

# Elizabeth's Household

A Bachelors Thesis in History.

By Sara Batty.  
Mills College. 1994.  
All Rights Reserved.

## ***Introduction***

In the sixteenth century, the king was considered the anointed of God, and was required to maintain his position at the top of the Great Chain of Being. Elizabeth I was a powerful monarch, and it was obvious to her and her fellow monarchs that magnificence was a requirement of their place in the Great Chain of Being. Since they were at the pinnacle of earthly mortals they needed to appear more capable than mere men, better dressed, and more lavishly attended. Elizabeth, being a woman and therefore naturally inferior to a man according to the Great Chain of Being, may have felt this requirement more keenly than other monarchs.

In addition to being the secular leader in England Elizabeth was the titular head of the Anglican church, which multiplied her authority while at the same time placing an additional burden on her. Not only did she have to preserve her position as the queen of England but she also had to maintain her position as a religious leader. In order to create an appropriate level of magnificence, Elizabeth had every-day tasks turned into ceremonial functions, even something as simple as setting the table for the queen's dinner required the setters to kneel before the empty table and place the utensils on the table with due reverence.

These rituals could be so elaborate that they evolved into "quasi-religious observances." This need for an element of religion in her household was only to be expected in a monarch who was the temporal head of the Anglican church. But these displays had a practical purpose as well, they could "impress potential trouble-makers with the majesty of the sovereign and the futility and sinfulness of rebellion," which was critical in an age that was prone to sedition. They also provided for suitable entertainment of important people, which was a critical point in the display of magnificence.

Generous hospitality was...probably the most useful and widespread form of nobles' conspicuous consumption; putting up, feeding and entertaining guests. The efficiency and gentility (or lack thereof) offered by the household in the provision of such hospitality, as well as the hospitality itself, would affect those whom the lord was attempting to impress.

Elizabeth, in the early part of her reign, needed to impress a number of people that she could rule England well. Many of the people Elizabeth wished to impress were the ambassadors present from foreign courts, especially those of France and Spain, and had permanent lodgings at the court. Because of these permanent observers, even the menial tasks needed to be performed in such a way as to promote an aura of respect and awe.

The separation of personal and political life blurred regularly in the sixteenth century aristocracy, and even more so in the life of the sovereign. In a society where "No one drew a distinction between the private and public functions of kingship" it was the monarch's household that supported her personal and state lives. Elizabeth's court was a nexus of personal, political and religious power, so that "attendance on her became the social obligation of the aristocracy and the goal of lesser mortals." These people did not seek service in the queen's household for altruistic reasons, they were attempting to forward their own careers. R.C. Braddock says, in his thesis "The Royal Household. 1540-1560", that "In the Tudor period, a place in the king's household ceased to be a means to an end and became an end in itself," meaning that once within the monarch's household a man's fortune was made.

In the sixteenth century, "the king ruled as well as reigned," he had to make policy as well as presiding over the country. Therefore, the court of Elizabeth "was not only the mortal household of this half-divinity, it was the center of nearly all the major activities of the State" . Because of this, her household had not only to maintain her dignity as a monarch, but also to allow for the smooth running of the government within its environs. Since the government was lodged within the monarch's household, and "everything that happened above stairs was dependent at least in part upon the smooth functioning of the household below stairs." The administrative function of the government was carried out by the Privy Council, Elizabeth's body of official advisors. But the Comptroller of the Household, in addition to his household duties was also a member of the Privy Council. The remainder of her household officers, while not an official part of England's government, "were still called upon to perform a variety of important national tasks." These tasks could range from carrying messages of a sensitive nature, to having her personal bodyguard arrest high-ranking peers for treason.

The household evolved a bureaucratic structure that was a miniature government in itself, in order to maintain Elizabeth's position as a monarch and the government lodged within the court. Each part of the household had specific assigned duties that formed part of the whole needed to produce the effect of glory and splendor surrounding the queen. This structure enabled the household to function without the direct supervision of those who were needed to attend to the affairs of state, or that of the queen. It is this structure that warrants examination, in order to show how the individual elements combined to create the elaborate structure of the Elizabethan court, which alternated between ceremony and practicality.

### ***Structure of the Royal Household***

England's royal household was the most stable in Europe, after the Pope's, because "it seems to have fluctuated less dramatically with the personality of the ruler" than the households of other monarchs. This stability was the result of the infrastructure of the household, which possessed an internal government that could have maintained the functionality and glory of court life without any monarch at all. Each of the individual division "contained many old hands who could run their sections without guidance from superiors," much less the queen or her ministers.

According to J.D. Alsop, in "The Structure of Early Tudor Finance, c.1509-1558", the lower strata of servants were seen as "inflexible, impersonal and substantially bureaucratic", he also says that the Privy Chamber was "fundamentally personalized, irregular, and (relatively speaking) unstructured" This perception of the lower levels of the household as noticeably bureaucratic shows that they were sufficiently structured that direct control by the monarch was not required for its smooth running. Not only was the household capable of maintaining its bureaucracy, but it had the ability to bypass standard procedure in order to better serve the queen. This flexibility was a middle ground between function and form.

The household was differentiated from other court hangers-on by 3 things: bouge of court, wages, or fees paid to them, and the authority of the Lord Steward, or the Lord Chamberlain. Within the structure of the household, the closer a servant was to the sovereign, the greater "the likelihood of royal interference and casual utilization". But few of those in the household appear to have been subject to this interference, under Henry VIII, "out of the hundreds of servants of the royal household only a score or so - and once again chiefly the Privy Chamber - came into any but the most formal contact with the king". There is no reason to believe that this pattern changed under Elizabeth. The servants in the royal household were present but mostly unacknowledged. The Great Chain of Being influenced the attitudes of those being served and those doing the serving, the queen had no need to impose personal direction on the majority of her servants; their jobs were already assigned and supervised according the bureaucratic tradition of the household.

According to Simon Adams, in "Eliza Enthroned? The Court and its Politics", Elizabeth was fixated on the management of her household. Elizabeth was too much the Prince to concern herself with a part of her court that functioned without supervision. Henry VIII affected the household management and structure more than Elizabeth did. He sponsored two major reforms of the household, one in 1525 and one in 1540, while the most Elizabeth did was appoint a commission to examine its spending habits. Adams may be

interpreting Elizabeth's concern with government spending as concern with the household, since the only documented concern she showed for the household was when it spent more money than she would have liked it to. Elizabeth had no reason to be fixated on the household, it performed its function, allowing her to reign in state and the government to function well.

The royal household was organized into two major sections, which Sir James Croft classified as "the Chamber and the Household", and which Edward IV defined in the *Liber Niger* as the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* and the *Domus Providencie*. The first section was responsible for maintaining the splendor of the court and the second section was responsible for the practical running of the court. They overlapped very little, each maintaining its own hierarchy and duties, but both contributing towards the overall grandeur of the court.

The control of the household was divided between the Lord Steward and the Lord Chamberlain. The Lord Steward was responsible for the *Domus Providencie*, as well as "accounting and household management". He was aided by the Board of Greencloth, which consisted of the Treasurer of the Household, the Comptroller and various clerks in addition to the Lord Steward. The Treasurer, Lord Steward, and Comptroller were collectively known as the whitestaves because of the white rods they carried as a badge of their office. The Lord Chamberlain was responsible for "public ceremony and ... the king's private service", in other words the *Domus Regie Magnificencie*. He was assisted by the Vice-Chamberlain and, infrequently by some of the gentlemen ushers within his department.

Serving the monarch was considered "both honourable and profitable at every social level". It was honorable because such service benefited the realm and profitable because each servant was well compensated for his effort. The servants of Elizabeth were willing to perform extra-household tasks for the monarch "in the hope of winning some direct notice from their master or small share of his royal favour." This favor might mean the placement of a family member within the household, a royal monopoly, or some other royal grant. The monarch benefited from their service since "By keeping a luxurious house and a generous table, by dressing servants in fine livery, by displaying a large following, a lord was able to assert his nobility, proclaim his wealth, and advertise his power, thus attracting clients and gaining respect"; however, by the same token, a servant who failed to perform his task well or was less than perfectly respectful could damage the lord's reputation. The aspect of a servant was considered a reflection on his master, therefore a slovenly servant was a sign of a poor master. This was just as important in the *Domus Providencie* as it was in the *Domus Regie Magnificencie*, the "servants in the 'below stairs' departments, from the pantry to the Woodyard - [were] not courtiers...but each perform[ed] tasks that were vital for the smooth running of the court." These tasks were perhaps less glamorous than attending directly upon the queen, but they were important, since they enabled the queen to present an aura of majesty and her council to run the government. Having tables set, food prepared, beds made, and halls swept was as much a part of the grandeur of the court as the ceremonies attendant on the queen herself. In the dual nature of the court, practicality could be as much a part of resplendence as fine clothes or uniformed attendants.

## ***Sections***

### **Domus Regie Magnificencie**

The Hall and the Chamber were under the *Domus Regie Magnificencie*, it was primarily composed of Nobility or high ranking gentry. These servants were well paid, but they also had their own fortunes and estates. Because of their higher rank in society they were more independent than the servants of the *Domus Providencie*, both financially and intellectually. The objective of the servants in the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* was to make the monarch look good, and to protect her when she wanted to withdraw from the world.

The Lord Chamberlain, under whose jurisdiction the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* was, was responsible for both the Privy Chamber and the Great Chamber. Both had a staff of "Gentlemen, Ushers, Grooms and

Pages", but the Great Chamber also encompassed "the Privy Wardrobes, Cupbearers, Sewers, Carvers, Physicians, Chaplains, Yeoman of the Guard and Gentlemen Pensioners". These positions were both practical and ceremonial. In order to be appointed to a post in the Domus Regie Magnificencie , "The courtier need possess little specialized knowledge beyond that of other members of his class. A good knowledge of etiquette, riding, hunting and jousting would suffice."

The Privy Chamber "marked the frontier between the public and private lives of the monarch; institutionally its staff alone served both of the monarch's two bodies: the actual 'body natural' and 'the majesty of the body politic'". The separation of these two was only beginning to emerge, Elizabeth carried it further when she separated the Bedchamber from the Privy Chamber in 1559 and abolished the Henchmen in 1565. Henry had used the Henchmen and the servants of the Privy Chamber as both political and personal servants, but Elizabeth preferred to be able to retreat from politics when she wished and "reinforced the barrier [between the private and the political] by a ferocious discipline. Dabbling in patronage was allowed by her Ladies, but involvement in politics was not." They might mention the name of one of their protégés to the queen, but they were not permitted to marry without the queen's consent. Despite this strict control over the activities of her ladies, it became evident that "even her closest servants could not be isolated from outside pressures" (i.e. politics). The nature of the court as a center of government pervaded all its aspects, and made participation in the politics of England unavoidable.

The Domus Regie Magnificencie did not enjoy the rigid organization of the Domus Providencie , it had no hierarchy of departments and sub-departments. Each officer would report "directly to the lord chamberlain," or to his deputy. This made control of the Domus Regie Magnificencie both easier and more difficult - easier because one man controlled everything in the section, and more difficult because he was needed for all of the important decisions. Most of the duties of the Hall and Chamber servants were ceremonial, not simply utilitarian, so one man could direct all of the work done in the chamber. Even the practical tasks in the hall and chamber were "designed more to impress the viewer than merely to get the job done." This combination of function and formality allowed Elizabeth to maintain her position as a powerful monarch, because it separated her from ordinary mortals.

The Yeomen of the Guard and the Gentlemen Pensioners were both under the Domus Regie Magnificencie , but "As the names suggest, the guard was drawn from a lower class than the pensioners, and was the more workman-like of the two groups." The Yeomen of the Guard were a ceremonial bodyguard for the queen, but, like her household, they were used for state purposes. Despite being, technically, a personal bodyguard, they were as much a part of the government as her privy council. They were often dispatched on diplomatic missions as couriers and members of the Guard were assigned to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland to lend him prestige. The Gentlemen Pensioners consisted of 50 men including Captain, Lieutenant and a Standard bearer. They were mostly ornamental, and "enjoyed bouge and lodgings only when they were on duty" which was ten to twelve men at a time. This is one of the rare instances of economy within the household: these men could be called up for major occasions when pomp and ceremony were required, but they did not create a permanent drain on the crown resources.

Under Elizabeth there were two types of chamber servants - paid and unpaid, or 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary'. The ordinary servants were paid regular wages and served full time, and the extraordinary servants were given a token stipend and promoted into positions in the ordinary when a vacancy occurred. The ordinary servants of the privy chamber were known as chamberers. The most senior in the Privy Chamber were the "four Gentlewomen of the Bedchamber... and [the] seven Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber". These women were appointed for political reasons, for example, to appease a favored courtier, or because of long service in some other capacity. They and the male servants of the chamber prepared the chamber in the morning, prepared for the midday meal, and had few other responsibilities. In fact, "The day of the officers of the chamber consisted of intensive activity followed by long periods with nothing to do." Their main purpose was to provide a backdrop for the queen.

In addition to the ladies of the Privy Chamber, there were Grooms of the Privy Chamber. There were six on coronation list (four ordinary, two extraordinary); by 1580 there were eight ordinary and four extraordinary. This increase in numbers can only be explained by Elizabeth's need to be further separated

from the mortal world. By 1580, it was clear that the queen was not going to marry and the result was the cult of the virgin queen, which required a great deal of ceremony to surround her.

Pam Wright in "A Change in Direction: The Ramifications of a Female Household, 1558-1603" says that some of the Chamberers, according to the records of the Wardrobe were

responsible for the queen's linen -- primarily bed-linen. Indeed, the main responsibility for the everyday running of the Privy Chamber seems to have devolved on [them]...They were, for instance, in receipt of an assortment of coffer, some to store plate, others to store linen, as well as a collection of water-bowls, locks, keys and a variety of other materials."

Probably, Wright is referring to male servants of the privy chamber, not the women of the Bedchamber. The Grooms of the Chamber were gentry, but not of noble blood, which explains Wright's assertion that some of the Grooms appear to have done the actual work of keeping the queen's apartment in order. Wright cites the receipt of "brushes, wood and general items for the department." as evidence of this, which is not by itself compelling evidence but Braddock agrees with her, for different reasons. He says that

Grooms, as befitted their lowly status, were usually stuck with the dirty work of cleaning the palace...The grooms of the chamber were to ensure that the ceilings, windows and portals of the public apartments were "kept clean from dust, filth and cobwebs." They also set up the tables for meals and brought basins of water for those fastidious enough to wash beforehand.

But the Grooms were not at the bottom of the hierarchy of the Domus Regie Magnificencie, that distinction belonged to the Pages. The popular conception of a Page is of a little boy being trained in a noble household, but in Elizabeth's household a Page could serve for upwards of twenty years. Their duty was to wake the Grooms and Yeomen of the chamber; "Their day, according to the regulations, was to start at seven o'clock....After rising, the pages made up the fires and then woke the esquires for the body, dozing in front of the door to the king's compartments." They were also made to fetch and carry, and almost certainly did their share of the menial work.

The Domus Regie Magnificencie was organized on a very loose basis, but the organization existed nonetheless. The autocratic rule of the Lord Chamberlain was unquestioned and each of the servants in his department knew to report to him. As was appropriate to a body that needed to respond to the whims of the queen, they were flexible within this structure. The yeomen ranked the pages, the Gentlemen Pensioners ranked the Yeomen of the Guard, and each man knew his place in the court. The tasks of the staff of the Hall and Chamber were primarily ceremonial, which enabled them to be done by the servant most readily available. These tasks were sometimes elaborate, sometimes simple, but always they had as their goal the enhancement of the monarch.

## Domus Providencie

To pass from the chamber to the household below stairs was to pass from the world of the politician and courtier into the world of the career servant. The Domus Providencie was responsible for "cleaning, transportation and a host of other menial functions" all of which focused on the practical aspects of life at court, but allowed the ceremonial functions to proceed unhindered. The Domus Providencie was further subdivided into various departments and sub-departments, which reported to their respective departments. The departments would report both the departmental totals and the sub-departmental totals to the Board of Greencloth. The Domus Providencie was composed of lower gentry, most of whom came from families that had served the monarch for generations and maintained a strong presence in the household. Even these lower levels of the household were traditionally filled by men, since they were as political as they were domestic. In the latter half of the sixteenth century, many of the nobility began to scale their households down to specifically domestic functions and therefore employ a greater number of female servants "whose

roles could seldom have been more than wholly domestic". This transformation had not yet begun in the royal household, so the positions were still held by men.

The Domus Providencie was under the control of the Lord Steward. His power within the household, when he chose to exercise it, was absolute. Elizabeth had six Lord Stewards during her reign; the first three and the last two were not concerned with making any changes or exercising any of their power over the household. Their lack of concern shows how well the household could run without the guiding hand of the Lord Steward, but it also shows how easily a servant could become involved with the politics of the court to the exclusion of all else. The fourth Lord Steward, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, was more attentive. He "became more than a nominal head of the lord steward's department. He took an active part in the deliberations of the board of Greencloth and seems to have been interested in reorganizing certain household offices." His reforms, if they succeeded in being implemented in fact instead of just on paper, were short lived and his death in 1588 put an end to the any further work he might have done on behalf of the household.

If the Lord Steward chose not to exercise his power, then "the treasurer and comptroller were given joint command over the household." Unfortunately, these men often proved ineffectual, and William Cecil, Lord Burghley, managed the majority of the household affairs during the reign, despite having no real affiliation with the household. Burghley's intervention was not necessary because the household was capable of running by itself, but it did put a check on the spending and the dishonesty of officials. In at least one instance, the comptroller of the household, "practised graft and placed his own interests above those of the queen," and would not have been noticed but for Burghley's attention.

Unlike the Domus Regie Magnificencie the Domus Providencie was broken into departments, each of which possessed, "a uniform chain of command [that] ran from sergeant to yeoman to groom to page. Outside the department was a clerk who had supervisory powers only." The chain of command encompassed the entirety of the Domus Providencie - each division was ranked in relation to the other departments, with the pastry at the bottom and the kitchen at the top. This rigid structure enabled it to function with little outside supervision and to effortlessly provide the necessary tools for the court to appear a center of magnificent hospitality.

The servants in the Domus Providencie were by no means confined to their areas of responsibility, as they would be in the eighteenth century. They were often "seen above stairs where they "most commonly or always approach her majesty's presence" with a petition." The strict delineation between noble and common blood had not yet precluded them speaking to each other. Their petitions were frequently heard, and occasionally granted. Their presence was not viewed as out of place, but they were required, as a result, to be of good character and presentable to the queen. When above stairs they were de facto courtiers and had to lend to the glitter and pomp of the court.

The actual day-to-day command of each department fell to the sergeant of that dominion, who was promoted from the ranks of the yeomen, who were in turn promoted from the ranks of the pages. The sergeants were technically ranked below the Clerks of the department, but they were paid more than the clerks, receiving £11 8s 1 1/2d per year compared to the Clerks who only received £6 13s 4d. The sergeants were also the recipients of the fees of a particular department, which the Clerk could only reap if the office of sergeant was vacant. In addition, the sergeant had the authority to do with his men "as he saw fit. He could transfer servants from on section to another to balance the workload," authority that the Clerks did not have. The drawback to these benefits was that "once a man was named sergeant of a department, he usually remained there until his death." He had no chance to be promoted to the Board of Greencloth and reigned in his little world for the remainder of his term of service.

The highest position a man who began his career within the household could hope to reach by promotion was the Cofferer who handled much of the money that passed through the Board of Greencloth, and was the working head of the Countinghouse. In order to become Cofferer, a man had to be apprenticed among the Clerks of the Domus Providencie . The Clerks advanced between departments instead of from the bottom to the top of one department. According the regulations,

a clerk started in the pastry and worked his way up successively through the larder, scullery, woodyard, bakehouse, poultry and acatry. Having served his apprenticeship, he was appointed to the most junior clerkship in either the avery, spicery or kitchen, depending on which had a vacancy.

It was from these three departments that the board of Greencloth appointed its junior clerks. Whenever vacancies occurred among the Clerks at the Board of Greencloth, a new Clerk was chosen from one of these departments, and the Cofferer was selected from the ranks of the Clerks of the Board of Greencloth. The cofferer was just below the whitestaves in authority, so if a man had political ambitions for his career in the royal household he would attempt to gain that position. Because the Cofferer handled money, and since there was no accountability from year to year, he could benefit quite handsomely, by lending the queen's money until he was called to account for it.

In the Countinghouse "by the end of Elizabeth's reign there were "two Clerks of the Greencloth [household auditors], two Clerk Controllers, one Yeoman, one Groom and one Messenger". The remainder of the Domus Providencie reported to the Countinghouse, which was primarily responsible for the budgets were reported and wages paid, but "it also adjudicated disputes...and listened to the complaints from outsiders against those necessary but perpetual nuisances, the royal purveyors." Again, this shows that the household policed itself, without unnecessary intervention from outsiders.

## Almonry

In order to maintain a generous reputation the queen regularly gave alms to the poor, and had a department to handle her . The Almonry was responsible for all the monarch's charitable works. It does not appear to have been a large department, since there were only children, Grooms, and Yeomen, under the authority of the "Gentleman amner." As in most cases where children are listed within a department they were most likely the children of other members of the household, and not paid servants. The Almonry would receive goods from other departments within the household, the Bakehouse, for example, and would "distribute the same to the poore people, without embesselling any part of the same away." The maintenance of largess was important in the preservation of the monarch's position at the top of the Great Chain of Being.

## Bakehouse

The primary function of the bakehouse was to make bread, but it also bought wheat and cleaned it of vermin and chaff, and made sacks for the bread. As with most of the departments that dealt with incoming goods, the sergeant of the bake-house made sure that the items provided were "provided of the best stuff that can be gotten," and that they reflected well on the queen's honor. The Bakehouse was also required to remove "the crust off the loaves, for bread crust was considered unhealthful; they had to take care that they did not chip too little, endangering the health of the court, or too much, which was wasteful." During the baking, the sergeant of the Bakehouse was responsible for overseeing the seasoning of the bread by the bakers, as well as making sure that the loaves were not watered down to increase their weight before baking. If he found any of his officers being wasteful, he would report them to the counting house. The waste of food was not to be tolerated, because, in addition to costing the queen money, if undersized loaves of bread were served at her table it damaged her reputation as a generous host. The Bakehouse worked closely with the kitchen, but was a substantial department in itself, having its own clerk, as well as a sergeant, yeomen and grooms.

## Kitchen

The Kitchen was one of the largest departments in the Domus Providencie , it had two staffs, the monarch's and the Hall's, which each consisted of "three Clerks, three Master Cooks, six Yeomen, six Grooms, eight

Pages, and an unspecified number of 'gallapines'," whose responsibility was "to scrub the kitchens and "outward galleries" twice daily" to maintain cleanliness. By 1601, the Kitchen was divided into the Privy Kitchen and the Great Kitchen - parallel to monarch's and hall kitchens, and Elizabeth's funeral procession only lists "Master Cook of the Housholde, Master Cook of the Kitchen," so she may have removed one of the cooks over the course of her reign.

The Chief Clerk of the Kitchen had two under Clerks, and all three of them were required to oversee the quality of the queen's food and to make sure that the goods were in the larder for the cooks use. The clerks would check each department for waste, and the quality of the goods being used. This function was duplicated in one form or another throughout the Domus Providencie, the clerk was responsible for maintaining the standards laid down by the household ordinances, and therefore the majesty of the queen. The sergeants were responsible for enforcing the clerk's decisions, and making the practical conform to the ceremonial. The Chief Clerk of the Kitchen was traditionally responsible for "all buyings of foodstuffs and sometimes of spices in the household...his function is mainly that of book-keeper", but with all the foodstuffs and departments that required the supervision of the Kitchen Clerks "there [was] matter enough to employ them all therein".

The Clerks of the Kitchen supervised "the cellar, the buttery, the acatry, the poultry, the bakehouse, the pantry, the kitchen, and other subdivisions of the household". Under the more direct control of the sergeant of the Kitchen were the Larder, the Boilinghouse, and the Pastry. The Boilinghouse was responsible for boiling all the meat to sterilize it, and was staffed by only three men. Once the meat had been preserved or boiled, it was stored in the larder. The larder was one of the departments that employed the children of other servants, and was run by the Sergeants, since it was under the control of the Kitchen. The Larder was a storeroom for the food the Kitchen would need for the preparation of meals. The pastry was an area of the kitchen that specialized in meat pies and baked meats.

## Cellar

After the kitchen, the Cellar had the most responsibility since it controlled the Buttery, the Pitcherhouse. The cellar itself stored and dispensed the wine, like all the other food departments, always checking that the quality was the best and that none of it had spoiled. The Buttery was traditionally a small chamber near the main hall, it had been where beer and wine were laid out before being served. By the sixteenth century, the buttery was the division of the cellar that bought, stored, served and checked the quality of beer and ale. The pitcherhouse "kept the cups, mugs and pitchers in which potables were dispensed." It was responsible for their cleaning and storage, which was not a minor chore, Elizabethan etiquette required the nobility to have a new glass with each cup of wine or beer.

It was the responsibility of the officers of the Cellar to "keepe their office of the celler cleane, without servants or others," which they may have done, but they probably had servants to do it for them. And, of course, they had to make sure the king had the best wine at the best price. The sergeant of the cellar "had to ensure that all the casks he signed for were of full measure and filled to the brim and that they were properly sealed when the court "removed" to prevent spillage and pollution by dust." In addition, he would taste the wine and ale to be sure of its quality, a duty that he no doubt exploited by drinking more than absolutely necessary.

## Acatry

The Acatry, sometimes called the Catery, bought meat, fish, and salt. They had their own purveyors, of "beef, oxen and sheep, and both fresh and salt water fish...[and were] responsible for supplying mutton." To facilitate their storage, they hired pastures and storehouses. They must have dealt regularly with the kitchen, supplying them with meat for meals, and perhaps salt for various dishes. In addition to supplying the meat and fish, the acatry would dress and scale them, to reduce the labor in the kitchen.

## Poultry

The Poultry was primarily concerned with the white meats, "lamb, fowl, butter, and eggs." It also had a staff of purveyors, who supplied "fowl of every kind imaginable, not merely the barnyard varieties known to the modern palate, but peacocks, sparrows and larks as well. They also brought in butter, rabbits, and kid." Under its jurisdiction was the Scaldinghouse, which dressed poultry and "prepared the meat before it was issued to the larder."

It was the duty of the Sergeant of the Poultry to assure that enough poultry was in stock, and to restrain his staff from making off with birds that were of fit quality for the queen's table. The theft of a hen, which cost 2d., would require the Kitchen to use mutton in its place, which cost 8 to 10d. He was also required to "see that the said Poultry shall be dayly put into the Scalders hands, at such houres, both morning and after dinner, that they may have convenient time to dress the same," a duty that required constant attention, since the scalding house had to have enough time to prepare the birds for the kitchen before they were needed for the various meals.

## Ewery

The Ewery was in control of the table linen, and the laundry. In the past, the Ewery had not been an office, but a thing;

a basin or ewer filled with water which was carried around, with towels, to the lord and his guests, for them to wash their hands during and after the meal. The term 'ewery' was applied at times to the dresser whereon these basins were kept.

By Elizabeth's time this innocent piece of furniture had become a staff of men, and the tending to the service of the lord's table had evolved into a full-time office.

The Sergeant of the Ewery was responsible for the linen used both by the queen and the court, he made sure that it was "cleane, and kept sweet...that the Napery be not torne nor rent, or otherwise evill-ordered, neither by any of the Officers in their owne Office, nor yet by the Officers of the Laundry." It was the duty of the Chief Butler to provide plates, salt cellars, candlesticks, table cloths, napkins, towels (for the butlers and sewers to use), carving knives, torches, bread, beer, and ale. He attended the high table's needs, making sure they had enough wine, ale, and beer and that his subordinates did the same for the lower tables. The Sewers, Carvers and Cup-bearers were not personal servants, but served only in the semi-public context of the dining chamber. Each of these positions had strict rules of etiquette to follow, which enhanced the grandeur of the court. For example when a sewer served bread, he "had to have a towel draped over his shoulder, but when serving fruit, the towel must be "folden and laid upon [the sewer's] arm, [no matter] what manner of fruit so ever it be.""

The Ewery oversaw the Pantry servants, who were "essentially waiters." Elizabeth's funeral procession does list Grooms, Yeomen, and a Sergeant of the Pantry, but they may have been general servants, not having any specific function except waiting on the tables.

The laundry was a small office, containing "only five officers, one yeoman, two grooms and two pages," and yet they cleaned all the linen from the Ewery, as well as that from the Wardrobe. Occasionally they were called on for ceremonial services, as during Maundy, when the "Yeomen of the Laundry, armed with a fair towell, and taking a silver bason filled with warm water and flowers, washed" the feet of the poor, after them came the sub-almoner, the almoner, and then the queen herself to distribute alms and abase herself by washing the feet of the poor. This shows that the departments of the Domus Providencie could not only perform their practical function, but could form part of the glamour that surrounded the queen.

Under Henry VIII, the king's personal linen went to a special laundress, who collected all the table linen once a week, and returned the previous week's at the same time. She was also required to come daily to assure the king that if he had any special needs, or washing that it would be done. In recompense, she received wages of £10, which did not include her costs for materials. She petitioned twice in as many years, and received increases, first to £16, 13s., 4d. and then to £20 annually. Since Elizabeth also retained a personal laundress, who was paid £10 a year including livery, it is probable that her linen was handled in the same manner.

## Scullery

The presentation of meals on rows and rows of gleaming trays and serving platters made quite a show, but the business of keeping them clean and polished fell to the Scullery. The Scullery "washed up the various trays, platters and other utensils," and tended the fires in the kitchen departments. They purchased large amounts of coal probably to heat the water they cleaned the dishes in. The Scullery also bought "Brass potts, pannes, broches, iron, rocks, standerdes, gardevianch, and other necessaries" which cost £295 per year and may have stored all of these utensils, in addition to cleaning and acquiring them.

The sergeant of the Scullery and his staff had to "see his vessells, as well silver as pewter, to be well and truly kept, and saved from losses and stealing." Because the officers of the Scullery received all the damaged pots, except the silver ones, as part of their fee, keeping them safe must have been very difficult. The Scullery and Woodyard shared one Sergeant between them, which indicates that they may have been separate entities only on paper. This is reasonable, since the two departments were so closely connected in function.

## Woodyard

The Woodyard bought the wood and rushes need to heat and light a household, as well as wood needed for other uses. It was responsible for "plancks, boards, quarters, tressets, forms, and carpenters, hired in time of progresses" which cost £109/yr., and it collected and issued wood and coal to the kitchen departments. It employed two woodbearers, six porters and "scourers", in addition to the eight yeomen and grooms. This large staff can only be explained when one considers the huge number of rooms in the majority of Elizabeth's palaces, each with its own fireplace, and the fact that England in the sixteenth century was not a warm place, a warm day being fifty-five degrees Fahrenheit.

## Spicery

The Spicery was another major department, it bought wax and fruit in addition to the obvious rare and expensive spices. The clerk of the Spicery was responsible for "the Spicery, Chaundry, Confectionery, the Ewery, Wafry, and Laundry." They used the wax to seal bottles of spices to keep them from going stale, but since the Spicery used £686 per year of "wax, over and above the bouche of the courte" it is more probable that the majority of it was assigned to the Chaundry - the Spicery did transfer goods into the Chaundry.

The Chaundry was responsible for the candles and tapers used within the court. They dealt in wax and tallow, making their own candles and tallow candles, even to the point of having a "purveyor of the wax", and three clerks to keep accounts of the raw materials that they needed. "As a sub-department of the Spicery, the Chaundry did not account directly to the counting house," rather it reported to the Clerk of the Spicery who then included its totals in his report to the Board of Greencloth.

The Confectionery made sweetmeats out of the "fruit, sugar and spices" available to it from the Spicery. Elizabeth's funeral procession lists Grooms and Yeomen, as is appropriate for a small department. The

sweetmeats were a luxury item, and the assignment of an entire department to their production could only emphasize the brilliance of Elizabeth's household.

## Stables

The stables were an independent organization, even though they were technically "part of the household for accounting purposes." It is included in this discussion because the Avenor, or Chief Clerk, was in the line of promotion for the Board of Greencloth and the position of Cofferer. The stable reported to neither the counting house nor the Lord Steward or Lord Chamberlain. The Avenor, like the Chief Clerk of the Kitchen, had two Clerks of the Stable under him. The Stables oversaw the stables proper, the kennels, and the toyles. The Kennels were divided into "three divisions-Hard Hounds, Buckhounds and Otter Hounds". The toyles had a staff of six under a sergeant, and the stables themselves were a major department, with a huge staff. The Stables and other hunting departments were "financed directly from the Exchequer, and answerable to no one except the monarch."

The Stable "purveyed most of its own goods as a department and usually had its own grain stockpile." The Avenery was a sub-department of the Stables, and had to do with the compartmentalization of grain stocks in households with large numbers of horses. It was responsible for all the grain incoming and outgoing, and assigning it to the correct department (bakery, stables, pastery, etc.), and it was this that the Avenor oversaw and which tied him to the household.

## Revenue and Accounting

The household was funded by the money and goods provided by the royal estates, and by the King's 'livelhode,' as Fortescue calls it, and the commodities and services that could be claimed from the subjects under the traditional rights of purveyance and other analogous dues. There was no clear distinction between the supply of the King for what we now regard as the natural purposes and tasks of Government, and his supply for his own maintenance and that of his children and personal servants

In addition to these funds, Elizabeth also received money from the rental of crown lands. These moneys funded the government officers, the army and navy, the queen's personal spending money, and the royal household. Because of the number of activities that this revenue needed to support, "the monarch could no longer "live of his own" but had to ask parliament for money to support the court" but most Englishmen were not willing to admit it, and still expected the queen to live and support her household from private revenues. Because of the perception that the crown should be self-supporting, the counties and shires often resented supplying the royal household. There are several instances in which various localities either refused to supply the purveyors, or sent other goods than those requested. In 1588, The Justices of Huntingdonshire sent word to the Earl of Leicester, who was at that time Lord Steward,

Desiring that they may not be further charged with providing sheep and cattle for the Household, their county not being suited for pasture. The county would willingly supply yearly 15 dozen of capons, 15 dozen of hens, 15 dozen of pullets. and 15 dozen of chickens for Her Majesty's Household.

Poultry was cheaper than sheep or cattle, which explains Huntingdonshire's desire to pay in poultry. In 1563 Lord Zouch and the Justices of Northampton wrote to Lord Burghley to express their "Thanks for relieving the county of purveyors. [And an] Offer to furnish certain provisions of sheep, oxen, &c. for the Queen's Household." This haggling over what was to be paid to the queen's household was acceptable, but some areas simply refused payment and there was little to be done. Burghley eliminated this problem over the course of the reign by arraigning contracts with the suppliers of the royal household to buy goods at a set price on a regular basis.

The 3 head officers of the household (Lord Steward, Treasurer, Controller) were theoretically also head officers in the Countinghouse, which "was always responsible for the money allocated to the service departments, no matter where it came from." Daily accounts were "submitted to the Clerk of the Greencloth by the Clerks or Sergeants of the various departments." Since the individual departments kept their own records, they must have been moderately autonomous. The Clerk then tallied the individual accounts into weekly, monthly, and yearly summaries, which were used in estimating the amount of supplies needed over the next year, and provided budgeting information.

The Tudors "had not yet developed any sense of corporate responsibility or accountability for crown revenue." They did attempt to cross check the accounts drawn up by the individual departments with the inspections performed by the Board of Greencloth, but this was fairly ineffective. Household accounts tended to be simple lists of what was spent with explanations next to the amounts, with little indication of where the money came from or what the purchase was intended for. This made it easier for household officers to embezzle goods or money without being detected.

The expenses of the royal household were high. In 1563 the Board of Green Cloth received £40,027 from parliament, but the expenditures outstripped the income. Expenses rose from between £45,000 and £50,000 a year at the beginning of the reign to £50,000 to £60,000 pounds a year at the end of the reign. This sum paid for "diets provided for those in attendance, bouge of court, and the wages of the Household and Privy Chamber." This amount did not cover the provisioning of the army and navy, or other governmental costs. Despite Elizabeth's reissue of the coinage, inflation must have been a factor in this increase in cost. The items taken by the household staff must have driven the overall cost up. Adams says that expenditure seems to have been £70,000 to £90,000 pounds a year to maintain the court. This figure may have included the money spent for entertainments during her summer progresses, which were not paid for by the crown, or it may have included the pilfering. Elizabeth was "very uneasy at finding her houshold expences run so high;" as a result, household expenses were "the subject of constant review by Queen and Council." These reviews may have decreased the rate of the growth in spending, but they never resulted in a drop in the level of spending.

During the early part of Elizabeth's reign, revelry was "modest" and "the queen encouraged and attended large-scale pageantry paid for by others." The expenditures in Lord North's household books, as well as the books of others that she visited, list enormous sums laid out for the queen's visits. Elizabeth still appears to have paid for the royal household, but all of the panoply and extravagance was paid for by her hosts.

## ***Compensation***

### **Wages**

The Queen's servants "swore an oath to her and took her wages." The Chamberlain or Vice-Chamberlain administered the oath of office to the new officers, and commanded them to serve their offices and the honor of the queen. The queen's servants were paid substantially higher wages than their counterparts in noble households. "The earl [of Northumberland] paid his carver only five marks, for example, while the king paid fifty." Even though they received better salaries than more common laborers, the wages were the smallest part of an official's income. In general, offices in the government and the household were worth more than the official fees paid to it.

The difference was made up by using cash balances for private money-lending, by the sale of inferior offices, by New Year gifts from lesser officials, by private fees, and by more disreputable sources such as bribes for the corrupt exercise of authority...[but] There was the cost of purchase of the office in the first place...and there was the general expense of life at Court.

The household servant was exempt from most of the expense of living at court because he received "livery" from the queen. That is, food, clothing and lodging at the king's expense." Even the upper gentry could live more than adequately on the money and other compensation paid to him by the queen. In general, the Yeomen were paid five or six pounds per year, Grooms, two to four pounds, and Pages two to three pounds per year "regardless of whether they worked in the scullery or the king's chamber." A servant at the bottom of the hierarchy, like the woodbearers, were paid a penny a day.

At least some of the household staff were paid from the privy purse instead of the Board of Greencloth, John Tamworth's Accounts list wages for various services, "...Mrs. Taylor , the Quene's Laundress, for wages, at £4 per ann. for one yere ended at the Annunciation of our Lady, 1568, with £6 paid to her for her lyvery gown £10 0s. 0d.," as well as wages paid to "Robert Grene, the Quene's Fool and to Nicholas Knight Smythe, his servant, for wage and borde-wage at sundry tymes, £17 0s. 0d." This last shows that even the queen's servants had their own servants, and that at least some of them were paid by the crown. But both of these examples were for personal servants of the queen, not servants that belonged to the royal household. Tamworth notes that there were other payments made from the privy purse that were "of late were accustomed to be paid at the office of the Great Wardrobe." These may have been paid from the queen's personal funds in order to save the government money, or she may have been making a loan to cover the wages until some later date. Because these men were employed in the Wardrobe, which like the Stables was an independent unit, their salaries were not as regulated as those of the Domus Regie Magnificencie or the Domus Providencie , and may have been more subject to financial relocation.

		£ s d
David Smyth,	Embroiderer - - -	203 15 7
William Middleton,	Embroiderer - -	25 11 11
Robert Careles,	Pynner - - - -	127 8 9
Raphel Hamonde,	Capper - - -	68 1 6.

These expenses pay the wages of three years, but even so are extravagant. The work they were doing was uniforms for the household, using silk floss and gold spangles. The gold was supplied by the queen's goldsmith and the material came from the offices of the wardrobe. £203 to David Smith is outrageous, unless one considers that he was probably buying the silk floss out of that wage and paying for outside labor. The William Middleton's wage of £25 11s 11d (or £8 10s 4d per year) is more consistent with the wages paid to the other servants.

The Domus Regie Magnificencie received £15,000 a year to pay "the wages of members of the Chamber, the yeomen of the guard and such miscellaneous servants as the Queen's boatmen, mole- and ratcatcher, together with her alms and the expenses of messengers and diplomatic couriers". Unfortunately, this does not reveal how much each individual servant actually received. We do know that the eight Gentlewomen of the Privy Chamber who received pay were given £33 6s. 8p. per year, and that the four paid Chamberers received £20 per year. In addition, we know that she paid the wages listed below.

	£ s d
Gentlemen of the Privie Chamber, 18;	fee apeece, 50 0 0
Gentlemen Ushers of the Privie Chamber, 5;	fee apeece, 30 0 0...
Grooms of the Privie Chamber, 14;	fee apeece, 20 0 0
Carvers, 4;	fee apeece, 33 6 8
Cupbearers, 3;	fee apeece, 33 6 8
Sewers to the Queene, 4;	fee apeece, 33 6 8...
Pages, 4;	fee apeece, 2 0 0
Messengers, 4;	fee apeece 26 13 4

But all of these wages added together only come to approximately £2000 per year. She may have spent the remaining £13,000 on other servants in departments like the Stables or the Wardrobe.

In addition to her paid servants, there were several unpaid ladies of the Privy Chamber. Unpaid ladies gained in status and political power instead of cash, and appear to have been called upon less, being reserved until the Queen wanted company or to impress a visiting dignitary. The Gentleman Usher whom Wright believes was a "working deputy to the Lord Chamberlain" was paid £30 per year. Not only were Gentlewomen and the Gentleman Usher paid more than the servants of the Domus Providencie, they had personal incomes, and if they were lucky, they might receive patents or other compensation for their work.

## Fees and tips

In addition to his wages, a servant in the household would receive fees and tips. These sums did not come out of the crown's revenue, they were paid by individuals at court often in return for a special service or a favor. These fees and tips were different for each office: they could be conventional amounts of money rendered for a specific service, the rights to items or food no longer deemed fit for nobility, or the rights to a nobleman's property after certain ceremonies.

Both the royal messengers and the royal cooks received tips on a regular basis. In general, "Messengers were always tipped by the person who received the message, and if they bore gifts, the tip was usually one-tenth the value of the present." Since a great deal of communication took place by messenger, these men must have received substantial sums for running back and forth delivering the missives of the nobility. The cooks were also tipped by custom, but only from guests at the court, except on special occasions. Nichols cites numerous expenses for individual dinners during Easter, most of which list the amount paid for cook's wages at between 2 and 6 shillings, with the most common wage being 3 shillings. These 'wages' were most likely the tips paid by the diners, since the cooks were paid by the quarter like the rest of the servants of the household.

Leftovers were considered the property of the officers of the department in which the goods were found. They were the parts of the food or goods for which the crown had no further use. For example, the officers of the scaldinghouse received the down and feathers of the birds they prepared for the queen, the Sergeant of the Cellar was entitled to the lees of wine, and the Sergeant of the Scullery was entitled to the damaged pots. Each department had its own special perquisite, many of which were abused. The Sergeant of the

Chaundry was entitled to all the spent candle ends, but the officers would often declare the candles spent before they had burned all the way down. The servers of food could also benefit; the almoner theoretically received all the food that had been tasted without being finished to distribute to the poor, but the

dishes which left the board untouched (of which there were a great many, owing to the nature of sixteenth-century meals) were the perquisite of the servants of the appropriate department...the principal beneficiaries were the Sewers, Ushers and Grooms of the Chamber, who no doubt made a handsome profit out of retailing what they obtained.

They sold the food to whomever could pay for it, courtiers who wanted extra food for their retinue, other servants who had their families at court, or hangers on outside the court.

Servants in the royal household were also asked to perform functions of state, such as when the queen initiated a knight of the Bath. Those servants involved in the ceremony received some sort of compensation, as when "The Sergeant of the Chaundry was entitled to all the clothes and bed linen which a newly created Knight of the Bath used during the ritual of his initiation -- or a cash composition." In many cases, these fees, tips, and other perquisites were worth more than the actual wage paid by the crown, and servants would maneuver to get positions that received numerous fees or perquisites. "Stephen Darrell, for instance, surrendered the second Clerkship of the Kitchen, which was worth £44.6.9 a year in the middle of Elizabeth's reign, for the Clerkship of the Acatry, worth £6.13.4 -- and he certainly did not intend to lose by the transaction."

## Bonuses

In addition to wages and fees he received, a servant of the queen could expect regular bonuses. These bonuses might take the form of cash, as when the Exchequer paid a Christmas bonus to the grooms of the Chamber, in the amount of 100 pounds, or they might take the form of special privileges. The cash bonuses were theoretically shared equally "according to their degrees." This bonus was at least triple the yearly salary. Likewise, "The master cooks got £6.13.4 "largess" at Easter" each year. The cash bonuses were supposed to be rewards for good service, but, since they were customary, they became an addition to the expected wages.

Special privileges were awarded in much the same manner, as cash. In May 1560 the queen gave

Licence for the officers of the household to sell the raw hides of oxen slaughtered before 1 April next for the provision of the household to any persons at the queen's slaughterhouses or wherever else the hides shall be, without carrying them to fairs or markets...notwithstanding sata. 1 Eliz. prohibiting the sale of raw hides elsewhere than in open market or fair.

The officers of the Acatry got to keep the money they received by selling the hides. This type of bonus was infrequent enough to be a reward for good service. Both types of bonuses allowed the queen to recognize the critical role her household played in court life, and to give her appreciation a tangible form.

## Livery

The queen's servants received their clothing as part of their compensation, so much so that "Lyverye Clothe for her Majesty's Servants" came to £328, 1s, 9d per year. This sum paid for all of the servants in the Domus Providencie, and some of the Domus Regie Magnificencie, since Grooms of the Privy Chamber and the Yeomen of the Guard had uniforms. The Nobles in the queen's service provided their own clothing. However, in 1594 the payments made for uniforms come to over £700. These warrants were only concerned with the Yeomen of the Guard, grooms and pages of the Chamber. In that year, the crown

authorized "219l. 10s. for red cloth for summer liveries of the yeomen of the guard and for others," which did not include any of the embroidery work done on the livery. Granted that these two prices are thirty years apart, it is difficult to imagine Elizabeth outfitting her household for under £350 in the early part of her reign, as John Nichols claims in *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth*.

## Bouge of Court

In the sixteenth century food was used to "illustrate splendour and largesse". Since Elizabeth's servants were a manifestation of her glory, her care of them would indicate how generous she could be, not just to her servants, but, symbolically, to all of England. The queen's servants were allowed specific amounts of "bread, wine, beer, fuel and light" each day, and to the leftovers from the state meals, these privileges were known as bouge of court. Despite specific limits on consumption the household commonly disregarded their allotments. In all cases the amount Elizabeth actually spent on her servants exceeds the amount budgeted, but the 'below stairs' positions appear to have come closer to the amount they were allotted than the higher positions, for example, the master of the Horse was allowed £310, 17s., 0d., but he actually spent £585, 14s., 9d., whereas the cellar was allotted £65, 10s, 1d. and actually spent £78, 17s. 4d. David Loades, in *The Tudor Court* says that there was "considerable manoeuvring and competition among the courtiers to obtain their rations" from the Privy Kitchen because the food was better and they shared in the queen's prestige if they ate food that was prepared for her. As if to encourage this, "the kitchen never closed, and the wine and beer cellars, far from being properly regulated, were also open all night to all comers." These pilferers of the kitchens probably left money in the hands of the kitchen servants, which may explain why it was so difficult to regulate the hours of the kitchen.

In the 1580's Burghley attempted to restrict the consumption within the household, "He...ordered that the cofferer, clerks comptroller, and clerks of the Greencloth be allowed only "six dishes" instead of seven at dinner and that on two days a week no supper be served in the household." This was disregarded, as most of the regulations concerning food were, and consumption continued as before. Once again the concerns of magnificence triumphed over practical considerations.

In addition to those who dined at the queen's expense, there were also "persons as do receive board-wages daylie throughout the yere, and not comprised within her Majesty's booke of diet." These men received a sum of money to compensate them for their absence from court, since they were unable to partake in the meals provided by the queen. It was also used when a man held more than one office, to compensate him for not being able to eat twice. The board-wage was more difficult to abuse than the bouge of court, but if a man held multiple offices, he could profit admirably.

In addition to making off with as much food as they could, servants would bring their wives and children despite the number of regulations that prohibited extra persons at court and the fact that their rooms were often only big enough for one. The small quarters did not discourage them, and the regulations were not well enforced. Servants may have brought their wives and children because they could not support them in a separate establishment, or they may have wished to have their families all in one place. Certainly it was easier to feed them all, since they expected to eat from the same table as the queen's servants. Mertes says that in return for this largess, traditionally, children in a noble household performed the tasks of "fetching for [the lady of the household] and doing simple tasks...turning the spit in the kitchen and dusting nightly in the pantry.

In addition to families, the noblemen, and their servants surrounded themselves with as many servants as they wanted. Not only did the servants of the nobles at the queen's court keep servants, but the servants of the queen kept their own servants, usually to keep their rooms clean. The "disciplinary officers of the court waged constant war" against these servants of servants, primarily in the hope that the costs of maintaining the court could be reduced. Theoretically, if a servant in the Pantry was found keeping his own servants he was penalized "for the first time to loose one dayes Wages, and at every time afre being soe found, to be checkt of three dayes Wages; and that noe service be done within the said Office by any substitute, but

only by Officers of the Office," in practice they were seldom fined and continued keeping servants of their own. The tradition of keeping personal servants prevailed over the attempted reforms.

## Gifts

Some of the queen's servants were required to give her new year's gifts, in return for which she would reward them with a certain amount of gilt plate. She would also give "Free Gifts" to inferior Officers in her Court, who were not expected to give a gift to the queen in return, as opposed to the higher ranking officers, who were expected to give her something in return. Those who gave her presents were of slightly higher rank - all of the Domus Regie Magnificencie, and such servants of the Domus Providencie as Chief Clerk of the Kitchen and the Master Cook. The gifts her household officers gave were symbolic, her physicians always gave ginger and orange flowers, the Sergeants of the Pastry gave her a pie of oregano, and the Cooks gave her marzipan. These gifts netted the cooks 7oz. each, and the Sergeants of the Pastry 8oz. each of gilt plate in return. The giving and getting of gifts, were tokens of regard and a way for Elizabeth to reward those servants personally that she believed had performed especially well in the preceding year. She would often give large amounts of silver gilt, which was the only type of present she made to her servants and courtiers, in return for a token gift from a beloved servant.

## ***Changes in Status***

### Hiring

In the royal household, "men and women served until removed by death or incapacity. New blood entered only when vacancies were created," or a new monarch took the throne. Elizabeth was loyal to those who had served her as princess, and attempted to find places for all of them in the royal household. In the early months of her reign, "she appointed thirty-eight new servants" in order to include her private household. Those who were not placed within the royal household were placed in some other position outside of the household. In order to place as many of her servants as possible, Elizabeth had many of the positions held by two men at the same time. These servants would split the wages, fees, and other benefits of the office, until one of them left office. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, there were almost three hundred servants in her household, but by the end of it, there were only about two hundred and fifty. This decrease was the result of the duplicated servants leaving, or finding other positions within the court.

This new blood was often the old blood in a new form, since "there was an established body of Household families whose position Elizabeth did little to disrupt". With little variation in personnel, there could not have been much deviation from the routine, even during something as disruptive as a change in the monarchy. Since family members were often placed in departments that they had grown up around, they would have understood the existing system faster than an outsider. For example, Elizabeth's head cook, Francis Piggot, had "literally been raised in the royal kitchens. His father, Hugh Piggot, was yeoman cook in the establishment of Princess Mary in the 1520's, rising to master cook by 1534." He was then transferred to Edward's household, and, in time, Francis was named groom of the kitchen. Neither of the Piggot's were able to be accommodated in the Royal household upon Edward's ascension, and the father was pensioned off, and the son transferred to Elizabeth's household, who appointed Francis Master Cook upon her ascension to the throne.

On the other hand, because the terms of service were so long, there was tremendous pressure for places in the service departments of the household "both from those who sought them and from those who wished to increase their influence by providing them". Placing someone in the queen's household would increase the prestige of the person who recommended the employee, only if that servant proved an asset. Occasionally the queen might intervene, placing someone she especially wanted in an office; but "routine replacements and promotions within the household were the responsibility of the Lord Steward...who had '...the placing

and displacing of all her Majesties servants' as the Ordinances of 1601 put it." In his absence, the treasurer and the comptroller of the household "carried with them the power to appoint most of their subordinates." Since recommendations often came from patrons, the man advanced for a position might or might not have any skill in the area for which he was a candidate. To avoid having an unsuitable man in the household, the Board of Greencloth often appointed men to vacant posts before the treasurer or the comptroller heard of a vacancy. In rare cases a man would be placed within the household by the influence of his patron, and would prove to have some real skill.

The Earl of Leicester recommended such a person, in the form of a man named Robert Laneham. He was of the gentry class, educated at St. Paul's, and had already spent time as a "Merchant adventurer." Through Leicester's "influence he was made "Clark of the Councel Chamber door, and also Keeper of the same" ". Prior to that appointment, Laneham held a position in the Royal Stables, which he succeeded in passing on to his father after his own advancement. After his appointment to Clerk of the Council Chamber, his "duty was not confined to keeping the entrance of the Council-room...he also performed the office of a Gentleman-Usher, in preserving the Presence-chamber, wherever that might be, free from the intrusion of strangers." It was Laneham's "boldness...joined to his knowledge of several foreign languages" that brought him to the attention of Leicester, and it was Leicester who brought him to the attention of the treasurer and/or the comptroller and placed him within the household. It was this same boldness that allowed him to determine the need for additional control over the access to the queen.

Money could also be used to gain patronage, and a position in the household. Sir Thomas Sherley asked Lord Burghley to intercede for him for the position of Comptroller, "for which he will give 500l. , and all other true service during his life", as well as promising Burghley that he would save the queen money if she granted him the post. Both parties benefited, Sherley received the post, and Burghley the £500. Once in a position of influence, a servant of the queen's could receive quite a bit of money by selectively exerting his influence.

Bribes were not the only method used to obtain positions, the promise of efficiency and economizing once appointed to an office was also used. Christopher Pays sent a letter to Burghley which stated that,

Mr. Quarles, who receives the whole fee for serjeant of the poultry, has so many offices to deal in, being also victualler for the Queen's ships, chief clerk of the kitchen, and keeper of Her Majesty's pasture of Creslow, that he is not able to do good service in any office, and yet the worst of these have matter enough for an honest gentleman to do good service....[and] that if Her Majesty will bestow the place upon him, he will undertake that she shall be better served and 300 l. a year saved.

Both this statement, and the one from Thomas Shirley, emphasize saving the queen money, if she will appoint them to office. Often it was a promise too good to ignore and succeeded in placing the candidate in the office he was bidding for.

## Promotion

In general, vacancies were filled, not from outside recommendations, but "by promotion from below, either within the same department or between departments" These promotions were granted, after consultation with the Lord Steward and the Sergeants and Clerks of the department concerned, by the Board of Greencloth. "The higher the position, the more interested the Steward was likely to be; the more menial, the greater the influence of the Sergeants and Clerks." Pages were promoted to Yeomen, Yeomen were promoted to Sergeants or Clerks, and Clerks were promoted to higher clerkships and eventually to the post of cofferer. Sergeants while they had more daily authority, and were paid better than the clerks were not in line for promotion to cofferer.

## Retirement

Under Elizabeth, retirement was not regularized into a specific form of compensation for years of labor. An especially lucky servant might receive some sort of compensation once he passed the age that he could do his job. A retirement plan was examined during Elizabeth's reign, but it was too costly to implement. This age of retirement varied with the individual, but eventually, "informal pressure was brought to bear upon those who were no longer able to discharge their duties." To gain funds to live on after their retirement, many older servants sold their positions to those trying to enter the queen's service. This was accomplished by the old office holder recommending his successor to the Board of Greencloth. This practice became so common that "one proposal for improved service below stairs included a provision that servants be licensed to sell their places as a form of retirement bonus."

Servants below stairs "were usually able to get small pensions when they were dismissed at the end of a reign; whereas servants of the privy chamber did not," but the members of the Domus Regie Magnificencie were better off financially than those in the Domus Providencie. Even This compensation could take the form of money granted for a period of time, or it could take the form of land rented at prices well below the value of the property. David Smythe and William Middleton received grants for life of 18d. a day. John Smytheson, one of the queen's master cooks, received a 21 year lease for 4 parcels of land in Westminster, for which he paid 87s. a year. These grants were not always free, Thomas Smyth, a clerk of the kitchen had to pay a fine of £54, 13s. and 4 d. before he could receive the lease of 3 parcels of land in Essex. In extreme cases, a servant would receive both land and a cash settlement, as in the case of Richard Hampden, who had been principal clerk of the kitchen, and received a "house or mansion of Cresselowe and the pastures called Cresselowe Pastures [and]...wages of 4d. a day."

## **Progress**

The chaos that followed Elizabeth's summer progress prompted one historian to write, "Nothing save war was more disruptive to the orderly well-being of court life than a royal progress." Elizabeth went on progress each summer, to maintain contact with her people and to get out of London during plague season. When the Queen went on progress "she was not content to be accompanied by a mere handful of courtiers and ladies-in-waiting; she took along a great multitude and a large train of luggage, furnishings, food, and other supplies". Burghley tried to get the queen to limit the number of people she took on progress, but she was unwilling to compromise on the matter. To maintain the level of magnificence expected of her, she expected both her courtiers and her household to behave as though they were in residence at one of her palaces. Among those she expected undiminished service from were the members of the household. They succeeded, but only by having "every department...trundling round the countryside on an assortment of wagons." As when she was in one of her own palaces, Elizabeth tended to let the household serve her without regard to how that service was accomplished. The household often had to do with very makeshift circumstances. It was the responsibility of each department to pack the necessary equipment to take with it when the court went on progress, and their baggage, and that of the rest of the court, could take up from three to five hundred carts.

## Planning and Organizing

The organization of a summer progress required lengthy preparation, involving the coordination of many different offices. The Lord Chamberlain was responsible for determining the course and provisioning of the summer progress. His job required knowledge of the political situation in the countryside, so that he could include in the queen's agenda the loyal servants that she wanted to visit as well as the areas that would be more settled after a visit from the queen and court. After the route had been laid out, "The Knight Harbinger was responsible for all accommodation when the court was on progress...and for organizing the regular moves from palace to palace", he would then have the waymakers mark the actual path the progress train would take. Their job was far from easy, since they "had to determine which roads were most likely to

be passable at that season, and safe from brigands, always keeping in mind the necessity of avoiding neighborhoods where plague or smallpox had been reported recently". Once the queen and court arrived in a village, manor or college to stay the night, elaborate preparations were needed to accommodate everyone. At Hampton Court, to prepare for the Queen's presence

Servants in blue liveries went from room to room, putting up and taking down tapestries, curtains and bed hangings, carrying trays of food or armfuls of bedding or other "Rich Implements." An army of grooms brought heavy loads of firewood from the woodyard to stack beside the palace's thousand hearths, where yeomen waited to lay the fires and warm the rooms.

Amid all this preparation, it was important to ensure that the household had enough space to perform as effectively as possible, which involved creative accommodations. During the queen's Visit to Cambridge in 1564, in preparation of the queen's arrival, supplies were laid in, and various buildings were co-opted for use by her household:

1. The Choristers' School was made the Buttery.
2. The Pantry and Ewry were two Chambers in the King's College.
3. The open Kitchens and Skulleryes were raised against S. Austin's wall.
4. The Cellar, in the Provost's Buttery.
5. The Councill Chamber, in the South Vestry.
6. The Guard Chamber, was the Lower Hall of the Provost's Place.
7. The Chamber of Presence, over that.
8. The Gallery and other Chambers served for the Queen's Lodging

The amount of space that the household took up on progress, as well as the elaborate preparations for its lodging, indicate that the function was a priority. These makeshift quarters did not allow for the most efficient service, but since the individual offices brought all their equipment with them it is probable that they did not suffer overly much.

## Expenses

During progress "all regular supplies for the queen and her train, the daily food and fodder, were paid for from the household treasury", a fact that the queen was inclined to disregard. She would change the route at whim, necessitating the procurement of additional supplies at inflated prices. The route the queen intended to follow would be laid out in advance, and "supplies were laid in in advance at various stages along the route. These supplies would have to be sold at a loss if Elizabeth changed her mind and decided to go in another direction, which she frequently did. In 1576, Burghley complained that a long progress had cost £2000 more than it should have.

Burghley regularly complained of the expenses that progress incurred but could do little to reduce them, since the queen was unwilling to change her ways. But Elizabeth's progresses "were not undertaken for reasons of economy," they were undertaken for reasons of policy. Elizabeth maintained an aura of omnipresence by appearing personally in areas that were at some distance from her regular abodes. She inspired loyalty and love among her people by allowing them to see her, even if at a distance.

The household also benefited from these entertainments, since they were paid numerous rewards at each different place they visited. In Lord North's books, there is an entry for "Gyftes and rewards to ye Quenes Maties Officers and Servants - £48." When the queen went on progress, tips were paid to her servants as "a form of blackmail they gladly paid to keep theft to a minimum." Since the queen's servants were so accustomed to taking items or food during the course of their jobs, it would have taken very little rationalization on their part to take stuff while lodged at one of her lord's manors.

## **Conclusion**

Elizabeth's household, primarily the *Domus Providencie*, was a government unto itself, providing for her comfort without supervision from the officers of her state. The institutionalization of this structure - with clearly defined duties, standardized supervision, and established hierarchies of promotion - made the panoply of the court easier to achieve. The segregation of officers of the household into departments and the strict lines of command allowed for an efficient response to the desires of queen and court. Since the members of the queen's household did not have to consult anyone except their immediate superiors for instruction regarding their duties, their competence was easily established.

The salary and rewards paid to the officers of the household higher than those of comprable servants in other households because the queen needed to keep her household better than any of the nobility as evedence of her superiority. This also promoted stability within the household, since men tended to stay in the household once they had obtained a position. Despite this comfortable wage, members of the household abused the largess of the queen: appropriating food and goods before they were entitled to them, feeding more persons than they were allowed by ordinance at the queen's table, and selling their offices at the time of their retirement. These practices were so institutionalized, that reforms were unable to have any noticeable effect on them.

The members of the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* were of a higher rank, and therefore were more independent, intelectually and financially. Since their duties were largely ceremonial, they had a great deal of time for political intrigues. The whims of the queen influenced their routine more than they intruded on the *Domus Providencie*, but, because the structure was looser, they were able to function smoothly despite her moods. Even though the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* was less institutionalized than the *Domus Providencie*, it possessed a simple command structure - each member was required to report to the Lord Chamberlain. They were held to account to him and disciplined by him.

Politics had a greater influence on the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* than on the *Domus Providencie*, but both sections of the household were affected. The offices in the Hall and Chamber, being primarily ceremonial, were awarded on a political basis; those in long service to the queen, those who had performed extraordinarily for her, and those who attracted her notice were given posts close to her. Their duties were light, and their proximity to the queen allowed them to bring their families and protégés to her attention. The politics of the *Domus Providencie* were more localized, centering on familial obligations, favors to individual officers in the household, and elementary bribery for positions.

Because the Government was centered on the court, the efficiency and splendour of the court was used as a political tool. There was a precedence among nations that was measured by the magnificence of the court, and Elizabeth was determined to be the best. The livery, the ceremonies, and the efficiency of her household were all designed to impress foreign visitors, as well as to assure her own people that she was the strongest monarch in Europe. Her position as head of the Anglican Church may have influenced the complexity of the rituals that surrounded her, but the primary motive was political.

The stability and efficiency of Elizabeth's household, both the *Domus Regie Magnificencie* and the *Domus Providencie* were critical in maintaining the splendor of court life. They allowed the ceremonies and rituals to be performed that emphasized the queen's position at the head of the government, as well as allowing the

government to receive the basic services it needed. They enabled the court to function, even when on progress, and for Elizabeth to have a splendid backdrop for herself.