



**Elizabeth's Glass: With "The Glass of the Sinful Soul" (1544) by Elizabeth I and "Epistle Dedicatory" and "Conclusion" (1548) by John Bale (1544 By Elizabeth I and "Epistle Dedicatory" & "Conclusion")**

*Marc Shell*

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As a girl of eleven, Elizabeth I translated into English a poem by Marguerite of Navarre on incest, spiritual and physical. Four years later her translation, titled "The Glass of the Sinful Soul," was published by the Protestant reformer John Bale. However ingenuous Elizabeth may have been at eleven, she surely realized the implications of the tract when she permitted new editions in 1568, 1582, and 1590. Its bearing on her own family and her precarious hold on the throne was all too obvious when dissenters accused both her father, Henry VIII, and her mother, Ann Boleyn, of adultery; when her father had sought to annul his first marriage on grounds of incest, when her mother was accused by Henry of incest, and when Elizabeth herself was deemed a bastard.

Making Elizabeth's little-known work readily available to today's scholars, *Elizabeth's Glass* includes a photographic reproduction of Elizabeth's manuscript and a modern transcription, as well as John Bale's additions to his 1548 edition. In an erudite and penetrating introduction, Marc Shell investigates the complex political, familial, theological, and ecclesiastical forces that made Elizabeth acutely conscious of incest and made her translation an emblem of a controversy that stormed throughout Reformation Europe.

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