Abstract

The thesis examines the correspondence of Bertrand de Salignac de la Motte-Fénélon (1568-75) and Michel de Castelnau, seigneur de la Mauvissière (1575-1585). From their correspondence two themes stand central, namely Elizabeth as a woman and Elizabeth as a ruler. In contrary to other works, the individuality of both ambassadors is discussed and the differences and similarities between ambassadors are presented.

This thesis will argue that Elizabeth's gender has been overplayed in her historiography. While gender is mentioned, it does not take a prominent role in the ambassadorial dispatches of Fénélon and Mauvissière. Furthermore, Fénélon and Mauvissière recognised Elizabeth's usage of her gender in political situations and reported this to the French royal family. Additionally, Fénélon and Mauvissière had different views on Elizabeth's rule. For instance, both ambassadors did not perceive Elizabeth as indecisive, but recognised her procrastination as a political tool. Moreover, Fénélon and Mauvissière were aware of the influence of Elizabeth's members, but knew that the queen held the final say in political decisions. Lastly, while Fénélon acknowledged the significance of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting, Mauvissière did not mention the ladies once, which illustrates the difference between the ambassadors.

PERCEIVING ELIZABETH I IN FRENCH DIPLOMATIC CORRESPONDENCE (1568-1584)

Lisa van der Torre
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List of abbreviations

CSP Spanish	M. A. S. Hume ed., *Calendar of Letters, Despatches and State Papers relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain preserved in the Archives of Simancas, Elizabeth I* (London, 1896).
Fénélon	Bertrand de Salignac, seigneur de La Mothe-Fénélon, *Correspondance Diplomatique*, ed. C. Purton Cooper and A. Teulet (7 vols, Paris and London, 1840)
LM	A. Strickland, *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots, and documents connected with her personal history* (2 vols, London, 1842)
Mauvissière	Michel de Castelnau, seigneur de la Mauvissière, *Nouvelles Additions aux Mémoires de Michel de Castelnau*, ed. J. Le Laboureur (3 vols, Brussels, 1731)
MSCM	A. Chéruel, *Marie Stuart et Catherine de Médicis* (Paris, 1858)
RPFEE	A. Teulet, ed., *Relations Politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Ecosse*, 2nd edn (5 vols, Paris, 1862)

Chapter One: Introducing Fénélon and Mauvissière

Bertrand de Salignac de la Motte-Fénélon (1568-75) and Michel de Castelnau, seigneur de la Mauvissière (1575-1585) were the two longest-serving French ambassadors to the court of Elizabeth. Their ambassadorial dispatches provide various sorts of information, from the outcomes of politics or the personality traits of the monarch to seemingly trivial details on customs of the host country or the weather forecast.[1] Although, Alessandra Petrina argues that it may be presumed that foreign ambassadors are more likely to write objectively than their English courtiers because of their detachment from the host country's court politics,[2] it is important to note that ambassadors were hardly objective observers. They were connected to their court politics at home, played a role in the court politics of their host country and pursued their own personal views and agendas. It is therefore crucial to analyse the personal lives and diplomatic careers of the ambassadors in order to grasp their motives, which helped fashion their perceptions of Elizabeth.

This approach is in line with the historiographical shift in early modern diplomatic history, namely 'New Diplomatic History'. Tracey Sowerby explains this change as an expansion of the study of early modern diplomatic history, which includes 'the processes by which international relations were maintained, prioritising the study of individual diplomats and monarchs, personal and information networks, and princely courts.'[3] This shift has brought new insights into how to read diplomatic correspondence. For instance, an article by Filippo de Vivo brings a new perspective on reading *relazioni*, which can be applied to other ambassadorial dispatches, because it presents the significance of the context wherein diplomatic correspondence is written and the varying ways in which the context of writing diplomatic correspondence develops or changes, which leads to a better analysis of the source material without omitting its various contextual layers.[4] Furthermore, de Vivo argues that Venetian ambassadors are seen as 'faceless representatives of the Republic' and that there is little known 'about the peculiarities of different ambassadors'.[5] As the personal views of the ambassador contributed to their perceptions and their eventual diplomatic correspondence, it is of value to include it.

[1] Fénélon to Charles IX, 10 September 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 302.
[2] A. Petrina, ''Perfit readiness': Elizabeth Learning and Using Italian' in C. M. Bajetta, G. Coatalen and J. Gibson ed, *Elizabeth I's Foreign Correspondence: Letters, Rhetoric and Politics* (New York, 2014), pp. 93-114, there 94.
[3] T.A. Sowerby, 'Early Modern Diplomatic History', *History Compass*, 14:9 (2016), pp. 441-456, there 441.
[4] F. de Vivio, 'How to read Venetian *Relazioni*', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 34:1-2 (2011), pp. 25-59.
[5] Ibid, p. 29.

Relating to the 'peculiarities of ambassadors', Gabriella Mazzon wrote an article on the pragmatics of diplomatic correspondence and emphasises the interplay between directness and (diplomatic) indirectness.[6] This is beneficial to analyse the hierarchical relationship between correspondents and presents the varying reasons why an ambassador uses a direct or indirect approach. In sum, building on the articles of de Vivo and Mazzon, a greater assessment of the personal views and perceptions of ambassadors is needed because as Estelle Paranque argues 'ambassadors helped to fashion their host monarch's identity and reputation in their home country'.[7] Therefore, concentrating on the perceptions of ambassadors may lead to new insights for representational studies on Elizabeth.

Although there is a vast amount of scholarship on the representation of Elizabeth, it is noteworthy that research on Anglo-French diplomatic sources has been minimal.[8] This is mainly a consequence of scholars relying mostly on English sources. Recently, studies on foreign perceptions of Elizabeth has broadened. For instance, John Watkins analysed Venetian diplomatic sources to argue that Venetian ambassadors' hesitation to honour Elizabeth with a resident ambassador stemmed from their perception of Elizabeth and England.[9] Watkins argues 'that Venice's formal alienation from Elizabeth arose from a diplomatic stance that paradoxically linked the republic directly to her: a commitment to political neutrality in the face of Reformation and Counter-Reformation efforts to divide European diplomatic relationships along sectarian lines.'[10] Another example is an article by Nabil Matar, who argues that the Gloriana reputation of Elizabeth did not reach her Moroccan counterpart the Saadi sultan Mulay Ahmad al Mansur.[11] Rather, Elizabeth was perceived as a queen, but her pedigree was not thought equal to that of the sultan; she was not an imperial queen. Interestingly, Matar argues that the sultan was not bothered by the sex of Elizabeth and did 'not view her through gendered eyes'.[12] In relation to gender and representation, Eduardo Guerrero and Esther Fernández's collection looks at a broad array of Spanish sources, from correspondence of Spanish clerics to visual images and Spanish literary representations, to

[6] G. Mazzon, 'The Pragmatics of Sir Thomas Bodley's Diplomatic Correspondence', *Journal of Early modern Studies*, 3 (2014), pp. 117-131.
[7] E. Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes* (London, 2019), p. 17.
[8] E. Paranque, 'Queen Elizabeth I and the Elizabethan Court in the French Ambassador's Eyes', in: A. Bertolet ed., *Queens Matter in Early Modern Studies* (London, 2018), pp. 267-284, there 268.
[9] J. Watkins, 'Elizabeth through Venetian Eyes', *Explorations in Renaissance Culture*, 30:1 (2004), pp. 121-138.
[10] Watkins, 'Elizabeth through Venetian Eyes', pp. 122-123.
[11] N. Matar, 'Elizabeth through Moroccan Eyes', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 12 (2008), pp. 55-76.
[12] Ibid, p. 75.

examine the perception of Elizabeth.[13] In the collection Jesús Usunáriz presents a counter-propaganda, as an alternative version to the Black Legend, where Elizabeth's image is set against that of Philip II.[14] Here, her gender is portrayed as a factor to the image of Elizabeth as the antithetical ruler in comparison to Philip II, aside from religious differences and political developments, such as the Spanish Armada. Together, these works offer new insights into studies on the representation of Elizabeth, such as the Venetian ambassadors' perception of Elizabeth's religious compromises, the unruffled attitude of Al-Mansur to Elizabeth's gender and the anti-Elizabeth sentiment gathered from various Spanish sources.

Returning to French diplomatic sources, Paranque looks at the representation of Elizabeth in French ambassadorial dispatches and letters of the French royal family, where she focuses on the representation of Elizabeth through the eyes of the Valois family.[15] While Paranque emphasises the novelty of her research, her ambitious undertaking of analysing the letters of six different ambassadors and the letters of the royal family over the course of thirty years, results in a book of less than 250 pages that generates a very broad view. Unfortunately, she focuses mostly on the familial ways in which the French royal family addressed Elizabeth and vice versa, but Paranque does not explain the personal views of the ambassadors when analysing their perceptions of Elizabeth. In this sense, the reader is left in the dark on the different styles of ambassadors' reporting and the reasons behind their distinct style of reporting. To gauge the subjectivity of the ambassadors, it is constructive to ask oneself what is to be gathered from or decided upon this information and what would the ambassador gain from this. In other words, the role of the ambassador and his identity is crucial to understand the context and construction of ambassadorial dispatches.

Secondly, Paranque briefly mentions in what ways the six ambassadors viewed Elizabeth's gender and her rule, but does not analyse their perceptions individually and instead compliments their perceptions with letters of the French royals as indicators for Elizabeth's representation at the French court. Therefore, the perceptions of the six discussed ambassadors are seemingly categorised together and potential differences between them are overlooked. Moreover, the ambassadorial reports of Fénélon and Mauvissière will reflect their views on Elizabeth's gender and rule. Their views are significant as they are both the two

[13] E. O. Guerrero, 'Introduction' in E.O Guerrero and E. Fernández ed., *The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain* (Lincoln, 2019), pp. 1-50.
[14] J.M. Usunáriz, 'The Political Discourse on Elizabeth I in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth Century Spain', Idem, pp. 81-122.
[15] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, p. 3.

longest-serving French ambassadors, who have encountered varying political landscapes during Elizabeth's reign. Additionally, both ambassadors were involved with the marriage negotiations of the French dukes, which will demonstrate what position Elizabeth's gender held in their reports and if this differed between both ambassadors. So, in light of the 'New Diplomatic History' and the stimulating articles by de Vivo and Mazzon, I propose to focus on Fénélon's and Mauvissière's individuality and analyse their perceptions of the queen's gender and her rule to supplement the ongoing debate on how foreign ambassadors viewed Elizabeth.

Although, Fénélon and Mauvissière both ended up as ambassadors in England, they came from different backgrounds. For instance, Fénélon (1523-1589) was born in Périgord to a local noble family, but was brought under the wing of his influential uncle Jean de Gontaut, who belonged to an important noble family and served as special envoy at the Spanish (1547-1548) and Portuguese courts (1548-1549). Here, Fénélon encountered the workings of diplomacy quite young, but remained under his uncle's supervision on diplomatic missions.[16] Mauvissière (1520-1592), on the other hand, was born to a noble family in a castle named La Mauvissière in Touraine and spent most of this time translating whilst receiving an excellent education.[17] Although, Fénélon accompanied his uncle as special envoy at the courts of Charles V of Spain (1547-48) and John III of Portugal (1548-49), it was not until a decade later that he attracted Catherine de Médici's attention and became a representative of the nobility in the États généraux from 1559 to 1561.[18] This in contrast to Mauvissière, who first befriended Francis II of Lorraine, duke of Guise, while he was on a military campaign and therefore aligned himself with the House of Guise.[19] Later on, he became Catherine de Médici's advisor during the early Wars of Religion and earned the respect and trust of the royal family.[20]

Meanwhile Fénélon, was ambitiously trying to climb the social ladder and travelled extensively in service of other ambassadors. For instance, he spent one year at the English court for the French ambassador Michel de Seure, then three years at the Spanish court, moved to Scotland in 1566 and then to the Netherlands one year later. Finally, in 1568 Fénélon obtained his first diplomatic mission and became French ambassador to the English

[16] *Fénélon*, i, p. 1; Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes*, p. 12.
[17] J. Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven and London, 1991), p. 9; G. Hubault, *Michel de Castelnau, Ambassadeur en Angleterre 1575–1585* (Paris, 1856), p. 2.
[18] M. Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire: Lettres et pouvoir au temps de Catherine de Médicis* (Paris, 2014), p. 357.
[19] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes*, p. 12.
[20] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, p. 9.

court.[21] Mauvissière, being three years older than Fénélon, held more years in diplomatic experience, and had by the time of Fénélon's first diplomatic mission already been sent to Rome and had spent two years in Scotland, where he had tried to reconcile the relationship between Mary, Queen of Scots, and Elizabeth I. Importantly, Francis II, duke of Guise, whom Mauvissière aligned himself with, was the uncle of Mary, Queen of Scots. In 1562 Mauvissière returned to France and fought along-side the Guises in various religious wars. Then, in 1575 Mauvissière was appointed French ambassador to England and was assigned with the task of the marriage negotiations between the French Valois prince and Elizabeth.[22] In other words, before the start of their diplomatic mission in England, Mauvissière had more experience in 1575 than had Fénélon in 1568. Yet, in their personal lives, Mauvissière was more interested in letters than diplomacy, while Fénélon dedicated his life to achieve his political ambitions. For instance, Fénélon never married and did not have children, while Mauvissière married the wealthy, Catholic Marie Bochetel with whom he lived in London during his embassy and had four children together.[23] They did have in common that both ambassadors did not speak English.[24]

During their embassies in England, Fénélon and Mauvissière wrote numerous ambassadorial dispatches to the French royal family, some of which have survived the test of time. In the case of Fénélon, the editors Charles Cooper and Alexandre Teulet (1840) have copied five volumes of 469 dispatches. These dispatches include several complementary documents, which were also remitted to the French royal family. The first is dated on the 26th November 1568 and the last on 20th September 1575.[25] Unfortunately, Mauvissière's correspondence is more challenging to analyse because they are scattered in various places and forms.[26] For instance, some of his letters are in manuscript form in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and others are published in anthologies. The best known anthology is the three-part volume of Jean LeLaboureur (1731), but its first volume remarkably has only four letters in Mauvissière's hand and the other two volumes include letters from the French royal family to Mauvissière. The author mainly focuses on the letters of the royal family, and sometimes, paraphrases Mauvissière's letters to give an overview of the ambassador's life.

[21] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes*, p. 12.
[22] G. Hubault, *Michel de Castelnau, Ambassadeur en Angleterre 1575–1585* (Paris, 1856), pp. 1-5; Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois Eyes*, p. 13.
[23] *Fénélon*, i, p. 18; Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, p. 10.
[24] *Fénélon*, ii, p. 132; Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, p. 9.
[25] *Fénélon*, i, p. 24-30.
[26] D. Potter, *A Knight of Malta at the court of Elizabeth I: The correspondence of Michel de Seure, French ambassador 1560-1561* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 2.

Other examples are the five-volume *Relations Politiques de la France et de l'Espagne avec l'Ecosse* by Teulet (1862), of which the third volume has 64 letters by Mauvissière. Additionally, Adolphe Cheréul's *Marie Stuart et Catherine de Médicis* (1858) includes 8 letters and Agnes Strickland translated 6 letters by Mauvissière into English in her book *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots* (1842). Crucially, the latter two anthologies have a fair amount of Mauvissière's correspondence, but a majority of them are also included by Teulet's anthology, resulting in that only 14 letters are referred to in this thesis. The first is dated on the 1st of March 1576 and the last on 25th November 1584. In total, 78 letters by Mauvissière and 469 letters by Fénélon have been consulted during this research. However, it should be noted that the total amount of Fénélon's and Mauvissière's complete correspondence is not known. Furthermore, their correspondences were compiled almost 200 years later than when both ambassadors penned their letters. In short, the reader should be aware that analysis of the correspondence of both ambassadors is based on a section of its totality, which has been transcribed at a later time. The consulted letters are diverse and represent the majority of the ambassadors' embassies in England. Furthermore, additional sources, such as letters from other ambassadors or secretaries and Calendar of State Papers have been taken into account that relate to the ambassadors' diplomatic correspondence in order to historicize the sources for a broader understanding.

From their correspondence, the two following themes will be researched, namely Elizabeth as a woman and Elizabeth as a ruler. Each will be analysed in their respective chapters. The perceptions of Fénélon and Mauvissière as ambassadors, who both had their embassies during the marriage negotiation, will demonstrate if gender was prominent or not. Additionally, the queen's notorious indecisiveness, the extent of influence of her council and the role of ladies-in-waiting will be explored through the eyes of the French ambassadors. Prior to these chapters, chapter two will elucidate the role of the ambassador and diplomatic practices in London. This will provide a contextual overview of the French ambassador's personal views as well as differentiate between their writing styles.

Overall, the purpose of this thesis is to elucidate the manner in which Fénélon and Mauvissière perceived Elizabeth as a female ruler. By individually analysing their correspondence, their personal views are detected as well as their differences. In addition, with use of these French sources, the study on Elizabeth's representation will be broadened by presenting a different narrative of the position of the queen's gender in historiography as well as how Fénélon and Mauvissière perceived Elizabeth's use of her gender in political

interactions. Moreover, the French ambassadors' perceptions add an alternative narrative as to how they perceived Elizabeth's conduct of governing in contrast to the perception of Elizabeth's subjects. In this sense, the narrative will demonstrate also how the French royal family perceived Elizabeth rule and it will add to our understanding of Anglo-French relations.

Throughout this thesis, I have used the dates according to the Old Style calendar, including letters written after 5/ 15 October 1582 by Catholics adhering to the Gregorian calendar. As for spelling and punctuations, I have kept the original text, albeit I have modernised the usage of *ſ* to ensure easy reading. Furthermore, unless otherwise mentioned, all translations are mine.

Chapter Two: Diplomatic nature and practices in relation to the English embassy

Of the 469 dispatches of Fénélon, 232 letters are addressed to Catherine de' Medici and 376 to Charles IX. After the death of Charles IX 64 letters were written to his successor Henry III. This illustrates that Fénélon maintained a steadier exchange of letters with the reigning French king than the queen mother. Precisely, 65% of all his letters were addressed to Charles IX and Henry III and 34% to Catherine de' Medici.[27] Similarly, of the 78 letters written by Mauvissière, 58 letters are addressed to Henry III, 16 letters to the queen mother and four to Mary, Queen of Scots. Thus, Fénélon and Mauvissière both sent more letters to Charles IX and Henry III than to Catherine de' Medici. In addition, of the 469 dispatches there is not a single letter found by Fénélon to Mary, Queen of Scots, but of the 78 by Mauvissière the four letters to Mary Stuart are consulted.

In contrast to Mauvissière's correspondence, the amount of data collected from Fénélon's correspondence permits making numerical estimations, such as estimating the span of days between each dispatch. For instance, Fénélon wrote to Charles XI or Henry III on average every five or six days, while the queen mother received a letter every 10 or 11 days. Furthermore, each of Fénélon's eight years as ambassador to the English court is detected in the consulted dispatches, whereas the 78 consulted letters of Mauvissière represent eight years of his 10-year embassy, namely 1576 to 1584. Therefore, the consulted letters are not representative of the totality of his diplomatic mission. For instance, the years 1576 and 1577 are represented by three letters each, while 1583 is depicted in 15 letters. Moreover, there are considerable differences between the dates of letters, varying between gaps of 18 months to one day. All in all, each of the consulted corpus of diplomatic correspondence has its limitations.

Aside from writing numerous dispatches, the role of the ambassador extended beyond informing the French court of the political situation at the host court. Isabella Lazzarini argues that 'negotiation, information-gathering, and representation were the three major aims of diplomacy'.[28] Negotiation was conducted by resident ambassadors or by ordinary ambassadors sent for a specific purpose by their monarch. In addition, arranging frequent ambassadorial exchanges helped maintain and facilitate a good relationship between

[27] Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, pp. 353-354: with the help of Gellard's method of approach, I concluded the same results as him. Percentages are based on my own calculations.
[28] I. Lazzarini, *Communication and Conflict: Italian Diplomacy in the Early Renaissance, 1350-1520* (Oxford, 2015), p. 6.

countries.[29] Together with ambassadors, resident and ordinary, the diplomatic envoy includes courtiers and staff, whose complementary letters are also found in diplomatic dispatches. For instance, Fénélon and Mauvissière use their secretaries, who are also their main courtiers, to report negotiations, which are sent to the French court. Importantly, their letters are complementary and therefore usually guided with a letter (memoire) from the resident ambassador. Lastly, as ambassadors, Fénélon and Mauvissière represent the French king with their presence. This is visible during an audience with the ambassador and Queen Elizabeth, which symbolises a conversation between the monarchs of England and France. In this sense, audiences are a vital component of the ambassador's residence because it creates an opportunity for the ambassador to negotiate with the monarch, gather information and represent his king by reciting his words.

Although, audiences were a useful diplomatic tool for both ambassadors and monarchs, they were not always granted which deterred the duties of the ambassador. For instance, to postpone a decision, Elizabeth could deny or delay an audience to the ambassador. The queen would go as far as to put an ambassador under house arrest during a bilateral dispute to send a political message to their sovereign.[30] In this sense, Elizabeth did not accept the ambassador as representative for his sovereign, which was also reported by Fénélon: 'They are treating the king of Spain's ambassador worse than ever, and sent word to him by his own secretary that the queen did not regard him any longer as an ambassador'.[31]

International disputes and court politics influenced the setting of the audience, such as its frequency, location, how the audience was granted and who was present. Firstly, there was no fixed frequency in obtaining audiences.[32] It depended on the importance of the situation, where some cases required more frequent audiences in a shorter time span than others. This is illustrated by Fénélon who obtained approximately 148 audiences during his embassy in England,[33] visiting Elizabeth on average every 16 or 17 days, but negotiated with the queen six times in August 1572 about the terms of marriage to Francis, duke of Alençon, while

[29] G. Richardson, 'Introduction' in Idem ed., *The Contending Kingdoms: France and England 1420-1700* (Aldershot, 2008), p. 1-22, there p. 9.
[30] Fénélon to Charles IX, 22 January 1569, *Fénélon*, I, p. 128.
[31] Fénélon's memoire, 5 September 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 297: 'ayans eulx pensé de tretter plus mal que jamais son ambassadeur, et luy ayant mandé par ung sien secrétaire que la Royne d'Angleterre ne le tenoit plus pour ambassadeur'.
[32] Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, p. 374.
[33] Ibid. p. 373. Importantly, Fénélon is not as meticulous in reporting the dates of his audiences, which makes it difficult to locate.

meeting her only once in the following two months after the grave news of the Saint Bartholomew Day's Massacre was received at the English court.

In addition to the infrequency of obtaining audiences, the location where the audience was held signified diplomatic precedence. For instance, David Starkey pointed out the significance of the privy chamber over the presence chamber, Mathieu Gellard demonstrated the exclusivity of the bed chamber and that ambassadors were rarely granted access to it, while Malcolm Smuts and George Gorse argue that the amount of various rooms which ambassadors had to pass through accentuated the dignity of the host sovereign.[34] Additionally, the queen was also somewhat more difficult to approach during summers, when she left London for her ten-week progress through England.[35] Although, the queen and her court were continuously moving during this period, the ambassadors visited Elizabeth to acquire an audience. While Fénélon reports visiting the queen at Fernan Castle, Greenwich, Hatfield, Hampton Court, Quilingcourt (Leicester's estate), Richmond, Warwick, and Wynck (hunting house near London), Mauvissière met the queen at Greenwich, Nonsuch and Oatlands palace. Interestingly, a letter from Fénélon demonstrates that ambassadors needed permission to participate in the summer progressions, as he writes:

> [I] begged her to permit me to go to find her on her progress if there should be occasion to negotiate anything of importance with her. She readily agreed, and said that I will be welcome wherever she is, although they tell me that she is not in the habit of dealing with business on her progresses […].[36]

This explains why both ambassadors would not follow the court around, but would visit the queen for one day or a few days and after their audience would return to London.

Another location to meet Elizabeth and her councillors was the residency of the ambassadors, named Salisbury court. According to John Bossy, the French embassy was located between Fleet Street and the Thames.[37] Here, Fénélon reported a dinner with several English councillors: 'On the same day, the gentlemen, the count of Leicester, the Admiral of

[34] D. Starkey, 'Intimacy and Innovation. The Rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547', in Idem ed., *The English Court: From the War of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), pp. 71-118; Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, p. 378; M. Smuts and G. Gorse, 'Introduction', in M. Fantoni, M. Smuts and G. Gorse, George ed., *The Politics of Space: European Courts, ca. 1500-1750* (Rome, 2009), pp. 13-39, there p. 29.
[35] Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 147.
[36] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 1 August 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 137: 'l'ay priée de trouver bon que je la peusse aller trouver en son progrez, s'il se offroit occasion de négocier aulcune chose d'importance avecques elle, ce qu'elle m'a fort libérallement accordé, et que je seray le bien venu en quelle part qu'elle sera, bien qu'on dict qu'elle n'avoit accoustumé de tretter d'affaires en ses voyages.'
[37] Bossy, *Giordano Bruno*, p. 10.

England, and other lords of this court, came to have dinner in my house'.[38] Additionally, in 1580, the Spanish ambassador Bernardino de Mendoza reported to Phillip II that the queen visited Mauvissière. Mendoza specified that it 'was considered a great innovation for the queen to go to his [Mauvissière's] house'.[39] This is true, as arranging audiences was often done by ambassadors. The reason behind this was that ambassadors had to wait for instructions from their monarch and had to receive a letter in order to request an audience, allowing the ambassador to recite his monarch's words during an audience.[40] Audiences were thus well prepared and depended on the arrival of letters and instructions from their monarchs. Unsurprisingly, ambassadors would frequently complain that they had not received enough news or instructions.[41] Gellard argues that this tension is characteristic in diplomatic exchanges, namely 'communication in the presence and communication in absence is combined; the audience being an art of the present and the dispatch an art of distance'.[42] Gellard points out that ambassadors could not always wait for the arrival of instructions as diplomacy is mostly about managing the unexpected.[43] In addition, due to the sensitivity and secrecy of the letters not all instructions were specific. For instance, in 1583 Henry III wrote to Mauvissière: 'You will hear enough by these few words my intention on this point.'[44] Moreover, during audiences ambassadors had to react in their own words when Elizabeth or her councillors asked questions. An amusing, but diplomatically difficult example was in February 1575 when Elizabeth accused the queen mother of mocking her by using two dwarfs to impersonate Elizabeth at the French court.[45] Needless to say, Fénélon was not prepared by a royal dispatch, but spoke as himself and not as his king in order to form a diplomatic answer. In this sense, the diplomatic circumstances created opportunities for the ambassador to influence audiences by choosing his own words.

Overall, it is important to stress that ambassadors were not merely reciting the words of their monarchs or became 'mouthpieces' of host monarchs, as Paranque claims.[46] Gellard argues and illustrates that Fénélon influenced audiences with knowledge of Charles IX. The

[38] Fénélon to Charles IX, 6 April 1569, *Fénélon*, i, p. 293: 'le mesme jour, messieurs le comte de Lestre, l'Admyral d'Angleterre et autres seigneurs de ceste cour, venuz prendre leur disner en mon logiz.'
[39] Bernardino de Mendoza to Phillip II, 12 March 1580, *CSP Spanish*, iii, p. 16
[40] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 15 December 1568, *Fénélon*, i, p. 27.
[41] Ibid.
[42] Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, p. 379: 'Ainsi, communication en presence et communication en absence se conjuguent, l'audience étant un art du present et la dépêche un art de la distance.'
[43] Ibid, p. 384.
[44] Henry III to Mauvissière, 19 December 1583, *Mauvissière*, i, p. 593: 'Vous entendrez assez par ce peu de parole mon intention en cet endroit.'
[45] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 28 February 1575, *Fénélon*, vi, p. 388.
[46] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, p. 130.

French king wrote to Fénélon 'the remarks, which you put forward concerning the marriage of the Queen of Scotland with the Duke of Norfolk, had been coming from you only, and not from me, which I found good'.[47] Thus, Gellard presents the significance of the ambassador's presence during diplomatic decision-making. However, the author does not demonstrate the boundaries or nuances of the ambassador's influence. For instance, in 1572 Fénélon showed a letter of the duke of Alençon to Elizabeth, which had been addressed to Fénélon's predecessor, Paul de Foix. However, Fénélon admits that he had 'no commission to show' the letter.[48] Although, it is not clear if the king and queen mother disapproved of this action, Fénélon sought out the boundaries of his influence. On the other hand, Mauvissière's letters present an instance where the ambassador clearly overstepped his position as representative of the French king. In 1584, Mauvissière apologised to Henry III for acting too favourably on behalf of Mary, queen of Scots, which the king did not approve of.[49] Thus, ambassadors balanced, on the one hand, their opportunities to speak as themselves and therefore influence an audience, but, on the other hand, their influence was sometimes restricted by their sovereign. In this sense, ambassadors held influential positions, but this was not permanent

This tension between influence and instability is also demonstrated in the practicalities and pragmatics of the ambassadorial dispatches. For instance, Fénélon's and Mauvissière's diplomatic letters were sometimes encoded, so if intercepted, the other party could not read the contents of the letters. In October 1569, less than a year after Fénélon became ambassador to England, he reported that a royal dispatch was stolen. He addressed this issue numerous times to Elizabeth as well as to the queen mother, persuading her to address the theft to Henry Norris, English ambassador to France.[50] As he was representative of the French king, Elizabeth took this situation serious, but Fénélon was under the impression that Burghley had something to do with the theft. Nevertheless, one month later, the letters were thrown in the garden of the ambassador with a note apologising for the inconvenience.[51] The weight with which Fénélon issued his complaint to Elizabeth and the queen mother illustrates the delicate position of the ambassadors at the English court as well as the importance of the contents of diplomatic letters.

[47] Charles IX to Fénélon, 1 November 1569, *Fénélon*, vii, p. 69: 'Les propos, que vous avez mis en avant touchant le mariage de la Royne d'Escosse avec le duc de Norfolc, avoient esté tenus comme venant de vous seulement, et non de moy, ce que j'ay trouvé bon.'
[48] Fénélon to Charles IX, 5 July 1572, *Fénélon*, v, p. 35: 'nulle commission de le luy monstrer.'
[49] Mauvissière to Henry III, 3 September 1584, *MSCM*, p. 323-324.
[50] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 13 October 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 280.
[51] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 5 December 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 377-382.

As for pragmatics in correspondence, audiences as well as diplomatic letters focused on the main components of the ambassador's embassy in England. These were: first the marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and Henry, duke of Anjou, and later Francis, duke of Alençon; second the predicament of Mary, queen of Scots; and third the question of Elizabeth's aid to the Huguenots. The latter two issues were outlined by Fénélon after the conclusion of his embassy in a speech to Henry III on 15 July 1575.[52] The diplomatic correspondence of both ambassadors illustrate its high content-orientation and its structured arrangement, whereby the first paragraphs held more importance than the latter ones. Thus, the political events or discussions were arranged in an order, which the ambassador considered important to present to his monarch, yet its arrangement also demonstrates the ambassador's preferences and views.[53] For instance, Paranque points out that after September 1572 Fénélon did not raise Mary's predicament as often in comparison to previous years.[54] This corresponds to the descending placement of references of the Scottish queen in his diplomatic letters, for during this time, Mary's fate is continuously discussed in the last paragraphs.

Another distinctive aspect of pragmatics in ambassadorial dispatches is found in the description of audiences. Usually, after the opening salutations, if an audience took place, this was first reported. Both ambassadors would report the statements of Elizabeth in detail, but would use the indirect style to create an objective distance.[55] For instance, in 1569 Fénélon wrote to Charles IX: 'Here, Sire, what has been mainly treated in this audience, of which I have kindly represented to you the same words of the said Lady, so that you may draw from them what they can show of her intention.'[56] Thus, Fénélon presented detailed conversations of Elizabeth and himself in a distant manner, but due to his placing and filtering of information, the ambassador's opinion is detectable.

Interestingly, the contents of both ambassadors' letters to the queen mother are not exact to that of the king's letters. This is because Fénélon and Mauvissière are aware that

[52] Speech Fénélon, 15 July 1575, *Fénélon*, i, p. xxvi-xxix.
[53] J.C. Waquet, 'Introduction', in S. Andretta, S. Péquinot, M.K. Schaub, J.C. Waquet and C. Windler ed., *Paroles de négociateurs: l'entretien dans la pratique diplomatique de la fin du Moyen Âge à la fin du XIXe siècle* (Rome, 2010), pp. 1-26, there p. 9.
[54] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, p. 110-111.
[55] Wacquet, 'Introduction', pp. 7-8.
[56] Fénélon to Charles IX, 20 January 1569, *Fénélon*, i, p. 134: 'Voylà, Sire, ce qui a esté principalement tretté en ceste audience, de laquelle je vous ay bien vollu représanter les mesmes parolles de la dicte Dame, affin que tiriez d'icelles ce qu'elles peuvent monstrer de son intention.'

Catherine de' Medici is reading the letters of the king as well.[57] For instance, in the letters to the queen mother, Mauvissière placed more focus on the proceedings of the marriage negotiations, while Fénélon shares the same information to the queen mother and the king, but personalises Catherine de' Medici's letters by providing more details about ceremonial and courtly life. Although, the latter is not as often present in comparison to Spanish diplomatic correspondence, which is due to the Spanish placing more focus on ceremonial precedence while the French found the English court less formal than theirs.[58] Nevertheless, despite Catherine de' Medici's status as queen mother, the ambassadors treated her as a royal force to be reckoned with and were thus not unfamiliar to a woman, albeit queen consort, who gave out orders.[59]

Finally, Fénélon and Mauvissière had different backgrounds and personalities, which resulted in a different diplomatic approach that is evident in their letters. For example, while Mauvissière gave advice and recommendations to the French king and his mother on how negotiations should be conducted, Fénélon did not express his personal views directly. For instance, Fénélon wrote to Charles IX in a deferential manner, such as 'I *beg* you very humbly, Sire, to be careful to keep watch of the motions of Germany' or to the queen mother: 'I have not yet received the letter that you wish to write from your hand to this queen, *it seems that* it will be good for me to have it early.'[60] This is in contrast to Mauvissière, who reported confidently:

> The said queen, seeing that I spoke to her in this fashion and with such truth, and with arguments so strong that she could not contradict any of them, begged me to drop all these subjects, and to talk of something more agreeable.[61]

According to Mazzon, deferential writing and uses of de-personalised formulas, such as 'it seems that' signals uncertainty and conveys distance.[62] This corresponds to the difference in ambassadorial experiences between Fénélon and Mauvissière, of which the latter

[57] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 6 January 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 7; Mauvissière to Catherine de' Medici, 24 July 1581, *Mauvissière,* i, pp. 692-693.
[58] M. Levin, 'A New World Order: The Spanish Campaign for Precedenge in Early Modern Europe', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 6:3 (2002), pp. 233-264, there p. 234; Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, p. 381.
[59] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, p. 48. This in contrast to what Paranque claims: 'the French had no experience of engaging and working with a sole female ruler […].'
[60] Fénélon to Charles IX, 11 January 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 23: 'je vous supplie très humblement, Sire, de fère soigneusement prendre garde aulx mouvemens d'Allemaigne'; Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 15 November 1568, *Fénélon*, i, p. 9: 'Je n'ay encores receu la lettre que voulez escrire de votre main à ceste Royne, il semble qu'il sera bon que je l'aye bien tôt.'
[61] Mauvissière to Henry III, 17 January 1583, *LM*, ii, p. 8.
[62] Mazzon, 'The Pragmatics of Sir Thomas Bodley's Diplomatic Correspondence', pp. 122-123.

was a seasoned ambassador. Thus, it is pointed out that the backgrounds and personalities of ambassadors are reflected in the writing of their diplomatic correspondence.

In short, the positions of Fénélon and Mauvissière as ambassadors to the English court are ambiguous. On the one hand, they are representatives of the French king and due to the diplomatic setting of audiences and correspondence, they are able to influence both. However, on the other, their influence was not limitless and they had to abide to the ruling of their sovereign as well as not to overstep the boundaries with the host monarch. Furthermore, it is important to recognize the different personalities and experiences of both ambassadors, as they each have their own approach to diplomacy. Thus, Fénélon and Mauvissière are not faceless mouthpieces, but ambassadors with their own personalities and influence to a certain extent.

Chapter Three: Elizabeth as a woman

In Fénélon's first report to Charles IX, the ambassador remarked that 'though her sex of which it was considered to be weak, I would find it always a rock that would not bow to all things.'[63] In other words, Fénélon perceived Elizabeth as an able ruler, despite her sex, and informed the French king that the queen was not to be underestimated or easily persuaded. In this sense, Fénélon's words aptly captured the anomalous position a queen regnant held in early modern Europe. Firstly, it is important to note that in this thesis gender is understood as a social construction.[64] Accordingly, through constructed notions of 'femininity' and 'masculinity', certain early modern gendered stereotypes lay down constraints of what was socially desirable for each sex.[65] As a result, Elizabeth's queenship is a significant part of the scholarly research on the queen. Some scholars researched various gendered angles of her queenship and argued that Elizabeth employed certain strategies to compensate for her gender. For instance, Charles Beem argues that Elizabeth used male-gendered expectations of military behaviour to emphasise her masculinity.[66] Inversely, Christopher Haigh claims that the queen exploited her 'feminine wiles' in her marriage diplomacies with the French dukes, while Helen Hackett writes that her image as virgin queen was shaped as a positive aspect of her femininity.[67] Taking a different stance, Carole Levin argues for an androgynous perspective on Elizabeth's feminine and masculine theatrics. She explains that the queen conflated both elements in her gendered construction of power because her biological gender would not have been enough to justify her sovereignty.[68]

While the overall argument of these studies demonstrates that Elizabeth's construction of power was gendered and multi-layered, it is important to note that the queen's representation as an iconic female ruler has been revised over the last two decades.[69] In this revised view, Beem's constructed masculinity of Elizabeth is viewed as being heightened while Hackett's argument on the queen's femininity is questioned because Elizabeth's virginity demonstrated that the queen was an unnatural woman, i.e. lacking femininity, which

[63] Fénélon to Charles IX, 16 November 1568, *Fénélon*, i, p. 5: 'car encor que le sexe duquel elle estoit fût estimé léger, je la trouverois toutesfois ung rocher qui ne se plieroyt à tous vens.'
[64] H.M. Lipps, *A New Psychology of Women: Gender, Culture and Ethnicity* (Urbana, 2017), p. 7.
[65] S. Mendelson and P. Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), pp. 65-70.
[66] C. Beem, *The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I* (New York, 2011), p. 15.
[67] Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 78-80; H. Hackett, *Virgin Mother, Maiden Queen: Elizabeth I and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (London, 1995).
[68] C. Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King: Elizabeth I & the Politics of Sex and Power* (Philadelphia, 2013), p. 1.
[69] A. Hunt and A. Whitelock, 'Introduction: 'Partners both in throne and grave'', in Idem ed., *Tudor Queenship: The Reigns of Mary and Elizabeth* (New York, 2010) pp. 1-10, there p. 1.

added to her portrayal as a 'successful masculine queen'. Crucially, both arguments stemmed from a narrative written by twentieth century scholars, which helped fashion Elizabeth's 'mythical' or iconic cult.[70] Thus, both explanations of Elizabeth's gendered representation are based on Elizabeth's cult rather than the queen herself. In addition, Haigh's argument that Elizabeth's 'feminine wiles' played a role during the French marriage politics is, according to Doran, a 'moot point' because characterising one's style of negotiating as either 'feminine' or 'masculine' is a too simplistic assumption of the queen's conduct in statecraft.[71] Moreover, a majority of these scholars focus on the construction of Elizabeth's various gendered images, but not so much on how these constructed images were perceived by Elizabethan contemporaries. Consequently, certain primary sources, in this case ambassadorial reports, are read and analysed in a different context causing a methodological issue. For instance, although Levin uses ambassadorial reports and points out that each dispatch reflects the individual opinion of the ambassador or a specific aspect that Elizabeth wants to emphasise, the author concludes 'but, pieced together, all these sources can help illuminate the issue of gender and rule in sixteenth century England'.[72] Thus, on the one hand, Levin acknowledges the individuality of each ambassador, yet, on the other hand, she chooses to overlook their personal views in order to gather collective perceptions of the queen. In sum, due to the revisionism of Elizabeth's gendered representation, it appears that a majority of studies has stressed the centrality of the queen's gender in such a way that it has been shaped by the inherited narrative of the twentieth century of the queen's cult rather than herself. In addition, by focusing on the construction of gendered images and not on the perception of Elizabeth's gender has caused scholars to overlook individual differences in primary sources, specifically ambassadorial dispatches.

Gendered remarks made by foreign ambassadors and English courtiers have helped shape the prominent position of gender in Elizabeth's historiography. For examples, in 1558 the Count of Feria observed that Elizabeth was 'a very strange sort of woman', and de Quadra, bishop of Aquila and Venosa, believed that Elizabeth was not 'a woman of brains or conscience'.[73] These remarks give a sense that gender was often mentioned by ambassadors. However, the diplomatic correspondence of Fénélon and Mauvissière demonstrates that

[70] A.F. Pollard, *The History of England from the Accession of Edward VI to the Death of Elizabeth (1547–1603)* (London, 1910), pp. 181-182; S. Doran and T. S. Freeman, 'Introduction', Idem ed., *The Myth of Elizabeth* (New York, 2003), pp. 1-23, there pp. 9-10.
[71] S. Doran, 'Elizabeth I: Gender, power & politics', *History Today*, 53:5 (2003), pp. 29-35, there p. 32.
[72] Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, p. 5.
[73] Count of Feria to Philip II, 14 December 1558, *CSP Spanish*, i, p. 12; de Quadra to Count of Feria, 29 October 1559, *CSP Spanish*, i, p. 108.

gender did not play a prominent role in their dispatches. For instance, both ambassadors did not write that Elizabeth was weak and unstable because of her gender. Additionally, common stereotypes, such as women gossip, are lustful or idle are not detected in Fénélon's and Mauvissière's correspondence.[74] Moreover, Fénélon describes receiving information from Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting as having 'gained intelligence', which demonstrates that Fénélon perceived information from the ladies as significant and not mere gossip.[75]

Yet, this does not mean that the reports of both ambassadors were gender neutral. On the contrary, Tudor England was a misogynistic society and as Anne McLaren argues, the Tudor political discourse was 'rarely free from gender-specific references', which also applies to the ambassadorial dispatches of Fénélon and Mauvissière.[76] For instance, Fénélon frequently referred to the queen's gender during the marriage negotiations when her gender was significant to the political context of the dispatch. In May 1571, Fénélon emphasised the gender of Elizabeth in a positive manner to enhance her likeability to the French royal family as marriage candidate for the duke of Anjou. The ambassador underlines her feminine virtue, wisdom and moderation.[77] Similarly, a few days before the outbreak of the Saint Bartholomew Day's Massacre, Fénélon reported the queen's 'great prudence, great virtue, wise counsel, and perfect good fortune' and he concluded '[that all her subjects were] always hoping that she would leave them a successor after her'.[78] Here, Fénélon is referring to Elizabeth's femininity and her masculinity as wisdom, prudence and moderation were masculine traits.[79] Thus, Fénélon was combining both masculine and feminine stereotypes to portray Elizabeth as queen and an authoritative ruler, during the marriage negotiations.

Similarly, Mauvissière employed Elizabeth's gender in his reports to add to the marriage negotiations. For instance, on 24 July 1581 Mauvissière remarked that 'since she [Elizabeth] is a princess who has no fault of speech, she has extended herself sufficiently to speak of this affair and of that marriage'.[80] Importantly, this was a difficult time during the marriage negotiations between Elizabeth and the duke of Anjou because, on the one hand, the

[74] Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, pp. 65-75.
[75] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 11 July 1571, *Fénélon*, iv, p. 173: 'et ay gaigné les intelligences des dames'.
[76] A. N. McLaren, *Political Culture in the Reign of Elizabeth I: Queen and Commonwealth 1558-1585*, (Cambridge, 1999), p. 3.
[77] Fénélon to Charles IX, 18 May 1571, *Fénélon*, iv, p.109.
[78] Fénélon to Charles IX, 20 Augustus 1572, *Fénélon*, v, p. 104: 'de grande prudence, et de grand vertu, et de sages conseilz, et d'un parfaictement bon heur […] en espérance toutesfoys qu'elle leur laysseroit ung successeur après elle'.
[79] A. Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood In Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003), p. 247.
[80] Mauvissière to Catherine de' Medici, 24 July 1581, *Mauvissière*, i, p. 693: 'comme elle est Princesse qui n'a pas faute de discours, elle s'est estendue assez amplement de parler de cette affaire & dudit marriage.'

marriage contract was signed by both parties, but, on the other hand, Elizabeth had the liberty to change her mind within six weeks, which was appealing because Elizabeth did not want to participate with Anjou's campaign against Spain in the Netherlands.[81] Despite the impending deadline of 22 August 1581, Elizabeth's refusal to send money or men and considering that she had made it clear to Mauvissière in July 1581 that she was leaning more towards maintaining a strong Anglo-French alliance than ratifying the marriage between herself and the duke of Anjou, Mauvissière portrays her in a positive light in his report to the queen mother.[82] More specifically, he praises her ability to speak publicly, which was a masculine trait. Thus, similar to Fénélon, Mauvissière combined masculine and feminine stereotypes to portray Elizabeth in his reports. Moreover, Mauvissière demonstrated that, although, the political situation was not favourable for France, the ambassador did not blame Elizabeth's gender through negative gendered remarks, but portrayed her gender positively to add to the marriage negotiations.

However, Mauvissière was not always as diplomatic. For instance, in 1584 Mauvissière described Elizabeth as 'dubious and ambiguous and full of artifice' in a letter addressed to Mary, queen of Scots.[83] 'Artifice' or cunning behaviour is a characteristically feminine vice as it demonstrated that women were incapable of holding true wisdom.[84] In this instance, Mauvissière reminds the modern reader of misogyny in early modern England and illustrates that he is more opinionated and expressive in his dispatches than Fénélon. Although, Fénélon is more diplomatic than his colleague, he will express his disapproval when Elizabeth exhibits stereotypical female behaviour. For instance, Fénélon did not mask his opinion in 1570 when he reported to Charles IX that Elizabeth 'did not hide the grief which she felt, which in my opinion rendered her less well disposed to us in this first audience'.[85] During this particular audience, Fénélon accompanied Monsieur de Montlouet and tried to obtain permission for Montlouet to visit Mary, queen of Scots. However, Elizabeth did not maintain a calm composure and appeared rushed and unfocused by initially cutting the ambassador off and eventually shedding tears when she recounted the assassination on the Earl of Moray. Another tearful instance was in November 1569, during the northern uprising, when Fénélon reported to the queen mother that 'it is said that the queen of England bears a great pain in her

[81] S. Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony* (London and New York, 1996), p. 184-186.
[82] Ibid., p. 184.
[83] 20 May 1584, p. 597.
[84] Mendelson and Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England*, p. 64.
[85] Fénélon to Charles IX, 2 February 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 39: 'Duquel coup la dicte Dame n'a peu dissimuler le regrect qu'elle y avoit, ce qui la nous a (sellon mon adviz) randue moins bien disposée en ceste première audience.'

heart about the uprising of the north, saying with tears that she never deserved this from her subjects'.[86]

According to Bernard Capp, expressing one's emotions, such as crying, was perceived as problematic in early modern England and not in line with society's cultural values, namely emotional self-control.[87] Crucially, Capp demonstrates that this disapproval of tears was not absolute in all contexts or various strata of society. For instance, crying in a religious context was approved and could be a 'powerful weapon in national as well as private contexts'.[88] Therefore, Paranque argues that Elizabeth's public tears after the Saint Bartholomew Day's Massacre was a symbol of her kingly strength and not a weakness of her sex because the queen demonstrated her humanity as well as her religious right to rule over subjects, who were troubled by the massacre.[89] In addition, grieving was universally accepted. However, Capp explains that moderation was expected of the highest societal classes. Therefore, monarchs would 'confine grief to their private chamber'.[90] In this sense, Elizabeth expressed disapproving, feminine behaviour when she grieved publicly over the Earl of Moray. Similarly, Elizabeth's tears over the northern uprising would have also been met with disapproval. Capp argues that 'tears triggered by self-pity or fear also suggested feminine weakness and attracted more general contempt.'[91] In other words, approval or disapproval of public crying depended on the social context and the societal class, wherein one resided. Thus, on the one hand, Paranque demonstrates that in specific contexts Elizabeth's feminine behaviour was presented as positive. Yet, on the other hand, Fénélon's references to Elizabeth's tears when she grieved over the death of the Earl of Moray and the northern uprising were perceived as a mark of her feminine behaviour.

Aside from shedding tears, Fénélon's secretary Vassal described another instance of Elizabeth stereotypical feminine behaviour. In 1569 Fénélon includes Vassal's report to the French royal dispatch as it describes the deliberation on the verdict of the duke of Norfolk because of his role in the northern uprising. Vassal reports:

[86] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 30 November 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 371: 'L'on dict que la Royne d'Angleterre porte ung merveilleux ennuy dans son cueur de ceste eslévation 371 du North, disant avecques larmes qu'elle n'a rien moins mérité que cella de ses subjectz.'
[87] B. Capp, ''Jesus wept' but did the Englishman? Masculinity and emotion in early modern England', *Past and Present*, 224 (2014), pp. 75-108, there p. 75.
[88] Ibid., 97.
[89] Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, pp. 102-103.
[90] Capp, ''Jesus wept' but did the Englishman?', p. 89.
[91] Ibid., p. 83.

> When one of the commissioners ventured to say to the queen that according to the laws of the country they did not find him [Norfolk] guilty of anything, "Go", she said, "what the laws cannot do, my authority can do". She became so angry that she fainted, and someone ran for vinegar and other remedies to revive her.[92]

Here, in a moment of monarchical authority Elizabeth's body had a moment of weakness, which in early modern eyes would have affirmed the weakness of her sex. This occurrence is exemplary for the tension Elizabeth would have encountered as a female ruler. Furthermore, although, Fénélon did not mention Elizabeth's fainting in the principal letters to the French king or queen mother, it is referred to in his memoire, which would have been included in the ambassadorial dispatch. Therefore, Fénélon viewed Elizabeth's expression of her gender as significant to report to the French royal family. Moreover, taking into account the references of the queen's tearful outbreaks, which were at sometimes perceived as a political tool and other times as a weakness, testifies that Fénélon viewed it as disapproving feminine behaviour. Thus, although ambassadorial reports were rarely gender neutral, Elizabeth's gender was not prominent in Fénélon and Mauvissière's diplomatic dispatches, yet it was employed by the ambassadors as a political tool to influence the marriage negotiations. Crucially, when Elizabeth exhibited stereotypical feminine behaviour, such as crying and fainting, this was viewed by Fénélon as feeble and the ambassador represented her as such in his reports. In this sense, Elizabeth's feminine behaviour ensured that the French royal family viewed her as a weak ruler.

Another form of gender portrayals in ambassadorial dispatches are citations by Elizabeth, where she refers to her own gender. Elizabeth would use both masculine and feminine gendered remarks, which has been argued by Levin through the body politic. As Elizabeth' authority was masculine and her gender feminine, it enabled her to present herself as both king and queen.[93] Additionally, Elizabeth would at sometimes refer to herself as a simple woman, which Haigh argues would 'prompt others to praise her' and thus enhanced the queen's image as a remarkable woman.[94] While, Elizabeth's own usage of gendered representations has been explored by Levin, Haigh and others, it is significant that both

[92] Fénélon's memoire, 28 October 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 302: 'mesmes, ainsy que l'ung d'eulx [commissaires] s'advança de dire que sellon les loix du pays ils ne le trouvoient coulpable de rien:—'Allez, dict elle, ce que les loix ne pourront sur sa teste, mon authorité le pourra.'—Et entra en si grand collère qu'elle esvanouyt, et courut l'on au vinaigre et aultres remèdes pour la faire revenir.'
[93] Levin, *The Heart and Stomach of a King*, pp. 121-148.
[94] Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 94.

ambassadors regard it important to cite the queen when she refers to her gender. For instance, in 1570 Fénélon reported to the French king:

> 'after the discussion of his requests [Monsieur de Poigny] she [Elizabeth] replied that 'although they say that women always have an answer ready, that is not her custom here, and she will take time to consider the matter, to give us greater satisfaction''.[95]

Likewise, in July 1584 Mauvissière reports on Elizabeth's grief after the death of the duke of Anjou. He writes that 'the Queen all the time appeared to be full of tears and regrets, telling me that she was like a widow woman who had lost her husband'.[96] Both instances were significant enough for the ambassadors to report to the French royal family because they demonstrated Elizabeth's manner of conducting politics. For instance, Elizabeth explicitly disassociates herself from ordinary women, which emphasised her remarkable position as queen regnant, and she simultaneously created a justified argument to gain additional time to make her decision. Moreover, Elizabeth's public portrayal of grief would have been disapproved by her contemporaries. However, due to the long marriage negotiations with the duke of Anjou, Elizabeth presented herself as Anjou's widow by public weeping, which was a political tool to strengthen the Anglo-French alliance. After the death of Anjou, Elizabeth went into mourning by wearing dark clothes and the French ambassador was frequently asked to visit her.[97] Thus, if Elizabeth had not demonstrated her grief in public, but behaved in a masculine manner by crying in private, the queen would not have been able to utilise her gender as a political tool.

On the other hand, it can be argued that Elizabeth was not performing womanly behaviour, but displaying real emotions as Mauvissière reports on 16 July 1584 that 'the queen of England received with such a show of regret that it is a thing difficult to believe by those who have not seen it'.[98] However, two weeks later when Mauvissière is referring to Elizabeth's grief, he writes that Elizabeth 'is a princess who knows how to compose herself and transform herself as it pleases her'.[99] In this sense, Mauvissière recognises Elizabeth's

[95] Fénélon to Charles IX, 9 July 1570, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 236: 'encores qu'on dye que les femmes ont toutjours des responces et deffaictes toutes prestes, qu'elle n'en usera en cest endroict, ains prendra temps pour bien consulter l'affère, affin de nous donner, par après, plus grande satisfaction.'
[96] Mauvissière to Henry III, 28 July 1584, *MSCM*, p. 313: 'la dicte dame estant touzjours en aparence pleine de larmes et de regretz, me disant qu'elle estoict comme une femme veufve, qui avoict perdu son mary'.
[97] Mauvissière to Henry III, 18 September 1584, *MSCM*, p. 328.
[98] Mauvissière to Henry III, 16 July 1584, *MSCM*, p. 304: 'la royne d'Angleterre l'a receue avec une telle demonstration de regret, que c'est choze mal aizée à croire à qui ne l'auroit veu.'
[99] Mauvissière to Henry III, 28 July 1584, *MSCM*, p. 313: 'qu'elle est princesse qui se peult et sçait composer et transformer comme il luy plaist.'

performance of her femininity. In sum, where Levin has demonstrated Elizabeth's usage of gendered representation, it appears from the diplomatic correspondence of Fénélon and Mauvissière that Elizabeth also used her gender as a diplomatic tool in conducting politics. More importantly, it illustrates that Mauvissière was aware that Elizabeth employed her gender as a political tool.

Thus, the diplomatic correspondence of Fénélon and Mauvissière demonstrate a dual argument. On the one hand, there is a lack of gendered comments in the ambassadorial dispatches, which signifies that gender was not prominent for the ambassadors. However, their reports were not gender neutral and there is an interplay present between positive and negative gendered remarks. The perception of these remarks depended on the social context, which was illustrated by the various interpretations of public weeping and fainting. Additionally, both ambassadors recognised Elizabeth's usage of her gender. The queen would sometimes challenge gender norms to signify her superiority as a remarkable woman and as another strategy Elizabeth would conform to them. This performativity of her gender did not pass the ambassadors and they were keenly aware of this political tool. Therefore, they would report to the French royal family of Elizabeth's gendered strategies to demonstrate the queen's conduct of statecraft.

Chapter Four: Elizabeth as a ruler

Susceptible queen or a skilful politician? Levin argued that many contemporaries viewed Elizabeth as indecisive and Haigh specified that councillors and ambassadors were driven 'to distraction by her caution and indecision.'[100] However, both Fénélon and Mauvissière do not describe Elizabeth as an indecisive ruler. Rather, Fénélon acknowledges her tendency to delay political decisions, but recognises that Elizabeth employs it as a political tool. For instance, in 1560 Fénélon lets his secretary Vassal, report that Elizabeth would likely not marry the king of Spain, but negotiate the marriage 'only to amuse the world and to save time'.[101] The reference to 'saving time' is later explained as to stop her subjects from urging the queen to name a successor to the English crown.[102] In addition, in the aftermath of the Northern Rebellion, Fénélon reports to the queen mother that Elizabeth 'after having said yes, delayed her deliberation', which referred to her decision to hold Lord Hunsdon at court and not send him immediately to the supress upheavals in the north.[103] Both examples illustrate that Fénélon was displeased with Elizabeth's manner of governing, but it is not evident if Fénélon viewed the queen's delay as a consequence of her indecision. After all, delaying a decision is not conclusive evidence for one's indecisiveness.

While, Fénélon merely described his annoyance towards Elizabeth's procrastination in his reports, Mauvissière confronted the queen with it. In 1580, when Elizabeth apologised for her delays in the marriage negotiations, Mauvissière bluntly replied to her that it was 'her fault […] and that the time she has wasted will never be recovered.'[104] Moreover, Mauvissière was not only displeased with Elizabeth's procrastination, but also felt that she was deceiving him. The ambassador underlined his distrust of the queen in reports and told Edward Stafford that 'she [Elizabeth] does not deceive him, for he trusts nothing that she says till he sees it done'.[105] In other words, Fénélon's annoyance and Mauvissière's distrust demonstrate that they did not view Elizabeth as an indecisive ruler, rather a queen who used procrastination as a political tool in decision-making.

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[100] C. Levin, *The reign of Elizabeth I* (New York, 2002), p. 1; Haigh, *Elizabeth I*, p. 73.
[101] Fénélon's memoire, 27 July 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 117: 'car ce n'estoit que pour amuser le monde et gaigner le temps.'
[102] Ibid., p. 120.
[103] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 2 June 1571, *Fénélon*, iv, p. 122: 'la dicte Dame, après m'avoir ouy, a retardé sa deliberation.'
[104] Mauvissière to Henry III, 21 March 1580, trans. Paranque, *Elizabeth I of England through Valois eyes*, p. 153: 'sa faulte […] elle perdoit le temps qui luy estoit.'
[105] Mauvissière to Henry III, 29 July 1579, *RPFEE*, iii, p. 55; Edward Stafford to Lord Burghely, 24 August 1580, A. John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign: Elizabeth, 1579-1580* (London, 1904), xiv, p. 397.

Another mentioned reason for Elizabeth's delay of decision-making is the absence of her councillors. This argument has been frequently attested by Fénélon and argued by the queen herself to prolong the outcome of a decision. For instance, during summer progressions the queen was 'not accustomed willingly to speak of any matters of business, because her Councillors are not with her', or in 1574 Elizabeth explained to Fénélon that she needed more time because a few of her councillors were absent and others were sick.[106] While, it is possible that Elizabeth used the absence of her councillors as an excuse to gain more time, as a consequence Fénélon interpreted the queen's delay as a demonstration of her reliance on the council.

However, the importance of the council is not only present in the queen's procrastination of decision-making. Throughout Fénélon's diplomatic letters numerous examples are found of the influence of councillors and courtiers over Elizabeth. For example, in 1571 the ambassador argued that four lords influenced the decision of the council and Elizabeth.[107] Although, Fénélon does not identify these four, he is most likely referring to Leicester, Burghley, Walsingham and Bacon and concludes that these four are in the position to influence the queen about the marriage negotiation with the duke of Anjou. He continues his assessment of their influence to Catherine de' Medici by narrating their standpoints on the marriage to the duke. From there, it is concluded that Leicester and Bacon are supportive of the French marriage, but Burghley and Walsingham are against it. Thus, in Fénélon's view the opinions of these four lords are influential to the extent to persuade Elizabeth's decision and in that sense Elizabeth is presented as a queen who is susceptible to the opinions of influential courtiers.

The influence of several councillors is also demonstrated by the fact that both Fénélon and Mauvissière meet them to gain their support. Gellard explains that it was common for foreign ambassadors to meet courtiers whenever they visited the palace. [108] This is demonstrated by Mauvissière, who in 1584 Mauvissière explains to the French king that: 'I meet those of her [Elizabeth's] council as much as I can, and we have seen each other very privately for four or five months'.[109] In addition, Fénélon reported to Charles IX in 1572 that

[106] Fénélon to Charles IX, 23 September 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 243: 'où elle n'a de coustume d'ouyr volontiers parler d'aulcune matière d'affaires, par ce que ceulx de son conseil ne sont avecques elle'; Fénélon to Charles IX, 5 January 1574, *Fénélon,* vi, p. 2.
[107] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 6 February 1571, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 459-460.
[108] Gellard, *Une reine épistolaire*, pp. 377.
[109] Mauvissière to Henry III, 22 October 1584, *MSCM*, p. 341: 'Je entretiens ceux de son conseil le plus que je peux, et nous sommes veus fort privément depuis quatre ou cinq mois.'

Leicester and Burghley promised the ambassador 'to use their power' to influence Elizabeth's opinion in the marriage negotiation.[110] Moreover, in 1577 Mauvissière explained that he preferred to speak with Leicester 'to get more easily what I asked and I found him talking to me freely and affectionately in what he could do'.[111] The examples illustrate the efforts of the ambassadors to align themselves with influential councillors or courtiers and it testifies the extent of influence Fénélon and Mauvissière perceived certain courtiers to possess to persuade Elizabeth.

Crucially, Fénélon and Mauvissière were distrustful towards Elizabeth's councillors and believed that they were providing her with bad counsel. Aside from the marriage negotiations, in 1569 Fénélon frequently warned the French royal family of the instigation of the council to persuade the queen to go to war to aid the Huguenots.[112] Additionally, in 1569 and 1579 both Fénélon and Mauvissière were under the impression that several councillors were responsible for the ill-treatment of Mary Stuart and not Elizabeth.[113] Moreover, Fénélon went as far to plot the murder of Burghley in December 1568, who was gaining too much power at court according to the ambassador.[114] All these examples, illustrate that both ambassadors disagreed with the advice the council gave Elizabeth and demonstrated that they were under the impression that Elizabeth was easily persuaded by her council. However, Fénélon and Mauvissière did not perceived her to be a puppet of her councillors. Both ambassadors were aware that Elizabeth had the final say and that the queen was feared by her subjects. For instance, in 1571 Fénélon described Elizabeth's authority through the eyes of her English subjects:

> at her court we can only see a good order, and she was there very well honoured and attentive to her affairs, and the greatest of her realm and all her subjects feared and revered her, and she commands them and over them with full authority.[115]

[110] Fénélon to Charles IX, 22 June 1572, *Fénélon*, iv, p. 20: 'promis de s'y emploier de leur pouvoir'.
[111] Mauvissière to Henry III, 25 November 1577, *RPFEE*, iii, p. 19: 'pour obtenir plus facilement ce que je demandois, où je l'ay trouvé me parlant librement et affectionné en ce qu'il pouvoit faire.'
[112] Fénélon to Charles IX, 11 July 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 85; Fénélon to Charles IX, 6 April 1569, *Fénélon*, i, p. 295.
[113] Fénélon to Charles IX, 3 October 1569, *Fénélon*, ii, p. 257; Mauvissière to Henry III, 26 July 1579, *RPFEE*, iii, p. 52.
[114] Fénélon secret letter, 28 December 1568, *Fénélon*, i p. 72.
[115] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 6 March 1571, trans. Paranque, 'Queen Elizabeth I and the Elizabethan Court in the French Ambassador's Eyes', p. 277: 'de tant qu'en sa court l'on ne voyt que ung bon ordre, et elle y estre bien fort honnorée et ententive en ses affaires, et que les plus grandz de son royaulme et toutz ses subjectz la craignent et révèrent, et elle ordonne d'eulx et sureutx avec pleyne authorité.'

Similarly, in 1584 Mauvissière wrote to Mary Stuart that Elizabeth 'has all the strengths of this kingdom' and 'that the said queen of England has done all that she wanted'.[116] Furthermore, Fénélon reported to the French royal family that her councillors feared her as she 'had their lives and heads in her hands' and, therefore, they 'would not dare to do anything contrary to what the queen wanted'.[117] In 1584 Mauvissière illustrated that the influential Leicester was also careful not to overstep the boundaries of his position because Elizabeth would be quick to put him in his place.[118] Thus, although several councillors held influential positions, their influence was not constant and, more importantly, it was subject to Elizabeth's authority.

It is not without reason that Fénélon and Mauvissière alternated between portrayals of a queen susceptible to her influential councillors or councillors living in fear under the authority of Elizabeth. The instances when Fénélon and Mauvissière demonstrated the influence of the councillors, were issues of importance to the ambassadors as well as the French crown. For example, in April 1569 Fénélon was quite clear that Elizabeth did not want war, but mentions twice that if the queen was provoked she would start a war.[119] Additionally, the ambassador concludes that this 'act cannot be excused on the pirates as the own ships of the said queen are used'.[120] In the same letter, Fénélon emphasised that the queen is easily persuaded by her council by wishing 'to obey, as much as possible, to her council'.[121] In this sense, Fénélon warned the French king that Elizabeth was persuaded by her councillors to aid the Huguenots, while giving the reader the sense that the queen was involved in the decision to send ships to France. It is clear that Fénélon was not certain if it was Elizabeth's opinion or that she was influence by her councillors. After all, Elizabeth claimed that she had no intention to facilitate religious opposition in France. Furthermore, it was the ambassador's task is to send accurate information to the French royal family. Thus, in order to refrain the spread of misinformation, Fénélon presented an ambiguous portrayal of Elizabeth as an authoritative queen surrounded by persuasive councillors to the French royal family.

[116] Mauvissière to Mary, queen of Scots, 20 May 1584, *Mauvissière*, i, p. 596: 'car elle a toutes les forces de ce Royaume prestes [...] que ladite Royne d'Angleterre y a faict tout ce qu'elle a voulu'.
[117] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 18 January 1571, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 440: 'comme ayant leursvies et leurs testes en sa main et qu'ilz n'auseroient faire que ce qu'elle vouldroit'.
[118] Mauvissière to Henry III, 16 July 1584, *MSCM*, p. 309.
[119] Fénélon to Charles IX, 6 April 1569, *Fénélon*, i, p. 294.
[120] Ibid., p. 296: 'car ce dernier faict ne se peult excuser sur les pirates, estantz les propres navyres de la dicte Dame qui l'ont exécuté.'
[121] Ibid. 'qu'elle veuille obtempérer, autant qu'il est possible, à ceulx de son conseil.'

In other words, it appears that both ambassadors viewed Elizabeth as a queen with authority. Although she is surrounded by councillors, who try to manipulate and persuade her, Elizabeth eventually had the final say in the decision-making process. Moreover, Elizabeth's procrastination has been perceived as an indicative of her indecision. However, Fénélon and Mauvissière do not describe her as indecisive or wilful, rather they perceive the queen's delay as a political tool. In this sense, Elizabeth was represented as an authoritative queen regnant, which would effectively have led to the French royal family perceiving her as an equal royal figure.

In addition to the French ambassadors' perceptions on Elizabeth's rule and their views on the influence of the council, Fénélon also recounted meetings with Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting. This is contrary to Mauvissière, who did not mention ladies-in-waiting or other court ladies once. These women, who stand in great proximity to the monarch, have recently been researched by scholars for their role in politics and their influence. Scholars, such as Nadine Akkerman and Brigitte Houben have argued that ladies-in-waiting worked as intermediates in an early modern political system of patronage.[122] These ladies gave advice on gift-giving, passed along messages and had inside knowledge on the queen.[123] This is demonstrated in the correspondence of Fénélon. For instance, at various moments Fénélon described receiving information, secret advice or letters from several ladies at court.[124] Additionally, Fénélon recognised and reported to the French royal family that several ladies-in-waiting were associated and worked with certain councillors. For instance in 1570, after various marriages had taken place in Europe, Elizabeth complained that none of her councillors had mentioned a marriage candidate for her. She continued that if the Earl of Sussex was present, he would have mentioned the Archduke Charles and Fénélon concludes that 'one of the ladies told this to the earl of Leicester'.[125] Another example was in 1572 when lady Sidney arrived at court to speak with the queen and Fénélon argued that 'she is devoted to Spain, and is closer to the Earl of Leicester than his other sister.'[126] These examples illustrate that Fénélon was aware of the influence of court ladies and viewed them as playing a part in court politics. Moreover, the

[122] N. Akkerman and B. Houben ed., *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-Waiting across Early Modern Europe* (Leiden, 2014), p. 1-27.
[123] Ibid., p. 3.
[124] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 22 June 1572, *Fénélon*, v, p. 24; Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 2 June 1572, *Fénélon*, iv, p. 213; Fénélon to Charles IX, 29 November 1572, *Fénélon*, v, p. 213.
[125] Fénélon's memoire, 6 February 1571, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 466.
[126] Fénélon to Catherine de' Medici, 10 July 1572, *Fénélon*, v, p. 46: 'avec elle qui, pour estre dévote à l'Espaigne, et plus intime avec le comte de Lestre que nulle aultre seur qu'il ait,'

ambassador thought it was significant to report the alliances and standpoints of these court ladies to the French royal family.

Crucially, Fénélon reported that Elizabeth allowed certain ladies-in-waiting to voice political opinions publicly or spread to others. For instance, in February 1571 the ambassador recounts that Elizabeth had asked the opinion of Lady Clinton and Lady Cobham on the marriage to the duke of Anjou. Fénélon explained that the two ladies were the 'two most loyal and in whom she confided most of any ladies in the world' and continued by quoting the opinions of both ladies.[127] However in May 1571, Fénélon tried to gain information from countess Lenox, but she replied that:

> 'she [Elizabeth] did not use much confidence with her ladies on this subject, reserving it entirely between herself, the earl of Leicester, and my lord Burghley; so, if I [Fénélon] required more light on the matter, I must obtain it from one of the two.'[128]

Here, Fénélon demonstrated that at sometimes Elizabeth would use her court ladies in political situations, but at other times the queen would not include them. This is similar to the position several councillors held, which was at sometimes influential, yet unstable. In other words, Fénélon viewed the ladies-in-waiting or court ladies as valuable because of their close position to queen and their information. Thus, regardless of their gender, Fénélon would take their advice and listened to them. On the contrary, it appeared that Mauvissière did not perceive the court ladies as valuable as their presence is not attested in his correspondence. Therefore, the French ambassadors' view on the role of ladies-in-waiting at the English court differed per ambassador.

All in all, unlike Fénélon's and Mauvissière's English counterparts, the French ambassadors did not perceived the English queen as indecisive, but recognised it as Elizabeth's tool to handle political situations. Furthermore, the ambassadors portrayed the influence of the members of the council and the role of several court ladies ambiguously. The influence of councillors and the importance of court ladies depended on the political context and on the ambassador himself. Nevertheless, it can be concluded that Elizabeth was surrounded by manipulative councillors, but she made the final decision and in that sense was perceived by both ambassadors and French royal family as an authoritative royal.

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[127] Fénélon memoire, 6 February 1571, *Fénélon*, iii, p. 468: 'comme les deux plus loyales, et où elle se fyoit plus qu'en dames de ce monde'.
[128] Fénélon to Catherine, 2 May 1571, *Fénélon*, iv, p. 81: 'qu'elle ne communiquoit plus ce propos aulx femmes, et sembloit qu'elle l'eust entièrement réservé entre elle et le comte de Lestre et milord Burlay; dont m'estoit besoing, pour en avoir plus de lumyère, d'en accointer l'ung des deux.'

Conclusion

This thesis first started out to examine Elizabeth's gender in the correspondences of Fénélon and Mauvissière. Initially, being very subjective, I assumed to find countless accounts of sexist remarks from the ambassadors. Yet, my research was positively disappointing. Rather than finding provocative negative stereotypes, I was welcomed with plain accounts of political issues and to a certain extent diplomatic subtlety. In this sense, instead of researching Fénélon and Mauvissière's biases, I was confronted with my own. For instance, the historiography of Elizabeth's gender is so overwhelming that one immediately thinks that gender is prevalent in all early modern writing. The correspondence of Fénélon and Mauvissière show otherwise. In their letters, it is evident that gender was not prominent, but it was present and often used depended on the political context. Furthermore, Elizabeth's own usage of her gender was recognised by both ambassadors and identified by Mauvissière as a performance of her femininity. In this sense, the French ambassadors were well aware of Elizabeth's usage of masculine and feminine stereotypes and this was also represented to the French royal family. Crucially, Elizabeth's gender was not prominent, but whenever the queen displayed stereotypical womanly behaviour, this was perceived as her weakness and found disapproval among the French ambassadors.

Furthermore, Fénélon and Mauvissière had different views on Elizabeth's rule. For instance, both ambassadors recognised Elizabeth's procrastination as a political tool. Additionally, they were aware of the influence of Elizabeth's members, but knew that the queen held the final say in political decisions. Lastly, while Fénélon acknowledged the significance of Elizabeth's ladies-in-waiting, Mauvissière did not mention the ladies once, which illustrates the difference between the ambassadors.

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