

Princess Mary Tudor as Godmother and Benefactor of Midwives and Wetnurses

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Outline

Introduction

Sources

Princess Mary as Godmother: the Liturgy of Baptism

Princess Mary as Godmother: Narrative Descriptions

 Baptism of Prince Edward

 Baptism of Harry Wriothesley

Princess Mary as Godmother: Financial Records

 At the Font

 At the Confirmation

Princess Mary and Other Expenses Related to Baptism

 Requests to be Godmother

 Other Gifts at Baptism

 Reimbursement of Expenses

Midwives and the Liturgy of Baptism

 Midwives and Nurses at the Baptisms of Prince Edward and Harry
 Wriothesley

Princess Mary as Benefactor of Midwives and Wetnurses

Conclusions

Appendix: Teaching the Our Father and I Believe in English

 Henry VIII's Injunctions 1536

 Thomas Cromwell's Injunctions 1536

 Henry VIII's Preface to the Primer 1545

Introduction

The liturgy of baptism is one aspect of the ritual life of the medieval church where women, as women, had a special role. One, two or three godmothers were indispensable in this liturgy (except in emergencies); as well, midwives also had a special part.

One individual godmother about whom we have quite a bit of information is Princess Mary Tudor, daughter of King Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon, and the future Queen Mary I; she was born 18 February 1515-16. So far as we know, Princess Mary first acted as godmother in 1522, when she was about seven years old. Based on financial records of the king, we are told that:

In the course of this month [February], the Princess stood godmother to Mary, the infant daughter of Sir William Compton, Knight, and at the baptism the sum of 33 *s* 4 *d* was given to the Lady Maistress to distribute in reward.

Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses* [see below], pp xxix - xxx

This record also introduces the subject of financial responsibilities -- “rewards” -- associated with being godmother, which will be considered at length below. [The “Lady Maistress” was the head of Mary’s personal household – her governess. At the time of her birth Mary’s governess was Lady Margaret Bryan (Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, p xx); how long she stayed in that post is not known.]

The next relevant records that survive stretch from December 1536 to May 1538 and from December 1542 to December 1544. In this period the Princess was godmother to her stepbrother Edward and as well to twelve other children. Thus by the time Mary was about 28 years old she had acquired (at least) fourteen godchildren.

Here I apply three lenses or perspectives to illuminate and recognize Princess Mary’s role as godmother. These are (a) the text of the liturgy of baptism, (b) narrative descriptions of two particular baptisms by contemporary chroniclers, and (c) certain relevant financial records. Some of these records also show that she was present for or had a serious interest in, still other baptisms in which she did not act as godmother. Finally, they shed some light on Mary’s relationship to midwives and wetnurses and to the role of these women in baptism as well as childbirth and nurturance.

Sources

One source used here is the text of the liturgy of baptism used in late medieval England. This is available both in the original Latin and in a modern English translation.

“Ordo ad Cathecuminum Faciendum,” pp 25-31, “Benedictio Fontis,” pp 31-35, De Baptismo,” pp 35-43, and “Confirmatio puerorum,” pp 166-167, in A. Jefferies Collins, editor. *Manuale ad vsum Percelebris Ecclesie Sarisburiensis*. Henry Bradshaw Society 91. London 1960

“The Sarum Rite,” pp 284-307, in E. C. Whitaker, editor, *Documents of the Baptismal Liturgy*, third edition edited by Maxwell E. Johnson. London: SPCK 1960, 2003

A second set of sources is narrative descriptions of the baptisms of Prince Edward (the future

Edward VI) and other nobility.

“The birth and christening of Prince Edward,” in John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials* relating chiefly to Religion and the Reformation of it, and the Emergencies of the Church of England, under King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, and Queen Mary I with Large Appendixes, containing Original Papers, Records, &c. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1822. Here vol 2, part 1, pp 3-9 [excerpts]

Thomas Wriothesley, *A Chronicle of England During the Reigns of the Tudors*, vol I, ed. William Douglas Hamilton. London: Camden Society. 1875 (New Series vol 11)

“The Christening of Prince Edward,” in John Leland, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*, editio altera. London: Benj White, 1724. vol 4, pp 670-677

The third source consists of financial records for Princess Mary’s household beginning when she was about age 24 and, with interruptions, continuing until she was about age 28.

Frederick Madden, editor, *Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary, Daughter of King Henry the Eight, Afterwards Queen Mary: with A Memoir of the Princess, and Notes*. London: Pickering 1831

Princess Mary as Godmother: the Liturgy of Baptism

The first lens or perspective is that of the liturgy of baptism itself. What does it tell us about what Princess Mary said and did as she acted as godmother? We may begin by recognizing the overall structure of this liturgy in late medieval England. It had three parts, the first of which was called The Order for the Making of a Catechumen; this had to do mostly with the person who is to be baptized as well as godparents and presiding minister. The second part is called The Blessing of the Font, and has to do with the water and font used in baptism. The third part is called Concerning Baptism, that is the baptism itself: the immersion of the child in water with the Trinitarian formula, followed by the raising of the child from the water. Finally, if a bishop is present, there is The Confirmation of Children. The first part of the liturgy was celebrated “at the door of the church”; the second and third parts at the font; confirmation was celebrated, at least sometimes, at the altar.

When Princess Mary was godmother, she also acted in conjunction with several other persons, among whom was the priest or bishop who presided. In addition, although neither the mother nor the father of the child being baptized was present at this liturgy, they would have chosen Princess Mary to be a godmother. Because baptism was usually celebrated very soon after the birth of the child, godparents of royal and noble children sometimes stayed at the parents’ home just before delivery.

Princess Mary’s role as godmother also differed somewhat depending on whether she was to be godmother “at the font” or “at the confirmation” (which was sometimes called “the

bishoping”). Her role also depended on whether the child was female or male. If female, there were two godmothers and one godfather at the font, plus a godmother at the confirmation. If a male child, there were two godfathers and one godmother at the font, plus a godfather at the confirmation. (The godparents collectively were also known as the “gossips”; whereas previously this term had applied to godmothers only, here it is applied to godfathers as well.)

Before going further, several rubrics having to do with godparents in general may be quoted from the rite:

Men and women who receive children at baptism are appointed their guarantors before God, and therefore must frequently admonish them when they are grown or capable of discipline, that they guard their chastity, love justice, hold to charity, and above all things are bound to teach them the Lord’s Prayer and angelic salutation, the symbol of the faith and how to sign themselves with the sign of the cross.

Wherefore persons are not to be received nor admitted as godparents except those who know the previously stated things, because godparents must instruct their spiritual children in the faith, which they cannot do unless they themselves have first been instructed in the faith.

“Sarum Rite,” p 305

The godparents had both verbal and nonverbal roles in the liturgy of baptism.

Verbal Roles

The godmother(s) and godfather(s) had three special verbal roles.

1. They told the priest what the child’s name was; in doing so they spoke this name out loud themselves. This was done ca 12 times in the course of the entire liturgy. Rubrics having to do with this responsibility are worded in several ways, for example:

Here first let the priest ask the name of the infant; and let the godparents reply, N.

Here let the godfathers and godmothers name the child.

Afterward let the priest ask the name of the child.

... and his name being asked, let those who hold him reply N.

“Sarum Rite,” pp 285, 286, 299

During confirmation, the single godparent gives the child’s name to the bishop once. (“Sarum Rite,” p 207).

Though the term “christen” is sometimes used to refer to baptism as a whole, it more narrowly and properly has to do with the giving of the child’s name. Some records to be considered below tell us that more than one person asked Princess Mary “to christen” his or her child. That meant that she was being asked to give the baptismal name to the infant, hence was being asked to be godmother.

The importance of godparents naming children in the liturgy of baptism is also made clear in a catechism for children included in the 1553 Primer of King Edward VI. (Though an Anglican document rather than Catholic, that would not have affected the following dialogue.)

Question: What is your name?

Answer: N or M

Question: Who gave you this name?

Answer: My Godfathers and Godmothers in my Baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

“A Catechism, that is to say, An Instruction to be Learned of Every Child, Before He be Brought to be Confirmed of the Bishop“, p 369 in: “The Primer: or Book of Private Prayer helpful to be used of All Christians. Authorised and Set Forth by Order of King Edward VI 1553.” In: Joseph Ketley, ed., *The Two Liturgies A.D. 1549, and A.D. 1552....* The Parker Society. Cambridge: University Press 1844; reprint 1968

The repeated use of the child’s name is not really to correct and inform forgetful priests, and not really to keep reminding the godparents who their godchild is – it is not for the sake of “getting it right.” Instead, putting the child’s name repeatedly on the lips of the godparents is part of the process of their entering into close relationship with the child. It is also public affirmation of the child and of this new relationship between them; it is taking pride in the child and in being godparent.

Repeatedly giving the child’s name also gives these lay women and men a greater role in the liturgical action than if this only happened once. It is liturgical speech and ministry; it is liturgical empowerment. It multiplied the godparents’ participation and visibility in the liturgy.

2. A second special verbal role of godparents was to “demonstrated their competence” to be godparents by saying aloud the Our Father, Hail Mary, and I Believe (Apostles’ Creed). Toward the end of the first section of the liturgy of baptism, the following rubric directs:

Afterwards let the priest say to the godfathers and godmothers together with all that stand about, that they themselves must say in order, Our Father, and Hail Mary, and I believe in God. [They then do so.]

Which also let the priest himself say with all listening reverently and distinctly thus:
Our Father..

Hail Mary...

I believe...

“Sarum Rite,” pp 291-292

In the liturgical book, this rubric, and the prayers themselves, are given in Latin. Interestingly, in several 16th century editions of the *Manuale*, the following versions in English are also printed:

Goodfaders and goodmoders and all that be here about, say in the worshyppe of god and our ladye and of the xii apostellys a Pater noster. and Ave Maria. and Credo in Deum. That we maye so mynyster thys blessed sacrament, that yt may be to the pleasure of almyghty god, and confusyon of our gostly enmy, and saluacyon of te sowle of thys chylde.

This is also followed by an admonition to the godparents, in English:

God faders and godmodyr of thys chylde whe charge you that you charge the foder and te moder to kepe it from fyer and water and other perels to the age of vii yere, and that ye lerne or se yt be lerned the Pater noster. Aue maria. and Credo. after the lawe of all holy churche and in all goodly haste to be confermed of my lorde of the dyocise or of hys depute and that the moder brynge ayen the crysom at hyr puryfcaton and washe your hande or ye departe the chyrche.

Manuale ad usum Percelebris Ecclesie Sarisburiensis, pp 31-32

“Sarum Rite,” pp 293 (using English titles to the prayers named)

3. The third special verbal role of the godparents was to speak on behalf of the child. when the priest addressed certain questions to the child. These were of three types:

- a. Renunciations of the devil: “I renounce” (three times)
- b. Professions of Christian faith: “I believe” (three times)
- c. Intentions regarding baptism: What do you seek? “Baptism”
Is it your wish to be baptized? “I wish.”

The same 1533 catechism quoted above shows us that here the godparents were not simply speaking for someone not capable of speech. Its dialogue is:

Question: What did your Godfathers and Godmothers then for you? [That is, what did they do for you?]

Answer: They did promise and vow three things in my name. [These are summarized.]

Question: Dost thou not think that thou art bound to believe and to do as they have promised for thee?

Answer: Yes, verily. And by God’s help so I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father, that he hath called me to this state of salvation, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. And I pray God to give me grace, that I may continue in the same unto my life’s end.

4. Finally, in common with other persons present, the godparents might also participate in the regular prayers of the liturgy. For example they might say or sing *ora pro nobis* / pray for us during the litany of the saints. They might also participate in the regular responses of the liturgy such as Amen, And with your spirit, etc. (In fact I am not certain if lay people did this at that time.)

Nonverbal Roles

The godmother(s) and godfather(s) had three or four special nonverbal roles.

1. I imagine that one of the godparents held the child during most of the liturgy, a godfather holding a male child and a godmother holding a female child.

Actually, at the beginning of the liturgy of baptism, the rubrics are rather vague on this point. They merely say, “First let the infant be brought to the doors of the church” [where the first part of the liturgy takes place] and then “let the [male] infant be set on the right of the priest, but a female on his left.” It is evident that the priest does hold the child.

The rubrics are quite clear, however, that the godparents are to carry the child to the font, during the third and central part of the liturgy. The text reads:

Then let the infant be carried to the fonts by those who are to receive him at baptism, they themselves holding the child in their hands over the fonts; and let the priest place his right hand over him; and his name being asked, let those who hold him reply N.

“Sarum Rite, “p 299

2. The second special nonverbal role is critical: the godparents raised or lifted up the child from the font after it had been immersed by the priest with the Trinitarian formula. This was a central act of the godparents toward the child; it was in this act that the special spiritual bond between godparents and child was established. The rubric stated:

Then let the priest receive the infant sideways in his hands: and having asked his name let him baptize him with a threefold dipping invoking the Holy Trinity once....

Then let the godparents receiving the infant from the hands of the priest raise him from the font. (Tunc patrini accipientes infantem de manibus sacerdotis leuent eum de fonte.)

“Sarum Rite,” p 301; *Manuale*, pp 36-37

All three godparents received the child from the priest right in the water of the baptismal font and raised her/him up from the water. (Though not mentioned, the child would be dried off and kept warm with towels.) This is an act of acceptance, recognition, relationship, responsibility and caring; it is a part of the giving new life that baptism signifies and imparts. As the baptismal font is imaged as the womb of mother church in the prayer of blessing the font, the godparents are acting as (spiritual) midwives and spiritually helping to deliver the child. This is thus an

“obstetrical” action that inevitably creates at least a conceptual relationship between godparents and midwives.

3. A third special nonverbal role is for the godparents to wash their hands. In the course of raising the child from the font, the godparents would have touched the water, which was blessed and to which consecrated chrism had been added in the course of its blessing. As an act of reverence, the water and chrism of the font was washed off. This is not actually mentioned by the rubrics, but is referred to in the English-language admonition quoted above which concludes by saying, “and wash your hands before you leave the church.” (“Sarum Rite,” p 293; *Manuale*, p 32. In addition, a narrative description given below shows that this was done with some ceremony and was definitely an important part of the rite.

4. I imagine that a fourth special nonverbal role is to help the child hold the candle she or he is given at the end of the liturgy of baptism. The liturgical texts seem to indicate that the child held the candle himself or herself; this was not done by a godparent. However I assume that an adult helped the child do this.

Then [the priest] having asked his name let him place a burning candle in the hand of the infant, saying...

“Sarum Rite,” p 301

5. The child also needed to be undressed and then dressed again, but this is not designated as a role of the godparents. In very simple circumstances, the godmother might do this or might help; certainly in more formal and elaborate cases, there would have been nurses and other women present who probably took care of this.

6. Though not in the liturgical texts, it is known from narrative descriptions that godparents sometimes brought gifts for the child and that refreshments were sometimes served to the godparents and others.

In summary, the liturgical text demonstrates that the godparents had important roles in the liturgy of baptism, both verbal and nonverbal.

Princess Mary as Godmother: Narrative Accounts

A second lens through which Princess Mary’s role as godmother may be viewed is several narrative descriptions of baptism in which she played this role. Such narratives provide information regarding the liturgy of baptism beyond what is provided by the text and rubrics referred to above. In addition, it offers important insights regarding the context in which at least some baptisms were celebrated and tells us more about the godparents’ roles. There are two such descriptions that name Princess Mary as godmother-participant. One is at the baptism of her stepbrother, Edward, and the other is at the baptism of a noble child, Henry Wriothesley. The former is surrounded by high ceremony; the latter is more simple.

Baptism of Prince Edward

Two accounts of the baptism of Prince Edward are considered here. One is extensive and elaborate; the other rather brief. Line divisions and subtitles are my own. The source of this description is:

John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*. Oxford: Clarendon Press. [Here vol 2, part 1, pp 3-9, excerpts.]

The same description is published in Johannis Lelandi, *De Rebus Britannicis Collectanea*. London: 1774; reprint Gregg 1970, vol 4, pp 670-677, under the title, “The Christening of Prince Edward The most dearest Sonne of King Hen. 8th of that Name”

Date and Place

The incomparable Prince Edward . . . was born on the 12th day of October, in the twenty-ninth year of the reign of his father, King Henry VIII [1537] at Hampton Court; and christened on the Monday following, being the 15th of the said month, at the chapel there. And an heir male being now happily given to the realm, after so many a long year’s expectation, the christening was performed with the greater solemnity. (p 3)

Procession

The order of going from the Prince’s lodgings to the christening was thus: (p 5)

Men

first, all gentlemen, esquires, and knights, went two and two, every of them bearing a torch in his hand, not lighted, till the Prince was baptized.

Clergy and Choir

After them the children and ministers of the King’s chapel, together with the Dean, in their surplices and copes, going outward.

Male Dignitaries

Next them the King’s Council, with the great Lords spiritual and temporal.

Next them, the Comptroller and Treasurer of the household.

Then the Queen’s Chamberlain, the King’s Chamberlain, the Lord High Chamberlain of England in the midst.

Next, ambassadors, and with them personages meet to accompany them.

Materials Needed for the Liturgy

Then were carried a pair of covered basins, and a towel thereupon, with a cup of assay borne by the Earle of Sussex, supported by another Lord.

Next after, a tapir of virgin's wax, borne by the Earl of Wiltshire, with a towel about his neck.

After that, a salt of gold, richly garnished with pearl and stone, borne by the Earl of Essex, with a towel about his neck.

The chrysom, richly garnished, borne by the Lady Elizabeth, the King's daughter, who, for her tender age, was carried by the Viscount Beauchamp, assisted by the Lord Morley. [Elizabeth was then about four years old.]

The Prince and Principal Baptismal Party

The Prince himself was carried by the Lady Marchioness of Exeter, assisted by the Duke of Suffolk, and the Lord Marquis her husband.

The train of the Prince's robe was borne by the Earl of Arundel, and sustained by the Lord William Howard.

The nurse went equally with him that supported the train, and with her the midwife.

A rich canopy was borne over the Prince by Sir Edward Nevyl, Sir John Wallop, Mr Richard Long, Mr Thomas Seimer, Mr Henry Knyvet, and Mr Radcliff, Gentlemen of the King's Privy Chamber.

Torches of virgin wax were borne about the canopy by Sir Humfrey Forster, Robert Tyrwet, George Harper, and Richard Southwel.

Next after the canopy went the Lady Mary, the King's daughter, appointed for the lady godmother. Her train was borne by the Lady Kingston.

Women

After the Lady Mary all other ladies of honour, and gentlewomen, in order after their degrees.

The Baptism itself

When the Prince was christened...

[The liturgy of baptism described above is now carried out and celebrated, but no details are given.]

This being performed...

The Prince is Dressed and Hymn of Praise sung

all the torches were lighted,

and Garter Principal King at Arms proclaimed his name in this form following:

God of his infinite grace and goodness give and grant good life and long to the right high, excellent and noble Prince, Prince Edward, Duke of Cornwall, and Earl of Chester, most dear and most entirely beloved son to our most dread and gracious Lord, King Henry VIII. Large, Large.

the service following was done,
while the Prince was making ready [being dressed] in the traverse.

Te Deum was sung.

Washing of Hands

Then first to the Lady Mary the Lord Williams gave the towel, the Lord Fitzwater bare the covered basins, and the Lord Mountague uncovered them.

To the Bishop that did administer, the Lord Butler bare the towel, the Lord Bray the basins, and the Lord Delaware uncovered them.

To the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Duke of Norfolk, godfathers to the Prince, the Lord Stourton bore the towel, and the Lord Wentworth gave the water.

Refreshments

For the serving the Lady Mary and the Lady Elizabeth with spices, wafers and wine, the Lord Hastings bore the cup to the Lady Mary, and the Lord Delaware another cup to the Lady Elizabeth. The Lord Dacre of the South bare the spice-plates to them both, the Lord Cobham the wafers, and the Lord Mountague uncovered the spice-plates.

The Bishop that administered was served with spice, wine, and wafers, by three of the ancient knights appointed by the Lord Chamberlain.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Duke of Norfolk, godfathers at the font, and the Duke of Suffolk, godfather at the confirmation, were served with like spices, wafers, and wine, by three knights, also by the Lord Chamberlain appointed.

All other estates and gentlemen within the Church and Court were served with spice and hippocrass; and all others with bread and sweet wine.

Procession

This being done, the going home with the Prince was in the same manner as the coming out was, saving that the taper, the salt, and the basins were there delivered [that is, left behind]

The gifts that were given by the gossypis were carried in order: a cope of gold, given by the Lady Mary, was carried by the Earle of Essex; three great bowls and two great pots, silver and gift, given by the Archbishop, were carried by the Earl of Sussex; the same gifts with those of the Archbishops were carried next by the Earl of Wiltshire; the two great flagons, and two great pots, silver and gift, given by the Duke of Suffolk, were carried by the Vicount Beauchampe.

The Lady Elizabeth went with the Lady Mary, her sister, and the Lady Herbert of Troy bore her train.

The second and briefer description of Prince Edward's baptism is given in Charles Wriotheley, *Chronicles of England*, vol I, p 66.

This yeare [1537], the 25th daie of October, being Moundaie, the Prince was christened in the Kinges chappell at Hampton Court,

the Archbishop of Canterberie and the Duke of Norfolke godfathers at the font, and my Ladie Maries grace, the Kinges daughter by Queene Katherin, godmother, and the Duke of Suffolke, godfather at the confirmation,

the Princes name being Edwarde, proclaymed after his christening by the King of Harolde, "Edward, sonne and heire to the King of Englande, Duke of Cornewall, and Earle of Chester."

The goodlie solumpnitie of the lordes and ladies done at the christning was a goodlie sight to behoulde, everie one after their office and degree; the Ladie Elizabeth, the Kinges daughter, bearing the chrisome on her breast, the Viscoumpt Beawchampe, brother to the Queene, bearing her in his armes, the Earle of Essex bearing the salte, the Ladie Marques of Exceter bearing the Prince to the church and home agine, the Duke of Norfolke staying his head, as she bare him, and the Duke of Suffolke at his feete.

Though the following jumps ahead somewhat, it seems appropriate to note here certain expenses having to do with Princess Mary's participation in the baptism of Prince Edward. Thus Madden, (*Privy Purse Expenses of Princess Mary*, p lxxx), writes as follows:

In the expenses of the month an item occurs of 10 *l* paid for a kirtle of cloth of silver to be worn on the occasion (p 43), and it was probably at the same time the hundred pearls were purchased at the price of 13 *s* 4 *d* each (p 48). Alms also were distributed on the day the Prince's birth, to the amount of 40 *s*, and in presents to the nurse, midwives, and rockers, the large sum of 30 *l*, in which, perhaps, might be included a gold cup she is stated to have presented at the christening. To meet these extraordinary disbursements, an additional sum of 100 *l* is received by her from the King.

These records are given in full as follows:

Item payed to peycocke for a kyrtle of Clothe of Siluer agaynst the Cristenyng of the prince – x li. (p 43)

[“Probably Sir Stephen Peacock, haberdasher, who was Lord Mayor the 25th Hen VIII.” p 256]

Item Bought of Farnando at my ladyes grace last comyng to the Courte a hundred Perles at xiiij s. iiij d. the pece – lxxvj li. xiiij s. iiij d (p 48)

[Farnando was a goldsmith, p 231]

Item geuen in Almes the same daye the prince whas borne – xl s (p 43)

Item geuen to the myddewife and Nurce and Rockers at the Cristenyng of the Prince – xxx li (p 42)

Item receyved of mr Hennage the Daye that the prince whas Cristened – C li (p 1)
[“Sir Thomas Henneage, Knt, one of the gentlemen of the Privy Chamber to Henry VIII.”
He apparently disbursed funds from the King’s accounts into that of the Princess. p 238.]

Baptism of Harry Wriothesley

The second description of a baptism in which Princess Mary served as godmother was that of Henry Wriothesley, son of the Lord Chancellor of England, who was cousin of the author of some of the narrative descriptions used in these and related studies. Here is the description of his son’s baptism.

This year [1545] on St Georges day, 1545,
Sir Thomas Wriothesley, Lord Chauncellour of England, was made Knight of the Garter at St James by Westminster,

and the morrowe, being St Markes Even, he had a soone christned
at St Andrews in Holborne with great solempnity,

the Kinges Majestie godfather; the Erle of Essex, deputye [proxy] for the Kinge;
the Duke of Suffolke the other godfather;
my Lady Mary godmother at the chrsistinge;
and the Earle of Arundell godfather at the bishopinge;

the name Henry.

Charles Wriosthesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 154.

The following disbursement of funds related to this baptism is noted in Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, p 43:

Item payed for other Expenses sende to the Cristenyng of mr Wriothesleys childe – xx s.

It may also be noted that Princess Mary, though not godmother, sent money gifts to the nurse and midwife on the occasion of Henry Wriothesley’s sister’s baptism in 1543-44; the entry is given later.

Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, p 275, says that this child’s father died in 1550, and that the son succeeded to the title. John Strype, however, prints a letter from Queen Katherine Parr to

Lady Wriothesley “comforting her for the loss of her only son”; though undated, this must have been written prior to Queen Katherine’s death in September 1548 (*Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol II, part II, pp 339-340).

These descriptions show that a number of rituals were added to the basic liturgy of baptism. A few are actually within the regular liturgy, such as the lighting of torches and proclaiming of the child’s name and titles immediately after he was raised from the font. In addition, the mundane washing of hands by the godparents now requires the help of a number of persons and an elaborate ritual of its own. Other rituals surround the official liturgy, such as the processions, gift giving, refreshments, etc. Lay persons – women as well as men – are especially prominent in all of these rituals. These rituals around the central rituals will in due course be the subject of a separate study.

Princess Mary as Godmother: Financial Records

A third perspective and source of information is a set of financial records called “privy purse accounts”. These show expenditures of money related to Princess Mary’s role as godmother and other costs related to baptism. It should be stressed that these are not payments made to the priest, but rather gifts to the child being baptized, gifts to the midwives and wetnurses, and other relevant expenses. The source of these records has already been identified as Frederick Madden, ed., *Privy Purse Expenses of the Princess Mary*. London: William Pickering 1831. The accounts commence in the month of December 1536 and are continued (with the omission of part of February, and the whole of March, 1538-39) to the month of May 1349, and then from the month of December 1542 to the same month 1544, both inclusive, comprising altogether the expenses of four years and seven months. They were recorded by Mary Fynche, a member of the Princess’ household, and were regularly signed by the Princess herself, as “Marye”.

Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, pp xi-xii, 213

I have divided these data first as items relating (a) to Princess Mary as godmother at the font and (b) to Princess Mary as godmother at the confirmation. These sections are followed by the following categories of additional expenses: Requests to be Godmother; Other Gifts at Baptism; and Reimbursement of Expenses incurred in attending baptisms..

I will then consider Princess Mary as Benefactor of Midwives and Wetnurses, and do so in the context of a wider consideration of the role of these women in the liturgy of baptism.

It will be noted that the money payments are not all the same; different amounts are given to different persons. I am not competent to evaluate the economic and other factors involved here.

Entries from the privy purse account are given below. Contractions have been expanded; otherwise the spelling is original. Year and month of each entry are provided by the editor of

these accounts. The person's name associated with each entry comes in part from the entry itself, which generally gives the name of the child's father. However, with the help of biographical data provided by the editor in the index and notes, I have, whenever possible, supplied the name of the mother and the sex of the child. The first page number given is that of the entry itself; the second is that of relevant biographical information provided in the index.

Godmother At the Font

1536-37, January. Lady Elizabeth Parker's son, pp 11, 255

Item geuen to the nurce and the mydwife of [Sir] harry pkers wife my ladys grace being godmother to her childe -- xv s

1536-37, March. Mrs Elizabeth Goddeshalf's son, pp 19, 234

Item geuen to the Nurce and mydwife of maistres Goddes half my ladies grace being godmother to hir Childe – x s

1536-37, March. Lady Jane Dudley's son, pp 21, 229

Item geuen to the Nurce of my Lady Dudleys, my ladies grace being godmother to hir Sonne – xx s

1547, April. Child of someone dwelling near Beaulieu, pp 26, 212

Item geuen to one dwelling unto Beaulieu bringing a phesante unto my ladies grace whose Childe hir grace dyd Crissen – vij s vj d
[Beaulieu was a residence in Essex, otherwise known as New-Hall. p 212]

1537, August. Mr Stafforton's child, pp 36, 268

Item geuen to mr Stafforton Childe my ladies grace being godmother to the same – lxvii s vj d

1537, November. David Ap Morgane's child, pp 45, 207

Item geuen to David ap Morgan my ladies grace being godmother to his Childe – xx s

1537, November. Doctor Michael's child, pp 45, 249

Item geuen at the Cristenyng of Doctor mychaell Childe a Salt seluer and gilt my ladies [grace] being godmother to the same, price – lxvj s xiiij d

1537-38, March. Lady Anne Cobhame's child, pp 61, 224

Item geuen to the Nurce and mydwife of my lorde Cobbam Childe my ladies grace being godmother to the same – xxvi s iij d

Godmother At the Confirmation

1536, December. Lady Elizabeth Carow's daughter, pp 5, 219

Item Payed for the fascioning of [a] Tablet geuen to my Lady Carowes Doughter *beeng my ladyes goddoughter at the byshoppyng* – vj s
[Italicized text added by the Princess herself.]

1536-37, January. Lady Jane Dudley's daughter, pp 11, 229

Item geuen the nurce of my lady Dudleyes Doughter being my ladyes grace goddoughter at the Bysshop – vij s vj d

1536-37, March. Mrs Shirbourne's daughter, pp 19, 267

Item geuen to maistres Shirborne Doughter, my ladies grace beyng hir godmother at the Bysshop a souaigne – xxij s xj d

1543, December, Jane Russell's daughter, pp 138, 264

Item geuen to mr Russell Childe my ladyies grace being godmother at the Bysshop to the same – xx s

Princess Mary as Benefactor: Other Expenses

Princess Mary also disbursed money in cases in which she was not godmother, but where she apparently attended the baptism or otherwise had enough interest to made money payments.

Requests to be Godmother

A few records shows that Princess Mary gave money gifts to persons who asked her to be godmother but where there is no indication that she in fact accepted this invitation.

1536-37, January. p 15

Item geuen to a pore man who desired my ladies grace to haue Cristened his Childe – x s

1540, April. p 89

Item geuen to a pore man the same Daye that my lady Maryres grace came to tittonhanger who desired hir grace to xpen [Christen] hym a childe – xv s
[Tittonhanger was a residence in Hertfordshire, p 270.]

Other Gifts at Baptism

Here the Princess gives gifts to children other than godchildren.

1537, September. p 41

Item geuen at the Cristenyng of a Childe of one Welshe bisids [beside] Honnesdon – -xx s
[“This was Mary's usual residence after the divorce of her mother...” p 240]

1538, May. p 69 (see also pp 61, 253)

Item payed for a Cuppe geuen at the Cristenyng at my lady Outred Childe – vij li xiii s

1538, September. pp 78, 213

Item geuen at the Cristenyng of Thomas Boroughe Childe – xx s

Reimbursement of Expenses Related to Baptism

Here the Princess pays for transportation to baptisms, in one case her own travel, in other cases the travel expenses of members of her household.

1536-37, March. p 19

Item payed for Boyt [boat] hyre at the Cristenyng of the said Childe – xx d
[Mrs Elizabeth Goddeshalf's son.]

1537, May. pp 28, 215

Item gevin to mastres Elmer and mastres browne for their charges Riding to the cristenyng of my Lorde Willms [William and Margaret Howard's] childe – x s
[Frances Aelmer and Mary Brown were gentlewomen in Princess Mary's household, pp 205, 215.]

1538, April. pp 65, 213

Item Payed to my lady Kingston for money by hir layed out at the Cristnyung of my lady of Sussex Childe and my lady of Hertford Childe – lxx s
[Lady Mary Kingston was a member of Princess Mary's household, p 243; other references are to Lady Mary, wife of the Earl of Sussex (p 269) and the wife of the Earl of Hertford, p 239.]

Midwives and the Liturgy of Baptism

In late medieval England, the midwife was not only an obstetrical expert; she also had a role in the liturgy of baptism. This is shown in the first place in the very first rubric given in the liturgical text, as follows:

[At the door of the church]

The Order for the Making of a Catechumen

First let the infant be brought to the doors of the church, and let the priest ask of the midwife (*obstetrix*) whether the infant is a male or female.

“Sarum Rite, p 284

As this rubric continues, it refers to a second possible liturgical role of the midwife: to baptize

the child herself in case of emergency. It reads:

Then [the priest asks] if the infant has been baptized at home [by the midwife].

The third part of this rubric is: “and by what name he is to be called”.

Additional rubrics, placed at the end of the rite, consider this role of midwife in greater detail, as follows:

And therefore if a lay person has baptized a child before he is brought to the church let the priest ask carefully what he said and what he did, and if he finds that the layman has baptized discreetly and in the required manner and used completely the form of words of baptism as above in his own language, let him approve of what has been done, and not rebaptize him.

“Sarum Rite,” p 303

This lay person is most often the midwife, though parents and indeed all parishioners are taught to baptize correctly.

It must be noted that every parish priest must frequently on Sundays explain to his parishioners the form of baptizing in pure, natural and fresh water, and in no other liquid, so that if necessity arise they may know how to baptize infants according to the form of the Church, using the form of words of baptism in their mother tongue distinctly and openly and in an even voice in no wise repeating those words that are properly said once or similar words in addition to the same, but without any addition, subtraction, interpolation, alteration, corruption or transposition saying thus: I cristene thee N., in the name of the fadir and of the sone and of the holy gost. Amen. Or in the Latin tongue thus, Ego baptizo te N in nomine patris et filii et spiritus sancti. Amen. sprinkling water upon the infant or dipping him in the water three times or at least once.

“Sarum Rite,” p 303

If the priest doubts that the midwife or other lay person has done this correctly, he re-baptizes conditionally.

But if the priest is in reasonable doubt whether an infant presented to him for baptism has already been baptized in the required form or not, he must do everything with that child as with another who is known not to have been baptized, except that he must use the essential sacramental words conditionally saying thus.

N if you are baptized I do not rebaptize you; but if you are not yet baptized, I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen, with aspersion or dipping as above.

“Sarum Rite,” p 303

It may be noted that the longstanding Catholic practice of baptism by women in cases of emergency or necessity was carried into the Anglican Book of Common Prayer in its rite called “Of Them That Be Baptized in Priuate Houses in Tyme of Necessitie”. English Puritans, theologically calvinist, together with John Calvin himself, strongly opposed this practice.

Midwives and Wetnurses at the Baptism of Prince Edward and Henry Wriothesley

A section of the narrative description of Prince Edward’s baptism, given above, is repeated here to give another perspective on the role of the midwife in the liturgy of baptism.

The Prince himself was carried by the Lady Marchioness of Exeter, assisted by the Duke of Suffolk, and the Lord Marquis her husband. The train of the Prince’s robe was born by the Earl of Arundel, and sustained by the Lord William Howard.

The nurse went equally with him that supported the train, and with her the midwife.

Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol 2, part I, p 6

The description of Prince Edward’s baptism given above also tells that despite the rubrics of the liturgical book, the midwife was not the person who carried the infant to the church door; this responsibility was taken over by a noblewoman. One can imagine that the midwife, nurse or mother delivered the child into the noblewoman’s arms in the nursery or mother’s chamber. Even if the midwife had no role in presenting the infant at the beginning of the liturgical rites, she, together with the wetnurse, walked in the entrance procession, immediately after the infant and those carrying him.

There is also an account of a money gift that Princess Mary made on the occasion of the baptism of Henry Wriothesley, as follows:

Item geuen to the mydde wife and Nurce at the Crestenyng of mr Wriothesleys Childe –
xl s (p 43)

Princess Mary as Benefactor of Midwives and Wetnurses: Financial Records

We are fortunate enough to have financial records that show Princess Mary as benefactor of midwives and wetnurses. (The contemporary records use the simple term “nurse”. Because this term now has medical connotations that were not applicable in the past, I interpret this as the nurturing function of wetnurse, and use that term consistently.)

Again, relevant entries from Madden’s *Privy Purse Expenses* are listed below. It is obvious that in some cases there is overlap between these listings and those given above with respect of Princess Mary’s role as godmother. Unique entries, however, indicate baptisms where Mary was not godmother but took a special interest for reasons that now escape us.

- 1536-37, January. Lady Elizabeth Parker's child, p 11, pp 255
Item geuen to the nurce and the mydwife of [Sir] harry pkers wife my ladyies grace
beyng godmother to her childe – xv s
- 1536-37, January. Lady Jane Dudley's daughter, pp 11, 229
Item geuen the nurce of my lady Dudleys Doughter being my ladyees grace goddoughter
at the Bysshop – vij s vi d
- 1536-37, January. Lady Elizabeth Carow's daughter, pp 11, 219
Item geuen to my Lady Carowes Doughter nurce in like manner – vij s vj d
- 1536-37, February. Lady Anne Beauchamp's child, pp 16, 211
Item geuen to my lady Beauchamp nurce *at the crystenynge of her chylde* – xx s
Item geuen to my sayde ladies mydwife iii Crownes – xv s
[Text in italics was added by Princess Mary.]
- 1536-37, March. Mrs Elizabeth Goddeshalf's child, pp 19, 234
Item geuen to the Nurce and mydwife of maistres Goddes half my ladies grace being
godmother to hir Childe – x s
- 1536-37, March. . Mrs Shirborne's daughter, pp 19, 267
Item geuen to the nurce of the same Chylde – v s
- 1536-37, March. Lady Jane Dudley's son, pp 21, 229
Item geuen to the Nurce of my Lady Dudleys, my ladies grace being godmother to hir
Sonne – xxs
Item geuen to the mydwife of the said Lady Dudleys – xj s iij d
- 1537, May. Lady Margaret Howard's child, pp 28, 241
Item gevin to my Lorde Willams [Howard] childe Nurce – xx s
Item to the mydwiff the same tyme – x s
- 1537, August. Mr Stafforton's child, pp 36, 268
Item geuen to the myddewife and the nurse – x s
- 1537, October. Lady Anne Shelton's son, pp 42, 266
Item geuen to the myddewife and the nurce at the Cristenyng of mr Shelton Childe – xx
s
- 1537-38, March. Lady Anne Cobhame's child, pp 61, 224
Item geuen to the Nurce and mydwife of my lorde Cobbam Childe my ladies grace being
godmother to the same – xxvi s iij d
- 1538, April. Lady Outred's child, pp 66, 253
Item geuen to the mydwife and Nurce at the Cristenyng of my lady Outred Childe – xl s

1538, June. Mr Edward Chamberlayn's child, pp 71, 220
Item geuen at the Cristenyng of mr Chamberlayn childe to the nurce and mydwife – xx s

1543-43, March. Mr Lovel's child, pp 111-112, 246
Item geuen at the Cristenyng of mr lovels Childe to the nurce – vij s vj d --
& the mydwif – v s

1543, April. Mr Rider's child, pp 113, 264
Item geuen to the Cristnyng of mr Ryder the prince's Cofferer his childe to the nurce --
vij s vj d
Item to the nurce [mistake for midwife] of the same Childe – v s

1543, May. Mr Philips Van Wilder's child, pp 115, 256
Item geuen at the Cristenyng of mr Phillips childe to the nurce – x s
Item to the mydwief – vij s xj d

1543, August. Mary Tomyow's child, pp 127, 270
Item to the Nurce and mydwyff at the cristenyng of thomyos childe – xx s

1543-44, January. Lady Jane Wriothesley's daughter, pp 150, 275
Item geuen at the Cristenyng of my Lord Wriothesley Daughter to the Nurce – xx s
Item geuen to the mydwyefe – xv s

1544, September. Mr Hutton's child, pp 165, 241
Item geuen at the Cristnyng of mr Hutton Childe to the norice – xv s
Item geuen to the mydwyfe – x s

Though these data recognize the great importance of midwives and wetnurses, they also leave us with many questions. What are the personal names of these women? How many individual women practiced these professions? When and how did Princess Mary actually present her money gifts to them, or did she act entirely through Mary Fynch? What fees did they receive from the parents and what was their ordinary income? Did other godparents give gifts to the midwives and wetnurses as well; was this a customary act?

Though we do not have such information regarding the midwives and wetnurses recorded below, the editor of these records tells us, based on financial records of Mary's father, that her own nurse at birth was named Catherine Pale (Madden, *Privy Purse Expenses*, p xxi) and that she was later superceded by a nurse named Margaret (p xxvi).

Conclusions

As a godmother, Princess Mary certainly had a significant role in the liturgy of baptism. She and the other godparents accepted the responsibility to teach basic prayers, bring the child to

confirmation, and form the child in the Christian life – though the primary responsibility was that of the parents. How, in practical terms, Mary carried out these responsibilities, or if she in fact did so, is not clear from the records available.

The narrative descriptions presented here show a larger picture of family, friends, and neighbors. The ceremony of baptism is enlarged and enhanced, and there is greater lay participation than the liturgical book itself indicates.

The financial records recognize and affirm the special role of midwives and wetnurses both in society and in the church. Thanks and appreciation are extended to them, and they are part of the liturgical action as well as the obstetrical and nursing actions.

Overall, in being godmother, Princess Mary entered into, participated in, and manifested, a complex network of relationships and connections. Thus there were special bonds with the family, as she had been chosen by the parents for this role. She also entered into a particular spiritual relationship with their child. She was also part of a particular liturgical community that included other godparents, clergy, midwife and mother church itself. The significance of the wider social community is shown by the expanded entourage and heightened ceremony described for the baptism of Prince Edward. Finally, there is the community of women (and men) who cared for the child, before, during and after the liturgical actions.

Appendix: Teaching the Our Father and I Believe in English

Then [1536] was every man, woman, and child, commaundid to lerne ther patar noster, ave, and crede, in Englische.

[Anonymous chronicler of London] in Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae*. London 1843, vol 2, p 34

I was surprised to come across this chronicle entry. Because teaching these prayers was an obligation of parents and godparents according to the liturgy of baptism, and because almost everyone at that time was baptized, this command should not have been necessary. I therefore began to look into this matter further, and eventually found the corresponding entry in another chronicle.

Also, in the beginning of September [1536], Sir Thomas Crumwell, Lord Crumwell, Keeper of the Privie Seale of our soveraigne lorde the Kinge, Vicegerent to the same of all his jurisdiction ecclesiasticall, visiting, by the Kinges supream auctoritie ecclesiasticall, the people and cleargie of this realme of Englande, sent out, under the Kinges Spirituall Seale, certaine Injunctions to the prelates and cleargie of this realme, for a good and verturous order to be kept and had of the said cleargie, and declaring by the said Injunctions *how the curates should preach and teach their parishioners the "Pater noster," "Ave," and "Creede," the Commandements of God, and the Articles of*

the Faith in our maternall English tonge, with other certaine Injunctions for and concerning the vertuous living of the said cleargie, in geving good ensample to their pariashioners, under a certain paine lymitted for the same for the said cleargie that doe breake the same.

Wriothesley, *Chronicle of England*, vol I, p 55 [Emphasis added]

Then I identified several official documents – by Henry VIII and Thomas Cromwell – that were probably the sources of the chroniclers’ notes. Relevant excerpts are given here.

Also in the same theyr sermones, and other collations the parsones, vicares, and other curates abovesaide shall diligently admonishe the fathers and mothers, masters and governors of yothe, beyng within their cure, to teache or cause to be taught their children and servants, evyn from their infancy, their “Pater noster,” the Articles of our faithe, and the Tenne Commaundementes in their mother tongue; and the same so towght, shal cause the saide yowthe ofte to repete and understand; and to th’intent this may be the more easlye donne, the said curatis shal in their sermones deliberatlye and plainlye recite ofte the said “Pater noster,” th’Articles of our faythe, and the Tenne Commandments, one clause or article one daye, and another an other daye, tyll the ole be taught and learned by lytill; and shall deliver the same in wrytinge, or shewe where printed bookes conteyning the same be to be sold, to them that can rede or will desire the same....

“The king’s injunctins.” [1536]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737; vol 3, pp 813-815 [here 814]

Item, that ye shall every Sondaye and holyday throughe the yere, openlye and plainlye recyte to your parishners twice or thrice together, or oftner, yf nede require, one particule, or sentence of the “Pater noster,” or Crede in Englishe, to the intente they may learne to gyve them one like lesson or sentence of the same, tyll they have learned the whole “Pater noster” and Crede in Englishe by rote; and as they be taught every sentence of the same by rote, ye shall expownde, and declare the understanding of the same unto them, exhortinge all parents and housholders to teache their childrin and servaunts the same, as they are bound in conscience to doo, and that don, ye shall declare unto them the Ten Commaundements, one by one, everye Sundaye and holydaye, tyll they be lykewyse perfect in the same.

Item, that ye shall in confessions every Lent examyne everye person that cometh to confession unto you, whether they can recyte the Articles of our faith and the Pater noster in Englishe, and here them say the same, particularlye wherein they be not perfyt, ye shall declare to the same, that every christen person ought to know the same before they sholde receive the blessed sacrament of the altare, and monishe them to learne the same more perfectly by the nex yere following, or elles lyke as they ought not to presume to come to Goddes bourde without perfite knowledge of the same....

“Injunctions by Thomas lord Cromwell, his majesty’s vicar general.” [1536]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737; vol 3, pp 815-

(It is interesting to see the pedagogical method in use at the time so clearly explained.)

The preface of King Henry VIII's Primer of 1545 also touches on this matter.

Among the manifolde businesse and moste weightie affaires appertainynge to our regall authoritie and office, wee muche renderynge the youthe of oure realmes (whose good educacion and vertuose bryngyng up redoundeth moste highly to the honoure and praise of almightie God) for divers good considerations, and specially for that the youthe by divers persons are taught the "Pater noster," the "Ave Maria, Crede," and Ten Commaundements, all in Latin and not in Englishe, by meanes whereof the same are not brought up in the knowledge of their faith, dutie, and obedience, wherein no christen persone ought to bee ignoraunt;

"An injunction given by the kynge our soveraigne lordes most excelente majestie for the autorisying and establishyng the use of his Primer." [6 May, 1545]

David Wilkins, *Concilia Magnae Britanniae et Hiberniae*, 1737, vol 3, p 875

Finally, this was still a matter of concern when King Edward I succeeded to the throne. Thus the following items are among the articles of visitation (inspection) issued in September 1547. They are published in John Strype's *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol II, part I, pp 73- 83.

Item, Whether they have not diligently taught, upon the Sundays and holydays, their parishioners, and especially the youth, their Pater noster, the Articles of our faith, and the Ten commandments in English. And whether they have expounded and declared the understanding of the same. (p 77)

Item, Whether they have, every Lent, required their parishioners in their confession to recite their Pater noster, the Articles of our faith, and the Ten Commandments in English. (p 78)

Item, Whether they have declared to their parishioners that they ought to know and understand the Pater noster, the Articles of our faith, and the Ten commandments in English, before they should receive the blessed Sacrament of the Altar. (pp 78-79)

On further reflection I realized that, at least potentially, there are three separate issues here. Which of these was the real problem for Henry VIII and his successors? Thus (a) were parents and godparents just not teaching the basic prayers as they were supposed to do according to the liturgy of baptism? Or, (b), did they teach them in Latin and not in English? Or (c), was the real issue the replacement of the Hail Mary / Ave Maria by the Ten Commandments?

Certainly, both learning the Ten Commandments and omitting the Hail Mary from the list of basic prayers were new practices for many and may have required appropriate instruction.

So far as compliance with the baptismal obligation is concerned, we have little information on how well parents, godparents and clergy actually taught children their basic prayers.

But the real issue may have been that parents and godparents were conscientious, but were teaching these prayers in Latin rather than English. Perhaps I was naive or just plain erroneous in thinking that people, knew the Our Father / Pater noster, Hail Mary / Ave Maria, and I believe / Credo in English. My thinking and assumptions regarding this point were along the following lines.

(a) English versions of these prayers had been available in England for centuries. See the examples printed in Thomas Wright and James Orchard Halliwell, *Reliquiae Antiquae: Scraps from Ancient Manuscripts*. London: William Pickering, 1842; reprint 1966, vol I, pp 22, 35, 38, 42, 57, 159, 169, 204, 234-5, 282.

(b) Primers and other liturgical / devotional books for lay people included English versions of these prayers. I would have thought these would be quite widely available.

(c) Even if the priest's address to the godparents (and bystanders) was printed in Latin in the liturgical book, such addresses often were translated by the priest on the spot and actually spoken in the vernacular.

(d) The liturgical book used in sixteenth century England included an English version of the relevant address to godparents regarding the teaching of these prayers.

(e) Even if the English address just referred to, and other materials, use the title of these prayers in Latin (e.g., Pater noster), that does not mean that the Latin text was meant. Even the injunctions of King Edward VI use the Latin titles, though clearly referring to English-language texts.

I remain unclear how all these considerations fit together, what the language of everyday prayer was, and what really was the nature of the problem the kings were trying to address.

After having written the above, I then ran across the following account, which seems to shed more light on this matter; it is dated 1547.

There was now great care taken, that the vulgar sort might arrive to some understanding of religion, which they were for the most part most barbarously ignorant of before. And for this purpose provision was made, that the people might learn in English the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, and the Ave, that used always to be said before in Latin; but especially the Lord's Prayer, commonly called *the Pater noster*. And therefore the better to inculcate it into the memories of the people, Latimer used to say this prayer constantly both before and after sermon, in the country where he was. And when any poor people came to him to ask an alms, he would oppose them with the Lord's Prayer, and bade

them say it; and cause his servants sometimes to require them to say it. Many would tell him, they could say the Latin *Pater noster*, and others, that they could say their *old Pater noster*, (as they termed the Lord's Prayer in Latin,) but not the new, meaning that in English.

John Strype, *Ecclesiastical Memorials*, vol II, part I, pp 112-113. [Italics in the source..]

It would still be interesting to know if the 1536 decrees made a difference in the liturgy of baptism, how they were implemented in home and church, and how quickly the general population became comfortable with these prayers in English.