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Elizabeth I: The Career Woman  

My thesis looks at the three major courtships of Queen Elizabeth I of England (b. 1533- d. 1603). It starts with her relationship with Robert Dudley in the early 1560s, analyzes her courtship with Archduke Charles of Austria from 1562 until 1567 and looks at the marriage negotiations with France’s Duke of Anjou from 1572 to 1581. I will show that with the exception of Dudley, her courtships with the Archduke Charles and the duke of Anjou were driven by politics. It was also politics that prevented her from marrying Dudley, Charles and Anjou. Her subjects and many members of her government would have never allowed her to marry one of her Catholic suitors or Dudley, who was not necessarily the most popular nobleman. Despite her rhetoric in Parliamentary addresses regarding her wish to die a virgin or any personal feelings she may have had towards each suitor, she could not have married any of them even if she truly wanted to because of the opinion of her subjects, the religious differences and the political consequences marriage could bring to England. I will use primary sources that include major Parliamentary addresses regarding marriage and strong secondary sources to support my thesis. Because Elizabeth did not marry due to the opinions of her subjects and her wish to retain power as queen, she can be seen as one of the first career women. Of course there were other women living during her time that worked to provide for themselves or their family, but Elizabeth’s decision to do this was monumental because of her position of power.

Sources Include:


