

Tudor Practice Source Paper

Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that Edward VI and his government wanted to keep Mary Tudor from succeeding the throne because of her religious beliefs.

[30]

Source 1: The Privy Council issues a final version of Henry VIII's will shortly before his death, clarifying the line of succession.

Succession to the Crown shall go to Prince Edward and his heirs. In default, to King Henry's daughter Mary and her heirs, on condition she marries only with the consent of a majority of the surviving councillors appointed to Edward. In default, to his daughter Elizabeth on like condition. Mary or Elizabeth shall forfeit all right to the succession for failing to observe this condition. In default, to the heirs of Frances [Grey], eldest daughter of [King Henry's] younger sister. In default, to the heirs of Eleanor, second daughter of his younger sister.

Henry VIII, last will and testament, 30 December 1546.

Source 2: Edward VI issues his 'Devise for the Succession' setting out who would succeed to the crown in the event of his death

As Lady Mary and Lady Elizabeth are both illegitimate, they have no claim to the crown. As half-blood to us, they would be barred by ancient law and custom of this realm and could not succeed us even if legitimate. Were the said Mary or Elizabeth to have the crown of England and marry a foreigner, he would rather practise his own country's laws and customs within this realm. This would utterly subvert the good of the nation. We therefore declare that the crown shall, for lack of issue of our body, come firstly to the eldest son of Lady Frances Grey or, secondly, to the Lady Jane and her male heirs.

Letters patent for the limitation of the crown, 21 June 1553

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Source 3: The writer, a Suffolk gentleman and Catholic supporter of Queen Mary, assesses Northumberland and his role in the attempt to change the succession in 1553

The Duke of Northumberland was an ambitious man. After a notable victory outside Norwich in 1549 against the peasants, who had been stirred up against the better sort by idle men, Northumberland sought to control both the King and the kingdom. In 1553, the King showed signs of imminent death. He dared not make any protests, but fell in with the Duke's wishes to alter the succession. The dying king spoke to the nobles and lawyers: 'it is our resolve, with the agreement of our noblemen, to appoint as our heir our dear cousin Jane. For if our sister Mary were to be queen, all would be over for the religion we have established'.

From Robert Wingfield's 'The Life of Queen Mary of England', 1553

Source 4: Lady Jane Dudley (formerly Grey) writes to Queen Mary I to explain the circumstances in which she was proclaimed 'Queen Jane' in the previous month.

The Duke of Northumberland announced King Edward's death. He said the King had considered it treason to acknowledge Mary, your most serene Majesty, or Lady Elizabeth as true heirs of the Crown. One disobeyed her father on religion and both were bastards. King Edward disinherited them and ordered the Council to obey. The Duke said King Edward had named me the true heir. The Council kneeled before me, saying they would obey King Edward's wishes on pain of death. I was amazed and troubled, overcome by sudden grief and fell to the ground, weeping very bitterly. I resolved never to consent to my husband becoming King.

Lady Jane Dudley, letter written in August 1553