichols, I, pp. ccxxv-ccxxix.

genuinely preoccupied with hostilities against Henri II, particularly by the possibility that the French would sign an alliance with the protestant princes of Germany. While the emperor continued to petition for the restoration of Mary's masses, [86] the accompanying threat had been temporarily neutered.

Edward may have been instructed to listen to counsel and rule with moderation. On the subject of his responsibilities as a godly monarch, however, he had learnt apply >universal= principles of Christian kingship in an uncompromising manner without considering his political context. The experience of conflict did nothing but strengthen Edward=s self-belief. The very next month, when the Lord Chancellor, Lord Rich, protested that a bill signed by the king was only authorised by eight privy counsellors rather than the entire body, Edward replied >the number of councillors does not make our authority=.[87] Edward=s >academike= and Erasmian schooling under John Cheke had given him a probing, questioning mind: he had learnt to dispute Cranmer and Ridley=s assertions, for instance. It had also given the country a precociously articulate, well-read and thoughtful monarch who took a keen interest in domestic and international affairs, as his journal shows. No one was suggesting in 1551 that Cheke should step down. Yet by teaching Edward to make decisions by applying universal principles to particulars, Cheke had also given Edward the moral certainty to be autocratic. Edward's liberal education had delivered a Christian prince. It had also rendered the king a potential political inconvenience and occasionally, an outright liability.

Edward=s uncompromising, Cheke-ish habits of reasoning should hardly surprise us. Until early 1550 his experience of the world was largely his cosseted life in the pew, schoolroom and exercise yard. He had not been exposed to the personal disfavour, court wrangling or threats that both his half-sisters had suffered. Had the king lived beyond his fifteenth birthday experience of political action may well have tempered his convictions. After Edward=s run-in with Mary, however, one suspects that Northumberland was not willing to wait and see.

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[86] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p. 104.

[87] Edward, Letter to Lord Rich, 1 October 1551 in National Archives, Kew State Papers 10/13 no.55 as cited by Dale Hoak,>Edward VI (1537-1553)=, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) www.oxforddnb.com/view/article 8522, accessed 5 September 2005. Edward also described this incident in his *Chronicle*, ed. Jordan, pp. 84-85.

V: William Thomas=s Machiavellian intervention

The Lord President's anxiety stemmed from a short and long term need to align Edward's will with his own interests. In the words of Geoffrey Elton, since the king 'could not be ignored' he 'had to be persuaded'.[88] Few claims unite scholars of Edward's reign, but W. K. Jordan, Dale Hoak, David Loades and Stephen Alford agree that the duke simultaneously strengthened his influence over Edward via the king's intimates while formally giving reign to his burgeoning sense of political responsibility.[89] Cheke had demonstrated, and continued to show, how influential the combination of personal intimacy and humanist pedagogy could be in shaping Edward's political behaviour. So in 1551 Warwick seems to have taken it upon himself to provide the king with alternative instruction in political matters. As we have seen, Warwick's secretary William Cecil—a man taught by Cheke in Cambridge, who shared the schoolmaster's religious convictions but who had a more practical outlook—was already involved in redirecting Edward's political interests in 1551. In September of the same year, at the height of Edward's intransigence over Mary's mass, another of Warwick's clients, William Thomas, a clerk of the Privy Council, first wrote to the king.

William Thomas (d.1554) was a protestant and humanist though quite when and how he acquired an intellectual or confessional right to these designations remains something of a mystery. [90] A Welshman, he had first come to court in the early 1540s to serve in the train of Sir Anthony Browne, master of the horse under Henry VIII. In what he later called the 'fragilite and slipperiness of youth' Thomas ran up significant gambling debts, embezzled

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[88] Geoffrey Elton, *England under the Tudors* (London: Methuen, 1955), p. 202.

[89] The debate lies in the extent to which these formal mechanisms provided for Edward's genuine involvement: Jordan, *Edward VI: the threshold of power*, pp. 532-5; Hoak, *King's council in the reign of Edward VI*, pp. 120-25; Dale Hoak, 'The king's Privy Chamber, 1547-1553', in *Tudor rule and revolution*, eds. DeLloyd J. Guth and John W. McKenna (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 87; Loades, *John Dudley: the duke of Northumberland*, pp. 149, 201; Alford, *Kingship and politics in the reign of Edward VI*, pp. 136-74.

[90] The following biographical information draws upon: Dakota Hamilton, >Thomas, William (d. 1554)=, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) www.oxforddnb.co/view/article/27242 accessed 25 September 2005; E. R. Adair, 'William Thomas: a forgotten clerk of the privy council', in *Tudor studies presented by the board of studies in history in the University of London to Albert Frederick Pollard being the work of twelve of his colleagues and pupils*, edited by R. W. Seton-Watson (London: Longmans, Green, 1924), pp. 133-60.

Browne's money to pay for them and ran off to Italy.[91]   After a period of incarceration in Venice, he travelled around the peninsula, acquiring facility in the language, discovering its literature and apparently growing exasperated with Papal Rome and Italian sexual deviance.[92] While abroad Thomas used his grammatical and historical skills to tempt potential English patrons. He composed an early Italian grammar and dictionary for John Tamworth which was subsequently published by Thomas Berthelet. After Henry VIII's death in 1547 he also penned a dialogue in defence of his divorce and break with Rome, 'Peregryne', later published in Italian as *Il pellegrino Inglese* (1552).

Upon return to England, probably after Sir Anthony's death in April 1548, Thomas completed his *Historie of Italie*, which he astutely dedicated to John Dudley, earl of Warwick on 20 September 1549.[93] Warwick had just successfully crushed the Kett rebellion in Norfolk and he was on the point of leading a push within the Council to oust Somerset. In his dedication Thomas recommended history to Warwick in the same terms that Machiavelli had promoted it to Italian rulers in his *Discourses… upon Livy*: to 'see, upon what little beginning many great astates have risen, and how thei that have had the power to rule, by usyng their auctoritees well and prudently, have merited immortall fame of honour and preise'; yet equally to discover 'howe mutable fortune is, and howe that, whiche hath been gotten with extreme peines… hath been loste in a moment'.[94]   As Cathy Shrank has observed in an insightful study of Thomas's works, 'astates' was as apt a term to describe the rise of individuals as it was political communities; this was an ideal set of dicta for a man on the make like Warwick.[95] Thomas went onto praise Machiavelli, 'a notable learned man', whose *Florentine Histories* (1532) 'gathered in one' the 'discourse of diuers authours'.[96] The work

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[91] Edmond Harvell, English Ambassador in Venice, Letter to the Privy Council, *L&P*, XX.i, no. 515.

[92] *The Historie of Italie, a boke excedyng profitable to be rede: because it intreateth of the astate [sic] of many and divers common weales, how thei have ben & now be governed* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1549), fols 22v, 39v, 84v, 139v and 162r.

[93] William Thomas, *Principal rules of the Italian grammar, with a dictionarie for the better understandying of Boccace, Petrarcha, and Dante* (London: Thomas Berthelet, 1550) and *Il pellegrino Inglese* (Zurich: Andreas & Hans Jakob Gesner, 1552).

[94] Thomas, *The Historie of Italie*, sig. A2r. Following the dedication the body of this text is paginated.

[95] Cathy Shrank, *Writing the nation in reformation England, 1530-1580* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 125.

[96] Thomas, *The Historie of Italie*, p. 140.

of both Thomas and Machiavelli evidently appealed to Warwick and on the 19 April 1550, the former was appointed as a clerk of Edward=s Privy Council.[97]

In September 1551 Thomas sent Edward a list of eighty-five >Common places of state= and offered to elaborate on any one of them for the king=s use.[98] In his prefatory letter, Thomas supposed correctly 'that hitherto yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie hath more applied the studie of the tonges than any matter either of historie or of policie, (the holie scriptures excepted)', he added quickly. Yet there was in Thomas' view 'no earthelie thinge more necessarie' for princes 'than the knowledge… of such examples as in this and uther regimentes heretofore have happened'. Consequently he proposed to 'present unto yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie the notes of those discourses that arr nowe my principall studie, which I have gathered out of divers aucthors'. The list of discourses, however, was essentially a collection of chapter titles from *The Prince* and *The Discourses*, such as '4.Wheather is wise and more constant the moltitude or the Prince?' (*Discourses*, 1.58) and '31. How a Prince ought to governe himselfe to attaigne reputacion?' (*The Prince*, 21). Once again Machiavelli had done the gathering from 'diuers aucthors' for him.

Thomas urged Edward to study this collection of examples and the 'circumstances of those reasons' which he promises to extract from them, since they 'concerneth the chief mayntenaunce of yo[u]r high astate and preservac[i]on of yo[u]r com[m]on wealthe'.[99] This letter was not, as a recent commentator has suggested, 'nearly a word-for-word translation of Machiavelli's dedicatory letter to *Il Principe*'.[100] It was, however, an argument which combined the Florentine's (and Polybius') argument in *The Prince* and *Discourses* regarding the political utility of comparing modern and ancient events with Machiavelli's insistence that a ruler's first concern should be to maintain his state. Critically Thomas had set this vital knowledge of 'historie and policie' against the 'studie of the tonges' which had hitherto dominated Edward's schooling. While Cheke had imparted erudition, Thomas implied, he

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[97]Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p. 25.

[98]William Thomas, >Common places of state=, British Library, Cotton MS Titus B. II, fols. 85r-90r. This letter is undated and some scholarly disagreement exists as to the time of its composition. A combination of factors point to September 1551, not least Thomas's account of the international political situation, which draws on his embassy to France as secretary for Northampton's negotiations on Edward's marriage, from 24 April- 12 August 1551. Additionally, Edward's discussion of the coinage in his journal on 22-23 September 1551 shows the influence of Thomas's first discourse: British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols. 28r-31v.

[99] Thomas, >Common places of state=, British Library, Cotton MS Titus B.II, fol. 84r.-v.

[100] Joseph Khoury, 'Writing and lying: William Thomas and the politics of translation', in *Travel and translation in the early modern period* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2006), pp. 91-102, p. 93.

was offering Edward a superior model for political action.

Thomas suggested both in this initial approach and in a note accompanying his first discourse, that king and secretary should shroud their correspondence in secrecy. Ostensibly this was so that Edward could 'utter these matters as of yo[u]r owne studie: whereby it shall have the greater creadite w[i]th yo[u]r Counsaill'.[101] It was only since 14 August that year that Edward had begun to 'come to, and sit at, Council, when great matters were in debating, or when[?] [he] would'.[102] Indeed Thomas had proposed that when their go-between, Sir Nicholas Throckmorton(1515/16-1571) was unable to attend upon them, that he would enclose his discourses 'to deliuer unto yo[u]r Ma[jes]tie as it were a thinge from the Counsail'.[103] Scholars have themselves debated whether the clerk's ostentatiously stealthy approach was designed to appeal to 'arcane' or perhaps 'Protestant' traditions of secret counsel, or whether it was merely a ruse to increase Edward's sense of princely exclusivity.[104] Yet it might also be pointed out that by making his advice private, Thomas had also hit on a convenient method of slipping the king history under Cheke's nose. Cheke's view, of course, was that historical discourses generally left the wit *emollita et obtusa*. His life and extant writings, moreover, suggests that he shared his pupil's, Roger Ascham's, opinion that all Machiavelli was good for was teaching young men to serve whichever religion proved most convenient.[105] Secrecy bypassed the need for confrontation and may have given Thomas the opportunity to counsel Edward more frankly. It also proved the way to the king=s heart. Edward agreed to Thomas=s offer and its terms.

Subsequently, Thomas expanded upon at least six commonplaces for the king. Apart from Thomas=s brief first discourse urging the restoration of the coinage, which he improvised at Edward's particular request, the main sources for his five subsequent offerings were Machiavelli=s *The Prince*, followed by his *Discourses*. Thomas acknowledges his

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[101] Quotation from Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 28v-29r . See also Thomas, >Common places of state=, British Library, Cotton MS Titus B.II, fol. 90r.

[102] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, p. 75.

[103] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fol. 28v.

[104] Donaldson, *Machiavelli and mystery of state*, pp. 42-44; Shrank, *Writing the nation*, p. 133; Anglo, *Machiavelli—the first century*, p. 105.

[105] **Error! Main Document Only.**Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster or a plaine and perfite way of teaching children to understand write and speake the Latin tonge* (London: John Daye, 1570), fols 28v-29r.

debts explicitly (if not always accurately) on several occasions but his writings were not, as Peter Donaldson has claimed, little more than a reprisal of Machiavellian maxims.[106] Instead, Thomas adopted a strategy that the Florentine himself would have approved of and reshaped Machiavelli's arguments to pertain to England's monarchical and protestant polity.[107] Rather than asking whether liberty was best safeguarded by the populace or nobility (*Discourses*, I.5), for instance, Thomas poses the question 'Whether it be better for a com[m]on wealthe that the power be in the nobilitie or in the co[m]monalitie'? Having rejected Machiavelli's positive account of powerful 'moltitudes', Thomas concluded that it was nonetheless the role of the English prince to the keep the nobility from oppressing the common sort and so to keep all men in obedience.[108] It was, oddly enough, a similar conclusion to that which John Cheke himself had reached in his denunciation of the 1549 rebellions in *The Hurt of sedicion*. Yet instead of substantiating his argument with scriptural citation and appeals to the precept of divinely ordained obedience, Thomas urged Edward to consider chronicler Jean Froissart's account of the brutality of the Jacquerie in 1358 and the instability of popular regimes like ancient Athens and modern Florence.[109]

The same concern for English affairs is evident in another discourse on 'What Princes Amitie is Best'. Thomas began by alerting Edward to the discrepancy between Cicero's view of friendship, in *de Amicitia*, as the 'perfict concorde of all divine and humayne things with benivolence and charitie' and the reality that all political associations were bonds of necessity. This insight had been contained in Machiavelli's discussion of a prince's relationship with his subjects (*The Prince*, 17) but Thomas applied it to England's foreign policy. He followed Machiavelli's *Discourses* (II.11) in warning Edward against reliance on rulers who were too far away to provide genuine assistance and who became allies *magis nomen, quam presidium*.[110] Yet Thomas also debated whether the confessional status of

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[106] Donalson, *Machiavelli and mystery of state*, pp. 41-44.

[107] Shrank, *Writing the Reformation*, p. 124; Gasquet, *Le Courant Machiavellien*, pp. 109-10; Anglo, *Machiavelli—the first century*, p. 109.

[108] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 20r-27v.

[109] John Cheke, *The Hurt of Sedicion howe greueous it is to a commune wealth* (London: John Daye and William Seres, 1549); Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 23r-24v. For the Jacqueries, see *The Chronicles of Froissart*, ed. George Campbell Macaulay (London: Macmillan and Co., 1904), pp. 136-137.

[110] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 12r-19r, fol. 16v. Both Thomas and Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, p.304 cite Livy, *ab Urbe condita*, VII. 29.

princes made them better or worse allies. This matter had not troubled Machiavelli but it was proving of increasing relevance to England, virtually isolated by its religion, in the 1540s and 1550s. This was a danger to which Thomas returned in his longest, and possibly final, discourse on foreign affairs. 'It is impossible we shulde have any perfict amitie w[i]th any foreyn Prince that dissenteth from us in Religion', Thomas acknowledged, 'so because we have no neighbor of uniforme religion, I determyne we can finde no frende; whose amitie is to be trusted'.[111] Thomas warned Edward against too great reliance upon 'the frenche king a doubtfull frende' and urged him to insure this alliance by establishing a pact of mutual defence against France with the emperor. For this discourse, Thomas appeared to be drawing not upon historical accounts but his own political experience as part of Northampton's train in France. Nicholas Wotton (c.1497-1567), who replaced Richard Moryson as English ambassador to Charles V, had made precisely the same argument against Edward's French marriage in a letter to William Cecil earlier that year.[112]

David Loades has argued that Thomas=s Machiavellian discourses are not >significant= in understanding Edward's education since they assumed a degree of personal power which Edward lacked.[113] Yet barring his reluctant discussion of the coinage, Thomas was not trying to prescribe a specific course of action to the king. Even his suggestions regarding a Spanish alliance, Thomas insisted, should be weighed against 'the doinges of wiser men'.[114] The discourses are better read as an attempt to turn Edward attention from universals and precepts toward the more specific and contingent study of 'historie and policie'. To this end Thomas used the twenty-fifth chapter of Machiavelli's *The Prince* to illustrate the inadequacy, or even danger, of making decisions on the basis of supposedly eternal truths. Indeed this was the central theme of his discourse for Edward on >wheather it be expedient to varie with tyme=.[115] Thomas heaped up ancient and modern historical examples to make his case and even put Machiavelli's famous advice that 'wheare [a prince]

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[111] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 34r-46r, fol. 35r-v.

[112] Nicholas Wotton, Letter to Cecil, January 1551, *HMC Reports*, Salisbury MSS, I, p. 82.

[113] Loades, *John Dudley: Duke of Northumberland*, p. 202.

[114] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fol. 34r.

[115] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fols 2r-11v.

could not plaie the Lyon it was no shame to plaie the Foxe', into the mouth of Alexander the Great.[116] To act honourably was preferable, Thomas acknowledged, but 'whan either [a prince's] power serveth nor or that his contrarie practiceth subtillie (as most co[m]monly Princes do at these daies)' then it seemed to him that 'policie is no vice'. The clerk counselled Edward that when particular circumstances demanded it, he should accept the need for compromise, a degree of dissimulation and political prudence in his decision-making.

Edward's (and England's) Protestantism and poverty made such 'policie' particularly important in foreign relations. In addition to France's probable inconstancy, Charles V was likely to turn on England as soon as he had subjugated the German princes. To secure the emperor's good will, if only temporarily, Thomas proposed that Edward claim that he was willing to alter his religion, with 'the matter to be dissembled with such practises of delaies' as would buy the nation time to restore its finances and train soldiers.[117] Rather than provoking Charles by bullying Mary, Thomas proposed that Edward make every effort to appease the 'puissant… dissembling' emperor. It was necessary, 'so saith Macchiauegli' that the king examine the particulars of any situation—through attention to the time rather than to timeless truths—in order to 'phrame his proceadings' successfully.[118] Rather than judge like 'an Academike' and live as a godly monarch, Thomas encouraged Edward to act like a politician. He challenged the prince to revise his understanding of kingship.

Yet rather than fashioning an autocrat, Thomas= discourses were specifically focussed on those elements of the king=s behaviour—his universal reasoning, his Erasmian moral certainties and his willingness to offend Charles V in the cause of protestant uniformity—which had proved problematic for his advisers during 1551. They were shaped to encourage Edward to moderate his zeal and take counsel more widely and more seriously. Nor was Thomas as the only client of Warwick and adviser to Edward who was interested in Machiavelli in 1551. William Cecil, who was then moderating Edward's plans for the Order of the Garter, tried to obtain a copy of *The Discourses* in December that year. Despite initial frustration he may have done so later: there is a sixteenth-century manuscript translation of

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[116] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fol. 6r.

[117] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fol. 39r.

[118] Thomas, >Six discourses=, British Library, Cotton MS Vespasian D. XVIII, fol. 4r.

certain chapters of *The Discourses* at Hatfield House.[119] Similarly Nicholas Thockmorton, the gentleman of the Privy Chamber who passed Thomas's discourses to Edward, was an early Tudor reader. The ambassador Richard Moryson wrote to him on 18 November, praising his penetrating understanding of Somerset's true viciousness. Because he had 'mistrust to the worst' Throckmorton had cleverly 'guessed rightlier of [the duke's] doings', showing himself to be a true 'Machiavellist' in his expert judgment of men.[120] Sydney Anglo has urged his readers not to make much of these references to the Florentine, despite the fact that they are surprisingly positive.[121] Yet when they're considered in the context of Edward's education, they suggest that there was a brief and localised moment when Thomas, and perhaps other committed, mid-century Protestants around Northumberland, saw Machiavelli as a fellow critic of Rome, a man of conciliar business, a repository of advice for managing the hostile international realm and a useful tool in the service of princely education.

Conclusions

To return from Thomas's questions to my own, how did Edward VI engaged with Erasmus and Machiavelli and to what the extent did their writings influenced his political ideas? With respect to Erasmus, the evidence for Edward's study of the *bonae litterae* is substantial. More importantly the humanist's writings on the duties of Christian princes, mediated by Cheke's firmly Protestant and scholarly interpretation of that office, shaped the king's mental habits and youthful political ideology. Yet the effects of Edward's careful cultivation were not always predictable. Erasmus= ideal of the Christian prince and Cheke=s >academike= reasoning were intended to cultivate a moderate monarch who was receptive to counsel but in practice these principles encouraged Edward to ignore the particulars of his political and religious context and to be reluctant to compromise.

My claim is that Thomas's Machiavellian discourses were, in part at least, a response

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[119] Sir William Pickering, Letters to Cecil, 15 December 1551 and 29 December 1551, St Denis, calendared in *CSP Foreign, Edward VI*, no. 516 and no. 522; 'Certayne selected chapters translated oute of Nicholas Machiavell his three books of discourses upon the first decade of Livie', Hatfield House MS 273-3 in Émile Gasquet, 'Machiavelli's *Discourses*: a forgotten English translation', *Notes and Queries*, 5/4 (1958): 144-45.

[120] Richard Moryson, Letter to Nicholas Throckmorton, 18 November 1551, Brussels, in *CSP Foreign, Edward VI*, no. 550; Gasquet, *Le Courant Machiavelien*, pp. 111-13.

[121] Anglo, *Machiavelli—the first century*, p. 19.

and an alternative to this ideology and pedagogical method. His discourses stressed attention to counsel, to the time and to the importance of adapting to it. It is harder to discern what Edward made of them. The king had asked Thomas to elaborate on some of his eight-five commonplaces and, from his journal it is evident that he read the first discourse on the coinage, at least, with close attention.[122] Furthermore in early 1552 Edward began to seek counsel from outside his schoolroom or the pulpit. Edward proposed to institute a council 'for the state' which would meet with him at least once a week and involve members of both his Privy Council and household. Among their number was William Cecil with whom Edward subsequently composed a discussion paper on England's relationship with the Holy Roman Empire. The king's notes on the English occupation of France in Henry VI's reign may also date from this period.[123] From the winter of 1551 it seems as though Edward was starting to engage more directly in matters of 'historie and policie'. It would be overstretching the evidence to conclude that Thomas's Machiavellian discourses were entirely responsible for this cognitive turn but they were certainly congruent with it.

We are on firmer ground, perhaps, in assessing the significance of this episode for accounts of how Machiavelli was read in mid-century England. Thomas's discourses were passed secretly to Edward largely, I think, on account of Cheke. Yet among the schoolmaster's fellow Protestants, humanists and royal servants were men who regarded 'Machiavellist' as a complimentary adjective. Thomas was the central figure in this circle and as his *Historie* shows, he was willing to attest to his adherence to Machiavelli in print. His discourses for Edward were responses to a specific political and religious situation. Yet they show that *The Prince* was being used to counsel Tudor princes at an earlier date, and in a more positive fashion, than has often been acknowledged. Thomas had made a particularly strong case for the political utility of reading histories to obtain examples for imitation and to develop the mental habit of judging each situation according to the particulars. It was a lesson that Gabriel Harvey, an appreciative reader of Thomas's *Historie,* passed on to his students of Livy.[124]

Indeed it was at this broader pedagogical level that the importance of Thomas=s

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[122] Edward, *Chronicle and political papers*, ed. Jordan, pp. 80-81.

[123] British Library, Cotton MS Nero C.X, fols 84r-85v, 73r-v and 94r-97v respectively. For the council 'of the state' see Alford, *Kingship and politics in the reign of Edward VI*, pp. 161-66.

[124] Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, '"Studied for action": How Gabriel Harvey read his Livy', *Past and Present*, 129 (1990): 30-78.

Machiavellian discourses resonates. The English secretary had revealed that *The Prince* could be used to moderate imprudent religious and moral zeal. Yet even in this relatively tame guise, he had issued a warning shot over the bows for the hitherto dominant Erasmian model for princely pedagogy in England. The six discourses signalled the introduction of the idea that educating a prince was qualitatively different from educating a Christian man. The notion that rulers could act, and indeed might need to act, in ways which diverged from conventional morality, custom and law would lie at the heart of debates about kingship throughout the early modern period in England and Scotland.