



Princely Education in Early Modern Britain (Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History)

Aysha Pollnitz

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In the sixteenth century, Erasmus of Rotterdam led a humanist campaign to deter European princes from vainglorious warfare by giving them liberal educations. His prescriptions for the study of classical authors and scripture transformed the upbringing of Tudor and Stuart royal children. Rather than emphasising the sword, the educations of Henry VIII, James VI and I, and their successors prioritised the pen. In a period of succession crises, female sovereignty, and minority rulers, liberal education played a hitherto unappreciated role in reshaping the political and religious thought and culture of early modern Britain. This book explores how a humanist curriculum gave princes the rhetorical skills, biblical knowledge, and political impetus to assert the royal supremacy over their subjects' souls. Liberal education was meant to prevent over-mighty monarchy but in practice it taught kings and queens how to extend their authority over church and state.

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