

# Elizabeth Tyrwhit's Morning and Evening Prayers

*Edited by*  
**Susan M. Felch**



The Early Modern Englishwoman, 1500-1750: Contemporary  
Editions

## ELIZABETH TYRWHIT'S *MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS*

In 1574, Christopher Barker published a volume of prayers and poems collected and composed by Elizabeth Tyrwhit, an intimate member of Katherine Parr's circle, governess to the princess Elizabeth, wife of a Tudor court functionary, and a wealthy widow. Later, Tyrwhit's *Morning and Evening Prayers* was selected by Thomas Bentley to be republished in his 1582 compilation of devotional works, *The Monument of Matrones*.

This volume presents critical, old-spelling editions of both versions of *Morning and Evening Prayers*. Placing them side by side, Susan Felch discloses that the second version contains nearly a quarter more material than the first, and is organized quite differently. Felch convincingly argues that the additional material and revised arrangement of the longer version are likely copied direct from another, no longer extant authorial version, either printed or manuscript.

In the volume's introduction, Felch provides background on Tyrwhit's life and family, including new information unearthed in her research, and sets Tyrwhit's work within the context of sixteenth-century English prayerbooks. Felch here posits that Tyrwhit's reorganization and framing of traditional material indicates her own considerable creativity. The Textual Notes and Appendix A compare the 1574 and 1582 versions and identify the source texts from which Tyrwhit derives her prayers and poems.

The edition is completed by an autograph note by Tyrwhit; a discussion of the Tyrwhit family connections, and several versions of the rhymed hours of the cross as background to Tyrwhit's rendition entitled, 'The Hymne of the Passion of Christ.'

**Susan M. Felch** is professor of English at Calvin College, USA.

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# Elizabeth Tyrwhit's *Morning and Evening Prayers*

Edited by

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*For Doug*



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# List of Abbreviations

- A&M* John Foxe. *Acts and Monuments* [. . .] . *The Variorum Edition*. [online]. (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/>. Editions are indicated by date.
- BCP* The Book of Common Prayer; editions are indicated by date.
- L&P* *Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII, 1509–1547*, edited by J.S. Brewer, James Gairdner, and R.H. Brodie, 21 vols. (London, 1862–1910).
- STC* *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, and Ireland and of English Books Printed Abroad 1475–1640*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised and enlarged by W.A. Jackson, F.S. Ferguson, and Katharine R. Pantzer from materials compiled by A.W. Pollard and G.R. Redgrave, 3 vols. (London: Bibliographical Society, 1976–1991).
- Wing *Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, and British America and of English Books Printed in Other Countries 1641–1700*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. revised and enlarged from materials compiled by Donald Wing, 3 vols. (New York: Modern Language Association, 1982–1994).

## Introduction

# The Life and Times of Elizabeth Oxenbridge Tyrwhit

### Elizabeth Oxenbridge (later Tyrwhit)

Elizabeth Oxenbridge was born in the early years of the sixteenth century, probably before 1510, to Sir Goddard Oxenbridge of Brede in Sussex (d. 1531) and his second wife, Anne Fiennes.<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth, as the daughter of gentry, undoubtedly enjoyed a privileged childhood. The Oxenbridge family traced its lineage back to John de Oxenbridge (c. 1303–1343)<sup>2</sup> and, by the time Elizabeth was born, could boast a fine house, extensive land holdings, and a substantial social rank in East Sussex. Her paternal grandmother, Anne Lavelode, brought a sizable dowry to her marriage with Robert Oxenbridge, enhancing both the wealth and the social standing of the family, as the Chantry and tombs in the church at Brede attest.

Brede itself is about five miles northwest of Hastings, not far from Battle, and was settled by Benedictine monks from Normandy who occupied it until the early fifteenth century. Brede Place (formerly known as “Ford Place”), Elizabeth’s birthplace and childhood home, was built in the fourteenth century, but her father made a great many improvements and additions to it during his lifetime.<sup>3</sup> It was described in the nineteenth century as “a tolerably good house . . . of stone, with good foliated windows, and two fine chimnies. . . . and in the centre an Elizabethan half-octagon.”<sup>4</sup> The house had its own chapel, which opened off the large finished

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1 See also Patricia Brace, “Tyrwhit, Elizabeth, Lady Tyrwhit (d. 1578),” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H.C.G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/46929> (accessed September 30, 2004).

2 The family genealogy in the early visitations of Sussex begins four generations prior to Sir Goddard with Thomas Oxenbridge of Berkley (W. Bruce Bannerman, ed., *The Visitations of the County of Sussex, Made and taken in the years 1530 . . . and 1633-4*, The Publications of the Harleian Society, vol. 53 [London, 1905], 14–15). The genealogical details that follow rely on this account; cf. Harleian MS. 1562. Katherine Philips, the Restoration poet, was descended through her mother from the Surrey Oxenbridges through Adam Oxenbridge of Rye, no immediate relation to Elizabeth Oxenbridge Tyrwhit.

3 Edmund Austen, *Brede: the Story of a Sussex Parish* (Rye, Sussex: Adams and Son, 1947), 30.

4 William Durrant Cooper, *The Oxenbridges of Brede Place, Sussex, and Boston, Massachusetts* (London: John Russell Smith, 1860), 19–20.

apartment to the south of the great room.<sup>5</sup> Sir Goddard's will mentions this chapel, although the window with unique foiled arches in the antechapel, which contained the Oxenbridge arms, was later removed to Northiam Church.<sup>6</sup>

Elizabeth's father, Sir Goddard, became popular in local legend as the "Brede Giant" who purportedly ate naughty children. A nearby "Groaning Bridge," stained with iron rust, is reputed to mark the place of his death, where, it is said, the children exacted their revenge by sawing him in half. On a more positive and accurate note, he was one of twenty-six "honorable persons" made a Knight of the Bath on 23 June 1509 in honor of the coronation of Henry VIII and Katherine of Aragon. The previous day the honorees attended the king at the Tower of London, serving him at dinner "in token that they shall never bear none [dishes] after that day."<sup>7</sup> He was sheriff of Surrey and Sussex in 1506, 1512, and 1519 and was appointed to Commissions of the Peace in 1511 and 1512.<sup>8</sup> In his will, he bequeathed money to various religious foundations as well as "to the High Aulter of the church of Brede aforsaid for my tythes and oblacyons forgotten" and requested "that an honest preest shall singe in the parryshe church of Brede and yn the chapell at Forde for my soule and my frendes soules and all Christen soules during the space of vii yeres next aftre my decesse."<sup>9</sup>

Sir Goddard's first wife, Elizabeth Etchingham, was the daughter and coheir of Thomas Etchingham.<sup>10</sup> Their son, Thomas (d. 1540), Elizabeth's older half-brother, inherited his grandfather Etchingham's lands. He married Elizabeth Putnam, and their only daughter, Elizabeth, became his sole heir.<sup>11</sup> This younger Elizabeth Oxenbridge, the half-niece of our author, later married Sir Robert Tyrwhit of Kettleby, the nephew of our author's husband.

The elder Elizabeth's own mother, Anne Fiennes, was Sir Goddard's second wife. She was the daughter of Thomas Fiennes (Fynes) of Claversham and the granddaughter of Richard, Lord Dacre.<sup>12</sup> Although at least one of Elizabeth's siblings, William, died young, she had an elder sister, Margaret, who married John Thatcher

5 A full description of Brede Place is found in L.F. Salzman, ed., *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 9:165–6.

6 Cooper, *The Oxenbridges*, 19–20.

7 *L&P* 1: no. 81. Sir Goddard had also attended the funeral of Henry VII as a gentleman-usher (*L&P* 1: no. 20).

8 *L&P* 1: no. 1494.9 and page 1545.

9 R. Garraway Rice, *Transcripts of Sussex wills as far as they relate to ecclesiological and parochial subjects, up to the year 1560*, Vol. 1, Sussex Record Society 41 (n.p., 1935): 200–202; see also Austen, *Brede*, 35.

10 The Sussex Visitation misidentifies her as "Anne" (Bannerman, *The Visitations of the County of Sussex*, 15).

11 Brace identifies this Elizabeth Oxenbridge as the sister of Thomas rather than his daughter (Brace, "Tyrwhit").

12 The Sussex Visitation records also list a third wife, Faith Devenishe and her two children, Andrew and Ursulowe (Bannerman, *The Visitations of the County of Sussex*, 15), but she was instead the second wife of Sir Goddard's son, Thomas Oxenbridge.

of Priesthawes, Sussex, and a brother Sir Robert (d. 1574) who became constable of the Tower and inherited Brede Place after his mother's death.<sup>13</sup> She also had a younger sister, Mary, who eloped with "a gentleman of Kent called Barram" much to Elizabeth's displeasure, since she had hoped to secure a place for Mary in the household of Honor Basset Plantagenet, Lady Lisle.<sup>14</sup>

By 1537, Elizabeth was already at court and in a position to help her siblings. Although she was not of sufficient rank to be one of the great ladies (later called "Ladies of the Bedchamber" in Queen Elizabeth's court), she served Jane Seymour as a lady of the Privy Chamber, the second rank above that of maids of honor and the chamberers who assisted the ladies of the Privy Chamber.<sup>15</sup> After the death of Queen Jane following the birth of Prince Edward, Elizabeth Oxenbridge resided with Mary Arundell, Lady Sussex, along with a number of other young gentlewomen including Anne Basset, the daughter of Lady Lisle, as they waited for Henry VIII to take a new queen.<sup>16</sup> Sometime between April 1538, when she was still known as "Mistress Oxenbridge" to the Lisle family, and 4 August 1539, when she signed her name "Elizabeth Tyrwhyt" to a thank you letter, she married Robert Tyrwhit, second son of a Lincolnshire gentleman, and with him continued to serve at court.<sup>17</sup>

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13 Anne Fiennes Tyrwhit received Brede Place as a dower-house; it then reverted to Sir Robert (Salzman, *Victoria History*, 9:169).

14 Throughout March 1538, John Husee promised Lady Lisle that Mary Oxenbridge would soon arrive, only to announce in a letter of April 6 that she "hath both deceived your ladyship and her sister," adding that "her sister is not a little displeased or aggrieved" and "[i]t were good your ladyship sent her [that is, Elizabeth] some loving and kind letter, for I assure your ladyship she taketh the matter most heavily" (Muriel St. Clare Byrne, *The Lisle Letters* [Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981], 5:nos. 1117, 1125, 1131, 1133, 1136a).

15 She is listed as a recipient of court gifts in 1537 and as a member of the Privy Chamber in 1538 (*L&P* 12:973i; 15:21; 16:1389). For a discussion of the various court positions, see Anne Somerset, *Ladies-in-Waiting: From Tudors to the Present Day* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), 9–10.

16 Byrne, *The Lisle Letters*, 5:no. 1126. Robert Tyrwhit was also already at court. In November of that year, Lady Lisle complained that she was unable to stay with Sir Christopher More at his London house because Mr. Long and Mr. Tyrwhit "lieth sick there" (Byrne, *The Lisle Letters*, 5:nos. 1264, 1265).

17 Elizabeth's signature appears on a letter with that of nine other ladies of the queen's Privy Chamber, thanking Henry VIII for his "most gracious entertainment" on the occasion of their trip to Portsmouth to see his "new Greate Shippe" (Byrne, *The Lisle Letters*, 5:no. 1513a). Sir Goddard's will (1531), which mentions his married daughters, probably refers to older, unknown half-sisters as well as possibly to Margaret (Frederick William Town Attree, *Notes of Post Mortem Inquisitions taken in Sussex: 1 Henry VII to 1649 and after*, Sussex Record Society 14 [London: Mitchell Hughes and Clarke, 1912], no. 789). Robert Tyrwhit was himself a widower, having been previously married to Bridget Wiltshire, widow both of Sir Richard Wingfield and Sir Nicholas Harvey (P.W. Hasler, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1558–1603*, vol. 3 [London: The History of Parliament Trust, 1981], 537–8; see also Eric Ives, *The Life and Death of Anne Boleyn* [Oxford: Blackwell, 2004], 330).

## Elizabeth Tyrwhit and Katherine Parr

From 1543 through 1548, the Tyrwhits' careers and fates were closely linked with that of Henry's sixth and final queen, Katherine Parr. Parr would certainly have known the Tyrwhits through her first husband, Edward Borough, a cousin of Robert Tyrwhit, although Elizabeth herself did not marry into the family until after Edward's death in 1533. (See appendix B for a discussion of the Tyrwhit family connections.) Yet Robert Tyrwhit's career in the court of Henry VIII may well have been expedited by Parr's father, the master of the king's household, or by her father-in-law Thomas Borough's position as Anne Boylen's chamberlain.<sup>18</sup> Certainly by 1543, when Katherine Parr herself became queen, the Tyrwhits were well established at court and poised to become even more influential. Robert was knighted in 1543 and joined the queen's household in July; the following year, he was made master of the horse and, by 1547, was steward.<sup>19</sup> With Sir Thomas Arundell, Walter Bucler, and Hugh Aglionby, Robert served as one of the counselors who most closely dealt with the queen's practical affairs.<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Tyrwhit also joined the inner circle of the queen, serving as a lady of the Privy Chamber. Such positions of responsibility brought with them opportunities for greater wealth, and the Tyrwhits benefited from Parr's patronage.

Shortly after his marriage to Katherine in 1543, Henry went to France, leaving his new wife behind as regent. During this time, Parr clearly took seriously her role as governing monarch: her strong signature, "Kateryn, the Quene, KP," is recorded on numerous state papers. It also seems likely that she grew increasingly attracted to the reformist members of her counsel, and, indeed, this growing attachment to Protestant doctrine frames the opening of John Foxe's account of Parr's brush with treason and incarceration. As Foxe tells the story,

[Henry VIII] was informed that Queene Katherine Parre, at that tyme his wife, was very much given to the readyng and study of the holy Scriptures: and that she for that purpose had retained divers well learned and godly persons, to instruct her thoroughly in the same, with whom as at all tymes convenient she used to have private conference touching spirituall matters: so also of ordinarie, but especially in Lent every day in the after noone, for the space of one houre, one of her said Chaplaines in her privie chamber made some collation to her and to her Ladyes and Gentlewomen of her privy chamber, or other that were disposed to heare: in whiche Sermons, they oftymes touched such abuses, as in the Church, then were rife. Which thynges as they were not secretly done, so neither were their preachinges unknowne unto the king. Whereof at the first, and for a great time, he semed very well to like. Which made her the more bold (beyng in dede become very zelous towarde the Gospell, and the professours therof) franckly to debate with the kyng,

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18 *L&P* 6:no. 601; see also Susan E. James, *Kateryn Parr: The Making of a Queen* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 62.

19 He continued as steward for Thomas Seymour after the death of Henry VIII and held other minor offices as well.

20 PRO: E315/161, f. 97; see also James, *Kateryn Parr*, 146, n. 7.

touchyng Religion, and therein flatlye to discover her selfe: oftymes wishyng, exhortyng and persuadyng the kyng, that as he had to the glory of God, and his eternall fame, begon a good and a godly worke in banishing that monstrous Idoll of Rome, so he would thoroughly perfitte and finishe the same, clensing and purgyng his Churche of England, cleane from the dregges therof, wherein as yet remayned great superstition.<sup>21</sup>

Although this opening account of Parr's evangelical circle does not mention Elizabeth Tyrwhit by name, as one of the queen's ladies, she was esteemed for her "vertuous disposition" (as Foxe would later describe her), and almost certainly would have been among those who were "disposed to heare" the afternoon sermons and participate in the theological discussions. Foxe is at pains to point out that there was nothing secretive about these meetings, and, indeed, for over a decade women at court had been significant supporters of religious reformation.

Robert Parsons, the Jesuit apologist, records a conversation from Henry VIII's reign between a courtier (possibly Sir Francis Bryan, one of the King's close companions) and "a Lady that was somewhat forward in the new Gospel."<sup>22</sup> The courtier defends the 1536 Articles that argued for three sacraments rather than seven by insisting that, if there must be "devices" or novel opinions in religion, he would rather they come from a king than from a knavish friar like Martin Luther. The king, at least, "hath Majesty in him, and a Council to assist him" whereas Luther made up his opinions out of ambition, a desire to revenge himself upon the Dominicans, and his lust for a wife. The lady objects that a mortal man, even a king, cannot authorize matters of religion and argues that the reformers speak "God's Eternal Truth and Word," not the devices of men. But this claim of *sola Scriptura* is countered by the courtier's reminding her of the Smithfield Dutch martyrs who, as even the lady agrees, were heretics. Yet, says the courtier, they, too, based their arguments on the Bible, "singing and chanting Scriptures" as they went to their deaths. In the face of such contradictory interpretations, how can mere humans determine what is God's word? Although the skeptical courtier wins the day against the "gospelling" lady in Parsons's account, the story itself illustrates the extent to which women were at the forefront of the Henrician court in defending the emerging Protestant religion.

This defense of Protestantism, which moved from Katherine Parr's reading circle to debates with the king, nearly led to the queen's downfall in 1546. Foxe casts Stephen Gardiner, bishop of Winchester, and Thomas Wriothesley, the Lord

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21 John Foxe, *[T]he ecclesiasticall history contaynyng the actes and monumentes of thynges passed in euery kynges tyme in this realme*, (London, 1570; STC 11223), 1422. The account of Parr's "gospelling" activities and subsequent confrontation with Henry VIII is first recorded in the second edition of *Actes and Monuments* (1570) pages 1422–5 and is repeated in the 1576 (pages 1212–14) and 1583 (pages 1242–4) editions. This narrative is taken from the 1570 edition. Quotations from Foxe are cited from John Foxe. *Acts and Monuments* [. . .]. *The Variorum Edition*. [online]. (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available at: <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/>. (Accessed: 09.30.2004).

22 Robert Parsons, *A treatise of three conversions of England from paganism to Christian religion* (London, 1688; Wing P575), 192–4.



Chancellor, as the chief villains who convince the king that Katherine's exhortation and persuasion amount not only to wifely insubordination but also to political treason. Their initial plan, according to Foxe, was to isolate the queen by attacking her closest friends and then, having discovered evidence "whereby the Queene might bee charged," to have Katherine herself "taken, and likewise caryed by Barge by night unto the Tower."<sup>23</sup> The three friends selected by Gardiner and Wriosthesley were Anne Herbert, Katherine's younger sister and the wife of William Herbert, earl of Pembroke; Lady Maud Lane, a cousin; and Elizabeth Tyrwhit, her cousin by marriage. Of Tyrwhit, Foxe notes that she was "in very great favour and credite" with the queen by reason of "her vertuous disposition."<sup>24</sup>

The proposed attack on the three women was twofold. First, they would be brought into court to answer to the Six Articles of 1539, which re-established Catholic orthodoxy and which had been used in the examination of Anne Askew. Second, while they were thus occupied, it was determined to search their "closet and coffers" for forbidden books. The Askew affair had prompted the issuing on 8 July 1546 of a list of banned books, including unauthorized versions of the Bible in English and books by prominent reformers.

Why the plan was not immediately put into action is unclear. Foxe credits Henry's suspicions of Gardiner and Wriosthesley, suggesting that the king delayed in order to test the veracity of his councilors and the integrity of his queen. The fortuitous discovery of the bill of articles drawn against the queen alerted Katherine to the plan and enabled her to make an offensive move against her accusers. Well aware that she and her ladies were in a precarious position, she commanded "her Ladyes to convey away their bookes, which were agaynst the law" before going to see the king in his chambers.<sup>25</sup> Her plea to Henry, a masterly speech composed equally of humble obeisance and gentle rebuke, succeeded in restoring her to his favor, to the discomfiture of his councilors.

Foxe's account remains the only contemporary version of this story and has, for that reason, been somewhat suspect. While the framing of the story undoubtedly elevates Parr to the role of a Protestant heroine, there is no reason to believe that the incident itself did not take place. Foxe pays careful attention to his sources and is attentive to the critics who doubt his facts. In this case, he appeals directly to eye-witnesses, noting in one place that "certayne of her Ladies and gentlewomen being yet alyve, which were then present about her, can testifie" to the accuracy of his report.<sup>26</sup> And, indeed, this story did remain intact in the following two authorial editions of 1576 and 1583, although others were dropped or modified when sufficiently challenged by Foxe's critics.<sup>27</sup>

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23 *A&M* (1570), 1423.

24 *A&M* (1570), 1423.

25 *A&M* (1570), 1424.

26 *A&M* (1570), 1424.

27 See David Loades, "'The Early Reception of the *Acts and Monuments*," in John Foxe, *Acts and Monuments* [. . .]. *The Variorum Edition*. [online] (hriOnline, Sheffield 2004). Available at <http://www.hrionline.ac.uk/foxe/>. (Accessed: 09.22.2005).

The incident of 1546 underscores Elizabeth Tyrwhit's commitment to the more aggressive forms of reformed Protestantism and her close association with Katherine Parr. Although the case was resolved quietly, and Foxe himself dismisses it as being dangerous only to the "private estate" of the queen and not to the public welfare of the church itself, it certainly posed a genuine threat not only to the queen but also to her friends.<sup>28</sup> Their position, of course, was made even more tenuous by the trial and torture of Anne Askew who was executed on 16 July 1546. As Askew herself reports, Thomas Wriothesley and Richard Rich attempted to extract from her the names of those who shared her religious convictions, but "bycause I confessed no ladyes nor gentyllwomen to be of my opynyon . . . they kepte me a longe tyme" on the rack.<sup>29</sup> Although Elizabeth Tyrwhit was not specifically named in connection with Askew, the interrelated connections of the northern families and her own service to and friendship with Katherine Parr certainly would have kept her on the list of suspects.<sup>30</sup>

In less than a year following this close call, Henry VIII himself was dead, Katherine Parr was free to marry Thomas Seymour, the Lord Admiral, and the Tyrwhits accompanied her from London to Chelsea and then to Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire, where she awaited the birth of her first child. Her relationship with the Tyrwhits appears to have remained close. In a deposition to the Privy Council after Parr's death, Robert notes that one day he was walking in Sudeley Park with Parr, engaged in a wide-ranging conversation,<sup>31</sup> when she said, "Master *Tyrwhyte*, you shall se the Kinge whene he comyth to his full Age, he wyll call hys Lands agayne, as faste as they be now gevyne frome hym." To which Robert replied, "[T]hene ys *Sewdly Castyll* goone from my Admyrall." At which Parr quickly added, "Mary, I do assure yow, he intends to offer them to the Kynge, and gyve theme frely to hym at that Tyme."<sup>32</sup> The primary intent of the anecdote is to report a brief exchange during which the dowager queen defended her husband's relationship with Edward VI, but the incident also demonstrates the familiar relationship sustained between Katherine Parr and the Tyrwhits.

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28 *A&M* (1570), 1425.

29 Elaine V. Beilin, ed., *The Examinations of Anne Askew* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1996), 127.

30 Robert Parsons, however, did make a connection between Askew and Tyrwhit, noting that Parr's banned books had been sent to her by Askew and that Elizabeth Tyrwhit, along with Anne Herbert and Maud Lane, could witness to that fact (James Kelsey McConica, *English Humanists and Reformation Politics under Henry VIII and Edward VI* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1965], 226–7).

31 Tyrwhit's exact term is "many Comenecasyons," literally many [items of] conversation (Samuel Haynes, *A Collection of State Papers . . . Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley* [London: William Bowyer, 1740], 1:104).

32 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:104.

Parr's defense of her husband can also be heard in her letters to him, which sound a personal and affectionate note; already several months pregnant, she tells him that "I gave your lytell Knave yowr Blessing, who lyke an onest Man styred apase after and before; for *Mary Odell* beyng a Bed with me had layd her Hand upon my Belly to fele yt styre."<sup>33</sup>

Although it was Mary Odell who in this case shared Katherine's bed, Elizabeth Tyrwhit remained a close companion, and it was she who gave a deposition to the king's council regarding the dowager queen's death. As in the Foxe account of the conspiracy against Parr and her ladies, the documents in this case are colored by the context in which they were written. Shortly after Katherine Parr's death on 5 September 1548, Thomas Seymour was arraigned on the instigation of his brother, Edward Seymour, Protector Somerset. Ill-feelings had run between the brothers for years: Thomas Seymour apparently resented Somerset's control of the young king, their nephew, and attempted to circumvent his influence by providing spending money and a sympathetic ear to Edward VI. Additional sources of tension included the ownership of Parr's jewels, which Somerset had confiscated after her death, Seymour's guardianship of Lady Jane Grey and his plans to marry her to Edward VI, and, most particularly, his own attempts to seduce and marry the Princess Elizabeth. By January 1549, Elizabeth had been moved from the care of her governess, Kate Astley, and cofferer, Thomas Parry, to the guardianship of the Tyrwhits at Hatfield House. Robert Tyrwhit's letters to Somerset, reporting on the young princess, earned him the title of "spy," although that term may have been too harsh.

Both Robert and Elizabeth Tyrwhit, however, were called before the Privy Council to give evidence against Seymour, and Elizabeth's account of the following scene at Katherine Parr's deathbed is, therefore, framed within an adversarial context of interrogation leading to the condemnation of a suspected traitor:

A Too Dayes afor the Deth of the Quen, at my cumyng to har in the Mornnyng, she askyd me wher I had ben so long, and sayed unto me, she dyd fere such Thinges in harself, that she was suer she cold not lyve: Wherunto I answareyd, as I thought, that I sawe na lyklyhod of Deth in har. She then haveyng my Lord Admyrall by the Hand, and dyvers other standyng by, spake thes Wardys, partly, as I tooke hyt, idylly,<sup>34</sup> "My Lady *Tyrwhyt*, I am not wel handelyd, for thos that be abowt me caryth not for me, but standyth lawghyng at my Gref; and the moor Good I wyl to them, the les Good thay wyl to me:" Wherunto my Lord Admyrall answareyd, why Swet-Hart I wold you no hurt. And she saed to hym agayn alowd, no my Lord, I thinke so; and imedyetly she sayed to hyme in hys Ere, but, my Lord, you have geven me many shrowd<sup>35</sup> tauntes. Thos Wordys I parsavwyd<sup>36</sup> she spake wyth good Memory, and very sharply and earnestly, for har Mynd was sor unquyettydd. My Lord Admyrall parsevyng that I hard hyt, callyd me asyd, and asked

33 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:62.

34 That is, deliriously; Tyrwhit understands Parr's concerns to be motivated, at least in part, by her illness.

35 That is, shrewd or grievous.

36 That is, perceived.

me what she sayd; and I declaryd hyt plainly to him. Then he consowlytyd with me, that he wold ly down on the Bed by har, to loke if he could pacyfy har unquyetnes wit gentyll camynycacyon;<sup>37</sup> wherunto I agreed. And by that Tyme he had spoken thre or four Wordes to har, she ansuered hym very rowndly and shartly, sayeng, my Lorde, I wold have geven a thowsand Markes to have had my full talk with *Hewyke*, the fyrst Day I was deliveryd, but I doorst not, far displesyng of you: And I heryng that, parcevyd har Troble to be so gret, that my Hart wold sarve me to her no mor.<sup>38</sup> Sych lyke comunycacyon she had with him the Space of an Owre; wych thay dyd hear that sat by har Bed syd.<sup>39</sup>

It is unclear from this narrative whether Katherine Parr truly feared her husband's intentions or was merely disoriented from the childbirth fever of which she was to die. Since her verbal, or *nuncupative*, will, witnessed by the doctor Robert Huyck and her chaplain, John Parkhurst, left all her possessions to her husband with the wish that they be more in value, it may be that her love for Seymour remained intact to the end and that Elizabeth Tyrwhit either misunderstood the nature of Parr's outburst or shaded the incident in such a way as to curry favor with Somerset.<sup>40</sup> On the other hand, Seymour was regarded by many in a most dubious light. Hugh Latimer, the bishop of Worcester, denounced him as "a man the farthest from the fear of God that I knew or heard of in England" and, after his death, compared him to Lot's wife as one who turned his face away from the truth and toward worldly gain.<sup>41</sup> It may be that in the last year of her life, Katherine Parr was pulled between her old friends and chaplains loyal to the Protestant faith and her boldly ambitious paramour and new husband. Whatever the narrative may say about the relationship between Parr and Seymour, it certainly reveals Elizabeth Tyrwhit's own close relationship with Katherine Parr and is indicative of Tyrwhit's privileged position at court. Surely Anne Somerset is correct when she notes that "at a time when virtually every profession was an exclusively masculine preserve, the position of lady-in-waiting to the Queen was almost the only occupation that an upperclass Englishwoman could with propriety pursue. . . . Any lady with a position at court could feel she had a finger on the pulse of power."<sup>42</sup> Tyrwhit was perhaps one of the six lady mourners who followed Jane Grey, the chief mourner, at Katherine's interment in Sudeley Chapel on 8 September 1548.

While Robert Tyrwhit may have switched his loyalty from his cousin's husband to her brother-in-law with undue speed, it is less clear exactly what Elizabeth did following the death of the dowager queen. In a letter dated just twelve days after the death of his wife, Seymour wrote to the Marquis of Dorset requesting that his daughter, Lady Jane Grey, remain at Sudeley with a suitable entourage of attendants:

37 That is, communication or conversation.

38 That is, I could no longer comfort her.

39 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:103–4.

40 PRO, PROB 11/32/19; cf. Somerset, *Ladies-in-Waiting*, 2.

41 George Elwes Corrie, ed., *Sermons by Hugh Latimer, Sometime Bishop of Worcester, Martyr, 1555*, The Parker Society 33–4 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1844), 164–5.

42 Somerset, *Ladies-in-Waiting*, 2.

I fynde indede that with God's helpe, I shall right well be hable to contynewe my House together, without dyminisheng any greate parte therof. And therefore putting my hole Affyance and Trust in God have begonne of newe to establish my Houshold, where shall remayne not oonelye the Gentlewomen of the Quene's Hieghnes Privey Chamber, but also the Maids which wayted at larg, and other Women being about her Grace in her lief Tyme, with a hundred and twenty Gentlemen and Yeomen, contynualle abeyding in House together.<sup>43</sup>

Elizabeth Tyrwhit, however, at least according to Kate Astley's report, suspected that the Lord Admiral might have another agenda for keeping his household intact. Astley reported that she "had talkid with my Lady *Tyrwhit*, and lernid by her, that Men did thynk that my Lord Admirall kept the Quenes Maydens together to wait upon the Lady *Elizabeth*, whom he entended to mary shortly, as the Bruyte<sup>44</sup> went."<sup>45</sup> While it is unclear just where and when Kate Astley talked with Elizabeth Tyrwhit, the former being situated at Cheshunt with the Princess Elizabeth, it is probably the case that Elizabeth Tyrwhit was one of the women retained by Seymour and thus was in a position to evaluate his actions. Kate Astley also reported that she talked with Robert Tyrwhit about a possible marriage between Elizabeth and Seymour, only to be told to "take hede, for it were but undoeng, if it were done without the Counsell's Consent."<sup>46</sup>

The uneasy relationship between Elizabeth Tyrwhit and Seymour may also be reflected in his joking reference to her skill in religious debate. Robert Tyrwhit reports that late in September 1548, just a few weeks after Katherine's death, Seymour stayed with the Tyrwhits at Mortlake Park and, in a reprisal of Henry's remarks to Katherine, commented on the extent of Elizabeth Tyrwhit's theological knowledge.<sup>47</sup> As Robert Tyrwhit noted, "[A]fter Supper he talked with my Wyfe. And passynge by hyme he called me, and sayd theys Words, Master *Tyrwhyt* I ame talkynge with my Lady your Wyffe in Devynnyte: I mayd hym answer, that my Wyffe was not seyne in Devynnete, but she was halff a Scrypture Woman."<sup>48</sup> Since "seyne" here means "read," as in having a degree in or having studied theology, Robert's explanation that Elizabeth was "halff a Scrypture Woman" probably

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43 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:77–8.

44 That is, "report."

45 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:101.

46 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:101.

47 In the confrontation between Henry and Katherine recorded by Foxe, Henry had said to his wife, "You are become a Doctor, Kate, to instruct us (as we take it), and not to be instructed, or directed by us," to which Katherine countered that, when she had disagreed with her husband, it was only that she might distract him from his illness and in hearing his "Majesties learned discourse, might receive to my self some profit therof" (*A&M* [1570], 1424–5).

48 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:104.

referred to her immense knowledge of the Bible, such that half of her conversation was composed of scripture.<sup>49</sup>

### **Elizabeth Tyrwhit and the Princess Elizabeth**

The easy familiarity between Katherine Parr and the Tyrwhits did not extend to their relationship with her stepdaughter, the Princess Elizabeth. Elizabeth had already been removed from Sudeley to Cheshunt during the summer of 1548 when Katherine became uneasy over the growing familiarity between her stepdaughter and her husband. On 21 January 1549, however, Kate Astley and Thomas Parry were arrested and Elizabeth's care was entrusted to Robert Tyrwhit at Hatfield House. Robert's letters to Somerset leave little doubt either that the Princess Elizabeth distrusted him or that she had good reason to do so. On 25 January 1549, for instance, he wrote that "I hav shewed my Lady your Letter, with a grett Protestacyone that I wold not for a 1000 *l.* to be knowne off yt; wherein she resavyth a grett Kyndnes at my Handes; notwythstandyng, I canne not frame her to all Ponets, as I wold wych yt to be."<sup>50</sup> Three days later he wrote that he had "practysed with my Lady's Grace, by all Meynes and Pollyse, to caws her to confesse more, then she hath allredy donne."<sup>51</sup> Elizabeth's own letter to Somerset, written the same day, tartly reported that she asked Sir Robert who had coached him to interrogate her and that "he answered me and said, no bodey bad him say so."<sup>52</sup>

While Robert Tyrwhit was interrogating Elizabeth Tudor and writing reports to Somerset, Elizabeth Tyrwhit was kept busy supervising the fifteen-year-old princess. A letter from the members of the Privy Council to the Princess Elizabeth dated 17 February 1549 notes, however, that they had been informed that the Lady Tyrwhit "hath not shewed herself so moche attendant to her Office in this Part, as we looked for at her Hands" and that they had had "somewhat to say to her rowndeley in that beholf."<sup>53</sup> It is not clear from this single terse report precisely how Elizabeth Tyrwhit had disappointed the Council, but since the letter goes on to say that they had appointed her to advise the princess on certain "Matters," it seems likely that she

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49 Without hearing Robert's tone of voice, it is difficult to know whether this claim was made depreciatingly or with some pride, but it may well have been the latter. Sir Robert himself, for instance, was a good friend of Sir Walter Mildmay, who was known for his rectitude and piety. For the "profound biblicism" that pervaded the writings of the early reformers, see Susan Wabuda, "Henry Bull, Miles Coverdale, and the Making of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, edited by Diana Wood (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 249–50.

50 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:88.

51 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:88.

52 Janel Mueller and Leah S. Marcus, eds., *Elizabeth I: Autograph Compositions and Foreign Language Originals* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), 19; also see Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:89.

53 Haynes, *State Papers*, 1:107.