



# The Unity of the Roses: A Study of the Impact and Depictions of the Marriage of Elizabeth of York and Henry VII 1485-1547



ANA LORENZA R. COLAGROSSI  
COLLEGE 21'

ADVISOR: DR. MARGO TODD (HIST DEP)  
COLLEGE ALUMNI SOCIETY

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## Research Questions:

HOW DID THE MARRIAGE OF HENRY VII AND ELIZABETH OF YORK PROVIDE STABILITY TO THE EARLY TUDOR REIGN?  
HOW WAS THE MARRIAGE DEPICTED, BOTH BY THE MONARCHS AND THE NOBLES, THROUGHOUT BOTH THE REIGNS OF HENRY VII AND HENRY VIII?

## Methodology

DUE TO COVID-19 I WAS UNABLE TO TRAVEL TO THE UNITED KINGDOM TO DO IN PERSON RESEARCH AT THE ARCHIVES. IN ADDITION, MOST OF THE ARCHIVES HAVE NOT FULLY REOPENED SO I WAS UNABLE TO OBTAIN AS MANY SCANS OF DOCUMENTS AS I HAD HOPED. MY RESEARCH HAS CONSISTED OF MOSTLY ONLINE RESEARCH. I HAVE MADE GREAT USE OF THE PRIMARY SOURCE BIBLIOGRAPHY IN THE BACK OF MY SECONDARY TEXTS. WHILE MOST WERE NOT AVAILABLE ONLINE THEY WERE STILL HELPED DIRECT MY RESEARCH. I WORKED WITH AN LIBRARIAN AT THE RYLANDS SPECIAL COLLECTION LOCATED IN MANCHESTER WHO WAS ABLE TO GET THE DE LA POOL SCROLL UPLOADED ONLINE FOR PUBLIC USE. I ALSO WORKED CLOSELY WITH VISUAL RECORDS SUCH AS STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS AND PORTRAITS WHICH WERE CLEAR EXAMPLES OF THE PROPAGANDA OF THE TIME. I AM VERY PLEASED THAT MY SUMMER RESEARCH HAS PROVIDED ME WITH AMPLE EVIDENCE TO WRITE MY FIRST FEW. AS ARCHIVES CONTINUE TO OPEN I HOPE I WILL BE ABLE TO GET MY HANDS ON MORE PRIMARY SOURCES!

## Introduction

THIS CHAPTER WILL LAY OUT THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND INTRODUCE THE ENGLAND THAT HENRY CONQUERED AT BOSWORTH ALONG WITH ITS KEY PLAYERS.

### Chapter 1: The Glue That Held England Together

THIS CHAPTER WILL DISCUSS THE SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPORTANCE OF HENRY'S AND ELIZABETH'S MARRIAGE DURING THE EARLY YEARS OF HIS REIGN. IT WILL HIGHLIGHT THE IMPORTANCE OF ELIZABETH'S BOND WITH THE PEOPLE AND KNOWLEDGE OF CUSTOMS IN CONTRAST WITH THAT OF HER HUSBAND WHO SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE BEFORE HE WAS KINGN ABROAD.

### Chapter 2: Meet the Tudors

THIS CHAPTER WILL ANALYZE THE CONSCIOUS POLITICAL IDENTITY KING HENRY VII CREATED. HE MADE AN EFFORT TO GLORIFY HIS WIFE'S LINEAGE AND HER ROYAL ROOTS THROUGH IMAGERY AND RELATIONS WITHH THE NOBLES BUT HE ALSO WANTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE WAS KING IN HIS OWN RIGHT AND THROUGH HIS LANCASTRIAN FAMILY. THE YOUNG MONARCH WORKED HARD TO CREATE A SPECIFIC IMAGE FOR HIS NEW DYNASTY THAT EMBODIED THE UNION OF THE RED AND WHITE ROSES.

### Chapter 3: The Nobility and Their New King

THIS CHAPTER WILL SHED LIGHT ON HIS THE NOBILITY VIEWED THEIR NEW KING. HENRY INHERITED A COUNTRY WHICH HAD BEEN DEVASTATED BY CIVIL WAR. THE DECADES-LONG CONFLICT HAD IMPACTED THOSE CLOSE TO THE CROWN THE MOST: THE NOBILITY. WHILE HENRY PROMISED TO PARDON ALL YORK SYMPATHIZERS WHO SWEARED THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM, THEIR WRITTEN RECORDS AND VISUAL DEPICTIONS DEMONSTRATED THEIR TRUE FEELINGS TOWARDS THEIR NEW KING. MOST IMPORTANTLY THEY SHOW HOW, DESPITE HIS EFFORT TO CREATE A DELIBERATE IDENTITY, MANY NOBLES VIEWED HIM DIFFERENTLY.

### Chapter 4: The Usurper's Son

THIS CHAPTER WILL FOCUS ON HOW HENRY VIII PORTRAYED HIS PARENT'S MARRIAGE IN CONTRAST TO THAT OF HIS FATHER. UNLIKE HENRY VII, HENRY VIII INHERITED THE THRONE AND DID NOT HAVE TO JUSTIFY HIS CLAIM. HE, INSTEAD, CHOSE TO GLORIFY HIS MOTHER'S SIDE OF THE FAMILY AND EMBRACED HIS DESCENDANCY FROM MORE LEGITIMATE KINGS.

## Epilouge

THIS SMALL FINAL SECTION WILL LOOK INTO ELIZABETH I, DAUGHTER OF HENRY VIII, AND HOW SHE CONTINUED THE LEGACY OF CREATING A DELIBERATE POLITICAL IDENTITY FOR THE TUDOR LINE.

## Hypothesis

I HYPOTHEZIZE THAT, DESPITE NOT BEING ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH POLITICS, ELIZABETH WAS MORE THAN A YORK SYMBOL. HER OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NOBLES AS WELL AS THE COMMON PEOPLE SERVED AS A MAJOR ASSET TO HER HUSBAND, ESPECIALLY DURING THE EARLY TURBULENT YEARS OF HIS REIGN. HENRY HAD LIVED MOST OF HIS LIFE IN FRANCE WHILE ELIZABETH HAD BEEN IN ENGLAND ALL HER LIFE. HER DEEP CONNECTION WITH THE PEOPLE AND KNOWLEDGE OF ENGLISH COURT AND CULTURE PROVIDED MUCH NEEDED STABILITY. THE SECOND QUESTION HAS TWO PARTS. FIRST, I HYPOTHEZIZE THAT THE NOBLES DEPICTED THE MONARCHS, ESPECIALLY HENRY VII VERY DIFFERENTLY. EACH HAD THEIR OWN POLITICAL MOTIVATIONS AND PORTRAYED THE MONARCHS AND MARRIAGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE HOUSE THEY WERE LOYAL TO AND THE POLITICAL AIMS THEY HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH. AS FOR THE SECOND PART OF THE QUESTION, THE TWO MONARCHS PORTRAYED THE HISTORIC MARRIAGE VERY DIFFERENTLY SINCE THEY WERE IN DISTINCT SITUATIONS. HENRY VII WANTED TO EMPHASIZE THAT HE WAS KING IN HIS OWN RIGHT AND NOT THROUGH HIS MARRIAGE TO ELIZABETH BUT AT THE SAME TIME WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THEIR UNION HAD ENDED THE DECADES LONG CIVIL WAR. HE, THEREFORE, HAD TO FIND A BALANCE BETWEEN CELEBRATING HIS WIFE'S LINEAGE BUT ALSO HIGHLIGHTING HIS "ANCIENT" ANCESTRY AND LANCASTRIAN HERITAGE (HOWEVER DUBIOUS IT WAS). HENRY VIII ON THE OTHER HAND INHERITED THE THRONE RATHER THAN TAKING IT BY FORCE LIKE HIS FATHER AND, AS A RESULT, DIDN'T NEED TO JUSTIFY HIS CLAIM. HE, INSTEAD, CHOSE TO CELEBRATE HIS MOTHER'S YORK FAMILY SIGNIFICANTLY MORE THAN THAT OF HIS USURPER FATHER.



THE FAMILY OF HENRY VII WITH ST GEORGE AND THE DRAGON C. 1503-90 OIL ON PANEL | 145.6 X 142.6 CM (SUPPORT, CANVAS/PANEL/STR EXTERNAL) | RCIN 401228  
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