

## TROY, BLANCHE HERBERT, LADY TROY (previously BLANCHE MILBO(U)RNE, BLANCHE WHITNEY) (died c. 1557)Lady Mistress of Elizabeth I, Edward VI and Queen Mary

**Name:** Blanche Herbert Troy  
**Date of death:** c. 1557  
**Gender:** Female  
**Occupation:** Lady Mistress of Elizabeth I, Edward VI and Queen Mary  
**Area of activity:** Royalty and Society  
**Author:** Ruth Elizabeth Richardson

She was in charge of the upbringing of Elizabeth I, Edward VI and also of Queen Mary when she lived with the younger Tudor children. Therefore she was the Lady Mistress for Elizabeth and Edward, the title accorded to the lady who controlled the household. Her funeral elegy, composed by [Lewys Morgannwg](#), includes the lines:

Arglwyddes breninesau,  
Gofrner oedd ban oedd yn iau.  
Hi a wyddiad yn weddus  
Wybodau iarllesau'r llys,  
Gorcheidwad cyn ymadaw  
Ty Harri Wyth a'i blant draw.  
I Edwart Frenin ydoedd,  
Uwch ei faeth, goruchaf oedd,  
Waetio yr oedd at ei Ras,  
Gywirddoeth wraig o urddas.

Arglwyddys plas a gladden',  
Troe, a'i llew lletya'r ieirll hen.  
Bu i frenin, bu fawr unwaith,  
Roeso, a'i ieirll, Harri Saith.  
Gweddu y bu tra fu fyw  
Hon sydd frenhines heddiw.

(She was a) Lady (in charge) of Queens,  
A governess she was in her youth.  
She knew in a fitting manner  
The accomplishments of the ladies of the court,  
(And she was the) guardian, before she passed away,  
Of Henry VIII's household and his children yonder.  
To King Edward she was a true  
(And) wise lady of dignity,  
In charge of his fosterage (she was pre-eminent),  
(And) she waited upon his Grace.

(She, whom) they buried, the Lady of the palace of Troy,  
And her lion (i.e. William), gave hospitality to the old Earls.  
A welcome was given to the King, Henry VII,  
And his Earls; he was great once.  
She gave service all her life,  
To the one who is Queen today (i.e. Mary I) ....

Blanche was one of the eleven co-heiresses (a son and daughter died young) of Simon Milborne and Jane (Baskerville) of Burghill, Herefordshire. The family had wide-spread connections. [Sir William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke \(1st creation\)](#) married Ann Devereux, the niece of Simon Milborne's mother, Elizabeth Devereux. Simon arranged marriages for his daughters with all the important local gentry. His eldest daughter, Alice, married Henry Myles of Bacton, the parents of [Blanche Parry](#), Queen Elizabeth I's confidante. Blanche Milborne first married James Whitney of Whitney and Pen-cwm; her dowry was the manor of Icomb in Gloucestershire which had belonged to her father and was inherited by her eldest son. James Whitney died on 30 June 1500, leaving Blanche with Robert aged thirteen years, and James, Watkin and Elizabeth who were younger. (Elizabeth's daughter, Ann Morgan of Arkstone, Herefordshire, married Henry Carey, later Lord Hunsdon by licence on 21 May 1545; he was the son of Mary Boleyn and so was Queen Elizabeth's first cousin, or very possibly her half-brother as Mary was a known mistress of Henry VIII. (The senior branch of the Whitney family of the U.S.A. descends from Robert.)

Between July 1500 and August 1502 Blanche remarried, becoming the second wife of William Herbert of Troy Parva, son of [Sir William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke](#) and one of his mistresses, Frond verch Hoesgyn. It was a Welsh household; though Blanche was English she would have also been Welsh-speaking. [Lewys Morgannwg](#) states that she and her husband welcomed [King Henry VII](#), his earls and possibly his queen to Troy House, near Monmouth in August 1502. They had two sons Charles and Thomas, both of whom were eventually knighted and served as sheriffs of Monmouthshire. (Sir William also had an illegitimate son, Richard.) Thomas married Anne Lucy of Charlecote.

The legitimate Herbert line was through Elizabeth, the grand-daughter and heir of the [first Earl of Pembroke \(1st creation\)](#) who married [Charles Somerset](#), (illegitimate son of Henry Beaufort 3rd Duke of Somerset) who was created [Earl of Worcester](#); their son was [Henry Somerset 2nd Earl of Worcester](#); his second wife was Elizabeth (daughter of Sir Anthony Browne). Sir William Herbert of Troy's full nephew would become [first Earl of Pembroke \(2nd creation\)](#) in 1551.

In 1505 Sir William Herbert of Troy gave an undertaking to keep the peace with his half-brother, Sir Walter Herbert of Raglan, and with Henry Myles, his brother-in-law ([Blanche Parry](#)'s father). He is recorded as being an annuitant of Edward Stafford, 3rd Duke of Buckingham at Thornbury Castle in 1508, Sheriff of Herefordshire in 1515 and was knighted between Easter and Michaelmas 1516; thereafter Blanche Herbert was usually called Lady Troy. He died in 1524; Blanche and their son Charles were executors of his Will, in which Blanche was well provided for. A clause of the Will trusted that Henry Somerset (then Lord Herbert but succeeded as 2nd Earl of Worcester in 1526/7) would be 'a good lord to my wife and children'. Sir William also requested that 'Blanche will keep herself sole'. It is a reasonable deduction, therefore, that Lady Troy, accompanied by her niece (probably also her god-daughter) [Blanche Parry](#), first went to the royal Court with Elizabeth, Countess of Worcester who was one of Queen Anne Boleyn's ladies and had a role in her Coronation banquet.

Lady Troy may have helped her great-nephew, John Vaughan (son of [Blanche Parry](#)'s eldest sister) in his career as he was a Page of the Chamber to Henry VIII in 1533, and a Sewer by 1538. That Lady Troy was in the household at that time is shown by a later report, author not named (on the subversive activities of the [Earl of Essex](#) and [Roger Vaughan](#) in 1601) which has the preamble 'My mother was chosen and brought to the Court by my Lady Herbert of Troy, to have been her Majesty's (Queen Elizabeth I) nurse and had been chosen before all other had her gracious mother (Queen Anne Boleyn) had her own will therein ...' (A Mrs. Pendred / Pendryth was actually chosen.) Lady Troy is mentioned at the christening of Prince Edward in 1537; when the procession reformed at the conclusion of the ceremony it was noted that 'Lady Elizabeth went with her sister Lady Mary and Lady Herbert of Troy to bear the train' (*Letters and Papers of King Henry VIII*).

Lady Bryan was in charge of Princess Elizabeth when she was a baby but her responsibilities were transferred to Prince Edward when he was born. The evidence shows that Lady Bryan was succeeded by Lady Troy; Prince Edward was also placed in her charge when he grew older for [Lewys Morgannwg](#) states that she was 'in charge of Prince Edward's fosterage'. It was as a result of her training that the courtier, Thomas Wriothesley, was able to compliment Lady Elizabeth's upbringing and education in 1539. Lady Troy's position is confirmed by lists of personnel for Lady Elizabeth in the *Letters and Papers of Henry VIII*. Internal evidence suggests a range of dates for these lists from before 1536 to 1546. Lady Troy's name heads the earlier lists, preceding that of Kate Champernon (married John Astley) who was appointed in 1536 as a governess. In 1545 Roger Ascham (whose page was John Whitney, possibly a relation of Lady Troy) wrote to Kate Champernon asking that she commend him to 'my good Lady Troy and

all that company of gentlewomen'. However, the c.1546 household list for Lady Elizabeth does not mention Lady Troy indicating that she retired from her position in late 1545 or early 1546; Elizabeth was then twelve years old.

In 1549 Sir Robert Tyrwhitt wrote that 'Ashley ... was made her mistress (Lady Elizabeth's) by the king her father ... But four of her gentlewomen confess that Ashley first removed Lady Troy ... and then her successor (Blanche) Parry ...' Lady Troy had evidently intended her niece Blanche to succeed her but the post of Lady Mistress was given to Kate Ashley, perhaps because she was married. (Blanche remained as second in the household, succeeding Kate Ashley when the latter died in 1565.) It was likely that Lady Troy, probably now in her sixties, was pleased to retire. She had her own furnished apartments at Troy House (see 1552 Will of Sir Charles Herbert) where she was cared for by her son Charles and his wife, Cicill. *The Household Accounts of Princess Elizabeth* (1551-1552, Hatfield) show that Elizabeth sent her a regular half-yearly pension 'by warrant' which was about half the amount she would have received while in post; a servant of the Knights Marshall was paid to deliver it. She died an honoured lady, probably in 1557 and certainly before the accession of Queen Elizabeth in November 1558. She was presumably buried as her second husband had intended in the tomb in Monmouth parish church, now lost; it was adorned by the three effigies of Lady Troy, Sir William and his first wife.

Blanche Herbert, Lady Troy was a crucial figure in the childhoods of Edward VI and Elizabeth I. The close relationship with her niece, Blanche Parry, was also of major importance. A residual Lollard influence in her family may have helped to form the religious views of the younger Tudor children. She certainly provided a stable upbringing for both children. Lady Troy was a gracious, gentle, cultured lady who was evidently loved and admired - 'a wise lady of dignity'.

## Author

Ruth Elizabeth Richardson

## Sources

C. A. Bradford, *Blanche Parry, Queen Elizabeth's Gentlewoman* (London 1935)

Ruth E. Richardson, *Mistress Blanche, Queen Elizabeth I's Confidante* (Eardisley 2018), which includes the full elegy to Lady Troy

other references given in the text of the article above

[www.blancheparry.com](http://www.blancheparry.com), which also includes the full elegy to Lady Troy

## Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: "Blanche Herbert"

## Additional Links

Wikidata: [Q4924857](https://www.wikidata.org/wiki/Q4924857)

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