

**THE PURSUIT OF GOD'S GLORY: FRANCIS  
WALSINGHAM'S ESPIONAGE IN ELIZABETHAN  
POLITICS, 1568-1588**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Elizabethan espionage has been mistakenly stereotyped by both popular works and academic historiography as a collective and constitutional state service, working purely for national security. This thesis shifts the focus of the investigation into the world of espionage and intelligence control, moving it from the conventional concern for national defence towards a new location within the power politics of the mid-Elizabethan regime, from 1568 to 1588.

From the late 1570s, the divisive policy of English intervention in the continental Protestant wars—whether such intervention should primarily serve the ‘advancement of the Gospel’, or instead be in the service of English interests and mindful of ruling legitimacy—split the Elizabethan intelligence service into rival components. William Cecil Lord Burghley and Principal Secretary Francis Walsingham hence individually organised their clientele-based secretariats and spy systems. The first half of the thesis will explore why and how Walsingham privatised, administered and financed his intelligence clientele. It will further reveal how the two systems competed over intelligence, at home and abroad, attempting to undermine each other’s prominence inside the regime, and ultimately to benefit their respective parties in policy debate.

Focusing on the divided spy systems, the second half of the thesis will discuss two historical controversies respecting the mid-Elizabethan polity: first, the existence and nature of faction/party; and second, Elizabeth’s gynaecocracy, a form of government which was situated unstably between royal absolutism and a monarchical republic. A political divide arose between Burghley and Walsingham from the late 1570s and peaked in 1585 to 1586, though it never deteriorated so dangerously as to become rebellious ‘factionalism’, as in the 1590s. This conflict originated chiefly in their divergence over English interventionist policy, rather than from personal enmity or a struggle for patronage. During the 1580s, Walsingham manipulated his espionage effectively to tempt the irresolute Elizabeth to favour of his political aims: the execution of Mary Stuart, and anti-Spanish militarism. Sometimes, a common interest reconciled the rival parties, uniting them together against Elizabeth’s personal rule. The ministerial dominance over espionage selectively isolated the sovereign from the very heart of policy-making. The Privy Council, by controlling intelligence and state information, became the alternative and practical head of the regime.

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The greatest gratitude goes to my parents, whose undoubted love continues to embrace me warmly, supporting me to explore my beloved historiography. This work is dedicated to my dearest grandmother who always unconditionally encouraged me, though very sadly was not alive to see this thesis completed.

### **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I, Hsuan-Ying Tu, hereby certify that this doctoral thesis, which is approximately 79,000 words in length, is the result of my own work, and that parts of Chapter III have been published in the article entitled 'The Politics of Intelligence Gathering: Sir Edward Stafford's Embassy in France (1583-1590)', *Collectanea of History NCCU* 18 (2010), pp. 63-98. I also declare that this thesis has not been submitted for any other degree to any other University or Institution.

## Introduction

On 30 January 1585, Principal Secretary Francis Walsingham wrote Lord Treasurer Burghley a letter using extraordinarily harsh rhetoric. He first refuted certain calumnious reports in Burghley's hands, which 'myght work some doubtfull conceypt of my good wyll towards you'. Walsingham then denied the suspicion of his involvement in the 'growe of Factyon' at court. Finally, he condemned Burghley's opposition to 'my sute for the farming of the custome' of certain English ports. Intelligence of these matters, 'confyrmed so many wayes', now induced Walsingham to credit 'former reports of your L. myslyke of me'. The wrathful Walsingham announced that henceforward 'yt was a more save [safe] coorse for me to howlde your L. rather as an enemye than as a frende'.<sup>1</sup> Touching the sources of his information, Walsingham was reluctant to divulge them, only stating: 'yf I myght doe yt with the credyt of an honest man I woold not fayle to satysfyie your L. therin Besydes yt may reache to sooche persons as are not to be caused in question.'<sup>2</sup> Presumably, Walsingham gained his intelligence not from spies, but from within the Privy Chamber, or even possibly from Queen Elizabeth, who manipulated factiousness to enhance royal supremacy. Walsingham's recriminations expose the papered-over antagonism beneath Elizabeth's seemingly harmonious regime in the mid-1580s. From the late 1570s, mutual hostility and rivalry seem to have grown dramatically within English high politics, though not simply because of personal enmity or patronage distribution, as in Walsingham's accusations of Burghley in this hostile letter. Divisions over whether to give military and financial aid to the Dutch revolt, the hidden background

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<sup>1</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.

<sup>2</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/20, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5. Both letters are given further discussion in Chapter V.

to this letter, were deepening a pre-existing split.

This episode throws light on three central issues of this thesis: intelligence, faction/party, and queenship. This thesis moves the focus of research on sixteenth-century English intelligence away from its traditional concern with national defence, towards the power politics of the mid-Elizabethan regime. Far from being employed simply in national security, Elizabethan espionage served individual parties in their rivalry over policy. This benefited the sovereign by giving her multiple sources of intelligence. However, royal incapacity in the bureaucrat-dominated circulation of information was also reshaping the English polity, turning it from the personal rule of an absolute monarch, to a monarchical republic. The research begins in 1568 when Mary Queen of Scots fled to England for political asylum; this event sees the debut and subsequent rise in Elizabethan high politics of Francis Walsingham, the most famed Elizabethan spymaster. The study concludes in 1588, rather than 1590 the year of Walsingham's demise, because by then the mid-Elizabethan political divide had narrowed, Mary Stuart's execution in February 1587 and the near certainty of war against Spain acting to heal this breach.

Previous attempts to understand Elizabethan espionage, whether in popular works like Robert Hutchinson's or academic ones by scholars such as John Bossy and Robyn Adams, usually focus either on specific figures like Walsingham or the spy William Herle, or on spying against plots.<sup>3</sup> Yet the systematic organisation and management of espionage have received far less attention. The first aim of this thesis is to therefore

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spy Master: Frances Walsingham and the Secret War that Saved England* (London, 2006). John Bossy, *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (New Haven & London, 2001). Robyn Adams, '“The Service I am here for”: William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571'. *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72 (2009), 217-38; 'Signs of Intelligence: William Herle's Report of the Dutch Situation, 1573', *Lives and Letters* 1 (2009), 1-18.

reconstruct Walsingham's private secretariat, examining its administrative structure, division of labour, routine and remuneration.

Secondly, research into the spy systems will verify that party rivalry had arisen by the late 1570s out of the disagreements over English interventionist policy. It will also reveal how Walsingham manipulated espionage to promote his godly ideology of universal Protestantism. Traditional studies on Elizabethan espionage usually misunderstand it as a constitutional and collective state service, generally under Secretary Walsingham's sole direction, and working purely for national security. Yet the intelligence service that operated during most of the Elizabeth's reign was far from this centralised and patriotic ideal. Alan Haynes refers to it as the practices of individuals collaborating, not a department; service was controlled by individual officials of state.<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth I's biographer John Black was one of the first to reconceptualise intelligence gathering as 'a necessary piece of equipment for anyone who aimed at taking a leading part in policy making'. It attracted all the heavyweights of the Elizabethan Council—Burghley, Walsingham, Leicester, and later in the 1590s Robert Devereux Earl of Essex, and Robert Cecil—who spared 'themselves no effort to acquire, by an elaborate system of espionage, every scrap of information likely to be of use to them in the discharge of their duties'.<sup>5</sup> Political rivalry over policy thus split Elizabethan espionage into individual systems. John Archer likewise depicts Elizabethan spying not simply as a 'systematic apparatus of surveillance at home or abroad', but as cliental groups competing to hunt for, or even fabricate, intelligence for the royal rewards of patronage:

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<sup>4</sup> Alan Haynes, *Invisible Power: The Elizabethan Secret Service, 1571-1603* (Stroud, 2000), xi.

<sup>5</sup> J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford, 1959), 208-209.



The queen solicited information from her mightiest servants, rewarding them with prestige and authority. Rival officeholders like Burghley and Walsingham competed for whatever scraps of intelligence their own clients—spies in their pay, pursuivants, and occasional informers—discovered or invented....Elizabeth had to decide upon the relative value of what she heard while weighing her servants' competing interest against one another.<sup>6</sup>

Apparently, Archer adopts the patronage theory of John Neale and Wallace MacCaffrey, agreeing that Tudor factionalism developed out of materialism, and disregarding the influence of both ideology, which Conyers Read emphasized, and personal enmity, as explored by Simon Adams. Most significantly, all three assume that as a distributor of patronage, the monarch could, first, ensure his or her multiple channels to intelligence, second, maintain an equilibrium in the regime, and ultimately, reinforce royal supremacy. But they overestimate the control of royal patronage over bureaucratic politics.

Recently, Stephen Alford has drawn out this connection between espionage and the allocation of power in regime politics, in his newly published book touching on the intelligence history of the reign of Elizabeth I. He characterises intelligence as 'a form of political currency to buy favour and reputation and to damage court rivals'. In his opinion, the ministerial dominance over intelligence circulation diminished Elizabeth's queenship, diverting the initiative on policy away from her and towards her male counsellors, and further driving the English polity towards a 'monarchical republic'. Faced with Catholic dangers but frustrated at Elizabeth's inefficient rule, her ministers strove for 'survival at all cost, even to the extent of subverting the will of the queen they sought to serve'; at times they 'acted upon their own authority'. The development

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<sup>6</sup> John Michael Archer, *Sovereignty and Intelligence: Spying and Court Culture in the English Renaissance* (Stafford, 1993), 4-5.

happened in the Privy Council-led execution of Mary Queen of Scots in 1587, and Secretary Robert Cecil's 1601 drafting of a mechanism for a foreign succession in the event of Elizabeth's death.<sup>7</sup> Alford narrows this internal power struggle to that waged between Essex and the Cecils in the 1590s. However, this does not explain why Elizabethan espionage had split into divided systems as early as the late 1570s, and why in the 1580s it entered into a period of intense competition.

Up to this point, these scholarly arguments have been conceptual. The second purpose of this thesis is therefore to explore the evidence concerning the mid-Elizabethan period to demonstrate that intelligence was employed not only for national defence, but also within the regime for party rivalry or faction. In addition, the majority of historians have consistently questioned the existence of any Elizabethan political divide before the 1590s. Simon Adams denied it, saying there was a lack of evidence of an open rupture between the heavyweights at Elizabeth's court, caused either by personal enmity, by competition over patronage, or the exclusivity of their followings.<sup>8</sup> Alford agrees with John Guy that despite being opposed over the issue of military deployment during the 1580s, all sides in the Council still operated rationally under a broader Protestantism and the centralised functioning of the state. By exploring the competition between the individual intelligence groups, this thesis will confirm the existence of a political divide from the late 1570s. Caused by the differences over English interventionist policy, the hostility peaked in the mid-1580s, though it never came to so internecine a clash as happened in the 1590s.

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<sup>7</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012), 13.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Adams, 'Faction, Clientage, and Party: English Politics, 1550-1603', *History Today* 32 (1982), 33-39.

Finally, and differently from the traditional definition of espionage as a purely masculine activity, this thesis explores how Elizabeth, through her female privy chamber, operated an alternative system of intelligence. Most significantly, it will analyse how Elizabeth's relative exclusion from the ministerial circulation of information drove the English polity towards a monarchical republic. It must be noted, however, that all sovereigns, regardless of gender, were circumscribed by the court in both physical and social terms, and equally reliant on their bureaucratic systems of information. Counsellors or spymasters, for a complex set of competing interests, would select or conceal information from kings as much as queens. Jacob Soll has demonstrated that Louis XIV was handicapped by his ministers' dominance over state information. His intimate Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83) created an unprecedented state information system to enhance his king's personal absolutism. But Louis's kingship therefore became ineffectively centralised, parasitical on the administrative devices and information collection designed by Colbert.<sup>9</sup>

Accordingly, Elizabeth's being a woman was not necessarily pertinent to the fact of her sovereignty being limited by her ministers' control of information. But her male ministers, who ascribed her irresolute and sentimental rule to her sex's inferiority, therefore more severely limited the information allowed to her, isolating her from policy-making. This development drove the English polity from personal rule towards a monarchical republic. This latter ideal was defined by Patrick Collinson in his significant essay, 'The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth', with a particular concern for the 'other face' of Elizabethan public life: the Elizabethans without Elizabeth. He set out this paradoxical manifesto, defining Elizabethan England, not as

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<sup>9</sup> Jacob Soll, *The Information Master: Jean-Baptiste Colbert's Secret State Intelligence System* (Ann Arbor, 2009).

a personal despotism, but as ‘a piece of republic’: ‘a state which enjoyed that measure of self-direction which...was the essence of liberty, but with a constitution which also provided for the rule of single person by hereditary right’.<sup>10</sup> This political dichotomy, in response to a universal fear of gynaecocracy, decentralised sovereignty to the Privy Council and Parliament; the former was in particular granted ‘a position to contemplate the world and its affairs with some independent detachment, by means of its own collective wisdom and with the Queen absent: headless conciliar government’. Therefore, ‘at times there were two governments uneasily coexisting in Elizabethan England: the Queen and her Council’.<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, however, being a female ruler may have put Elizabeth in a stronger position than a male monarch in organising intelligence, because her female chamber offered her an alternative information supply, which, although possibly less efficient, bypassed male control.

Chapter One traces Walsingham’s entry into Elizabethan high politics through his participation in Secretary William Cecil’s intelligence clientele, which promoted him speedily from being an unknown member of parliament in 1568, to the residential ambassador to France in 1570, and finally to the Principal Secretaryship with a seat in the Privy Council in December 1573. These experiences—first on Mary Stuart’s tribunal to investigate the Casket Letters in 1568, and then with the first Anjou matrimonial negotiations in 1571-1572—enlightened Walsingham as to the impact of intelligence on policy as well as on his indecisive Queen. His preferment to the counsel group furthered his divergence from his patron Burghley over English intervention in continental Protestant wars, and consequently gave impetus to his departure from

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<sup>10</sup> Patrick Collinson, ‘The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), 119, 114.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 118.

Burghley's cliental espionage after 1576.

Chapter Two discusses the why, when and how of Walsingham's withdrawal from Burghley's system by looking at the former's private and household-based secretariat, examining its structure, routine and remuneration, something which has been surprisingly little researched. The establishment of Walsingham's own spy system was postponed until between 1576, when Thomas Smith's retirement as joint Secretary strengthened Walsingham's position, and 1578, from which point the policy quarrel over the Dutch Protestant revolt accelerated his departure from Burghley's side. Thereafter more evidence appears of innovations that moved Walsingham's system towards privatisation, enlargement, multi-class employment, and cosmopolitanism, as well as of how he financed the espionage. His intelligence secretary Nicholas Faunt's 'Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate' offers insights into routines, archives, and the allocation of employment inside Walsingham's secretariat.<sup>12</sup> The intelligence letters of the spy Nicholas Berden from the mid-1580s reveal the procedures of the cipher secretary Thomas Phelippes in decrypting and annotating secret reports. Walsingham became the key figure pushing espionage towards a privatised system that was used to advance personal ideology in politics.

Chapter Three investigates the competition in espionage in Paris during the 1580s between Edward Stafford's embassy system, which was favourable to Burghley, and Walsingham's spy network. It shows first how the two systems monitored, defamed, and hindered each other, as well as how they vied for Catholic intelligence. Stafford's political partiality for Burghley and his pro-Catholic background motivated Secretary

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<sup>12</sup> Charles Hughes, 'Nicholas Faunt's Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate, c. 1592', *English Historical Review* 20 (1905), 499-508.

Walsingham to intercept the former's private correspondence and spy on his embassy. Stafford retaliated by forcibly intervening in the activities of Solomon Aldred, a spy of Walsingham's, who lobbied the exiles and 'plundered' the leading exile William Gifford, a figure who was nearly lobbied successfully by Aldred. This chapter also analyses the unusual increase in Catholic apostasy and semi-conformity to Elizabeth's Protestant reign in the 1580s, looking particularly at the English operation of coercion and mercy, the exiles' struggle for survival, and division within the Catholic ranks. Presumably, Burghley became predominant in the intelligence competition in Paris: his control over Stafford's embassy broke Walsingham's monopoly on continental intelligence, and as Lord Treasurer and the Master of Wards he was able to exert control over exiles' estates and families, consequently drawing to himself more Catholic intelligence than did Walsingham.

Chapter Four sees Walsingham's successful comeback in the matter of home counter-plots against Mary Stuart in the 1580s. It begins by illustrating the sharp contrast between the unusual absence of intrigues from 1573 to 1583, and the intense discovery of plots that followed in the 1580s. It then explores how Walsingham excluded Burghley's party from his counter-plots, and his attempt to monopolise intelligence in order to promote his policies. The discovery of the Throckmorton Plot not only had the pro-Cecil Earl of Shrewsbury replaced by Walsingham's man Amias Paulet as Mary's new guardian, but tempted Elizabeth into publicly breaking with Spain. The research on the Babington Plot reveals the delicate division of spying labour and the workings of Walsingham's intelligence secretariat; its success forced the irresolute Elizabeth to sanction Mary's execution. The final section argues that Burghley avoided being kept in ignorance of Walsingham's intelligence activities, first, through being absolutely trusted by Queen Elizabeth; second, through his mastery of

wardships; and third, thanks to his spies working for both sides.

The first four chapters portray a change in the relationship between Burghley and Walsingham in terms of their espionage, moving from cooperation to rivalry. Intelligence had become a tool for political parties to use in promoting their partisan ideologies, and in preventing each other from gaining an ascendancy in the regime. The final two chapters move the focus away from intelligence employees towards their spymasters' role within power politics, and from spying activities towards the influence of intelligence on party politics and queenship in Elizabeth's regime.

In terms of research into the divided Elizabethan intelligence systems, Chapter Five considers the three key debates in the historiography concerning Tudor factionalism: the terminology of 'party' and 'faction'; the periods when it is said to have existed; and whether its nature was defined by personal enmity, patronage or policy. First, by examining the diverse contemporary usage of the terms 'party' and 'faction', it adopts the former as more moderate and less dangerous to political stability. Second, the fact of the divided and competing espionage systems from the late 1570s shows that a party rivalry existed inside Elizabeth's regime from 1578 and peaked around 1585. Unrelated to personal enmity and patronage, this political divide originated in ideological differences: whether English policy should serve first the glory of God, or state interests and ruling legitimacy. The final section of this chapter will explore how his intelligence operation affected policy decisions about armed English intervention in the Dutch Protestant war in 1585.

Chapter Six discusses a scholarly controversy over the Elizabethan polity—whether it was governed by personal rule or was a monarchical republic—by examining

Elizabeth's incapacity in her ministerial system of information and intelligence. The first section examines Elizabeth's use of her female chamber in transmitting information, and the reasons why it failed: an unstable supply of intelligence, Elizabeth's financial caution, and her male counsellors' antipathy to female participation in politics. The inefficiency of the female chamber system sometimes resulted in the Queen's ignorance of key matters, as in February 1587 when Walsingham and Burghley cooperated towards Mary's execution without Elizabeth's knowledge. Through consideration of William Davison's trial, the chapter explains the reasons why the Council isolated their Queen from the execution: the appeal for a mixed rule, the concept of female inferiority, disappointment at Elizabeth's irresolution, and their self-identity as godly counsellors. This chapter concludes that the lack of initiative in intelligence was marginalising Elizabeth's queenship, reducing her regime to an acephalous conciliar one.

The Conclusion reveals the disorganisation of Walsingham's espionage system immediately after his death in April 1590, and makes an overall estimation of his career as a spymaster. It also offers a new reading of Elizabeth's Rainbow Portrait. This reading overthrows the traditional understanding of the painting as praise for the glorious Queen Elizabeth and her royal absolutism. By referring to contemporary politics, the success of Robert Cecil in factional struggle, and an aging Queen, the portrait is revealed as extolling: first, the union of Elizabethan espionage under Secretary Cecil's control; second, the Cecils' ambition to be the exclusive royal eyes and ears monopolising state knowledge; and third, the Cecils' hope of becoming the mouths of the polity, jointly making policy and driving England towards a 'monarchical republic'.



### **The Dispersal of Walsingham's Papers**

Any attempt to understand the life and career of Francis Walsingham is hampered by the intractability of fragmentary archives. A great majority of intelligence reports were either burned after they were read, in accordance with instructions, or vanished at Walsingham's death in 1590. This latter archival dispersal was the result of, first, Walsingham's practice of mixing private with public papers; second, pilfering by Walsingham's servants who were either seeking gifts for new patrons or trying to protect themselves after their involvement in highly sensitive political events; third, the collection policy for the State Papers, which concentrated solely on official documents and dismissed material of a purely personal nature; and finally, because of rampant stealing by subsequent antiquarians. Little evidence survives to explain when, how, or by what route Walsingham's papers travelled from his family study into government archives and private libraries. By tracing back from the present distribution of Walsingham's papers, the following will reconstruct both the major collections which formed immediately after Walsingham's death in 1590, and the routes of further document dispersal.

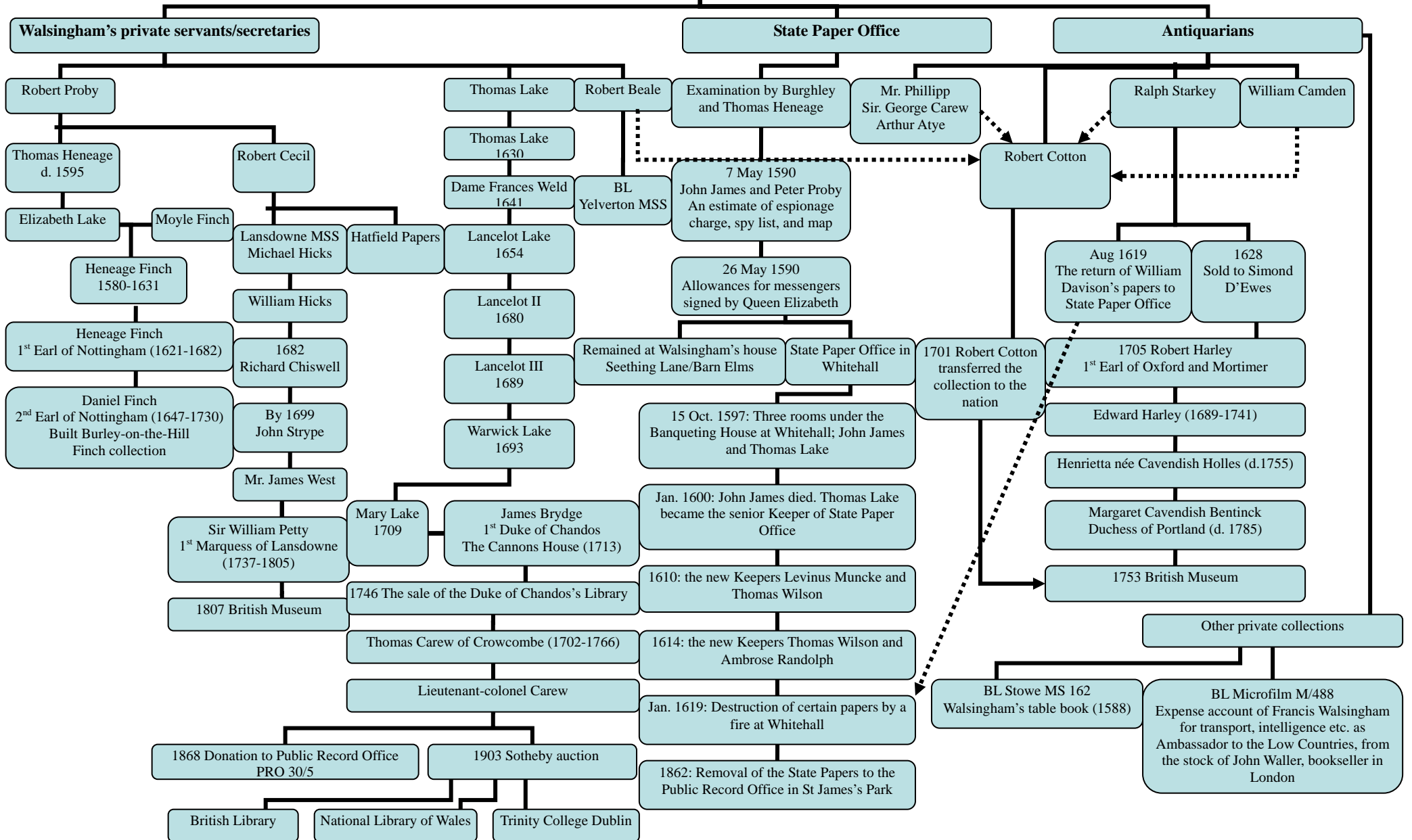
Walsingham sorted his papers by subject, instead of by document type. The model of the categorisation of his files is recorded in an inventory compiled by one of his secretaries Thomas Lake in 1588, now entitled 'Walsingham's table book'.<sup>13</sup> Walsingham's papers were organised first under thematic headings, either relating to countries, as in 'France & Flanders' and 'the Sc[ottish] Qu[een]', or by various 'Home matters', such as 'Musters'; the rest fell into the class of 'Diverse Matters'. Within these subject headings, the papers were subdivided by year or relevance. Accordingly

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<sup>13</sup> BL, Stowe MS 162.

# The Dispersal of Francis Walsingham's Papers

Francis Walsingham died on 6 April 1590



they were set into subject ‘boxes’, or wrapped into ‘bundles’, ‘parcels’ or ‘bags’ marked with a letter.<sup>14</sup> Two of the stores were ‘at the study [of Walsingham’s house in Seething Lane] in London’ in chests, or ‘at the Court [Whitehall] vpon the shelves’.<sup>15</sup> Sometimes writings were carried to Barn Elms, Walsingham’s manor on the Thames west of London.<sup>16</sup> It had been an administrative habit since the later Middle Ages for the storage of official documents to be increasingly decentralised into the custody of the department, or the post-holder, that produced them. This was ‘a natural result’, Robert Wernham stated, ‘of the growth of bureaucracy in the older courts...As the bureaucracy solidified, so its officials came to look upon their offices almost as their free holds and to regard their archives, if not exactly as private property, at least as strictly office muniments’.<sup>17</sup> Storage of files as bundles or packets facilitated later retrieval for circulation and consultation, and was portable for the Secretary’s office when travelling with the itinerant court.<sup>18</sup> However, loose papers kept in bundles were at a higher risk of loss than bound volumes. ‘There hath been found of late greate Confusion in the keeping of loose papers though they bee digested in to bundells’,

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<sup>14</sup> Walsingham’s system of organisation repeated that suggested by Hugh Oldcastle in *A Profitable Treatyce* (1543). ‘It is also necessarie that you haue a chyst in your counting house for your letters, wherein you shall put them as soone as you haue red them, and written the day of receite on the backe side, till the month be ended, and gather all that yee receiued that moneth, and fold them somewhat large, and binde them in a bundle. And in the case yee receiue diuers letters from one place, as Venice, Iene, Florence, London, Cyuill, or Andwerpe, yee shall binde all that is from one of these places in a bundell by themselues and write vppon the vpper letter Venice, or Iene, or any other place that they come from.’ John Mellis, *A Briefe Instruction and maner how to keepe bookes of Accompts after the order of Debitor and Creditor, & as well for paper Accompts partible*. Expansion of Hugh Oldcastle’s 1543 translation of Pacioli, now lost. (London, 1588), STC 18794, F6r-F8r.

<sup>15</sup> Hubert Hall, *Studies in English Official Historical Documents* (Cambridge, 1908), 33.

<sup>16</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035 f. 36v, Walsingham’s ledger book for 1583-1584.

<sup>17</sup> ‘At the end of James I’s reign Sir Thomas Wilson,..., was still recovering papers that had been taken home by Secretary Davison, who had ceased to act in 1587.’ R. B. Wernham, ‘The Public Records in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries’, in Levi Fox, ed., *English Historical Scholarship in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century* (London, 1956), 12-15, 21.

<sup>18</sup> Mark Taviner, ‘Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrew University, 2000), 21-22. James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (Basingstoke, 2012), 217-22.

confessed Nicholas Faunt, another of Walsingham's secretaries.<sup>19</sup> Papers in bundles were also more easily extracted.

Opinion was divided over Walsingham's categorisation of papers by subject. Faunt prized this system for serving 'chiefly for the clearing of things in doubt, which hereby may bee readily found out; whereas without this care both this necessarie presedent wilbee euer wantinge and greate inconveniences may growe throughe the losse of papers and vnorderlie keepinge of them'.<sup>20</sup> By contrast, Robert Beale, Walsingham's chief assistant and brother-in-law, criticised Walsingham for breaching an order to make 'a separac[i]on betweene those things w[hi]ch are her Ma[jestie's] Recordes and appertaines unto her and those w[hi]ch a Secretarie getteth by his private industrie and charge'. Public papers were supposed to enter the Treasury of the Receipt of Exchequer in the Chapter House of Westminster Abbey.<sup>21</sup> But this order had been neglected by Walsingham, and 'things w[hi]ch weare publicke have bine culled out and gathered into private bookes' in his 'private Custodie'.<sup>22</sup> Archival privatisation, Beale maintained, would not 'give anie light of service to yonge beginners'. And upon Walsingham's death, 'all his papers and bookes both publicke and private' were seized 'by those who would be loath to be used so themselves'—that is, by his private employees, ironically including Beale himself, and by the government.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Hughes, 'Nicholas Faunt's Discourse', 505.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 504.

<sup>21</sup> Amanda Bevan, 'State Papers of Henry VIII: the Archives and Documents', *State Papers Online, 1509-1714* (Thomson Learning EMEA Ltd, 2007).

<sup>22</sup> Robert Beale, 'Treatise of the Office of a Councillor and Principall Secretarie to her Ma[jes]tie' (1592), in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford, 1925), I, 431. Faunt's 'Discourse' and Beale's 'Treatise', both offering insights into the Elizabethan Secretaryship, are further discussed in Chapter II.

<sup>23</sup> Beale, 'Treatise', 431.

Beale's criticism came with the benefit of hindsight, when he had witnessed the archival chaos that followed Walsingham's death in April 1590: papers stolen, and confusion in proceeding with Walsingham's espionage. It was a fate that potentially awaited every Elizabethan heavyweight, whose papers could easily be pilfered by their intimate servants when they died. Simon Adams has discovered that many of Leicester's papers concerning 'the Queen's letters in matter of secret importance' were seized by Richard Browne, who was steward or keeper of either Leicester House or Wanstead, Leicester's two main residences, and by Arthur Atye, Leicester's principal secretary from 1574.<sup>24</sup> Between Burghley's death in August 1598 and his funeral, his chief secretary Michael Hicks smuggled an equivalent of 115 volumes of Burghley's papers (now the Lansdowne MSS) into his own house at Ruckholt, Essex.<sup>25</sup> Moreover, some private letters concerning the relationship between Queen Elizabeth and Christopher Hatton, at one point may have fallen into the hands of her private secretary Thomas Windebank, who passed them to his son Francis, Secretary of State to Charles I. Fortunately, these letters remained in the office of the Secretary of State when Francis was exiled to France in December 1640.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise, as soon as Walsingham died on 6 April 1590, parts of his papers were removed by his household servants, either for themselves or as gifts to please new

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<sup>24</sup> Simon Adams, 'The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, I: The Browne-Evelyn Collection', *Archives*, 20 (1992), 63-85; 'The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, II: The Atye-Cotton Collection', *Archives* 20 (1993), 131-44; 'The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, III: The Countess of Leicester's Collection', *Archives* 22 (1996), 1-26. *The Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records* 30 (1869), 216.

<sup>25</sup> *A Catalogue of the Lansdowne manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1819), ix.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Lemon, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Edward, Mary and Elizabeth, 1547-80* (London, 1856), xii-xiii.

patrons. Peter Proby, in Walsingham's service from around 1578 and accounted 'very honest and used in place of good credit as one well accompted of by Mr. Secretary [Walsingham]', turned for patronage to Thomas Heneage, the Vice Chamberlain.<sup>27</sup> Some of Walsingham's private letters may have accompanied him into Heneage's household. Heneage died in 1595; his papers were bequeathed to his only daughter Elizabeth, who married Moyle Finch, and ultimately fell to her great grandson Daniel Finch, second Earl of Nottingham, who kept them at Burley-on-the-Hill in Rutland. The Finch collection contained one original entitled 'Instructions which Sir Francis Walsingham gave his nephew [Thomas Walsingham] when he sent him into foreign parts to travel', which was destroyed by fire in 1908.<sup>28</sup> Once again in search of patronage, immediately upon the death of Heneage in October 1595 Proby turned to Robert Cecil. To please Cecil, Proby sent him 'the cabinet wherein is the written description of Ireland, with the map which was Mr. Secretary's, and written by Mr. Davizon when he was in the Tower', and some of Walsingham's books. He promised to wait on Cecil at court, with 'good testmony of sundrye Employments of Importance, for which I was Largely promised in her majesty's name but yet vnpreferred'.<sup>29</sup>

Misappropriation by household servants may explain the poor archival holdings of

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<sup>27</sup> Proby served Walsingham as an intelligence agent in 1589, together with his cousin William Humbarsten and the spies David Vassewr and one Kirkham (who spied on the movements of the Duke of Parma), and William Stanley in the Low Countries. Unfortunately, most of Proby's intelligence reports to Walsingham have now vanished. P. W. Hasler, ed., *The House of Commons, 1558-1603* (London, 1981), III, 254-55; Austin T. Young, *The Annals of the Barber-Surgeons of London* (London, 1890), 532-35; TNA, PC 2/14/326, [Metting] 18 Apr. 1587; TNA, SP 78/19/10, Peter Proby to Walsingham, 14 Jan. 1589; TNA, SP 78/19/12, Proby to Walsingham, 17 Jan 1589; William Humbarsten to Proby, 11 Jun. 1589, *CSPF, 1589*, 312; [Meeting] 18 Jun. 1589, *Acts of the Privy Council*, XVII, 285.

<sup>28</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, III, 451-52. *Guides to Sources for British History to Principal Family and Estate Collection: Family Names A-K* (London, 1996), 57-58. The Finch family papers have been edited in *Report on the Manuscripts of Allan George Finch, Esq. of Burley-on-the-Hill, Rutland* (London, 1913-22), 4 vols.

<sup>29</sup> CP 35/85, Pe. Probyn to Sir Robert Cecil, 21 Oct. 1595.

documents produced by Walsingham's secretaries. Francis Mylles, in charge of diplomacy and intelligence, was a leading figure in Walsingham's secretariat, next to Beale who served concurrently as Clerk of the Privy Council and Laurence Tomson as the Queen's Latin secretary. Surprisingly there are few of his papers still in existence: thirty-four in the State Papers and one in Egerton MS 1694.<sup>30</sup> These include fourteen letters from Mylles at Walsingham's house on Seething Lane to Walsingham at Barn Elms, written during the Babington Plot from July to September 1586. Apparently, Mylles acted as the helmsman resident in Walsingham's London house or at court, managing secretarial business.<sup>31</sup> The lack of his papers may partly reflect the oral, rather than written, exchange of information inside the secretariat. But there is no surviving record of correspondence between him and Walsingham while the latter was away from London, even during Walsingham's embassies to the Low Countries in 1578 (accompanied by Tomson), to France in 1581, and to Scotland in 1583. Likewise, few of Nicholas Faunt's papers survive, except for one report to Walsingham on the examination of the Scottish Jesuit William Creychton, who together with another Jesuit Patrick Addie, in September 1584 sailed from Dieppe to Scotland to take part in a conspiracy to restore Catholicism and liberate Mary Stuart.<sup>32</sup> Faunt can be studied only through his correspondence with his friend Anthony Bacon, an informant of Walsingham's in Paris; the originals of these letters remain in the Bacon Papers MSS 647-662 in the Lambeth Palace Library.<sup>33</sup> It is reasonable to assume that Walsingham's immediate employees pilfered their own papers or other valuable documents during

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<sup>30</sup> BL, Egerton MS 1694 f. 19, Fr[ancis] Mylles [Secretary to Sir F. Walsingham], 18 Jun. 1576.

<sup>31</sup> The significant role of Francis Mylles in Walsingham's secretariat is discussed in Chapter II.

<sup>32</sup> TNA, SP 12/173/14, Nicholas Faunt to Walsingham, 14 Sept. 1584.

<sup>33</sup> This collection was used by Thomas Birch in *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth: from the year 1581 till her Death* (London, 1754). Birch's transcripts are now BL, Additional MSS 4109-4124.

Walsingham's life, or on his death. Some of these were then transferred into the hands of new patrons.<sup>34</sup> It is why the Lansdowne MSS and Hatfield Library contain not a few of Walsingham's private letters on intelligence matters.<sup>35</sup> Among these, interestingly, are some transcripts of diplomatic reports addressed to Walsingham, provided by Sir Edward Stafford, the English Ambassador in France from 1583 to 1590 and Burghley's partisan.<sup>36</sup>

Robert Beale, Walsingham's brother-in-law, was another pilferer, 'primarily of material he had either produced or collected himself for his own particular political activities'.<sup>37</sup> This included material relating to his missions to Mary Queen of Scots, such as Additional MSS 48027 and 48049, which contain the papers relating to Mary's plots, and her secret correspondence and keys to ciphers with English exiles and conspirators, like Charles Paget and Anthony Babington. Beale collected or copied these probably during his secretarial attendance on Walsingham from 1570 and his customary deputations during Walsingham's embassies to France in 1581 and Scotland in 1583. Mark Taviner has made a detailed analysis of Beale's papers and their later dispersal.<sup>38</sup> The collection consists of letters Beale had written himself, those he later acquired, and some copied from the State Papers and the Cotton collection. The majority of them concern relations with the Low Countries between 1576 and 1587, as well as Beale's

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<sup>34</sup> The fact that Walsingham's servants turned to serve new patrons is discussed in the Conclusion.

<sup>35</sup> Private letters: e.g. BL, Lansdowne MS 48 f. 148, Leicester to Walsingham, 10 Nov. 1586; CP 11/97, same to same, 30 Jul. 1581, concerning Walsingham's royal nickname 'Moor'. Intelligence reports to Walsingham from: e.g. Robert Carvyle, W. Shute, Laird of Pury Ogilvire in Paris, Doctor Christopher Parkins in Poland, Richard Tomson in Spain, Francois de Cville in Paris, and one prison spy Alexander Bonus.

<sup>36</sup> Stafford's cliental fidelity to Burghley is discussed in Chapter III.

<sup>37</sup> Beale to Robert Cecil, 28 Sept. 1597. Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 23.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-45.



involvement with Mary Queen of Scots in the 1580s. Beale sent Robert Cotton some part of his collection, including several of Walsingham's letters.<sup>39</sup> After Beale died in 1601, the rest of his papers descended to the Yelverton collection, either through the marriage between Beale's eldest daughter Margaret and Henry Yelverton, or through his anonymous second personal clerk who served Beale from 1593 and then turned to the Yelverton family for employment after Beale's death.<sup>40</sup> Beale's papers remained in Yelverton ownership at Easton Maudit until 1785. They were then transferred to the London residence of the Calthorpes in Grosvenor Square, until 1953 when they entered the British Museum.

Thomas Lake was the likely thief of Walsingham's entry book of December 1579 containing letters to and from Ireland, and Walsingham's Journal book 1570-1583. In 1713, his great-granddaughter Mary Lake inherited his property Cannons House, and in doing so may have brought both books to her husband James Brydges, the first Duke of Chandos.<sup>41</sup> With the sale of the Duke of Chandos's library in 1747, the books passed directly or indirectly into the hands of Thomas Carew of Crowcombe Court.<sup>42</sup> In 1868, Lieutenant-Colonel Carew invited John Bruce, the director of the Camden Society, to inspect about 200 volumes 'which had not been looked at by any competent person within living memory'; Walsingham's Journal book was thence unearthed.<sup>43</sup> At Bruce's suggestion, in June 1868 Colonel Carew donated six volumes of his

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<sup>39</sup> E.g. BL, Cotton MSS Caligula C/IX ff. 69-90; Galba D/III f. 157.

<sup>40</sup> Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 25.

<sup>41</sup> T. F. T. Baker, ed., *Victoria County History of England: Middlesex* (London, 1976), V, 96-99, 113-17.

<sup>42</sup> Susan Jenkins, *Portrait of a Patron: The Patronage and Collecting of James Brydges, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Chandos (1674-1744)* (Burlington, 2007).

<sup>43</sup> John Bruce, *Notes of the Treaty carried on at Ripon between King Charles I and the Covenanters of Scotland, 1640*, Camden Society, 100 (1869), xxxviii.

manuscripts, including the two books mentioned, to the Public Record Office for the use of Calendar editing, classified as the Carew Papers (PRO 30/5).<sup>44</sup> Both books remain in the National Archives, Kew, catalogued as PRO 30/5/4 and 30/5/5.<sup>45</sup>

Following the pilfering of individual documents by household employees came the wholesale confiscation of Walsingham's papers by the government. Within a month of Walsingham's death and confronted with a series of claims from agents for payments, Burghley, who had resumed the Secretaryship, together Thomas Heneage, the joint Keeper of the Records in the Tower of London, inquired urgently into Walsingham's espionage network, using as evidence his papers and the abstracts retained by his employees.<sup>46</sup> They were assisted by John James, Keeper of the State Papers, and Peter Proby.<sup>47</sup> On 7 May, James and Proby estimated for Heneage the costs of continuing 'a course of understanding how things pass in Flanders, France and Spain'. A partial list was reconstructed, of people engaged in espionage and of the places they worked, ranging over the major cities of France, the Low Countries, Italy, Spain, Germany and

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<sup>44</sup> J. Hogan and N. McNeill O'Farrell, eds., *The Walsingham Letter-Book or Register of Ireland: May, 1578 to December, 1579* (Dublin, 1959), ii-iii.

<sup>45</sup> TNA, PRO 30/5/4, Walsingham's entry book December 1579 of letters to and from Ireland, printed in Hogan and O'Farrell, eds., *The Walsingham Letter-Book or Register of Ireland*. But as the editors note, the 'summary indications on the part of the copyists are not reproduced except where the information as given might be useful', and 'Nor has it been considered necessary to reprint such letters as have been already printed in full or *in extenso* in official sources'. TNA, PRO 30/5/5, *Walsingham's Journal book 1570-1583*, printed in Charles T. Martin, ed., *Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham from December 1570 to April 1583*, Camden Miscellany VI, 104 (1871). The rest of Carew's papers were dispersed at the sale at Sotheby's in 1903.

<sup>46</sup> Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999), 154-55.

<sup>47</sup> Taviner misidentifies this 'Mr. D. James' as Dr. Francis James, a civil lawyer who had only just entered Walsingham's household service in early 1590. Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 120-21. Francis James: Hasler, *The House of Commons*, II, 373; Brian P. Levack, *The Civil Layers in England, 1603-1641: A Political Study* (London, 1973). John James: Hasler, *The House of Commons*, II, 374. CP 45/89, Peter Proby to Robert Cecil, 18 Oct. 1596, 'D. Jeams who at his [Walsingham's] deathe, had the sortinge of his Lordship's papers, he can best informe your honour (and so I told Mr. Chanceler) wher those and suche lyke are'.

Turkey, and also concerning specific figures such as Mary Queen of Scots and her friends at Sheffield and in the North, and foreign ambassadors.<sup>48</sup> On 26 May, according to these reports, Queen Elizabeth permitted Burghley to pay certain messengers who held bills or warrants subscribed by late Francis Walsingham.<sup>49</sup>

Afterwards the Privy Council devolved Walsingham's papers onto John James, in charge of the 'Office of Her Majesty's Papers and Records for business of State and Council' at Whitehall. He kept sorting them, and managed the administrative retrieval of those required for consultation. On 7 May 1591, the Council assigned James, together with Jeffrey Fenton, Anthony Ashley, and an unnamed attorney, to make diligent search amongst the divers papers of Walsingham, to give light to the charge of treason against John Perrot, the former lord deputy of Ireland. They were authorised to 'reparie unto such place and places as you shall understand any of the writings, bookes or letters of the said Sir Fraunces to be remaining'. Any discovery had to be made with 'a perfect note of the several parcels of the said papers, and take the same into your owne custodie to be disposed of according to such order as hath bin formerly given you herein'.<sup>50</sup> Two of Beale's diplomatic memoranda in 1594 and 1596 refer to James's custody of Walsingham's archives: 'whereof mr D. James may mak a particular extract out of the Papers of mr Secretary Walsingham', and 'whereof mr D. James can geue you out of mr Secretaries papers particular notes'.<sup>51</sup> On 6 October

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<sup>48</sup> TNA, SP 12/232/11, Sir Thomas Heneage to Burghley, 7 May 1590. The recreated list of intelligencers has disappeared now. TNA, SP 12/232/12, 'The names of foreign places from whence Mr. Secretary Walsyngham was accustomed to receive his advertisements of the state of public affairs', 7(?) May 1590.

<sup>49</sup> CP 167/47, 'Allowances for Messengers and others', 26 May 1590.

<sup>50</sup> TNA, PC 2/18/254, [Meeting] at the Star Chamber, 7 May 1591.

<sup>51</sup> BL, Additional MS 48044 f. 339v, 'An advise, in what sorte, her Ma<sup>tie</sup>, and the Frenche Kinge, maye proceade to deal with the Princes of Germanie, about the late League', 1594; Additional MS 48102 f. 356r, 'Paper advising an Anglo-French alliance, drawn up by Beale prior to negotiations culminating in

1596, Beale again recorded that he had delivered to Burghley at his house in the Strand, ‘two Buckeram bags full of papers sometimes belonging to Mr. Secretary Walsingham, deliuered to Sir Henry Killigrew and myself heretofore by Mr. D. James: Item his L. had at the same tyme of the bundell O. the peces marked 1.6.9.10.17 of the bundell marked O. the pre. 6’.<sup>52</sup> Lake’s inventory of 1588 contains a note probably by James: ‘Ireland A book of Plotts and discourses Sr R. Cecill hathe it of me, 1596’.<sup>53</sup>

However, not all of Walsingham’s papers were confiscated and relocated to Whitehall; parts of his archive remained in his study in Seething Lane until at least 1596. In October of that year, Peter Proby reported to Robert Cecil that he was to survey the contents of Walsingham’s study:

By Mr Chanceler I am wyllyd to looke out suche papers as ar in that studye whearof I have the key at savoye, which doe concern the treatye with the stats, and the contract made betweyn Her Majesty and them, and to bringe the same to his honour. I have accordingly sought, and fynd only articles in frenche of 1585 concerninge the same course...there is in Englishe an extractt out of therle of Leicester’s Instructions from her Majesty, which I suppose to have bin delivered to Sir Thomas Heneage by Mr Secretary at the time of his goinge to the states and this is a copie of Mr. Lake’s handwrytinge...the originall of the contracts...I suppose they were in Mr. Secretary his study at Walsingham House in a chest.<sup>54</sup>

On 15 October 1597, in order to make order out of chaos, James and the joint Keeper Thomas Lake removed the Queen’s records, as well as Walsingham’s papers, to three rooms under the Banqueting House at Whitehall, with the Records of the Council and

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the Treaty of Greenwich between England and France’, 1596.

<sup>52</sup> BL, Additional MS 48116 f. 100r.

<sup>53</sup> BL, Stowe MS 162 f. 2r.

<sup>54</sup> CP 45/89, Peter Proby to Robert Cecil, 18 Oct. 1596.

the Signet. There they installed manuscript ‘presses’, storage shelves, and a fireplace for drying documents, and sorted, indexed, and bundled all available papers ‘of lesser use’ dating from 1550 on.<sup>55</sup> Afterwards, in 1610, the newly assigned Keeper Thomas Wilson again transferred them to ‘very convenient rooms near the old Banqueting House at Whitehall’, and divided the papers under the two heads of ‘Domestical’ and ‘Foreign’.<sup>56</sup>

Walsingham’s papers in the custody of John James and Thomas Lake (and later Thomas Wilson) may have been dispersed a second time into the hands of private individuals, through a process of loans, pilfering, and the ‘public-only’ selection policy of the State Papers.<sup>57</sup> In terms of the first of these, certain loans of Walsingham’s papers were never returned to the State Paper Office. In July 1599, when a new resident ambassador was being sent to France, the Keeper of the Exchequer could not find any bond for the £ 30,000 lent to King Henry VI, whilst he was King of Navarre. There had been ‘a book in folio, bound in vellum’, wherein Walsingham recorded briefly all the assurances for foreign loans. This Burghley had obtained with other papers of Walsingham’s, and inserted therein the Dutch States General’s bonds. Not having been returned, it was supposed to have come to Robert Cecil’s hands with other books of a like nature.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> CP 56/24, ‘The Queen records’, 15 Oct. 1597. TNA, SP 12/271/82, Henry Maynard to Cecil, 7 Jul. 1599.

<sup>56</sup> *The Annual Report*, 221.

<sup>57</sup> John James died in 1602. Sir John Haryngton to Robert Cecil, 31 Jan. 1600/1601, *HMC Salisbury*, XI, 25.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, SP 12/271/82, Henry Maynard to Cecil, 7 Jul. 1599; TNA, SP 12/271/83, Vincent Skinner to Cecil, 7 Jul. 1599; Sir Horatio Palavicino to Cecil, 13 July 1599, *HMC Salisbury*, IX, 233.

Second, an unknown number of Walsingham's private papers were filtered out by the State Paper Office, which accepted essentially 'private muniments of the King, his courts, and his government', and 'office archives of the secretaries of state'.<sup>59</sup> Any 'irrelevant' material of a purely personal nature was inadmissible as State Papers. As Simon Adams suggests, this selective collecting policy, rather than deliberate suppression because of sensitive information, is the only possible explanation for the disappearance of all Walsingham's personal (and family) papers and those of William Davison. As Walsingham died heirless, his weeded-out papers did not devolve to his family descendants but like vagrants wandered for centuries, at times being lost or misplaced, or becoming detached from other papers for auction.<sup>60</sup> It is worth noting that the portion of Walsingham's archives eliminated from the State Papers contains many items concerning sensitive 'public' issues of the time. The Elizabethan government's working distinction between 'public' and 'private' was not 'based upon the subject or import of the papers in question, but on the means and "industrie" which had lain behind their creation or collection'. Accordingly, papers such as 'journals', 'memorial' books and 'entry books' were sorted to 'private' because of the means of their production, despite their subject matter being of 'public' relevance.<sup>61</sup> This standard saw most of Walsingham's working books rejected by the State Papers. One of the most significant was the 'booke of secret intelligences', which recorded the names of spies, the aliases and cipher alphabets they used, and their payments; it was

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<sup>59</sup> Wernham, 'The Public Records in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth centuries', 11. G. R. Elton, *The Sources of History, Studies in the use of Historical Evidence: England, 1200-1640* (London, 1969), 66-75.

<sup>60</sup> It was not until the eighteenth century that 'illustrations of manners' as opposed to 'papers of state' were considered worth preserving. The first nationally organised survey of private manuscripts and papers of historical interest held in British archives hence began in 1869, with the foundation of the Historical Manuscripts commission. This interest continues today, as part of the National Archives. Alan Marshall, 'The Secretaries Office and the Public Records', State Papers Online, 1603-1714 (Cengage Learning EMEA Ltd, 2000).

<sup>61</sup> Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 24.

known to have existed in early 1590 but very unfortunately has disappeared.<sup>62</sup> The few working books that do survive are: Walsingham's table book of 1588 (Stowe MS 162) and his ledger book 1583-85 (Harley MS 6035) in the British Library; his Journal 1570-83, the entry book of Ireland 1579 (written partly by Tomson, Faunt and Lake) in the Carew Papers, Lisle Cave's French language letter book (1571-89), and Laurence Tomson's foreign entry book (1577-79), all in the National Archives.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, rampant pilfering by antiquaries disastrously dispersed Walsingham's papers into the hands of private individuals. Wanting to produce an annalistic-style history of the British Isles, Robert Cotton established the second-best collection of Walsingham's papers (approximately 900 letters), inferior only to the State Papers. These came partly from private secretaries or clients of contemporary personages, people like Beale, Arthur Atye, and William Camden. His collection, catalogued as Titus B/XII, contains extensive material relating to Ireland (1578-1579) 'oute of Sir Fr. Walsingham's notes' or 'bookes', each section being preceded by a cover sheet marked with a letter (possibly according to Walsingham's original catalogue): e.g. book I (ff. 43r-55v) and book H (ff. 62r-75v).<sup>64</sup> Cotton noted on book B (ff. 345r-366v): 'Ireland, I had of Mr. Phillipp and my L. Carew [Sir George Carew, Earl of Totnes]'.<sup>65</sup> Cotton also acquired

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<sup>62</sup> TNA, SP 12/231/56, 'Memorandum of State Papers delivered to the Lord Treasurer, to Mr. Wolley, to Mr. Freke, and of those sent home', Mar. 1590.

<sup>63</sup> TNA, SP 104/162, France, Flanders, German states and Holland: Lisle Cave's letter book, 1571-1589. TNA, SP 104/163, Flanders, France, German states, Holland, Scotland, Spain, Poland, Morocco and Sweden: Walsingham's letter book (by Laurence Tomson), 1577-1579. Only nine King's or Secretary's entry books, compiled by the mid-seventeenth century, remain in the State Papers: TNA, SP 104/162-170.

<sup>64</sup> Out of Walsingham's 'notes' or 'bookes': BL, Cotton MSS Titus B XII, ff. 43r, 63r, 159r, 172r, 345r. Cotton MSS Titus B XII: book E (ff. 159r-168v), book M (ff. 172r-185r), book O (ff. 194r-201v), book A (ff. 486r-498v). Cotton MSS Titus B XIII: book S (ff. 333r-337r).

<sup>65</sup> BL, Cotton MS Titus B/XII f. 345r.

Walsingham's manuscripts by stealing from the State Papers.<sup>66</sup> His theft of these latter documents was facilitated by his political position—as an unofficial secretary to the Lord Privy Seal the Earl of Northampton, as a client of the favourite Somerset and the Earl Marshal Arundel, and as a member of several official commissions—which gave him ready access to official archives.<sup>67</sup> In the Cotton MSS, among the letters addressed to Walsingham (approximately 613), up to 82% concentrate on diplomacy, news, and intelligence relating to Scotland in the 1580s.<sup>68</sup> The rest of the letters to and from Walsingham concern mainly his first embassy to France, especially in 1572; his embassy to the Low Countries with William Cobham in 1578; Walsingham's spying on the French embassy in London in 1583; and Leicester's expeditions to the Netherlands in 1586 and 1589. These major fragments not only reflect Cotton's interest in specific issues of Elizabethan politics, but also prove that he obtained Walsingham's papers often as entire bundles, rather than as loose separate documents.<sup>69</sup> In 1753, the Cotton library formed one of the foundation collections of the newly established British Museum.

As Cotton's secretary, Ralph Starkey had privileged access to Cotton's library. There he copied numerous manuscripts of Walsingham's correspondence during his first embassy to France, classified now as Harley MS 260.<sup>70</sup> However, Starkey is better

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<sup>66</sup> Colin G. C. Tite, *The Early Records of Sir Robert Cotton's Library: Formation, Cataloguing, Use* (London, 2003). *The Annual Report*, 212.

<sup>67</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631: History and Politics in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1979), 64-65. C. E. Wright, 'The Elizabethan Society of Antiquaries and the Formation of the Cottonian Library' in Francis Wormald and C. E. Wright, eds., *The English Library before 1700* (London, 1958), 176-212.

<sup>68</sup> BL, Cotton MSS Caligula C/VI-VIII.

<sup>69</sup> Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631*, 52.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 54.



known for his ownership of William Davison's papers, which contained many original and copied letters to Walsingham sent from his colleagues (particularly Leicester while on the Dutch expedition; Harley MS 285), or from his continental spies (Harley MSS 286, 287, 290).<sup>71</sup> This collection came to the attention of the Keeper Thomas Wilson. On 10 August 1619, the Privy Council authorised Wilson to search Starkey's house, and seized 'a sackfull of papers to the number of 45 pacquets', chiefly comprising Davison's ambassadorial documents.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, the contents of Harley MSS 285-287 can be seen as evidence that Wilson failed to seize all of Starkey's Davison papers. After Starkey died in October 1628, his collection of Walsingham's papers was bought by Simonds D'Ewes between 1628 to 1632.<sup>73</sup> Then in 1705 D'Ewes's grandson sold them to Robert Harley.<sup>74</sup> While in the hands of the D'Ewes and Harley families, several other of Walsingham's papers (scattered in Harley MSS 6845, 6992-6994), and his ledger book 1583-1585 (Harley MS 6035), were added to the collection.

In addition to this dispersal, some of Walsingham's papers also found their way to the Egerton and Stowe MSS, now in the British Library. The Egerton collection obtained Walsingham's items presumably through the marriage between George A. F. Rawdon-Hastings, second Marquess of Hastings, and Barbara Yelverton, Baroness Grey de Ruthyn.<sup>75</sup> The archive was acquired by the British Museum at auction in

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<sup>71</sup> BL, Harley MS 285 was edited in John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, during His Government of the Low Countries, in the year 1585 and 1586* (London, 1844).

<sup>72</sup> Adams, 'The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, II: The Atye-Collection', 138.

<sup>73</sup> Andrew G. Watson, *The Library of Sir Simonds D'Ewes* (London, 1966), 24-26.

<sup>74</sup> Cyril Ernest Wright, *Fontes Harleiani: A Study of the Sources of the Harleian collection of Manuscripts preserved in the Department of Manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1972).

<sup>75</sup> BL, Egerton MS 1049 ff. 3, 5; MS 1649, ff. 3, 10-15, 19, 128, 130, 163, 170; MS 2074, ff. 5, 9, 52.

1856.<sup>76</sup> The Stowe collection contains Walsingham's table book of 1588, the copies of Walsingham's correspondence during his first French embassy, and many original letters addressed to him.<sup>77</sup> After a number of vicissitudes, these papers found their ways into the hands of Thomas Astle (1735-1803), Keeper of the Records in the Tower and a Trustee of the British Museum.<sup>78</sup> It is unclear how he secured them, whether from London salerooms, or by inheritance from his father-in-law the Revd Philip Morant, antiquarian and noted historian of Essex. When Astle died in 1803, his former patron's son George Grenville, first Marquess of Buckingham, bought his whole manuscript collection, and removed it to Grenville's seat, Stowe House in Buckinghamshire. In 1849 the collection was offered for private sale to Bertram Ashburnham, fourth Earl of Ashburnham, and was again transported, this time to Ashburnham Palace, Sussex. In 1883, the Earl's son, also Bertram, sold the Stowe MSS to the government, thereby passing Walsingham's papers to the British Museum and ultimately to the British Library.

Faced with rampant pilfering by antiquarians, the Jacobean government, in June 1612, instructed Levinus Muncke and Thomas Wilson, the new Keepers appointed in 1610, to order the papers of the recently deceased Earl of Salisbury in Salisbury House, bringing them into the State Paper Office. Hereafter, this became the custom: when a Secretary of State or other minister resigned office or died, a warrant would be issued to deliver their detained official papers to the Keeper.<sup>79</sup> Then in 1619 Wilson

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<sup>76</sup> Tavinor, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 33-34.

<sup>77</sup> BL, Stowe MSS 142 f. 27; 151 f. 29; 143 ff. 67-79, 107; 147 ff. 214, 216-338. *Catalogue of the Stowe manuscripts in the British Museum* (London, 1895).

<sup>78</sup> In 1763, Thomas Astle was appointed by George Grenville, the Prime Minister and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, with Sir Joseph Ayloffé and Dr. A.C. Ducarel, to report on the records in the State Paper Office, and in 1765 to methodize the items in that office.

<sup>79</sup> *The Annual Report of the Deputy Keeper of the Public Records*, 30 (1869), 212.

recovered parts of Davison's papers from Ralph Starkey. Perhaps, however, we should thank the early Jacobean antiquarians for stealing documents; it saved numerous papers from being damaged or obliterated by a fire at Whitehall in January 1619. This disaster destroyed valuable documents, including the correspondence from Walsingham's first embassy to France, mainly dating from 1570 and 1571. 'When the Banqueting house at Whitehall was burnt down, the office [the room within the Holbein Gate] suffered by the hasty removing of the Papers to the place they are now in, many were lost and some burnt.'<sup>80</sup> For the remainder of the century, the surviving part of the State Papers was lodged in the newly rebuilt tower of the Whitehall Gateway, in two rooms opening into three closets and three turrets.<sup>81</sup>

Despite being kept in both official and private custody, some of Walsingham's papers either vanished through accident and negligence, or were sold to unknown buyers. The original expense account for Walsingham's transport, posting horses, and 'Intelligence or Spyalles' during his Dutch embassy in 1578 is an example. This was once in the stock of John Waller, a London bookseller, but has now disappeared.<sup>82</sup> Fortunately, some of these documents that went missing at a later date had been transcribed by contemporary historians. But some of these authors selectively edited the papers in question according to their political partiality and client loyalties, consequently shaping historical prejudices against specific Elizabethan political figures, especially Leicester.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 222.

<sup>81</sup> Hubert Hall, *Studies in English Official Historical Documents* (Cambridge, 1908), 37.

<sup>82</sup> BL, Microfilm M/488, Expense account of Sir Francis Walsingham for transport, intelligence, etc. as Ambassador to the Low Countries, 16 June-5 October 1578'.

William Camden was one such, whose account is coloured by his partisan loyalty to Burghley and the latter's anti-war policy. He was initially commissioned to write the *Annales* by his patron Burghley, who about 1597 'willed mee to compile in an Historicall stile, the first beginninge of the Reigne of Queene ELIZABETH...to eternize the memory of that renowned Queene'.<sup>83</sup> Around 1608 James I pressured him into continuing this project, in order to rebut the charges appearing in Jacque-Auguste de Thou's *Historia sui temporis* (1606) of Mary Stuart's adultery and murder of her husband.<sup>84</sup> In addition, Camden himself attempted to reform contemporary English historiography by the likes of Polydore Vergil and Edward Hall, by removing any mysterious or unnatural element, and all 'Ignorance', 'doubtfulnesse' and 'falsitie'.<sup>85</sup> His *Annales* became essentially a documentary history, 'the first English narrative history founded...on what we would now call "primary sources"'.<sup>86</sup>

These primary sources came first from Burghley, who in 1597 'set open unto mee, first his owne, and then the Queenes Roles, Memorials, and Records'. Also via Burghley's influence, Camden procured privileged access to the state archives: 'charters and Letters patents of Kings and great personages, letters, consultations in the Councill Chamber, Embassadors Instructions, and Epistles...The Parliamentarie Diaries, Actes,

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<sup>83</sup> William Camden, *Annales or the Histories of The Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse ELIZABETH, Late Queen of England* (London: [Thomas Harper], 1635), STC 4501, C2r.

<sup>84</sup> Hugh Trevor-Roper, 'Queen Elizabeth's first historian: William Camden', *Renaissance Essays* (London, 1985), 126-33. John Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: Literature, History, Sovereignty* (Cambridge, 2002), 60.

<sup>85</sup> William Camden, ed. by Wallace MacCaffrey, *The History of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England* (London, 1970), xxiv, xxvi. Camden, *Annals*, C3r.

<sup>86</sup> Wyman H. Herendeen, *William Camden: A Life in Context* (Woodbridge, 2007), 399. Daniel R. Woolf, *The Idea of History in Early Stuart England: erudition, ideology, and the 'light of truth' from the accession of James I to the Civil War* (Toronto, 1990), 120.

and Statutes...and...every Edict or Proclamation'.<sup>87</sup> Second, Camden made extensive use of Robert Cotton's library, as evidenced by the record of loans written in Cotton's hand.<sup>88</sup> Moreover, as an antiquarian and an inside observer of many of the events of Elizabeth's reign, Camden recorded accounts passed to him 'from my Ancestors and credible persons, which have beene present at the handling of matters'.<sup>89</sup> Such 'credible persons' included Burghley himself, who related his early employment in the household of the Duke of Somerset as the latter's Master of Requests; Margaret Douglas, Countess of Lennox, grandmother of James I, who was herself imprisoned in the Tower three times; and Alexander Nowell, the dean of St Paul's, who described to Camden the Duke of Norfolk's execution, confirming that, on 2 July 1572, he was with the Duke on the scaffold.<sup>90</sup>

The debate on Camden's scholarly impartiality is never ending, and will continue in the following chapters. Camden himself maintained he had a 'love of Truth'.<sup>91</sup> Against the rising suspicion that he had compromised his scholarly integrity under royal pressure to give a favourable account of Mary Stuart, Camden declared:

As for danger, I feared none, no, not from those which thinke the memorie of succeeding age may been extinct by present power...as many as have practiced crueltie upon Writers that have embraced Truth, have heaped dishonour upon themselves, and

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<sup>87</sup> Camden, *Annals*, C2r-v.

<sup>88</sup> Camden borrowed many volumes without returning them, so that in his will Camden left a provision for Cotton to enter his study and reclaim his books. Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631*, 54, 70n, 78. The list of archival loans in Robert Cotton's hand contains many records of loans by Camden, see in Tite, *The Early Records of Sir Robert Cotton's Library*, 37, 38, 39, 43, 53, 54, 56-7, 61, 64, 66, 68, 73, 79, 89, 100.

<sup>89</sup> MaCaffrey, *The History of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England*, xxvii. Camden, *Annales*, C2v.

<sup>90</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 153, 200, 219, 495. History-by-heard: 73, 144, 148, 179.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, C2v. Sharpe, *Sir Robert Cotton 1586-1631*, 94.

glorie upon them...To suspition either of favour, or disaffection, I have left no place...I might satisfie the truth onely.<sup>92</sup>

Indeed, by looking at Camden's working copy of the *Annales*, now in Cotton MS Faustina FI-X, Wallace MacCaffrey found no indication of changes between its earlier drafts and final edition.<sup>93</sup> Yet Camden reneged on his other promise that he would exclude any prejudice or partiality from his writing.<sup>94</sup> The *Annales* show his partisan favour towards Burghley, partly arising from his access to Burghley's papers, and partly due to his own inclination towards moderate Protestantism. In the *Annales*, therefore, he disparaged Catholicism and Puritanism, both of which in his opinion molested the social hierarchy and resisted constituted authority.<sup>95</sup> Burghley's chief antagonist, Leicester, was pictured as being personally immoral and politically aggressive. Camden even described him and Walsingham as the only ringleaders of Mary Stuart's death in 1587, in order to exculpate the similarly complicit Burghley and his family from the guilt of their involvement in the execution of King James's mother.<sup>96</sup> In addition, although his presentation of Queen Elizabeth at the height of her power was tailored to meet James's idealized self-image of royal supremacy, Camden did not withhold criticism of Elizabeth's inefficiency.<sup>97</sup> Camden represented her as 'being naturally slow in her resolutions' because she was a woman, with a 'womanish impotency' that was easily manipulated by her ministers; these accounts downplayed

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<sup>92</sup> Camden, *Annales*, C3r. Trevor-Roper, 'Queen Elizabeth's first historian: William Camden', 133.

<sup>93</sup> MacCaffrey, *The History of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England*, xxxvi. Kevin Sharpe, *Politics and Ideas in Early Stuart England* (London, 1989), 215.

<sup>94</sup> Camden, *Annales*, C3r.

<sup>95</sup> MacCaffrey, *The History of the most renowned and victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen of England*, xxxviii-xxxv. Herendeen, *William Camden*, 404, 407.

<sup>96</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>97</sup> Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England*, 61-63

her absolute monarchy.<sup>98</sup>

Taking a contrary position in his *Fragmenta Regalia* (1641), Robert Naunton, another commentator on Elizabethan politics, depicted Elizabeth as ruling by faction. His working sources mainly came from the State Papers to which Naunton had privileged access as a Principal Secretary of State, documents in his own possession, and oral records. From the first sort, he learned of Queen Elizabeth's own 'frequent letters and complaints to Deputy Mountjoy [Charles Blount, 8<sup>th</sup> Baron Mountjoy, who served as Lord Deputy 1600-1603]' of the costly expense of the Irish army and royal financial straits, catalogued now in the State Papers of Ireland.<sup>99</sup> Naunton also collected many original papers written by Leicester, as well as intelligence reports sent from France by the spy William Parry to Leicester and Burghley, 'containing many fine passages and secrets' in ciphers (now lost).<sup>100</sup> More significantly, Naunton's service for the second Earl of Essex in spying on the fugitive Spanish Secretary of State, Antonio Perez, from 1596 to 1599, and his later Secretaryship at the Stuart court, acquainted him personally with many late Elizabethan and early Jacobean events.<sup>101</sup> In addition, Naunton also relied on Henry Wotton's *State of Christendom* (1594) for information about Elizabeth's policy towards Spain, and cited Walter Ralph's *History of the World* (1614) in describing Elizabeth's lack of generosity in rewarding her soldiers and in commenting on the trial of John Perrot. Probably the Latin edition of Camden's

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<sup>98</sup> See Chapter IV and Chapter VI. Camden, *Annales*, 338.

<sup>99</sup> John Cerovski, ed., *Fragmenta Regalia, or, Observations on Queen Elizabeth, Her Times & Favourites* (Washington, 1985), 43.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, 51, 61.

<sup>101</sup> He gives credit to these sources of information with the use of such phrases as 'I know it from assured intelligence'; 'I have heard it spoken'; 'those that lived in his age, and from whence I have taken this little model of him'; 'I have heard it from that party'; 'I have heard from a discreet man of his own'; and 'I have heard those that both knew him well and had interest in him say merrily of him...'. *Ibid.*, 26-27, 41, 61, 62, 68, 79, 70.

*Annales*, published in 1625, also became one of the secondary sources for Naunton's work.<sup>102</sup>

*Fragmenta Regalia* was written in the context of Naunton's quest for royal patronage, which consequently shaped the text as loyal propaganda for divine sovereignty. He credited Elizabeth's triumph over both internal revolts and foreign invasions to her 'destiny' and 'fortune'; God was on her side.<sup>103</sup> And her intellectual qualities as a monarch, her ability, and her being 'learned (her sex and her time considered) beyond all common belief', were commended.<sup>104</sup> Under her royal supremacy, her ministers 'acted more by her own princely rules and judgment than by their own will and appetites', and 'she ruled much by faction and parties, which she herself both made, upheld, and weakened as her own great judgment advised'.<sup>105</sup> In short, Queen Elizabeth was the final policy-maker, 'very capable of counsel, absolute enough in her own resolutions'.<sup>106</sup> Accordingly, Naunton analogised Elizabeth's absolute monarchy to Charles I's rule in the 1630s, both given by providence; any man who resisted this government was opposing God's will.<sup>107</sup>

Another valuable documentary history is Dudley Digges's *The Compleat Ambassador* (1655), an edited compilation of the great majority of Walsingham's correspondence from his two French embassies (1570-1573 and 1581). Some of the originals,

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 26-27.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 38.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid., 39-40.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 40-41.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 42, 47.

<sup>107</sup> Roy E. Schrieber, *The Political Career of Sir Robert Naunton 1589-1635* (London, 1981), 125.



particularly documents written in 1570 and early 1571, have vanished, probably burnt in the fire of 1619.<sup>108</sup> Digges presumably copied these letters when they were owned by Ralph Starkey or Simond D'Ewes, classified now as Harley MS 260, with some supplements from the State Papers. It is reasonable to assume Digges used the duplicates made by Starkey rather than the originals in the Cotton collection. For instance, regarding the correspondence on 10 August 1572, Digges cited two letters from Walsingham to Thomas Smith, one to Cecil, and one to Leicester. The order and texts conform to the Harley MSS, but none of these exists in the Cotton MSS.<sup>109</sup> Likewise, in terms of the correspondence on 11 September 1572, there is only one letter from Leicester to Walsingham in Digges's work, identical to that held in the Harley MSS, but the Cotton MSS have two more separately from Smith and from Burghley.<sup>110</sup> On 5 December 1572, Walsingham wrote in sequence to Smith, Burghley, Leicester, and Burghley again; none of these four letters exists in the Cotton MSS, but only in Harley's collection.<sup>111</sup> Interestingly, the latter has one additional letter Burghley addressed to Walsingham, which Digges does not cite, implying he either ignored or selectively presented documents for some purpose.<sup>112</sup> The State Papers also enriched Digges's work; the instruction by the Queen to Walsingham on 19 December 1570, and the letter of Walsingham to Cecil on 28 January 1571, existed only in the

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<sup>108</sup> E.g. Cecil to Walsingham, 13 Aug. 1570; Queen Elizabeth to Walsingham, 7 Sept. 1570; Walsingham to Walter Mildmay, 8 Feb. 1571. Dudley Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador; or, Two treaties of the intended marriage of Qu. Elizabeth of glorious memory comprised in letters of negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham* (London, 1655), 5, 9, 38.

<sup>109</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 231-34. BL, Harley MS 260 ff. 282, 283, 285.

<sup>110</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 251. BL, Harley MS 260 f. 313/ Cotton MS Vespasian F/V f. 149 (Orig.), Leicester to Walsingham. BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/V f. 147, Smith to Walsingham; BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/V f. 148, Burghley to Walsingham.

<sup>111</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 291-93. BL, Harley MS 260 ff. 370, 371, 372, 373.

<sup>112</sup> BL, Harley MS 260 f. 154, Burghley to Walsingham, 5 Dec. 1572.

State Papers.<sup>113</sup> Despite being a copy of Starkey's duplicate, Digges's work can be used as a trustworthy authority, as the copied texts appear almost identical to the originals in the Cotton MSS.

Digges's book may have been written out of a Jacobean nostalgia for the time of Elizabeth I. In the early seventeenth century, the universal unpopularity of the Stuart regime created a fashion to rewrite the glorious history of Elizabeth's rule. The figure of Elizabeth further became the axis of propaganda between the royalists and the parliamentarians in the Civil Wars. Then in the Interregnum, ironically, her representative of monarchy became an obstacle to the Commonwealth government: the government feared it might encourage dreams of a restoration. An opposite and gendered fabrication of Elizabeth, therefore, was developed. This denied that female rule was monarchy, and attributed Elizabeth's glorious reign to 'her submission to her masculine and wise councillors'.<sup>114</sup> Accordingly, it is not surprising to observe that Digges followed this historiographical fashion. He found it 'doubly inscrutable' that 'she was a Woman and a Queen'. Elizabeth was described as a Queen making the final decisions, but also an indecisive woman who was very easily affected by misleading intelligence. Her only excellence, in Digges's estimation, was her judgment in making 'good choice of her Servants, though she rewarded but sparingly'. She had 'the Fortune to find them more loyal and secret then those Princes that succeeded her'. Because of Digges's agenda, his archival selection lays much greater stress on the correspondence between Elizabeth's ministers, than on that between them and the Queen. By doing this, he magnified the efforts of her ministers, chiefly Burghley and

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<sup>113</sup> TNA, SP 70/115 f. 65, Instructions for Mr. Walsingham, 19 Dec. 1570; Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 18-20. TNA, SP 70/116 f. 43, Walsingham to Cecil, 28 Jan. 1571; Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 28.

<sup>114</sup> Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: Literature, History, Sovereignty*, 102.

Walsingham, and minimised the role of Queen Elizabeth in her own reign.

These three works by Digges, Naunton and Camden will be frequently discussed throughout this thesis. Their partisan prejudices and different pictures touching both factiousness and Queen Elizabeth's specifically female rule will be treated carefully, and will also become central issues for this research.

## Chapter I: The Rise of Walsingham, 1568–1573

This chapter traces Walsingham's entrance into Elizabethan high politics through his employment in Secretary William Cecil's espionage clientele from 1568 to 1573. Elizabeth's political inheritance in 1558 was far from ideal: she faced Mary Stuart's claim to the English succession; international Catholicism, which regarded her as a heretic bastard and left her diplomatically isolated; domestic collision over the new Protestant settlement; and an empty treasury. In some urgency, the thirty-eight-year-old Cecil assumed the helm of her unstable regime, taking the roles of councillor and Principal Secretary, and from 1561 being additionally entrusted with the Court of Wards and Liveries.<sup>1</sup> Efficiency both in the Court of Wards and the Secretaryship depended on the supply of sound information and intelligence. Great profits could arise from transferring wardships, so escheators and feodaries had to 'have Argus eyes piercing into all conveyances' to closely monitor wardship status amongst the landed class.<sup>2</sup> It was also requisite for every Elizabethan Secretary, as Robert Beale stated, to offer the Queen and her Council the latest information concerning Church and religion, the routine of regional councils, military deployment, commerce, royal revenues, and 'forraine Espialls and Intelligences' like 'the number of the strangers, Denizens and others both in London and in other places of this Realme'. In other words, the

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<sup>1</sup> Regarding Cecil's mastery of wardships, Conyers Read and Joel Hurstfield accused Cecil of earning up to double or triple commission in each sale of wardship, in contrast with the declining income of the Court of Wards, from the peak of £29,552 in 1561 when he assumed this role, down to £9,004 in 1579. His guardianship of certain crucial wardships, like that of Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, cultivated his family's connections within the aristocratic class. Stephen Alford refers to this 'not open corruption' as a kind of 'oil applied to make a whole system of government and patronage run more smoothly', and emphasises Cecil's fidelity to the Crown in policing landowning society. Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1955), 192; *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1960), 17; Joel Hurstfield, 'Lord Burghley as Master of the Court of Wards', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Fourth Series* 31 (1949), 95-114; 'The Profits of Fiscal Feudalism, 1541-1602', *The Economic History Review, New Series* 8 (1955), 53-61. Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven & London, 2008), 149, 165, 225, 339-41.

<sup>2</sup> Hurstfield, 'Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I', *History Today* 4 (1954), 608.

Secretary needed to acquaint himself thoroughly with ‘the State of the whole Realme,...w[hi]ch by progress of time and experience he shalbe able to spie and amende’.<sup>3</sup> Robert Cecil, who succeeded his father William as Secretary in 1596, emphasised the Secretary’s discretion in ‘all matters of speech and intelligence’.<sup>4</sup> The Elizabethan intelligence service, therefore, grew primarily to meet a political need, and it was in working for Cecil in this context that Walsingham rose to prominence within Elizabeth’s regime.

By the early 1570s, Cecil’s intelligence service had achieved some kind of systematic procedure. This has been verified in Robyn Adams’s investigation into William Herle’s spying in the Marshalsea during the Ridolfi Plot in the spring of 1571.<sup>5</sup> This ‘greatest enterprise’ aimed to intercept letters between two key suspects in this plot: John Lesley, Bishop of Ross, Mary Stuart’s representative in London, and his agent Charles Bailly.<sup>6</sup> The investigations into the Ridolfi Plot bring three of Cecil’s intelligence mechanisms to light: overseas espionage and information for ambassadors, prison networks, and Cecil’s intelligence secretariat. An overseas spy William Sutton tipped off Cecil about Bailly’s impending journey to England.<sup>7</sup> Walsingham, then the English ambassador in

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Beale, ‘Treatise of the Office of a Councillor and Principall Secretarie to her Ma[jes]tie’ (1592), in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, I (Oxford, 1925), 428, 430, 435.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Cecil, ‘The State and Dignity of a Secretary of State’s Place, with the Care and Peril thereof, written by the Right Honourable Robert, late Earl of Salisbury’, *The Harleian Miscellany: or, a Collection of Scarce, Curious and Entertaining Pamphlets and Tracts...* (London, 1744), II, 265-66.

<sup>5</sup> Robyn Adams, “‘The Service I am here for’: William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571”. *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 72 (2009), 217-238; ‘Signs of Intelligence: William Herle’s Report of the Dutch Situation, 1573’, *Lives and Letters* 1 (2009), 1-18; ‘A Spy on the Payroll? William Herle and the mid Elizabethan Polity’, *Historical Research* 83 (May 2010), 266-79.

<sup>6</sup> BL, Cotton MSS Caligula. C/III ff. 60r-v, 61r-62v, Herle to Burghley, 4 Apr., 11 Apr. 1571. TNA, SP 53/6/37 f. 64r-v, Herle to Burghley, 11 Apr. 1571.

<sup>7</sup> Francis Edwards, *The Maryellous Chance: Thomas Howard, Fourth Duke of Norfolk, and the Ridolfi Plot, 1570-1572* (London, 1968), 38, cited in Adams, “‘The Service I am Here for’”, 224.

Paris, confirmed this intelligence.<sup>8</sup> This prior warning of Bailly's arrival allowed Cecil to arrange his arrest at Dover and make certain deployments within the prison, in this case involving a spy called Herle.<sup>9</sup> Accused of piracy off the Isle of Wight, Herle agreed to take on the role of prison spy in the Marshalsea in early 1571, in exchange for commutation or release, or perhaps exculpation with 'good opinion and name'.<sup>10</sup> The Marshalsea, located in Southwark, was one of the chief prisons used to detain recusants, political criminals, and those accused of maritime offences like piracy. This politically sensitive jail had a supervisory mechanism to block the prisoners' outward correspondence, except those letters under its tacit watch. Prison spies were safeguarded and kept in contact with the authorities under the guise of interrogation. In jail, Herle acted as a letter-conduit between Bailly and Lesley, but diverted their enciphered letters to Cecil for surveillance and copying. Herle was also expected to secure the cipher-alphabet so that Cecil's team could not only read the correspondence, but also add to its contents. This could only work if Burghley's intelligence team had mastered certain intelligence technologies and routines: letter delivery, copying, deciphering, forging and resealing. In addition – as confirmed by Adams's research into the marginal figures in Herle's reports during his later secret diplomacy with William of Orange in mid-1573 – Cecil's private secretariat had a file management system which collated, digested and inscribed intelligence into an ordered form, convenient for Cecil to read swiftly.<sup>11</sup> By the early 1570s then, Cecil's espionage had achieved a degree of maturity and systematic division of secretarial business.

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<sup>8</sup> Alan Haynes, *Walsingham: Elizabethan Spymaster & Statesman* (Stroud, 2007), 17.

<sup>9</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/III f. 60r-v, Herle to Burghley, 4 Apr. 1571.

<sup>10</sup> *Act of the Privy Council of England, 1558-1570*, 401. BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/III f. 60r-v, Herle to Burghley, 4 Apr. 1571. Adams, "The Service I am here for", 218-20, 234.

<sup>11</sup> Adams, 'Signs of Intelligence', 1-18.

Employment within Elizabethan espionage relied more on a private clientele than on government office, and was paid with patronage instead of regular salaries. Spymasters redistributed patronage earned from the Crown—like conveyances of wardships, pensions, promotion in office, pardons, and entrée to royal favour—downwards to their intelligence employees. For example, private informant William Dethick begged to be a custodian of records of ‘descents’, and another petitioner to be a registrar of baptisms, marriages and burials.<sup>12</sup> Herle requested in 1574 ‘the whole feodariship of Wales’, an office that assisted escheators in surveying local wardships, and then in 1575 a feodary appointment for ‘conselements’ and ‘the survey of certayn covent leases’.<sup>13</sup>

People mired in guilt, exile or poverty might easily be made use of as spies in exchange for pardons. Herle spied inside the Marshalsea in 1571 for commutation of his sentence; English Catholic émigrés served Elizabeth’s Protestant government to redeem their liberty, family estates, and for licences to return home.<sup>14</sup> Escaping England because of debt, in 1566 Christopher Rooksby in Edinburgh volunteered to spy for Cecil on Mary Queen of Scots, who had readily admitted him into her anti-Elizabeth intrigues: a proposed alliance and invasion involving continental Catholics and English Catholic aristocrats including the Duke of Norfolk, and the Earls

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<sup>12</sup> Hurstfield, *The Queen’s Wards: Wardship and Marriage under Elizabeth I* (London, 1958), 42.

<sup>13</sup> As to his request in 1574, Herle glossed over his greed with a hypocritical fidelity, declaring that by this ‘more painfull than proffitable’ duty, he would remind the Welsh gentry of ‘that they hold in Capite Since King Edward of most gloryous memory the first...to hold the contry therby & from thenceforth in better obedience & duty’. ‘Capite’ was an ancient hierarchical system of holding lands. BL, Lansdowne MS 18 ff. 87v-88r, Herle to Burghley, 18 Dec. 1574, cited from the website *Letters of William Herle Project*, edited by the Centre for Editing Lives and Letters, Queen Mary, University of London. Hurstfield, ‘Lord Burghley as Master of the Court of Wards’, 100. CP 160/48r, Herle to Burghley, 3 Jul. 1575. Burghley to Mr. Bosvile, clerk of the Court of Wards, 30 Aug. 1575, *CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579*, 489. Hurstfield, ‘Lord Burghley as Master of the Court of Wards’, 100-101.

<sup>14</sup> English Catholic exiles acting in the double service of both Catholic authorities and Elizabeth’s government are discussed in Chapter III.

of Derby, Shrewsbury, Northumberland and Westmorland.<sup>15</sup> Cecil kept Rooksby spying in Edinburgh until 1572, partly by appealing to his faith and patriotism, but more with the lure of eventual pardon and help.<sup>16</sup>

Senior intelligencers could earn a privileged entrée to government or royal favour. John Lee served Cecil by shadowing English émigrés in Antwerp from 1569.<sup>17</sup> Before the Dutch uprising of 1578, the Low Countries were the primary shelter for Elizabethan Catholic exiles. Because of geographical access to the ‘imperial route’—running from the Netherlands, up the Rhine and into Italy by the St Gotthard or the Brenner Passes—exiles either headed for Rome along this path, or settled down at Antwerp, Brussels and Leuven, places which thus became the top priorities for English espionage.<sup>18</sup> Lee and an exile called John Prestall jointly unravelled some regicidal intrigues, warning Cecil to watch ‘her [Queen Elizabeth’s] meats and drinks, for some say she shall not reign long’.<sup>19</sup> Lee and John Fitzwilliams also acted as intermediaries between Cecil and exiles like Francis Norton and Charles Neville, both of whom requested Cecil’s influence with Queen Elizabeth to obtain a royal pardon. In return, Norton pledged his duty to Cecil’s espionage.<sup>20</sup> Lee was arrested in Antwerp in

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<sup>15</sup> Christopher Rooksby to Cecil, Jun. 1566, *A Collection of State Papers, Relating to Affairs in the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, Transcribed from Original letters and Other Authentick Memorials, Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley, 1542-1570* (London, 1740), 445-47.

<sup>16</sup> Cecil to Rooksby, 16 Jun. 1566, *A Collection of State Papers, 1542-1570*, 445. Killygrew to Cecil, 24 Jun., 4 Jul. 1566, *CSP Scotland, 1563-1569*, 288-90, 293. TNA, SP 12/85/33, Information by Mr. Rooksby, Jan. 1572.

<sup>17</sup> TNA, SP 15/20/34, Lee to Cecil, 11 May 1571.

<sup>18</sup> John Bossy, ‘Rome and the Elizabethan Catholics: A Question of Geography’, *The Historical Journal* 7 (1964), 135-36. Peter Guilday, *The English Catholic Refugees on the Continent 1558-1795, Vol I: The English Colleges and Convents in the Catholic Low Countries, 1558-1795* (London, 1914).

<sup>19</sup> Lee to Cecil, 20 Mar. 1569-70, *HMC Salisbury*, I, 466. Same to same, 26 Jan., 8 Mar., 11 May, 23 Jul., 9 Nov. 1571, *CSPD Addenda 1566-1579*, 338-39, 341, 349, 356, 371-72.

<sup>20</sup> As to the negotiations with the Earl of Westmorland, Lee to Cecil, 26 Jan., 1 May 1571, 31 Mar. 1572;



1572 when monitoring the local Spanish forces. Though in prison, however, he kept collecting intelligence and after his release resumed his work for Burghley. In 1595 his spying efforts finally earned him an audience with Queen Elizabeth who ‘geve me thanks in regard of my service voluntarily of myself offered to her Majestie’. Burghley also promised to ‘further’ his suit for an official post.<sup>21</sup>

In return for such valuable services, leading Elizabethan ministers could elevate their core clients into the formal systems of bureaucracy. Alan Smith has demonstrated that the majority of the Cecils’ household secretaries entered central administration, chiefly into foreign embassies, or the financial offices of the lower exchequer and the duchy of Lancaster, or the Irish departments responsible for the local musters, wardship and exchequer. Such clients became the eyes of their patrons, watching over government routines.<sup>22</sup> Walsingham is perhaps the prime example of this; because of his espionage work for Cecil he rose from a little-known Kentish gentleman to official prominence as the Principal Secretary.

Walsingham had joined Cecil’s espionage network by August 1568, a ‘dangerous tyme’ as he saw it.<sup>23</sup> He alerted Cecil to the urgent danger of rebellion and

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Lee to John Fitzwilliams, 4 Apr. 1571, *CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579*, 338-39, 342, 348, 389. The wives of some exiles like Parkers and Rob Pygot also pleaded with Cecil via Lee for a pardon for their husbands. Lee to Burghley, 17 May, 7 Dec., 1571, 350, 371. Norton begged for favour from both Cecil and Leicester. Lee to Cecil, 15 Jan., 8 Mar., 31 Mar., 20 Apr., 11 May, 11 Jun. 1571, 15 Jan., Jun., 5 Aug. 1572, 18 Jan. 1573, *CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579*, 336-37, 341, 342, 345, 349, 352, 378-79, 415-16, 422-23, 442-43. Norton to Leicester, 2 Apr. 1572; Lee to Leicester, 2 Apr. 1572, *CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579*, 390-91. TNA, SP 15/20/35, Lee to Cecil, 31 Mar. 1571.

<sup>21</sup> CP 32/23, Lee to Robert Cecil, 8 May 1595. Norton to Burghley, 30 Oct., 15 Nov. 1572, 24 Jan. 1573, *CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579*, 428, 429, 443. The last existing letter John Lee wrote to Burghley was on 10 May 1573. From then until 1595 there is little record of their correspondence.

<sup>22</sup> Alan G. R. Smith, ‘The Secretariats of the Cecils’, *English Historical Review* 83 (1968), 502-504.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, SP 12/47/57, Walsingham to Cecil, 7 Sept. 1568.

assassination:

Wheyinge [the informant's] his earnest protestation, of the credyt of the partye that came from the nature of the matter, as of the greatest importaunce, the mallyce of this present tyme, the alleageaunce, and pertyculer good will I owghe her majesty, and the daynger, that might grow unto me, by the concealyng therof. Yf any sooche thinge which God defende hereafter, should happen...And I beseeche your honor that I may without offence conclude that is this devysion, that reygnethe amongst us. There is lesse daynger in fearinge to muche then to lyttle and that ther is nothinge more dayngerouse than securyte.<sup>24</sup>

Walsingham cautioned against believing that the Queen's safety could be guaranteed by the patriotism and fidelity of her subjects.<sup>25</sup> From the late 1560s, instances of 'mallyce' and 'devysion' from Scotland, Rome, Spain and France caused profound disquiet. In May 1568 for instance, the dethroned Mary Stuart fled to England looking for asylum, but found herself an unwelcome guest under house arrest. 'Preservation of the person of the Queen of Scots...to be right heire' soon became one of the excuses used for the Northern revolt in 1569.<sup>26</sup> The bull *Regnans in excelsis* issued by Pope Pius V in February 1570 excommunicated Elizabeth from the Catholic Church, which—from the Catholic point of view—freed her subjects from loyalty, obligation and obedience to this pretended sovereign. Relations between London and Madrid had also deteriorated sharply in 1567, when 10,000 troops led by the Duke of Alva reached the Low Countries to quell local Protestant revivalism. This army seized all local English property and imposed an embargo on commerce.<sup>27</sup> In a counter move at the

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<sup>24</sup> TNA, SP 12/48/61, Walsingham to Cecil, 20 Dec. 1568.

<sup>25</sup> John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 53.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, SP 15/21 f. 113v, Answers to interrogatories by the Earl of Northumberland, 13 Jun. 1572.

<sup>27</sup> R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485-1588* (London, 1966), 292.

end of 1568, Elizabeth detained five Spanish treasure ships when they sheltered from a storm in Plymouth and Southampton.<sup>28</sup>

These crises facilitated Walsingham's rapid rise within Elizabeth's regime. On 18 August 1568, Francis wrote to Cecil on behalf of Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, Elizabeth's ambassador to France during the first civil war, who was too ill to write himself. The letter concerned a financial request brought by Robert Stuart, a man in service to James Stuart, Earl of Moray and the Scottish regent. Robert was sent by the Huguenot leaders Louis de Bourbon-Vendôme, Prince de Condé, and Gaspard de Coligny, Admiral of France, who were struggling in the third civil war. They appealed firstly to Cecil, who in 1559 had advocated English military intervention to support the Protestant lords of congregation in Scotland. Walsingham pleaded with Cecil to arrange an audience for Stuart with the Queen, for Stuart had important messages to render only by mouth.<sup>29</sup> Cecil made no response to this petition. The Huguenots and their English advocates misunderstood Cecil's theory of English intervention, which was applied to Scotland, Stephen Alford explains, in accordance with ideas of traditional English 'superiority over Scotland' rather than religious conviction.<sup>30</sup> Cecil in fact shared Queen Elizabeth's aversion to intervention in foreign quarrels on behalf of rebellious subjects.<sup>31</sup> Unsurprisingly, later the Queen refused to receive the Huguenot envoy.

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<sup>28</sup> Derek Wilson, *Sir Francis Walsingham: A Courtier in An Age of Terror* (New York, 2007), 55-57.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, SP 12/47/84, Walsingham to Cecil, 18 Aug. 1568.

<sup>30</sup> Stephen Alford, 'Reassessing William Cecil in the 1560s', in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), 233-53.

<sup>31</sup> Cecil wrote in cipher to Henry Norris, the English ambassador in Paris, that 'Her Majesty much mislikes of the Prince Condé and the Admiral, wherein all is done that can be by the Council to cover the same. As I think the principal is that her Majesty being a prince is doubtful of giving comfort to subjects. Nevertheless you shall do well as occasion shall serve to comfort them'. Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil*, 394.

For Conyers Read this letter from Walsingham to Cecil marked the former's entrance into English foreign affairs.<sup>32</sup> Simon Adams believes that in the late 1560s Walsingham had served in an unrecorded capacity on one of Throckmorton's Scottish embassies. Walsingham's fellowship with Cecil may have begun earlier, in 1563, when Cecil acted as a referee for Francis's parliamentary selection at Lyme Regis, Dorset.<sup>33</sup> The last paragraph in this 1568 letter certainly demonstrated their pre-existing association in foreign espionage. Walsingham apprised Cecil that 'touchynge thos matters wherein you appoynted me, I will tomorrowe in the mornynge attende vppon your honor to advertyse you what I have don therin'.<sup>34</sup> Fluent in Italian as a result of his Marian exile in Padua, Walsingham was serving as a handler between Cecil and an Italian soldier Thomas Franchiotto.<sup>35</sup> Franchiotto, alias Captain François, had been in the pay of the French crown for four decades but, or so he claimed, his Protestant faith had convinced him to forsake his French paymasters. He was recommended to Cecil by the English Ambassador in Paris Henry Norris, and used to investigate the intrigues of the Guises in support of Mary Stuart.<sup>36</sup> Until the end of 1568, Walsingham passed on to Cecil intelligence gained by Franchiotto, who was termed by Walsingham as 'my friend' in his letters to the Secretary. Franchiotto discovered the preparation of twelve 'galleys for the transportinge of certayn souldyars', intended for military support for

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<sup>32</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, I, 54. Robert Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spy Master: Francis Walsingham and the Secret War that Saved England* (London, 2006), 33.

<sup>33</sup> 'Walsingham, Sir Francis (c.1532–1590)', Mitchell Leimon in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/28624> (accessed 27 September 2012). Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 42.

<sup>34</sup> TNA, SP 12/47/41, Walsingham to Cecil, 18 Aug. 1568.

<sup>35</sup> Stephen Budiansky, *Her Majesty's Spymaster: Elizabeth I, Sir Francis Walsingham, and the Birth of Modern Espionage* (New York, 2006), 70-71. CP 202/59r-60v, Walsingham's Report from Franchiotto, 20 Aug. 1568.

<sup>36</sup> TNA, SP 70/101 f. 4, Sir Henry Norris to Cecil, 2 Aug. 1568.

the northern uprising,<sup>37</sup> and also that the Cardinal of Lorraine, with Spanish support, had sent certain Italians into England for ‘a practyce in hande for the alteratyon of relygion, and the advauncement of the Queen of Scott to the Crowne’.<sup>38</sup> On Franchiotto’s tipoff, Walsingham cautioned the Queen to ‘exercise great watchfulness over her food, utensils, bedding, and other furniture, lest poison should be administered to her by secret enemies’. And he sent Cecil a list of suspicious newcomers in England during the past three months, ‘whose greatest desire is to upset and change the existing regime’.<sup>39</sup>

It was proposed to Cecil that intelligence be manipulated in order to convict Mary Stuart of the murder of her second husband, Henry Lord Darnley. At the first tribunal, held at York in October 1568, the Scottish Confederate Lords had failed in their attempts to convict Mary because of their reluctance to exhibit the key proof, the Casket Letters—a silver box containing eight letters, two marriage contracts and twelve sonnets said to have been written by Mary to Bothwell. Cecil hastily intervened to retrieve the situation. Unlike Queen Elizabeth, who hoped to act as a mediator between Mary and her Scottish subjects, Cecil aimed to have Mary declared guilty in order to weaken her claim to the English succession and to strengthen regent Moray’s Anglophile regime. Cecil moved the second tribunal south to Westminster, and added himself and four extra judges to it. At this time Walsingham suggested,

Yf for the discoverye of the Queen of Scotts consent to the murder of her husband ther lack suffycyent proves, he [Franchiotto] is able (yf yt shall please you to use him) to

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<sup>37</sup> TNA, SP 12/47/72; SP 70/102 f. 86; SP 12/48/23; SP 12/48/61, Walsingham to Cecil, 15 Sept. 1568; 24 Sept. 1568; 21 Oct. 1568; 20 Dec. 1568.

<sup>38</sup> TNA, SP 70/100 f. 59, Norris to Cecil, 23 Jul. 1568. TNA, SP 12/48/61, Walsingham to Cecil, 20 Dec. 1568.

<sup>39</sup> CP 202/59r-60v, Walsingham’s Report from Franchiotto, 20 Aug. 1568.

dyscover certayn that should have ben employed in the sayde murder who are here to be produced.<sup>40</sup>

It is unclear whether Cecil adopted the advice. The Casket Letters, produced in the tribunal six days later and ‘affirmed’ to be in Mary’s own hand, stubbed out her hope of restoration.<sup>41</sup>

Walsingham’s fidelity in the business of Franchiotto saw him promoted to surveillance of the Ridolfi Plot. In early 1569, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, was apprehended over his proposed marriage with Mary. In October Walsingham investigated this intricate conspiracy, especially the complicity of Roberto di Ridolfi. This Florentine banker was accused of having, from 1561 or 1562, smuggled papal funds from Flanders to the northern recusants ‘by bills of exchange’, then in September 1569 of repeating this method to transfer £3,000 from Don Guerau de Spes, the Spanish ambassador in London, to the Bishop of Ross.<sup>42</sup> Under Elizabeth’s command, Ridolfi was detained at Walsingham’s dwelling ‘without conference until he may be examined of certain matters that touche her Highness very nearly’.<sup>43</sup> Cecil authorised Walsingham to search Ridolfi’s lodgings for evidence, although he learned nothing further.<sup>44</sup> In late January 1570, Ridolfi resumed his liberty on bail of £1,000 and a pledge that he would not ‘deale directly or in indirectly in any matters concerning to

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<sup>40</sup> TNA, SP 53/2 f. 46, Walsingham to Cecil, 20 Nov. 1568.

<sup>41</sup> John Guy, *My Heart is My Own’: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2004), 385-436.

<sup>42</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/III f. 121, Charges against Norfolk, Jan. 1572.

<sup>43</sup> TNA, SP 12/59/3, Leicester and Cecil to Walsingham, 4 Oct. 1569.

<sup>44</sup> TNA, SP 12/59/11, Leicester and Cecil to Walsingham, 19 Oct. 1569. The Elizabethan Principal Secretary had authority to sign warrants ‘for the apprehenc[i]on of any man or serching of houses’. Beale, ‘Treatise’, in Read, *Walsingham*, I, 426. TNA, SP 12/59/12, Leicester and Cecil to Walsingham, 27 Oct. 1569. TNA, SP 12/66/30, Cecil to Mr. Alderman Rowe and Walsingham, 26 Jan. 1570.

hir Majesty or the state of this Realm'.<sup>45</sup>

It is hard to understand this easy escape of Ridolfi's, whose testimony Queen Elizabeth observed was 'farr otherwise than the truth is' and that 'in some poynts he will not declare his knowledge'.<sup>46</sup> Partly Elizabeth had him released for fear that under torture he might expose her secret diplomacy, for Elizabeth had used him to mediate between London and Brussels.<sup>47</sup> More probably, Walsingham, praised by William Camden as one who 'knew excellently well how to winne men's minds unto him, and to apply them to his owne uses', had persuaded Ridolfi to change sides.<sup>48</sup> In October 1570, he recommended Cecil recruit Ridolfi to help reconcile differences between England and Flanders: 'the late expseryence that I have dyvers wayes had of him, makethe me to hope that yf he were imployed in that behalfe, he woold deale bothe dyscreatly and upprightly, as one bothe wyse and who standethe on terms of honestye and reputatyon'.<sup>49</sup> Walsingham's suggestion was accepted. In March 1571, before departing for Rome, Ridolfi was received secretly by Elizabeth at Greenwich Palace, where 'he did in like sort make profession of great affection to serve Her Majesty and this crown', and obtained 'a very favourable passport' as her blessing.<sup>50</sup> This however was 'a catastrophic error of judgement'; both Walsingham and Cecil were hoodwinked by Ridolfi, wrongly leaving him at liberty to plot again.<sup>51</sup> Ridolfi soon joined another

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<sup>45</sup> TNA, SP 12/59/19, Leicester and Cecil to Walsingham, 11 Nov. 1569.

<sup>46</sup> TNA, SP 12/59/11; SP 12/59 f. 81, Leicester and Cecil to Walsingham, 19 Oct. 1569; 20 Oct. 1569.

<sup>47</sup> Haynes, *Walsingham*, 12.

<sup>48</sup> William Camden, *Annales or the Histories of The Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse ELIZABETH, Late Queen of England*, 3rd ed. (London, 1635), STC 4501, 394.

<sup>49</sup> TNA, SP 12/74/12, Walsingham to Cecil, 22 Oct. 1570.

<sup>50</sup> Alford, *Burghley*, 168.

<sup>51</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 58-59.

Catholic uprising with the Pope and King Philip of Spain to put Mary on the English throne. It failed, Charles Bailly was arrested, and in order to placate a Parliament intent on executing Mary, in 1572 Norfolk was beheaded. Walsingham's devotion to the business of Franchiotto and Ridolfi earned him an ambassadorial appointment to France in September 1570.<sup>52</sup>

Mitchell Leimon has described Walsingham's embassy as 'a meteoric arrival on the English political scene', astonished that Cecil's intelligence agent, unfamiliar as he was with English high politics and inexperienced in national diplomacy, had gained so crucial an assignment.<sup>53</sup> After John Man, the last Elizabethan ambassador in Madrid, was recalled in 1568, until the succession of James I England had no resident ambassador on the continent, except in France. The representatives there were either experts in statecraft like Nicholas Throckmorton and Thomas Smith, or high-born gentlemen with close family or privy-chamber ties with the Queen, like Henry Norris (as well as later Henry Brooke and Edward Stafford).<sup>54</sup> In contrast to another ambassadorial candidate (and Cecil's brother-in-law) Henry Killigrew, Walsingham's credentials were much inferior.<sup>55</sup> The Queen (or Cecil) selected Walsingham partly

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<sup>52</sup> Queen Elizabeth to Walsingham, 7 Sept. 1570, Dudley Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador, or, Two treaties of the intended marriage of Qu. Elizabeth of glorious memory comprised in letters of negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham* (London, 1655), 9.

<sup>53</sup> Mitchell MacDonald Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989), 6.

<sup>54</sup> A surprising number of the Elizabethan resident ambassadors in France had kinswomen in chamber attendance on Queen Elizabeth. Some of these female attendants served Elizabeth as an alternative medium of information or intelligence. The relevant research is cited in Chapter VI.

<sup>55</sup> The Queen formally authorised his embassy appointment in July; Walsingham took up his first diplomatic apprenticeship to France in August. Cecil to Henry Norris, 8 Jun. 1570, *Cabala: sive scrinia sacra: Mysteries of state and government in letters of illustrious persons and great agents in the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Queen Elizabeth, K: James, and the late King Charls* (London, 1663), 166; TNA, SP 12/74/12, Walsingham to Cecil, 22 Oct. 1570; Read, *Walsingham*, I, 103-104.



because of Killigrew's smaller financial means, although Walsingham himself was loath to accept the costly Paris embassy which was 'like to bring me to beggary'.<sup>56</sup> Presumably, Cecil also supported Walsingham's nomination in the interests of patronage and espionage (assigning ambassadors was a royal prerogative, though the recommendation of the Council or of the relevant departments was generally adopted).<sup>57</sup> On the showing of his early espionage work, the man Cecil preferred for the embassy was an obedient agent proficient in spying, rather than a skilled or aristocratic diplomat. Walsingham repaid Cecil's patronage with his allegiance. His letters to Cecil throughout his French embassy were full of phrases of client reverence and awe.<sup>58</sup> Even after Cecil's move to the post of Lord Treasurer in August 1573, Walsingham still continued to follow Burghley's instructions, placing Jacomo Manucci in the French embassy in Madrid.<sup>59</sup>

Scholarly attention has been mostly concentrated on Walsingham's diplomatic efforts in the first Elizabeth–Anjou matrimonial alliance and the Treaty of Blois, rather than on his espionage. In contrast to modern historians, however, Dudley Digges began *The Compleat Ambassador* with a description of Walsingham's abilities as an intelligence agent, explaining

how vigilant he was to gather true Intelligence; what Means and Persons be used for it; how punctual he was in keeping to his Instructions, where he was limited; and how

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<sup>56</sup> Cecil to Henry Norris, 7 Feb. 1569/1570, *Cabala: sive scrinia sacra*, 173. Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 63.

<sup>57</sup> Florence M. Greir Evans, *The Principal Secretary of State: A Survey of the Office from 1558 to 1680* (London, 1923), 304.

<sup>58</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 37. BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/VI f. 120, Walsingham to Burghley, Jul. 1572.

<sup>59</sup> BL, Harley MS 6991 f. 58, Walsingham to Burghley, 20 Aug. 1573.

wary and judicious where he was left free.<sup>60</sup>

Before Walsingham headed for Paris, Elizabeth had urged him to keep watch over ‘all manner of their doings there, as well private as publick, that may be prejudiciall to us or our estate’.<sup>61</sup> He began as soon as he arrived in France by associating with leading continental Protestants, including the Vidame de Chartres, François de Beauvais and Sieur de Briquemault. He addressed the Elector Palatine, volunteering to assist in the Elector’s correspondence with Queen Elizabeth.<sup>62</sup> In addition, intelligencers like Nicholas Cabry, Franchiotto, and an Italian Captain Tomasso Sasseti, visited or were used in Walsingham’s embassy, suggesting that Walsingham had initiated his network of spies, and that its headquarters was his Paris residence.<sup>63</sup> On the location of this residence, however, historiography does not agree. Conyers Read followed Karl Stählin in situating it in the fashionable Faubourg Saint Germain.<sup>64</sup> On the basis of a document written by Sasseti, John Cooper places Walsingham’s Paris house in Saint Marceau, south of the city walls and on the left bank of the Seine, a centre of Protestant activism.<sup>65</sup> However, Cabry’s letter to Walsingham refers to Saint Martin, the northernmost district of Paris.<sup>66</sup> Regardless of its exact whereabouts,

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<sup>60</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, iv.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

<sup>62</sup> Walsingham to the Elector Palatine, Paris, 22 Jan. 1571; the Elector to Walsingham, 14 Feb. 1571, Heidelberg, *CSPF, 1569-1571*, 419.

<sup>63</sup> TNA, PRO 30/5/5, ‘Walsingham’s Journal book 1570-1583’, printed in Charles T. Martin, ed., *Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham from December 1570 to April 1583*, Camden Miscellany 6 (1871), 12-13.

<sup>64</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, I, 220.

<sup>65</sup> Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 62. John Tedeschi, ‘Tomasso Sasseti’s Account of the St Bartholomew’s Day Massacre’, in A. Soman, ed., *The Massacre of St Bartholomew: Reappraisals and Documents* (The Hague, 1974), 143.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, SP 15/30 f. 50, Nicholas Cabry to Walsingham, 31 May/ 10 Jun. 1587. The Map of ‘Paris in 1571’, in Philip Benedict, *Cities and Social Change in Early Modern France* (London, 1992), 81.

Walsingham's Paris lodging sustained his pan-European espionage activities—activities that reached as far as Constantinople—until the late 1580s.

One focus of Walsingham's surveillance was the Valois Court and the Guises, who were the practical leaders of the French Catholic radicals and the chief support of their niece Mary Stuart.<sup>67</sup> Walsingham's informants were either introduced by Norris with good credit, or were household servants bribed for the purpose. They acquainted him with secrets at court touching Charles IX's health, the Catholic princes' armed enterprise to Ireland, and some marriage alliances connived by the Spanish ambassador, the Guises and Mary Stuart's adherents.<sup>68</sup> Suspicious newcomers, especially English exiles, were also placed under surveillance. In March 1572, Walsingham ordered his spies in Paris to monitor Anthony Standen, an English gentleman exiled for his support of Mary Stuart's claim to the English throne, who had become a pensioner of Philip II. Standen had lately left Spain for Paris, making 'some speech unto a Frenchman whom he [Walsingham] trusted, of some hope there would be in England of change or ever Summer ended'.<sup>69</sup> Like many needy exiles, Standen served all sides for money to sustain himself. By late 1568 he had cultivated Norris by alleging the existence of foreign plots to intervene in Scotland, gaining access to Ambassador Walsingham in the early 1570s. After Mary's execution in 1587, Standen salvaged his career through loyalty to Walsingham. Under the pseudonym Pompeo Pellegrini, he tracked Spanish military preparations during the Armada. He hoped for a 'reintegration to her Highnes favour' via Walsingham's influence. In 1588 the Queen recognised his efforts with an

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<sup>67</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and The Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009).

<sup>68</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 27-29, 35-36, 42, 49-50, 135.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, 183.

annual pension of £ 100.<sup>70</sup>

Generally Walsingham had suspicious foreigners spied on by their compatriots. In early 1571 he received Maurice Fitzgibbon, the exiled Catholic Archbishop of Cashel in Ireland. Fitzgibbon's two-year exile in Spain had acquainted him with King Philip's plans to invade England, and he promised to leak these secrets to Elizabeth's government 'if Her Majesty would restore him to his country and place'.<sup>71</sup> Walsingham distrusted him, assigning two Irishmen, a Captain Thomas and another Irish soldier, to monitor their compatriot. Captain Thomas was instructed to 'repair unto the said Archbishop, and to do him any friendship and service, he might here shew him in this court, in respect he was a Nobleman, and of his Country'.<sup>72</sup>

Walsingham's Paris embassy had first taught him about the influence of intelligence on policy, via the matrimonial negotiations between Queen Elizabeth and Henry Duke of Anjou. The initiative for this match came from the Huguenots in June 1568, though was soon terminated when the third French civil war broke out in October. Two years later, the idea was revived by Odet de Coligny, Cardinal of Châtillon. The Huguenots expected to contribute a French-English alliance to their joint campaign with William of Orange in the Low Countries.<sup>73</sup> The proposed dynastic match was timely for both crowns. It appealed to Charles IX as a means of raising his military reputation and

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<sup>70</sup> Paul E. J. Hammer, 'An Elizabethan Spy Who Came in from the Cold: the Return of Anthony Standen to England in 1593', *Historical Research*, 65 (1992), 277-95. 'Standen, Sir Anthony (*d.* in or after 1615)', Paul E. J. Hammer in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2005), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/39703> (accessed 27 September 2012). Read, *Walsingham*, III, 277, 289-92.

<sup>71</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 58-61.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 73-75, 79.

<sup>73</sup> Susan Doran, *Monarchy & Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London & New York, 1996), 99-101.

promoting domestic coherence. Meanwhile the amity between the Habsburg and Valois families had ended in 1570 with Philip II's new marriage to Anna of Austria, the elder daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian II, following the death of his first wife Elisabeth de Valois in 1568. Queen Mother Catherine turned her eyes to the still single Elizabeth, who might bring her favourite son a royal crown. England welcomed this French match too. Cecil referred to Elizabeth's marriage as a matter of state rather than a personal issue. Since her accession, he had urged matrimony chiefly in the interests of the Protestant succession and as a way of securing diplomatic alliances. He never stopped praying that 'God wold direct you [Queen Elizabeth] hart to procure a father for your children and so shall your children of all your realm bless your sede. Neither peace nor war without this will proffitt us long'.<sup>74</sup> Ideally her marriage would secure England an heir and a powerful foreign ally, rather than merely a royal consort: a domestic marriage would hardly benefit the state 'in riches, estimation or power'.<sup>75</sup> Simultaneously in 1570, the need for a new ally had become an urgent matter for England diplomatically isolated from international Catholicism, most notably Spain and the Papacy. An alliance with France was made a priority for Elizabeth's regime, although there remained arguments about Anjou's age, religion and nationality. At this key moment, matrimonial negotiations resumed with greater optimism.

Unfortunately Queen Elizabeth's intransigence in the cause of religion repeatedly reduced the marriage negotiations to stalemate, and ultimately to a breakdown.<sup>76</sup> She insisted that her consort must worship by the English Prayer Book, and be forbidden to take 'any manner of religion in outward exercise that is in her conscience contrary and

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<sup>74</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/X f. 105, Cecil to Queen Elizabeth, 21 Jun. 1560.

<sup>75</sup> Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil*, 336-37.

<sup>76</sup> Doran, *Monarchy & Matrimony*, 126-27.

repugnant to the direct word of Almighty God'.<sup>77</sup> Cecil achieved little consensus with his Queen about Anjou's faith. As early as 1570 Cecil had intended to allow a limited exercise of the Mass in Anjou's household—'he may for three dayes in the weke use his own religion' in his private chamber and with only six or seven of his own attendants present—in order to help the negotiations proceed.<sup>78</sup> Suddenly Elizabeth's stance became unusually firm; Burghley suspected she was misled by unsound intelligence.<sup>79</sup> To Walsingham, he grumbled at her unexpected change:

Now suddainly her Majestie hath thought good at this time to send only the French Articles, and her answers, and for the rest she meaneth to reserve until she may understand how her answers are taken, and specially how the knotty point of Religion will be smoothed. And the cause of this change (as I conjecture) groweth of some late intelligence brought thence, that if the Queens Majestie will stand earnestly upon that point for Religion, it shall be assented unto, which causeth her to proceed this confidently.

He feared that 'this matter of Religion is but projected to colour the delay in breaking off'. Walsingham was ordered 'to invent sufficient answer' and moderate the impatient anger of the French side.<sup>80</sup> In May Cecil complained again:

The Queen's Majestie was by some informed, that saw the Letters [of the French ambassador], that was no such difficulty in the matter of Religion...I was by one of some value secretly informed, that if this matter of Religion were earnestly sticked unto, and peremptorily pressed, it would be obtained; whereupon the answer was conceived, and I commanded to report it to the French ambassador, who hearing it seemed much dismayed and concluded that he saw not but this answer should make a

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<sup>77</sup> Alford, *Burghley*, 190.

<sup>78</sup> Doran, *Monarchy & Matrimony*, 107. TNA, SP 70/115 f. 98, Draft by Cecil of a paper entitled 'Reasonable demands to be required from Monsieur for the preservation of the religion of England' dated 1570.

<sup>79</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 55.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 87-88.

breach and end of the whole...It were strange that any one man should give comfort to the ambassador in the cause, and yet the same man to persuade the Queen Majestie that she should persist; both these things are done; but I dare not affirm by any one.<sup>81</sup>

These intelligences fastened Elizabeth's attention on the cause of religion.<sup>82</sup> Apparently, this kind of information reached the Queen directly, bypassing Secretary Cecil. Who supplied the misleading intelligence? The French ambassador in London denied it. Walsingham was an even less likely source, as his letters to the Queen were previewed by Secretary Cecil, and obviously at this time he was at Cecil's side. Certainly, as a zealous Protestant, Walsingham would hardly relish any marriage between his sovereign and a Catholic consort—touching this Anjou match, the only scruple he had was 'the exercise of his [Anjou's] religion, being myself not persuaded that an evil may be done whereof good may come'.<sup>83</sup> However, he kept in mind the overall interests of state. At the beginning of his embassy, he declared to Leicester that he had left 'my private passions behind me, and do here submit myself to the passions of my prince, to execute whatsoever she shall command me, as precisely as I may'.<sup>84</sup> Walsingham shared with Cecil a concern for England's strategic position, for which this French match was a 'so great necessitie': he recognised that it offered both a defensive alliance against Spanish-led Catholicism and a possible heir for the English succession, and in addition that it would break 'an unnatural match' between Anjou and Mary Stuart that had been proposed by the Guises to counter Elizabeth's regime

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 100-101.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 97, (96). The French Queen Mother Catherine rejected this demand and asserted Elizabeth 'should also receive some part of the blemish, by accepting for a husband such a one as by sudden change of Religion might by though worldly respects void of all Conscience and Religion'. Ibid., 89.

<sup>83</sup> Walsingham to Burghley, 28 Apr. 1571, *CSPF, 1569-1571*, 436-37.

<sup>84</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 29.

and the Huguenots.<sup>85</sup> This marriage was too crucial to fail. As he wrote to Leicester, ‘when I particularly consider her Majesties state, both at home and abroad, so far forth as my poor eye-sight can discern; and how she is beset with Forraign peril, the execution whereof stayeth onely upon the event of this match, I do not see how she can stand, if this matter break off’.<sup>86</sup> This was why Walsingham collaborated with Cecil to promote and salvage the Anjou match, even being ‘somewhat swerving from the precise course of her Majesties instructions’—in short, ignoring religion when necessary.<sup>87</sup> If he failed in this mission, Walsingham explained to the French diplomat Paul de Foix, ‘it should be for lack of judgement and experience, and not for lack of goodwill’.<sup>88</sup>

Leicester was the one under greatest suspicion at the time, as having supplied the false information that caused Elizabeth to stand firm on the matter of religious worship. Writing to Walsingham, he stated that ‘we are bound to thank God to see her Majestie so well to stand to the maintenance of the cause of Religion’, and ‘God sent her Majestie alwayies during her life so to stand to the defence of so just a cause’.<sup>89</sup> He believed also that France ‘will rather yield then break off’.<sup>90</sup> When the match eventually failed, Leicester regretted little but celebrated ‘Almighty God strengthen her Majestie true zeal to Religion’.<sup>91</sup> Leicester’s influence over the Queen was equal to

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 42-43; Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 66-67.

<sup>86</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 96.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid., 90.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 116.



Burghley's, and either his privileged access to Elizabeth or his connection with her female chamberers might have been the means of bringing her intelligence damaging to the French match, without Cecil's knowledge.

The failure of the Anjou match taught Walsingham how intelligence—even if false—could affect the inclination of his irresolute Queen. In the matter of this projected marriage, Elizabeth presented herself as the final decision-maker. In reality though, her queenship performed inconsistently in patriarchal politics—she could assume more initiative over matters of personal importance and royal prerogative, such as marriage, than on those concerning national security and intelligence. Elizabeth's fundamentally unstable queenship has given rise to a paradox in the historiography concerning Tudor sovereignty. Geoffrey Elton claimed that a Tudor revolution in government, beginning in Henry VIII's reign, had transferred the power within the regime from the royal court to the government.<sup>92</sup> But he also stated that Queen Elizabeth 'alone conducted policy with an eye solely to her success as a monarch and a symbol of national unity'.<sup>93</sup> This contradiction is repeated in Wallace MacCaffrey's portrait of Elizabeth. Far from powerful in her early reign, Elizabeth usually listened to the proposals submitted by her councillors, 'rejecting or accepting them but rarely taking the lead herself'.<sup>94</sup> However, her dominance of patronage distribution helpfully preserved some policy initiative for the sovereign. 'It was she who brought the Council to life, in its collective consultative capacity, by asking its advice; without her

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<sup>92</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1966).

<sup>93</sup> Elton, 'The State: Government and Politics under Elizabeth and James', in his *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, IV (Cambridge, 1992), 35.

<sup>94</sup> Wallace T. MacCaffrey, 'The Anjou Match and the Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy', *The English Commonwealth 1547-1640* (Leicester, 1979), 62.

command it could not function in this way.’<sup>95</sup> Elizabeth’s exercise of queenship, restricted by the nature of policy and intelligence supply drove England towards a two-headed rule: the Queen and her Council.<sup>96</sup>

This early diplomatic test in France sharpened Walsingham’s ideology of state affairs and gynaecocracy, inspiring him to build his own spy system in the cause of international Protestantism. Interestingly, Walsingham confided his real political arguments more to his new ‘friend’ Leicester than to the ‘patron’ Cecil. Four months into his embassy, in April 1571, Walsingham declared to Leicester that ‘Above all things I wish God’s glory and next the queen’s safety.’<sup>97</sup> He also revealed his fear of being ruled by a woman, whose gender made her less reasonable—a worry articulated most clearly in John Knox’s writings against the ‘monstrous regiment of women’, published during the period of Walsingham’s Marian exile.<sup>98</sup> For example, in July 1572, Walsingham indicated to Leicester that ‘if God had not raised up the Prince of Orange to have entertained Spain, a dangerous fire ere this time had bin kindled in our own home’.<sup>99</sup> But persuading the Queen to aid the Dutch Protestants would be hard, ‘First for that her Majestie beinge by sexe fearefull, cannot but be irresolute, Irresolucion beinge an ordinarie comepanion to feare, A thinge most dangerous in martiall affaires, where opertunitieis offered are to be taken at the first rebound.’<sup>100</sup> If

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 70.

<sup>96</sup> Patrick Collinson, ‘The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, first published in *Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester* 69 (1987), 394-424. The relevant discussion is in Chapter VI.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, SP 70/117 f. 179v, Walsingham to Leicester, Apr. 1571; Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 64.

<sup>98</sup> John Knox, *The First Blast of the trumpet against the monstrous regiment of women* (Geneva, 1558), STC 15070.

<sup>99</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 226.

<sup>100</sup> BL, Harley MS 168 f. 54r, ‘Whether it may stand with good policy for her Majesty to join with

some evidence (like intelligence) could convince the Queen that expeditions to the Low Countries would succeed without danger, ‘then feare givinge place, reason shall have his full course to directe her majesty to be resolute in her determinacions’.<sup>101</sup> God-assigned male ministers and their espionage, Walsingham insisted, could complement inferior female rule.

Unfortunately, Walsingham’s early lack of power and patronage hindered the development of his nascent intelligence system. Before rising to be senior Principal Secretary in 1576, he continued to act as a courier between Burghley and his spies. In early 1571, Walsingham received an appeal from Robert Huggins, one of the French ambassador’s men in Madrid, who had spied for the English ambassador in Spain, Thomas Challoner, from 1562, but was imprisoned in 1569 on the charge of ‘sending advertisement to England’. Walsingham requested Cecil to employ Huggins, who ‘upon some pension, shall advertize from time to time how things pass there’.<sup>102</sup> Other capable spies he also recommended to Burghley. For example, he commended the Irish Captain Thomas as a ‘very honest and civil’ servant, ‘who from time to time hath been a very good instrument for the discoverie of the practises against Ireland; which he hath done with the hazarding of his life if his dealing with me, or with Sir Henry Norris were known’.<sup>103</sup> Thomas was then assigned to work with Herle. Others, like Sassetti

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Spain in the enterprise of Burgundy’.

<sup>101</sup> BL, Harley MS 168 f. 54v-55r, ‘The enterprise of Burgundy’.

<sup>102</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 47. Walsingham to Burghley, 11 Mar. 1571, *CSPF, 1569-1571*, 417. After being released, Huggins might have kept working exclusively for Cecil until 1583. Robert Huggins, Thomas Parker, and Richard Layton to Challoner, 26 Aug. 1562, *CSPF, 1562*, 263. Huggins to Challoner, 9 Jan 1564, *CSPF, 1564-1565*, 7. Huggins to Cecil, 30 Mar. 1568, *CSPF, 1566-1568*, 435. Huggins to Norris, 22 Jul. 1569; Huggins to Leicester, 25 Jul. 1569; Sir Henry Norris to Cecil, 23 Sept. 1570; Norris to the Queen, 27 Sept. 1570; Huggins to Leicester and Cecil, 10 Jan. 1571; Huggins to Walsingham, 25 Jan. 1571, *CSPF, 1569-1571*, 98-99, 100, 343, 344, 390, 394.

<sup>103</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 79. Walsingham to Burghley, 26 Mar.; 22 Apr. 1571, *CSPF, 1569-1571*, 422-23, 434-35.

and a Frenchman Mr. Lyster, were also introduced into Cecil's intelligence service.<sup>104</sup> Walsingham believed the Queen 'shall find them no less ready to serve her, then if they were her own natural subjects'.<sup>105</sup>

The existing historiography has mistakenly credited Walsingham as being the creator of the Elizabethan secret service. In actual fact, Cecil was its pioneer, initially driven by the official information requirements of his secretaryship and his supervision of the Court of Wards. He fostered his espionage network through patronage. Walsingham's early political career was essentially dependent on this patronage framework. His embassy in Paris was formative for his statecraft and political reputation, both in terms of regime politics and his later espionage system. Walsingham's fidelity to Cecil elevated him to a place in power politics. It appears to have been a custom in Tudor government that a returning ambassador became a prime candidate for significant domestic offices of state.<sup>106</sup> On 20 December 1573, shortly after returning to England, Walsingham assumed the Principal Secretaryship, and on the following day gained a seat in the Privy Council. His entry into the very heart of the regime began polarising the divergent positions regarding English interventionist policy that he and Burghley held. Accordingly the Elizabethan intelligence service split into rival components.

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<sup>104</sup> BL, Harley MS 6991 f. 58, Walsingham to Burghley, 20 Aug. 1573. Read, *Walsingham*, I, 263-64.

<sup>105</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 135.

<sup>106</sup> In the Tudor-Stuart period, 57% of all principal secretaries had diplomatic backgrounds before their appointment. *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688*, 12-13.

## Chapter II: Walsingham's Secretariat

‘Nowe amongst all particular offices and places of charge in this state, there is none of more necessarie vse, nor subject to more cumber and variablenes; then is the office of principall Secretarie.’ Nicholas Faunt, *Discourse touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate*, c. 1592.<sup>1</sup>

This chapter explores the why, when and how of Walsingham's withdrawal from Burghley's intelligence clientele. It focuses particularly on Walsingham's private secretariat, examining its structure, routine and remuneration. Walsingham's administration, despite being large and active, has been poorly served by modern historiography. This is in contrast to the Cecils' secretariat after 1580, which has been well researched by Alan Smith and George Morrison, and that of the Earls of Essex and Leicester, described respectively by Paul Hammer and Simon Adams.<sup>2</sup>

‘The loosely organised intelligence network he [Walsingham] inherited from Burghley’, Robert Hutchinson writes, ‘was only patchily effective’.<sup>3</sup> In making this claim, Hutchinson follows the lead of Conyers Read and Penry Williams who also questioned the existence of both Cecil's and later Walsingham's spy ‘systems’—the systems ‘with

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Hughes, ‘Nicholas Faunt's Discourse Touching the Office of Principal Secretary of Estate, c. 1592’, *English Historical Review* 20 (1905) 499-500.

<sup>2</sup> Alan Smith, ‘The Secretariats of the Cecil’. *English Historical Review* 83 (1968), 481-504. George R. Morrison, *The Land, Family, and Domestic Following of William Cecil, c. 1550-1598* (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1990), 219-66. Simon Adams, ‘The Lauderdale Papers 1561-1570: the Maitland of Lethington State Papers and Leicester Correspondence’, *Scottish Historical Review* 67 (1988), 28-55; ‘The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, I: The Browne-Evelyn Collection’, *Archives* 20 (1992), 63-85; ‘The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, II: The Atye-Cotton Collection’, *Archives* 20 (1993), 131-44; ‘The Papers of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, III: The Countess of Leicester's Collection’, *Archives* 22 (1996), 1-26; *Household Accounts and Disbursement Books of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, 1558-1561, 1584-1586*, Camden Miscellany Fifth Series Vol. 6 (Cambridge, 1995). Paul E. J. Hammer, ‘The Use of Scholarship: The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601’, *English Historical Review* 109 (1994), 26-51; *The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-97* (Cambridge, 1999).

<sup>3</sup> Robert Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spy Master: Frances Walsingham and the Secret War that Saved England* (London, 2006), 83.

which legend has credited them'.<sup>4</sup> Quite aside from the inappropriateness of imagining that Elizabethan espionage ought to have been conducted along the lines of a modern model like MI5 or MI6, there are a number of problems with this position. For a start, Robyn Adams's investigation into William Herle's spying in the Marshalsea in 1571, as presented in the first chapter, verifies that by the early 1570s Cecil's espionage had achieved some degree of maturity, using prison surveillance and skilful deciphering and forging, as well as the systematic division of secretarial business. Secondly, Walsingham did not 'inherit' Burghley's system, as is evident from the very small degree of overlap in lists of both household secretariats and spies. Although relinquishing the office of Secretary in 1572, Burghley installed his friend Thomas Smith and his client Walsingham in the vacant Secretaryships, ensuring that information supply would continue as before and feed back to him alone. Elizabeth's ongoing reliance on Burghley assured his central role in guiding policy. The new Secretaries found it expedient to transmit the Privy Council minutes and letters to Burghley to draft, correct, and dispatch when he was absent from the court. Much of the time Smith had to request Burghley, on sick leave, to 'retorne these writings with your judgement and correction of them where they need', otherwise the Queen would refuse to sign papers until he approved them.<sup>5</sup> In 1585, the experienced Walsingham desired Burghley to 'send your L. two mynutes of letters, the one for the trayning of the marityme coun[t]yes, the other for the dysarming of the Recusants. I praye your L. after you have perused and corrected them to returne them'.<sup>6</sup> These all testify to Burghley's continuing omni-competence in administration. Admittedly, the eminence

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<sup>4</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth* (Oxford, 1925), II, 336; Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford, 1979), 278.

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989), 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> BL, Harley MS 6993 ff. 76-77, Walsingham to Burghley, 7 Apr. 1585.

of a post hinged less on itself than on its holder. ‘Under Elizabeth’, Penry Williams agrees, ‘the great succession of William Cecil, Francis Walsingham, and Robert Cecil gave the post of Secretary of State its central permanent and critical significance in government’.<sup>7</sup>

Burghley had little inclination to share his intelligence resources with colleagues, as is evident from the fact that his secretariat worked alone in Cecil House at the Strand, away from the government, and that his spies, like Rooksey and John Lee, still reported solely to him. A very small minority, like Herle and William Parry, were also in service for Walsingham, though this did not come about until 1581 when Walsingham had become sole holder of the Secretaryship.<sup>8</sup> Burghley and his party loathed their spies’ additional fidelity to others. In October 1583, Edward Stafford, Elizabeth’s new ambassador in Paris and one of Burghley’s adherents, cautioned Burghley that Parry ‘hath depended vppon some others’, supposedly Walsingham.<sup>9</sup> Walsingham learned of Burghley’s spies only when they were ‘in danger of death’, like an Irishman Thomas Bath (alias Tomazo) in Flanders, or via his friendship with men like Anthony Bacon.<sup>10</sup> Burghley’s personal bond with the Queen, and his anxiety for intelligence hindered the efficiency of the newly incumbent Secretaries in administration and espionage.

Meanwhile, Walsingham, as a novice at court, lacked sufficient patronage to develop

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<sup>7</sup> Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 2002), 142.

<sup>8</sup> Before 1580, only three of the chief figures in the English regime became the recipients of Herle’s letters: Burghley, Queen Elizabeth, and Leicester. TNA, SP 83/15 f. 50, Herle to Walsingham, 8 Mar. 1581/2. BL, Lansdowne MS 29 f. 126, Parry to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1579. TNA, SP 78/9 f. 103, Parry to Walsingham, 10 May 1583. Leo Hicks, ‘The Strange Case of Dr. William Parry’, *An Irish Quarterly Review* 37 (1948), 343-62.

<sup>9</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 58, Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583.

<sup>10</sup> Burghley to Walsingham, 4 May 1574, *CSPD, 1547-1580*, 477.

his specialisation in espionage, and hence postponed establishing his spy system until the late 1570s. A small minority of his secretaries, like Beale, Lisle Cave and Francis Mylles, and spies like Walter Williams, Jacomo Manucci and Anthony Standen, had followed him from or even before his Paris embassy; one Agard and one auditor Jenison served as his informants in Ireland in 1575. But his independent recruitment of intelligence operatives only really began in 1578, gathering pace in the 1580s, as Secretary Walsingham was initially ‘lodged embarrassingly far from’ Queen Elizabeth.<sup>11</sup> In mid-1575 he voiced his helplessness to Burghley: ‘I have as yet harde nothinge of that matter, and am not lyke to heare therof very mucche being lodged as I am far of from the courte; and having no great dysposytyon to repayre thither, but drawn by espetiall occasyon’.<sup>12</sup> His alienation from the Crown isolated him from the distribution of royal patronage, except for his annual Secretary’s wage of £100 and, from 1574, a series of export licences for cloth and occasionally wool.

The year 1576 brought changes, favourable for Walsingham’s footing in the regime but accelerating his departure from Burghley’s influence. By March 1576, cancer of the throat had so incapacitated Thomas Smith that he withdrew from public affairs. Walsingham took over Smith’s keeping of the Privy Seal and rose to be the leading Secretary. Leimon marks Smith’s resignation as the real beginning of Walsingham’s escape from Burghley’s ‘tutelage’.<sup>13</sup> According to an act against overseas fugitives in

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<sup>11</sup> Walter Williams was mentioned frequently in the correspondence between Ambassador Walsingham and other home colleagues, Dudley Digges, ed., *The Compleat Ambassador; or, Two treaties of the intended marriage of Qu. Elizabeth of glorious memory comprised in letters of negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham* (London, 1655), 216, 262, 283, 313, 334, 346. Anthony Standen: *ibid.*, 182-84. Manucci and the Captain Sasseti: *ibid.*, 270-71, 322-24; BL, Harley MS 6991 f. 58, Walsingham to Burghley, 20 Aug. 1573; Hutchinson, *Elizabeth’s Spy Master*, 46. Leimon, ‘Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan’, 8.

<sup>12</sup> BL, Harley MS 6992 f. 15, Walsingham to Burghley, 7 Aug. 1575.

<sup>13</sup> Leimon, ‘Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan’, 9.



1571, travelling licences had to be permitted ‘by the Greate Seale of Englaund, Privie Seale or Privie Signet’.<sup>14</sup> As new Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal (1576–1590), Walsingham therefore had the ready means of delivering his spies abroad, and recruiting homesick émigrés for his spying service. In 1578, Bernardino De Mendoza, the new Spanish Ambassador in London, rated Walsingham as pivotal in Elizabeth’s Council.<sup>15</sup> In 1581, the nickname ‘the Moor’ Elizabeth accorded Walsingham marked that he was formally admitted into the élite circle of the Queen’s intimates.<sup>16</sup> Walsingham’s growing discretion in office and his political prominence would facilitate his establishment of a spy network.

In the meantime, the lurking menace from international Catholicism had been redrawing the power landscape within Elizabeth’s regime. In 1578, the annexation of Portugal by Spain was nearly a foregone conclusion. After Don John of Austria died in the autumn of 1578, Alexander Farnese soon took over the Low Countries by force. At the same time, plotting recusants had assembled in the newly built English College in Rome. The abrupt rise of the pro-Guise Esmé Stuart in Scotland was threatening Morton’s Anglophile government. This series of Catholic turmoils drove Elizabeth’s Council to a policy quarrel (or ‘faction’, as some historians term it) over English interventionism in continental Protestant battles: whether such intervention should primarily be in the service of God’s glory, or in the service of English interests and mindful of ruling legitimacy.<sup>17</sup> The former position—representing a kind of

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<sup>14</sup> 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV. 531-34.

<sup>15</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 31 Mar. 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 571-73.

<sup>16</sup> CP 11/97r, Leicester to Walsingham, 30 Jul. 1581. Leimon suggests that ‘the Moor’ may have been used by the Queen for Walsingham before 1570.

<sup>17</sup> ‘Faction’ is discussed in greater detail in Chapter V.

cosmopolitan Protestantism by force—was endorsed by Leicester and Walsingham, but met with strong opposition from Burghley and Sussex. Leimon ascribes this polarisation of policy to the changes of offices of Burghley in 1572 and Walsingham in 1573. The worsening state finances warned Treasurer Burghley against costly wars, and in addition, leaving the Secretaryship had extricated Burghley from a daily confrontation with unpleasant news, the type of which would naturally infuse the post-holder with ‘an alarmed and activist frame of mind’.<sup>18</sup> This may be why the new Secretary Walsingham and his secretarial assistants were driven towards supporting an aggressive policy.

In actual fact though, Burghley’s and Walsingham’s changes in office in 1572 did not so much cause as deepen the pre-existing divide between Burghley’s political pragmatism and Walsingham’s godly Protestantism. This divide is evident much earlier, in their differing responses to Mary I’s Catholic regime, to which Cecil bent his knees whilst Walsingham chose exile. Not surprisingly, the realistic Burghley defined the English policy of intervention in terms of jurisdiction and state interest. A central justification Burghley used for the English armed aid offered to the Scottish lords of congregation in 1559, Stephen Alford states, was English superiority over Scotland. ‘The Crowne of England hath a just and unfeyned title, of longer continuance, than the frendshipp, betwixt Scotland and fraunce, unto the superioretie of Scotland.’<sup>19</sup> Burghley shared Elizabeth’s aversion to intervention in foreign dominions on behalf of plotting subjects: it was legal for sovereigns to suppress any rebel in their domain. Accordingly, in 1568 they both dodged a financial request from the Huguenots who

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<sup>18</sup> Leimon, ‘Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581’, 9-12.

<sup>19</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Early Elizabethan Polity: William Cecil and the British Succession Crisis, 1558-1569* (Cambridge, 1998), 58-60, 163-64.

were struggling hard in the third civil wars. From 1578 Burghley supported the Spanish suppression of its Dutch rebels, ‘a thing that any prince would do, as her Majesty did upon the like occasion both in England and in Ireland’. However, Burghley was not without mercy towards non-English Protestants in distress; he sought to improve their plight via diplomacy or royal matrimony, as with the two Anjou courtships. In contrast, Walsingham’s Marian exile and first French embassy, especially his witnessing of the bloody St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre, had sharpened his political creed: ‘above all things I wish God’s glory and next the Queen’s safety’. But his godly zeal was restrained by his reliance on Cecil’s patronage. From 1576 however, the risks to international Protestantism and Walsingham’s promotion in office deepened the rift in policy between the two, leading Francis away from his patron Cecil. Walsingham shared Leicester’s militarism and desire to free their persecuted coreligionists, with the ultimate aim of the ‘advancement of the Gospel’. Non-armed means of action were opposed as appeasement of Catholic tyranny.<sup>20</sup> Intelligence became necessary for policy debate. The Elizabethan intelligence service therefore split into rival components.

Walsingham’s political ambitions spawned a pressing need for private espionage and a larger household secretariat, both of which grew rapidly from the late 1570s. It was common for Elizabethan kingpins to establish their private secretariats, which ‘would mutate and grow as circumstance and ambition dictated’.<sup>21</sup> Personal secretariats consisted of household servants only, subject to patronage employment at the will of their masters. Though not bureaucratic, they did much of the administrative work of

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<sup>20</sup> Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador*, 121.

<sup>21</sup> Mark Taviner, ‘Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrew University, 2000), 117-18.

the state. ‘Elizabethan government was clearly a mixture of “bureaucratic” and “household” elements, combining the official machinery of institutions...with the informal processes of administration which took place within the personal offices of the leading ministers and officials.’<sup>22</sup>

There are three discernible characteristics in the organisation of Walsingham’s secretariat: privatisation, in other words, a preference for conducting his intelligence work with his own secretariat away from court; expansion in size, compared to Burghley’s network; a cosmopolitan and mixed-class approach, meaning the recruitment of personal secretaries and intelligence employees from a broader social spectrum in terms of education, professionalism and international experience, rather than from just the ranks of the nobility. For secrecy and convenience, Walsingham used personal residences and the services of clients in preference to government halls and official employees. His secretariat had two departments individually responsible for diplomacy and intelligence. Normally the former accompanied Walsingham, shuttling between the Queen’s tournaments, his ‘lodging at Cort’, and his dwellings: his London residence in Seething Lane and the suburban Barn Elms in Surrey.<sup>23</sup> Unlike Burghley, who dealt with intelligence business habitually in his ‘littell chamber att White hall’, Walsingham settled his intelligence department in his London house, away from Burghley’s entourage in government.<sup>24</sup> On 14 September 1584, Nicholas Faunt, Walsingham’s intelligence secretary, wrote to Walsingham from ‘your honours house

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<sup>22</sup> Alan G. R. Smith, *The Emergence of A Nation State: The Commonwealth of England, 1529-1660* (London, 1984), 117.

<sup>23</sup> Faunt to Anthony Bacon, 8 May 1582, in Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1754), I, 45-46.

<sup>24</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 31 ff. 22r-23v, Herle to Burghley, 19 Aug. 1580.

in London', giving full particulars of the examination of the Jesuit Creychton.<sup>25</sup> During the Babington Plot, in July 1586, his senior intelligence secretary Francis Mylles addressed letters to his master constantly from Tower Hill, the district containing Walsingham's London house.<sup>26</sup> Mylles's letters in the next three months signified the place of writing more precisely: 'Walsingham house in Seething Lane', London.<sup>27</sup> At that time Walsingham was away at Barn Elms, socialising insincerely with the plotter Anthony Babington.<sup>28</sup> Thomas Phelippes, another leading intelligence secretary, moved between Chartley (where Mary Stuart was jailed), Barn Elms, and the court. His prime duty at court, as Walsingham repeatedly reminded him, was to acquaint the Queen with their latest proceedings and win her support.<sup>29</sup>

'When anie businesses cometh into the Secretarie's handes', Beale noted, the Secretary 'shall doe well for the ease of himselfe to distribute the same and to use the helpe of such her Ma[jes]tie's servants as serve underneath him, as the Clercks of the Councell, ye Clercks of the Signett, the Secretarie of the Latin and of the French tonge, and of his own servants'.<sup>30</sup> By contrast, Faunt recommended only using private servants in the secretariat:

it shall bee needefull, that hee vse as little as hee may the advise and help of his equalls or superiours in aniethinge that toucheth the substance of his office and charge a thinge

<sup>25</sup> TNA, SP 12/173/14, Faunt to Walsingham, 14 Sept. 1584.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/65, 66, 67, 69, 70, 71, 72, 90, Mylles to Walsingham, 22, 23, 24, 29, 30 Jul. 1586.

<sup>27</sup> TNA, SP 53/19 ff. 44, 54, 105, Mylles to Walsingham, 13, 24 Aug.; 19 Sept. 1586; TNA, SP 12/194/42, Mylles to Davison, 14 Oct. 1586.

<sup>28</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/92, Walsingham to Phelippes, 30 Jul. 1586. Confession by Robert Poley, [Aug.] 1586, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 595-602.

<sup>29</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/80, 83, 96, Walsingham to Phelippes ('my servant at court'), 3, 4, 10 Sept. 1586.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Beale, 'Treatise of the Office of a Councillor and Principall Secretarie to her Ma [jes]tie' (1592), in Read, *Walsingham*, I, 426-27.

that would derogate from the credit of that place and his owne sufficiency, neither yet by vseinge anie of the inferiour officers to doe such things as apperteyneth nott to them, and may bee done by his owne servants, giue them likewise occasion to loke into his doeinges and as some are forward enough to take upon them to shewe their owne experience and skill for some further end.<sup>31</sup>

This suggestion arose from Faunt's self-serving desire to solidify his patron's reliance on the clientele service by rejecting the involvement of officials. Apparently Walsingham adopted Faunt's model. This degree of independence from the government, and the absence of a second Secretary from 1581 following the death of Thomas Wilson, meant that Walsingham's secretariat needed to expand to cope with the growing workload of administration and espionage. According to Beale, 'The Lord Thr[easur]er Burghley, being Secretarie, had not above two or three [secretaries]',<sup>32</sup> and Alan Smith has demonstrated that Burghley as Treasurer and Master of Wards never had more than four assistants responsible for foreign business and wardship.<sup>33</sup> Walsingham's secretariat was at least six times this size. His household secretaries from the 1560s or during his French embassy were Beale, Ralph Warcop, Lisle Cave and Francis Mylles. Walsingham's *Journal* (Dec. 1570–Apr. 1583) mentions other of his servants in France by name: Walter Williams, Jacomo Manucci, a 'Harcort', a 'Digbye', and John de Rosse; the first four are recorded as letter-carriers to and from England.<sup>34</sup> Walsingham's 'brother' William Dodington acted as his factor in England. After Walsingham rose to the office of joint Principal Secretary in 1573, and then

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<sup>31</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 500.

<sup>32</sup> Beale, 'Treatise', 427.

<sup>33</sup> Burghley's secretariat from 1580 to 1582 included Michael Hicks, Vincent Skinner and Barnard Dewhurst, and from 1583 to 1593 they were joined by Henry Maynard. Smith, 'The Secretariats of the Cecils', 482.

<sup>34</sup> Charles T. Martin, ed., *Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham from December 1570 to April 1583*, Camden Miscellany 6 (1871), Williams, 8, 13; Jacomo, 9; Harcort, 9, 11; Digbye (Digbie), 11, 13; Rosse, 13.

especially when he took the leading role in 1576, his secretariat expanded further: Laurence Tomson joined in 1573, Faunt from 1578, and in the mid-1580s Thomas Lake, Thomas Phelippes and Thomas Edmondes. William Bland and Thomas Middleton served in his customs affairs.<sup>35</sup> Walsingham's ledger book 1583–1585 also records others who performed secretarial duties in the 1580s, including Edward Burnham, Walter Williams, and the partially anonymous Ciprian, Charles, Weekes, Wilkes and Horcle.<sup>36</sup> The Exchequer Teller Books of Issues list still more servants who signed for Walsingham's annuities: Ralph Pendlebury, John Cottesforde, Christopher Barker, Roger Draunfelde, William Stubbs, Thomas Oldesworth and Peter Proby.<sup>37</sup> Simon Adams marks Charles Franck as Walsingham's servant in 1586.<sup>38</sup>

This bulkiness in scale gave rise to a fear about secrecy. 'Burthen not yourselfe w[i]th to many Clercks or servants as S[i]r Fra[ncis] Walsingham did', Beale cautioned. Faunt similarly warned that 'the multitude of servantes in this kinde is hurtfull and of late yeares hath bredde much confusion with want of secrecie and dispatch in that place'. Burghley's practice of acquainting only two or three with his secret business was more advisable; 'Burghley is more circumspect'.<sup>39</sup> Beale's and Faunt's criticisms reflect the

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<sup>35</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, III, 387.

<sup>36</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, Burnham: ff. 15v, 34r. Ciprian: ff. 27r, 32v, 35v, 36r, 51v, 54v, 68v, 70v, 101v, 104v. Charles: f. 27r. Williams: f. 33v. Weeks: ff. 33v, 34r, 70v, 76v. Wilkes (Probably Thomas Wilkes, clerk of the Council): ff. 23v, 70v, 105r. Horcle: ff. 64r, 89r, 101r. Others include Mr. Younge (f. 53r), Mr. Nicasius (f. 64r), Haynes (f. 64r), Wilford (f. 68v), Mushers (f. 69v), Fither (f. 75v), Skyrnore (ff. 36r, 103r), Wolley (f. 103r).

<sup>37</sup> TNA, E 403/2262 (1573-1574)-2273 (1586-1587): Dodington (1573, 1574), Pendlebury (1575), Cottesforde (1575), Williams (1576), Barker (1577), Draunfelde (1578), Stubbs (1579, 1580, 1581, 1582, 1586), Oldesworth (1580, 1581, 1582), Mylles (1583, 1584, 1585, 1587), Proby (1587, 1588).

<sup>38</sup> Adams, *Household Accounts*, 356, n. 702; 369.

<sup>39</sup> Beale, 'Treatise', 427, 432; Faunt, 'Discourse', 500-501.

suspicious nature of Walsingham, a man who never relied on a single opinion.

Inside Walsingham's secretariat, a 'principall servant', 'in whome the greatest trust is to be reposed', was set to be 'chiefly charged with Forraine matters'.<sup>40</sup> This official acted as Walsingham's 'owne penne, his mouth, his eye, his eare, and keeper of his most secret Cabinet'. During Walsingham's first French embassy, his 'brother Beale' presided in this position over his initial secretariat.<sup>41</sup> Beale co-worked with Ralph Warcop, who had served Walsingham from 1570 and was praised by the latter as 'verry godly and honest in whom I repose great trust'.<sup>42</sup> Beale quit when he rose to be the Clerk of the Council in July 1572. So did Warcop, after their return from Paris in the spring of 1573, to pursue his academic career at New College, Oxford. Hereupon Laurence Tomson, newly employed in 1573, headed the secretariat and concurrently served as the Queen's Latin secretary.<sup>43</sup> Tomson was joined by John Wolley as another Latin secretary around 1577, and by Thomas Edmondes in the 1580s.

Beneath this principal servant, a second servant had responsibility for 'matters of intelligence Cyfers and secrett advertisementes'.<sup>44</sup> Francis Mylles, who had served Walsingham from as early as 1566, was the first to assume this charge, and was responsible for correspondence with the continental spies and for reporting the status

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<sup>40</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 501-502.

<sup>41</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, ff. 47v, 57r.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, SP 70/119 f. 16, Walsingham to Cecil, 11 Jul. 1571; TNA, SP 70/119 f. 18, Walsingham to Sir Thomas Heneage, 11 Jul. 1571; Taviner, *Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity*, 79-81, 112.

<sup>43</sup> In 1586 Tomson wrote to William Davison of his 'twelve years' service. TNA, SP 12/195/69, Tomson to Davison, 27 Dec. 1586.

<sup>44</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 502.



of home Catholics.<sup>45</sup> His intelligence duties came to be shared with Nicholas Faunt and Thomas Phelippes. Faunt had entered Walsingham's secretariat by 1578, and was engaged in carrying dispatches to and from continental English informants.<sup>46</sup> Phelippes first comes to notice in June 1578 as 'young Philippes' in the employ of Amias Paulet the English ambassador in Paris, and he excelled at deciphering and forgery.<sup>47</sup> By the mid-1580s he had become a key linchpin in Walsingham's secretariat. Another specialist was Arthur Gregory, expert in opening letters and forging seals.<sup>48</sup>

Mylles's secretarial tasks also involved addressing, dispatching, abridging, categorising and filing papers. He endorsed and sorted incoming correspondence into three kinds—'home lettres', 'Councell matters' and 'Divers matters'—then every morning placed the sorted papers in 'seuerall Bundells for the present vse of them' or into 'some Chest or place' for longer term filing.<sup>49</sup> He must ensure that 'there bee noe hinderance or confusedness in the searchinge of them', and served as 'a remembrancer of all such matters as are of most necessarie dispatch'.<sup>50</sup> Mylles had assistants in filing: Lisle Cave, who had served Walsingham in Paris from mid-1571, and then Ciprian and

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<sup>45</sup> 'To search out the two suspectes persons', BL, Harley MS 6035 f. 36v.

<sup>46</sup> There is little information regarding Faunt in the State Papers, but some of his correspondence with Anthony Bacon is collected in Birch's *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth*.

<sup>47</sup> TNA, SP 83/7 f. 39, Wilson to Walsingham, 30 Jun. 1578.

<sup>48</sup> 'A Collection of all Accidents betwixt the Queen of England and Queen of Scots'. 12 Oct. 1586, *HMC Salisbury*, III, 182.

<sup>49</sup> BL, Harley 6035, E.g. 'To sorte out the thinges that are to be signed': f. 34r. 'To appoint a day to heare the matter betweene Lucy and Arbold': f. 35r. 'To sorte out the thinges that are to be singed' and 'To make a Collection touchinge the shriffes': f. 34r. 'To extract out the severall services of the Irishe suitors': f. 38v. 'To sett downe the names of the cause in the slvacall comtyes': f. 39r. 'To wryte into Ireland to knowne what is become of the examination of A. B': f. 40v. 'To make a collection of punishment dowme vppon sundrie offendes': f. 59r. 'To make note of those thinges of are to be commnicotes to my Threa [sure]': f. 87v.

<sup>50</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 501-502. BL, Harley MS 6035, ff. 25r, 51v.

Thomas Lake.<sup>51</sup> Lake earned the nickname of ‘swiftsure’ for his speed and accuracy in secretariat business, and he also assisted in decoding letters, like that from Pury Ogilby, whom Archibald Douglas had won over as a spy for Walsingham.<sup>52</sup> Lake compiled Walsingham’s table book of 1588 and Cave edited the French language letter book of 1571–1589, implying that they enjoyed considerable discretion in sorting Walsingham’s papers.<sup>53</sup>

Chronic illness and frequent absences on diplomatic missions or royal journeys obliged Walsingham to devolve partial authority onto his intelligence secretariat. This ranged from the management of intelligence correspondence and payments, to interrogations and arrest, and the exercise of discretion in espionage. A majority of spies were thus in contact with Mylles and Phelippes, but not necessarily in communication with Walsingham directly. They reported up-to-date intelligence and the progress of their missions, as well as requesting instructions. Mylles remained the only recipient of the spy David Jones’s intelligence letters. When spying in the Marshalsea in mid-1574, Jones kept appealing to Mylles for a transfer to other promising locations where he had learned that recusants were secretly resorting and holding Mass.<sup>54</sup> In 1585, Phelippes dispatched the spy Gilbert Gifford to Paris, where he successfully infiltrated the exiled English community.<sup>55</sup> In June 1586 Mylles ordered Nicholas Berden to investigate Ambassador Stafford’s dishonourable sale of diplomatic dispatches to the Duke of

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<sup>51</sup> Faunt, ‘Discourse’, 501-502.

<sup>52</sup> Phelippes to the Earl of Essex, 9 Dec. 1596, *HMC Salisbury*, VI, 511.

<sup>53</sup> BL, Stowe MS 162, Walsingham’s table book. TNA, SP 104/162, France, Flanders, German states and Holland: Lisle Cave’s letter book, 1571-1589.

<sup>54</sup> David Jones to Mylles, 5, 20 Jul., 13 Aug. 13 Sept., 1574, *CSPD, 1547-1580*, 483, 484, 486, 487.

<sup>55</sup> [Gilbert Gifford] to Phelippes, 26 Apr. 1585, *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 407.

Guise.<sup>56</sup> At the end of the Babington Plot, on 4 August 1586, Walsingham delegated full responsibility to Mylles to arrest John Ballard, with the warrant signed by Lord Admiral Charles Howard.<sup>57</sup>

The efficiency of Walsingham's espionage was partly a result of his tolerant recruitment of servants who, although low-born, were better qualified in academic and cosmopolitan terms than Burghley's. Burghley's mastership of wards, and Leicester's aristocratic blood constituted their narrowly gentry-based clientele.<sup>58</sup> By contrast, Walsingham shaped himself, in Leimon's phrase, as a 'poor and dutiful Protestant, apart from Burghley and Leicester', and attracted Protestant idealists or men from further down the social scale.<sup>59</sup> A great majority of Walsingham's servants were of low birth. Beale was the son of a mercer in London. Warcop was the eldest son of the London mercer Cuthbert Warcop.<sup>60</sup> Phelippes's father William was a cloth merchant and customs officer for wool in the Port of London. Thomas Lake's father Emery (Almeric) served as a minor customs official in Southampton. Surprisingly, these non-noble clients possessed no less a distinguished university education than their noble counterparts, through travel or exile had extensive experience of the continent, and possessed the associated skills in languages, cipher and counterfeiting. Walsingham's team also demonstrated a widely cosmopolitan background. Beale was a Marian exile who had studied in Strasbourg and Zürich, and had several diplomatic

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<sup>56</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 50, Thomas Rogers (Nicholas Berden) to Mylles, [June] 1586. TNA, SP 53/19/14, Mylles to Walsingham, 4 Aug. 1586.

<sup>57</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/14, Mylles to Walsingham, 4 Aug. 1586.

<sup>58</sup> At least three of Burghley's secretaries between 1580 and 1598 were of gentry stock. Smith, 'The Secretariats of the Cecil', 481-82.

<sup>59</sup> Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan', 73-75.

<sup>60</sup> Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 79-80.

apprenticeships in Paris under Sir Henry Norris and Walsingham. Warcop accompanied his devoutly Protestant family into exile on the Continent under Mary's reign, and settled in Frankfurt in 1556. After returning to England he entered Peterhouse in Cambridge in 1559, and graduated with a BA from Christ Church at Oxford in 1565. Tomson's grand tour gave him an international experience, ranging over Northern Europe (Geneva, France, Germany), to Italy and also Russia. Faunt was perhaps the man who sheltered at Walsingham's Paris house during the St Bartholomew's Day massacre.<sup>61</sup> By contrast, with the exception of Vincent Skinner, Burghley's assistants had little previous experience outside England; his household performed as a noble 'nursery' or 'agency' to the royal court. The outstanding professionalism of Walsingham's secretariat rendered it fit to be solely responsible for espionage.

Walsingham's day started when 'hee riseth from his Bed or whilst hee lieth in his bed', with him making notes in 'a generall memorial Booke', on 'all things presently accurringe or that upon anie occasion shalbee remembred', and marking out such matters as had been dispatched and reserving others which had not, so 'that the multitude of affaires doe not cause some important matter to bee forgotten'.<sup>62</sup> The only surviving example of these volumes now is the manuscript known as BL, Harley 6035 (1583–1585). Its pages were written by a multitude of different hands, mostly by Walsingham and Mylles, and occasionally by Lake, Beale, and some that remain unidentified.<sup>63</sup> This 'filofax' reminded Walsingham of his daily schedule, ranging from letter-writing and personal appointments, to drafting notes to brief the Queen in

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<sup>61</sup> William Faunt to Burghley, 22 Aug. 1572, *CSPF, 1572-1574*, 171.

<sup>62</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 503.

<sup>63</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, handwriting: Walsingham: e.g. ff. 52v, 53v, 54r-55r; Mylles, ff. 35r, 37v-39v, 49r, 50r, 51v, 61v-62r, 64r-v, 66r-v; Beale, f. 10r; Lake, f. 78v; the unidentified handwritings: ff. 66v-67r, 70r, 97r.

audience.<sup>64</sup> Walsingham also documented in the memorial book his use of his secretaries: Mylles, Faunt, Tomson, Lake and Ciprian are mentioned throughout for copying, abbreviating, fetching, or sorting papers into ‘collections’, ‘books’ or ‘boxes’.<sup>65</sup> Two Clerks of the Council—Beale and Wilkes—and Faunt appear in conjunction with Council business.<sup>66</sup> Generally Walsingham perused the papers with this memorial/ledger book beside him, and on it he ‘sett downe other things though it bee done in one word or darkly in tearmes not easily to bee vnderstood of others if the matter bee of secrecie’.<sup>67</sup> This may explain the existence of enigmatic symbols, like flowers, hands and crosses, scored at the head of some notes throughout the diary.<sup>68</sup>

While Walsingham penned his memorial book, his secretariat, whether at court or at home, started working with the first batches of post arriving between seven and eight o’clock each morning. On 15 October 1586, Walsingham’s letter arrived at Windsor ‘this morning at vij’.<sup>69</sup> On 3 August 1586, ‘this mornynge at viij<sup>th</sup> of the clock’, Mylles at Seething Lane received intelligence from Phelippes about Babington’s whereabouts in London.<sup>70</sup> Post would arrive throughout the day; on 14 January 1581, at Whitehall, ‘In this afternoone we [Walsingham] receyved advertissemences from the low contries.’<sup>71</sup> Government correspondence could be sent by the royal post, and also

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<sup>64</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, ff. 9r, 18v, 34r.

<sup>65</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, ‘book’: e.g. ff. 17r, 25r, 34r, 35v; ‘box’: e.g. ff. 34r, 35v; ‘collection’: e.g. ff. 34r, 59r, 68r.

<sup>66</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, ff. 23v, 68r, 105r.

<sup>67</sup> Faunt, ‘Discourse’, 503.

<sup>68</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, flowers: e.g. ff. 12r, 17v, 32r, 32v, 66r, 71v, 77v, 83r; hands: e.g. ff. 16v, 27v, 32r, 35v, 81r; crosses: e.g. f. 12r; others: e.g. ff. 6v, 7v, 17r, 19v.

<sup>69</sup> TNA, SP 12/194/44, Sec. Davison to Walsingham, 15 Oct. 1586.

<sup>70</sup> TNA, SP 53/19 f. 4, Mylles to Walsingham, 3 Aug. 1586.

<sup>71</sup> TNA, SP 52/29 f. 10, Walsingham to Thomas Randolph, 14 Jan. 1581.

through diplomatic and ambassadorial channels. A regular royal post had existed since 1509, and was chiefly responsible for letters written by the Secretary upon the Queen's business and dispatches sanctioned by the Council.<sup>72</sup> This restriction on its activity and its lack of efficiency forced Elizabeth's ministers and diplomats abroad to develop their own postal services.<sup>73</sup> Walsingham made his London residence and Barn Elms the headquarters his postal system. On 29 July 1578, Edmund Tremayne wrote to Walsingham then away on the Dutch embassy, 'in much haste being at your house [Seething Lane] while this messenger gives short warning of his departure'.<sup>74</sup> A survey of 1589 records that sixty-eight horses were stabled at Barn Elms, suggesting that this was another centre of Walsingham's postal system.<sup>75</sup> In general, Walsingham's post took less than four days to make it from London to anywhere inside England, even as far as Edinburgh. On the morning of 25 September 1583, Walsingham received letters from Robert Bowes, the royal envoy in Scotland, dated 23 September.<sup>76</sup> On 1 May 1585, Amias Paulet, keeper of Mary Stuart, received 'your [Walsingham's] lettres of the xxvij<sup>th</sup> of the last'.<sup>77</sup> Postal delivery that took up to a week was considered somewhat shameful. On 2 March 1586, Paulet complained to Walsingham that 'your [Walsingham's] lettres of the xxv<sup>th</sup> of Februarye dispatched at Greenwich at 8 in the morning, came not to my hande until the first of this present at

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<sup>72</sup> E. John B. Allen, *Post and Courier Service in the Diplomacy of Early Modern Europe* (The Hague, 1972), 13, 17.

<sup>73</sup> Allen, *Post and Courier Service*, 19-21. James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England: Manuscript Letters and the Culture and Practices of Letter-Writing, 1512-1635* (London, 2012), 109.

<sup>74</sup> TNA, SP 83/7 f. 91v, Edmund Tremayne to Walsingham, 29 Jul. 1578.

<sup>75</sup> John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 47.

<sup>76</sup> TNA, SP 52/33 f. 53, [Walsingham] to Robert Bowes, 25 Sept. 1583.

<sup>77</sup> TNA, SP 53/15 f. 84, Paulet to Walsingham, 2 May 1585.

2 of the clock in the after noone; which is slower speede then is meete in such cases'.<sup>78</sup>

The time between the arrival of the first post and Queen Elizabeth's rising (presumably before 10 o'clock), Walsingham spent in public interviews or in perusing letters that his secretariat had endorsed and annotated.<sup>79</sup> Once received, letters would be enrolled in a pre-bound paper book called the 'Journall',

wherein is Continually to bee recorded, the certaine day of the month and the howers when anie dispatch is made or receiued...further in this booke should alsoe bee noted the arrival and dspatch of anie Ambassonder or messenger sent abroad or comeinge hither and of such gent...the particuler assemblies of the Councell out of the Court and the occasion if it bee remarkable the times of Conferences and private meetings of the Sec: and others in Commission.<sup>80</sup>

Only one of Walsingham's Journals survives (December 1570–April 1583), and 'although all the entries are in the first person, the manuscript is not in Walsingham's own hand, but in that of his secretary.'<sup>81</sup> The entries during the period covering Walsingham's first French embassy (1570–1572) were filled in by Warcop and Cave, and in the next decade by Lake and other unidentified servants.<sup>82</sup> 'In order to save space', its printed version by C. T. Martin in 1870 omitted Walsingham's memoranda for each day, and extracted the lists of his correspondence from the notices of Walsingham's movements and placed it at the end. Actually, the entries consist of both

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<sup>78</sup> TNA, SP 15/17 f. 27, Paulet to Walsingham, 2 Mar. 1585/6.

<sup>79</sup> 'Her Majesty did not styr from hir bed afore x', TNA, SP 12/195/41, Burghley to Walsingham, 1 Dec. 1586. 'Mr. Solicitor and he [Burghley] had agreed to be with him [Walsingham] tomorrow between 8 and 9 in the morning' to 'consider what was meet to be done further touching those who are touching the confession of Cockyn'. TNA, SP 53/10 f. 19, Walter Mildmay to Walsingham, 10 Mar. 1574/5.

<sup>80</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 503-504.

<sup>81</sup> Martin, *Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham*, i.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, PRO 30/5/5, *Walsingham's Journal book 1570-1583*, Warcop: ff. 1-7r; Cave: ff. 7v-12r. Tavinier, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 83.

sets of records placed either side of a central date. The date would be first noted vertically across the middle of the page, on which Walsingham's schedule would be filled in on the right-hand side, and then on the left side of the date another servant would register Walsingham's inward and outward correspondence for each day.

After being registered, all incoming letters were allotted to the relevant department. The intelligence letters of Nicholas Berden, Walsingham's most capable spy in Paris in the mid-1580s, offer insights into the procedures of Walsingham's secretariat in decrypting and annotating secret reports.<sup>83</sup> In Elizabeth I's reign, political insecurity and religious uncertainty accelerated the use of encryption techniques—that is, invisible ink and cipher—in secret diplomacy, conspiracies and surveillance. In March 1587, Ambassador Stafford informed Walsingham that 'in thes doubtfull tymes wherein so much mallice is borne agaynst England men are loth to have ther names or exposition knowe'.<sup>84</sup> Writing under a pseudonym was common in espionage in order to preserve an informant's identity and to convey information securely. Thus, once Berden's pseudonymous letters were received, Phelippes would start by identifying the sender subscribed 'Thomas Rogers' by using the no-longer extant 'booke of secret intelligences', which contained the names of agents, their aliases, cipher alphabets, and their payments, and was safely kept in Walsingham's 'most secret Cabinett'.<sup>85</sup> This list would also have contained the names of Edward Grately alias John Foxley, Pierre d'Or alias Henri Châteaumartin, one Barnard alias Robert Woodward or Robert Wood, and

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<sup>83</sup> The employment of Berden in Walsingham's espionage in Paris in the 1580s is discussed in Chapter III.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, SP 78/17 f. 99r, Stafford to Walsingham, [24 Mar] 1587.

<sup>85</sup> TNA, SP 12/231/56, 'Memorandum of State Papers delivered to the Lord Treasurer, to Mr. Wolley, to Mr. Freke, and of those sent home', Mar. 1590.



William Sterrell alias Robert Robinson or Henry Saint Martin.<sup>86</sup> Even Walsingham and Phelippes used variant pseudonyms to correspond with different spies. The Catholic exile George Norton (alias William Robinson) sent family letters to ‘his brother John Robinson’, actually Walsingham.<sup>87</sup> Phelippes assumed the alias of either Henry Willsdon or James Dalison in contact with Gilbert Gifford in 1587, and another alias John Morice with Sterrell in 1592. From 1597 to 1600, he disguised himself as a London merchant Peter Halins in correspondence with Cecil’s spies John Petit (alias J. B.) and G. Sanf (alias Van Molen) in Flanders.<sup>88</sup>

Identifying a spy facilitated the correct recovery of the invisible ink and cipher system he used. The previous historians’ statements on invisible ink have been rather vague. The art of invisible ink became familiar during the early modern period through printed pamphlets of secrets and manuscript recipe books, which instructed in the use of varying substances—alum powder or salt ammoniac, vinegar, urine, or the juice of oranges, lemons and onions—all of which were only detectable only if treated with heat, water, or a powder such as coal dust.<sup>89</sup> A servant of the exile Thomas Copley, a Catholic prisoner at the Rye, confessed that he made secret writings ‘with the juys of an ora[n]ge and beyng drye theis nothings see but clen papper’.<sup>90</sup> Acting as a prison spy in the Rye in 1582, Walter Williams learned about the plan of the traitors to convey

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<sup>86</sup> Other spies’ aliases include: Mary Stuart’s secret French chaplain De la Rue, alias Samerie; John Ballard alias Fortescue; Burghley’s spies, Franchiotto alias Captain François, and Thomas Bath alias Tomazo.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 103, William Robinson to his brother John Robinson, 20 May 1584; TNA, SP 78/11 f. 110, same to same, 27 May/6 Jun. 1584.

<sup>88</sup> Gifford: *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 391, 457, 462. Sterrell: *CSPD, 1591-1594*, 225, 234. Petit: *CSPD, 1595-1597*, 364, 390, 494, 503, 509, 520; *CSPD, 1598-1601*, 10, 39, 59, 189, 201, 203, 214, 242, 297, 314, 327, 329, 342, 356, 358, 413, 438, 441, 455, 459. Sanf: *CSPD, 1598-1601*, 128.

<sup>89</sup> Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England*, 166-69.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, SP 12/155/31v, the confession of a servant of Sir Thomas Copley, 27 Aug. 1582.

intelligence by clandestine writing with ‘the juse’.<sup>91</sup> In September 1587, Phelippes wrote to Gilbert Gifford in Paris under the feigned direction of Francis Hartley, ‘with the juce of an onion or some like juyce’.<sup>92</sup> While in English captivity, Mary Stuart was a zealous practitioner of this art. In a letter to her envoy James Beaton in Paris which fell into Walsingham’s hands, she instructed that ‘You can (under the pretext of sending me some books) write in the blanks between the lines (alum appears to me the best, or gall nuts).’<sup>93</sup> Berden routinely employed invisible ink in his communications with Walsingham and Henry Palavicino.<sup>94</sup> He disguised these reports as mercantile letters in order to transmit information about the movements of Catholic powers and English exiles. He penned brief messages regarding business in normal ink, which covered up the following secret intelligence written in invisible ink. For example, the beginning of his report to Walsingham on 18 October 1585 was readable to outsiders:

I have sent ij severall patorns of suche stuff as yor honor requyred, one was sent the 18<sup>th</sup> of September, the other of the laste of the same, which was all I sent sithence I sent by my Frend. The Marchante who conveyed soche parcells as I sent heretofore hath sent me worde, that in respect of the warres he will nott send any more stuffe of soche valewe, least yt shoulde myscarrie by soldiars...yt please yor honor to take some new order...

The next three pages in invisible ink described the Spain-led plan for the invasion of

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<sup>91</sup> TNA, SP 12/156/17, W. Williams to Walsingham, 15 Dec. 1582.

<sup>92</sup> TNA, SP 12/203/36, copies of letters sent by Thomas Phelippes to Gilbert Gifford, 7 Sept. 1587.

<sup>93</sup> Mary Stuart to the Archbishop of Glasgow, 6 Nov. 1577, in William Turnbull, ed., *Letters of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, selected from the “Recueil Des Lettres de Marie Stuart,” together with the chronological summary of Events during the Reign of the Queen of Scotland, by Prince Alexander Labanoff* (London, 1865), 263-68.

<sup>94</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 50 Thomas Rogers to Palavicino, 11 Aug. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 52, Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 59, Rogers to Walsingham, 25 Aug. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 65, same to same, 30 Sept. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 70, same to same, 18 Oct. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 84, same to same, 16 Dec. 1585; SP 15/29 f. 98, same to same, 28 Dec. 1585.

Scotland.<sup>95</sup>

At the end of this same letter, Berden promised next time to send copies of some encoded Catholic letters, which he had no skill to decipher. Epistolary encryption and decryption was initially used by Mylles and Cave, and then in the 1580s mostly by Phelippes or Lake.<sup>96</sup> Cryptography started with simple substitution ciphers, then moved on to the nomenclator, a system based upon alphanumeric or symbolic substitution.<sup>97</sup> A typical nomenclator is that used by Walsingham during his first French embassy, in two letters to Cecil on 12 August 1571 and on 25 October 1572, respectively.<sup>98</sup> In accordance with a cipher index, he used multiple ideograms in substitution for common letters, and represented important figures and places by either symbols, capitals, or numbers in squares.<sup>99</sup> For secrecy, his correspondence with Cecil alternated between variant cipher systems.<sup>100</sup> When occupying the office of Secretary himself, Walsingham continued to develop nomenclator ciphers, instructing his secretaries to send to his spies ‘for the owld Cyphers’ and to ‘make new Cyphers’.<sup>101</sup> Interestingly, except for the 1571 and 1572 examples above, almost none of his cipher

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<sup>95</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 70r, Rogers to Walsingham, 18 Oct. 1585.

<sup>96</sup> Mylles’s autograph: e.g. TNA, SP 52/26/1 f. 84, Walsingham to Henry Killigrew, 30 Jul. 1574, partly in cipher. Cave’s autograph: TNA, SP 52/29/10, Walsingham to Thomas Randolph, 14 Jan. 1581, partly in cipher.

<sup>97</sup> Frank Higenbottam, *Codes and Ciphers* (London, 1973), 9-10, 128-29.

<sup>98</sup> TNA, SP 70/119 f. 90, Walsingham to Burghley, 12 Aug. 1571; SP 70/125 f. 71, same to same, 25 Oct. 1572.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, SP 106/2 f. 141A, Sir Francis Walsingham Cipher, 1571.

<sup>100</sup> BL, Harley MS 260 f. 55, Burghley to Walsingham, 24 Mar. 1570. BL, Harley MS 260 f. 113, Walsingham to Burghley, 25 Jun. 1571. BL, Harley MS 260 f. 170, Burghley to Walsingham, 2 Feb. 1571/2. BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/V f. 205, Burghley to Walsingham, 3 Nov. 1572. BL, Cotton MS Vespasian F/V f. 194, Walsingham to Burghley, 26 Nov. 1572. BL, Harley MS 260 f. 399, Walsingham to Burghley, 20 Jan. 1572.

<sup>101</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035 ff. 7r, 25r, 45r.

pamphlets survive in the State Paper collection of Elizabethan ciphers.<sup>102</sup> These three volumes, bound by 1862, consist of a myriad of alphanumeric code tables and keys to ciphers used by Elizabeth's ambassadors and diplomats, English spies like John Lee and Robert Poley in Flanders, and by Mary Stuart's partisans like the Guises, William Maitland, Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget. The volumes include a newly created index which lists the names of users, and the place and date a cipher was sent.

An undated letter between Catholic exiles William Gifford and J. Throckmorton in Rome provides an example of Phelippes's deciphering methodology.<sup>103</sup> Firstly, Phelippes made a fair copy of the original. In order to track the cipher, on the back of its final page he added five variant cipher keys—two code numbers, two alphabets, and one symbolic—which had presumably been intercepted previously. Phelippes noted: 'these figures at the side of the word shewe by w[hi]ch alphabet to write'.<sup>104</sup> Accordingly he added the names of people next to their code numbers throughout the main body of the text. Then he annotated in the margin next to a section he had marked: 'where he writes out of charactr he disguiseth by these termes of she & wenche as if he spoke of women'.<sup>105</sup> Phelippes also noticed one possible mistake Gifford himself had made in encrypting: 'Quere whether 83 were not mistaken by the writer himself for 73 for yt is an abrupt transition to 83 w[hi]ch in other places is Parsons [Robert Persons]'.<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> TNA, SP 106/1-3.

<sup>103</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/VIII ff. 327r-332v, Notes for a long dispatch from Dr Gifford to J. Throckmorton at Rome, [no date].

<sup>104</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/VIII f. 332v.

<sup>105</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/VIII f. 327v.

<sup>106</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula B/VIII f. 329v.

Following decryption, a summary of the letter would be written on the addressed cover. Berden's letter of 28 December 1585 certified that 'the newe Excommunication Againste England is graunted, and that yt shall shortly be sent into England...yt is gone in allreddy abovte v weke paste, and that other Gilbert Gyfford or some of the prests yt went in abovte the some tyme did carrye yt'. Berden also reported the spreading rumour in Paris of Gifford's 'apprehencion at the coaste'. This was abstracted as: 'New excommunication to go into England. Gilbert Gifford's apprehension in England known'.<sup>107</sup> Above the abstract a cipher mark 'X' was added to enable filing.<sup>108</sup> Finally, decrypted letters were circulated to Walsingham, who habitually underlined or expunged sensitive words, made marginal notes or instructions, and ordered letters to be either copied into 'sundrie bookes of paper', or digested into the subject 'boxes' or 'bundells'.<sup>109</sup> The former were letter-books, and were classified into 'forraine services' and 'home service'. Each was subdivided by country or policy. The letter-books functioned therefore as a narrative record, combining chronological duplicates of originals (including the related instructions of charges and minutes of further directions), with newly added abstracts, comments and updated follow-ups to relevant proceedings.<sup>110</sup> In 1588 Thomas Lake catalogued all of Walsingham's letter-books into a table book.<sup>111</sup> These formulary books together with other archival boxes and bundles

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<sup>107</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 ff. 98r, 102v, Rogers to Walsingham, 28 Dec. 1585.

<sup>108</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 52, SP 15/29 f. 65, SP 15/29 f. 84, SP 15/29 f. 98, Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug. 1585, 30 Sept. 1585, 16 Dec. 1585, 28 Dec. 1585.

<sup>109</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035, 'To make a book': ff. 17r, 25r, 34r, 35v, 'To provyd a box to put in the letters': ff. 34r, 35v.

<sup>110</sup> Faunt, 'Discourse', 504. TNA, SP 104/163 f. 0038r, Flanders, France, German states, Holland, Scotland, Spain, Poland, Morocco and Sweden: Walsingham's letter book (by Laurence Tomson), 1577-1579, 21-24 Aug. 1577.

<sup>111</sup> BL, Stowe MS 162.

were stored at Walsingham's house in chests, or 'at the Court [Whitehall] vpon the shelves'. Unfortunately most of Walsingham's letter-books have been lost, except for three in the National Archives: the entry book of Ireland of 1579 (organised partly by Tomson, Faunt and Lake), Cave's French language letter-book (1571–89), and Tomson's foreign entry book.<sup>112</sup>

After 10 o'clock, generally Walsingham briefed the Queen in her private chamber, 'with daily attendyng, for the most part iij or iiij tymes in the day; yt maketh me wery of my lief'.<sup>113</sup> There were three tasks of the Secretary in audience: to present letters, warrants and suits requiring Elizabeth's signature; to report information and counsel; and to hear dictations for drafting documents in Elizabeth's name.<sup>114</sup> He could either brief Elizabeth verbally—by reading a document verbatim or a pre-prepared précis—or by giving her a document to read it herself.<sup>115</sup> A minute in Walsingham's autograph of June 1585 was prepared to report the status of England's defence, outlining the Queen's treasure and her subjects' armed preparations, with observations under each head.<sup>116</sup> Another minute on 5 August 1586 kept the Queen briefed on Walsingham's

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<sup>112</sup> Walsingham's entry book December 1579 of letters to and from Ireland, TNA, PRO 30/5/4, printed in J. Hogan and N. McNeill O'Farrell, eds., *The Walsingham Letter-Book or Register of Ireland: May, 1578 to December, 1579* (Dublin, 1959); the autographs: e.g. Tomson and Faunt, PRO 30/5/4 f. 76r; Lake, f. 75v. TNA, SP 104/162, France, Flanders, German states and Holland: Lisle Cave's letter book, 1571-1589.

<sup>113</sup> 10 am: BL, Harley MS 290 f. 222v, Relation by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb 1587. 'attendyng': BL, Harley MS 6991 f. 124r, Thomas Smith to Burghley, 6 Mar. 1575.

<sup>114</sup> BL, Harley MS 6035 ff. 9r, 18v: 'To acquaint her majesty with...'; f. 34r: 'Memorial: To recommend to her Majestie the Earl of Rutlandes suite'; f. 35v, 'To sorte out the thinges that are to be signed'.

<sup>115</sup> BL, Harley MS 6994 f. 168r, Secretary John Wolley to Burghley, 11 Apr. 1581. BL, Harley MS 6992 f. 63r, Walsingham to Burghley, 16 Nov. 1576: 'And as towchinge the matter of the exchaynge, I shewed her the latter parte of your letter'. BL, Harley MS 6992 f. 79r, Walsingham to Burghley, 13 Sep 1577: 'receyving your L. letters at my being with her mat[ies] in her withdrawing chamber, she opened them & afer she had perused them, she grewe to this resolytyon...'

<sup>116</sup> TNA, SP 12/179/59, 'Heads or proposition by Walsingham', Jun. 1585.

counter-plot against John Ballard and Antony Babington.<sup>117</sup>

After Elizabeth's briefing, Walsingham organised the royal audience with foreign ambassadors and ministers, usually at 2 or 3 pm. For instance, on 17 March 1586 Walsingham requested the Lord of Lochleven and the Master of Weymss to arrive at his chamber in Greenwich by 2 pm, from whence he would introduce them to the Queen.<sup>118</sup> During the audience, at which it was not always necessary that Walsingham was present, he could either proceed with his paperwork or attend Council meetings. Afterwards Walsingham might work at the court until midnight. His letter to Ambassador Douglas on 27 July 1588 was done 'from the Court at Richmond...at 11 at Night'.<sup>119</sup> Otherwise in the evenings he received visitors or colleagues at home. On 22 August 1585, by the Queen's command, Walsingham directed Davison to 'sende for you to my house at Barne Elmes and to confer with you about the state of the lowe cou[n]t[r]yes. I praye you meete me there this night'.<sup>120</sup>

It was a punishing routine for Walsingham's health. A longstanding urinary ailment kept him frequently away from the court, on the first occasion between 5 and 16 March 1574.<sup>121</sup> A more serious bout of sickness in December kept him absent for nearly four months, although he continued working from his bed 'at my lodgeinge'.<sup>122</sup> He was

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<sup>117</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/17r, Walsingham to Queen Elizabeth, 5 Aug. 1586.

<sup>118</sup> Walsingham to Archibald Douglas, 17 Mar. 1585/6, *HMC Salisbury*, III, 134.

<sup>119</sup> Walsingham to Archibald Douglas, 27 Jul. 1588, *A Collection of State Papers...Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley, 1571-1596*, 631.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, SP 84/3 f. 45, Walsingham to Davison, 22 Aug. 1585.

<sup>121</sup> 'Journal of Sir Francis Walsingham', 17-18.

<sup>122</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/IX f. 3, [Walsingham] to Elizabeth, 2/7 Apr. 1575. BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/IX f. 4, [Walsingham] to Elizabeth, 14 Apr. 1575.

again away sick at the beginning of 1576, in 1577 and 1578. By September 1576 the exhausted Walsingham begged for permission ‘to be quyte of the place I serve in, which is subject vnto so any thwarts and harde speches’.<sup>123</sup>

On the other hand, his toil earned him increasing political prominence and royal patronage. He was sole Secretary following Thomas Wilson’s death in May 1581, until William Davison’s appointment in September 1586. A significant number of his new central and local offices brought him substantial profit through annuities. The Chancellorship of the Order of the Garter (22 April 1578) brought a pension of £100 annually and a lodging in Windsor Castle; the Duchy of Lancaster (15 June 1587) was a lucrative sinecure worth £142 16s.<sup>124</sup> Royal lands granted to him included: Odiham in Hampshire by November 1578, Barn Elms in 1579, Little Otford in Kent in 1587, and manors in Durham and York in March 1588. What was most profitable for Walsingham was a royal patent: the six-year customs of all the important western and northern ports from August 1585, at an annual rent of up to £11,263. Out of this he was allowed to draw a munificent 58% profit annually.<sup>125</sup> Unlike Burghley and Leicester, who were keen to build extensive residences symbolic of power and wealth, Walsingham invested his wealth in espionage.

Remuneration for employees in Walsingham’s intelligence service was made mainly in four ways: state subvention, royal pension, official promotion and parliamentary

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<sup>123</sup> TNA, SP 12/109/6 f. 11r, Walsingham to Burghley, 12 Sept. 1576. Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 95-96.

<sup>124</sup> The local appointments included Chief Steward of Salisbury, High Steward of Ipswich, Winchester and Kingston upon Thames, and Recorder of Ipswich.

<sup>125</sup> The ports: Plymouth, Fowey, Exeter, Poole, Bridgwater, Bristol, Gloucester, Milford, Cardiff, Chester, Berwick, Newcastle, Hull, Boston, King’s Lynn and Great Yarmouth. Hutchinson, *Elizabeth’s Spy Master*, 243-45.



seats.<sup>126</sup> First, the Privy Seal allowed Walsingham to appropriate funds to distribute to his intelligencer employees. But many of the Privy Seal warrants issued to Walsingham ‘from tyme to tyme went without prest or Account and without showing the cause of the employment of the same’, and more were consumed in the fire in 1619.<sup>127</sup> The invoices of Walsingham’s Dutch embassy from 17 June to 5 October 1578 include one entitled ‘The charges of Intelligence or Spyalles’ which lists the names of his informants during this time and their individual rewards, amounting to just over £243.<sup>128</sup> Another docket compiled by Thomas Lake in 1589 records the annual funds issued to Walsingham ‘to be paid over to such persons [intelligencers] as Her Majesty hath appointed him’: £500 in 1585, rising to £2,100 in 1586 as a response to the Babington Plot, and then further to £2,800 before the Spanish Armada.<sup>129</sup> This increasing investment implied that the financially cautious Queen Elizabeth had come to recognise the effectiveness of espionage.

Certain capable spies earned royal pensions instead of salaries. In reward for Phelippes’s effort against the Babington Plot, in May 1586 Queen Elizabeth signed a bill for his pension of a hundred marks: ‘you [Phelippes] wyll not beleve in how good parte she acceptethe of your seryvce’, wrote Walsingham.<sup>130</sup> In July 1586, Nicholas Berden and Gilbert Gifford shared a piece of royal patronage, of which ‘Berden shall

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<sup>126</sup> K. Mertes, *The English Noble Household 1250-1600* (Oxford, 1988), 194-215. Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 182-83.

<sup>127</sup> TNA, SP 52/50 f. 76, Edward Englyshe to Henry Maynard, 28 Jun. 1593.

<sup>128</sup> BL, Microfilm M/488, ‘Expense account of Sir Francis Walsingham for transport, intelligence, etc. as Ambassador to the Low Countries, 16 June-5 October 1578’.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, SP 12/229/49, ‘Note of the sums issued by warrant to Sir Francis Walsingham’, Dec. 1589. Williams, *The Tudor Regime*, 71. Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 309-10

<sup>130</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/60, Walsingham to Phelippes, 3 May 1586.

receave 30*ls* and G. G. may have the rest'.<sup>131</sup> In March 1587, the Queen and Walsingham promised to pension Gifford with £100 annually for his loyal attention.<sup>132</sup> In 1588, Anthony Standen gained an annual pension of £100 for his tracking of Spanish military preparations during the Armada.<sup>133</sup> In addition, it is worth noting that a peculiarly privileged intimacy with key political players made their private secretaries a medium in suits for their masters' patronage, benefiting these men greatly in terms of political influence and personal wealth.<sup>134</sup> For example, in 1585 Henry Stanley, Earl of Derby, appealed to Mylles to remind Walsingham of a suit for the conformity of Thomas Ashton and Richard Eltonheade.<sup>135</sup> In January 1586, a suitor Gilbert Towle from Berwick bestowed on Lisle Cave 'either a Scoth saddle or an halberd', for furthering his letter to Walsingham.<sup>136</sup>

Serving the Principal Secretary was an important ladder of advancement which might secure a stable future in government, though in Walsingham's system a very limited number of employees could have their wishes fulfilled. Beale assumed a Clerkship of the Privy Council on 8 July 1572, albeit through the political patronage of Thomas Smith, Burghley and Leicester.<sup>137</sup> Davison was elevated to the second Secretaryship in

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<sup>131</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/32, Walsingham to Phelippes, 7 Jul. 1586.

<sup>132</sup> Phelippes to Gifford, Mar. 1587, *CSPD 1581-1590*, 401

<sup>133</sup> Paul E. J. Hammer, 'An Elizabethan Spy Who Came in from the Cold: the Return of Anthony Standen to England in 1593', *Historical Research*, 65 (1992), 277-95. 'Standen, Sir Anthony (*d.* in or after 1615)', Paul E. J. Hammer in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, May 2005), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/39703> (accessed September 27, 2012). Read, *Walsingham*, III, 277, 289-92.

<sup>134</sup> Hammer, 'The Secretariat of Robert Devereux, Second Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601', 26.

<sup>135</sup> Earl of Derby to Mylles, 12 Nov. 1585, *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 284.

<sup>136</sup> CP 13/82, Gilbert Towle to Mr. Cave, 24 Jan. 1586.

<sup>137</sup> Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 105-107.

1586, and Tomson became the royal Latin secretary. In the autumn of 1586, with the help of Walsingham and Davison, Mylles acquired a reversion to one of the Privy Seal clerkships. In 1588 Walsingham successfully recommended Berden for a position he coveted, a royal purveyor of poultry—Berden's father was a London poulterer, so Berden's new position greatly benefited the family business.<sup>138</sup> Edward Brunham, who served Walsingham as a courier, first on the French routes and then on the Antwerp one, ended up as a water-bailiff in Flushing.

Most often Walsingham rewarded his private employees with seats in the House of Commons.<sup>139</sup> Until 1587 when he was appointed the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, Walsingham himself controlled too few parliamentary seats for this, but Leicester and Francis Russell Earl of Bedford (one of the most prominent parliamentary patrons in the state, and an old friend from Walsingham's Marian exile in Italy) used their borough vacancies for Walsingham's patronage purposes.<sup>140</sup> Mylles, the member for Poole in the Parliaments of 1584 and of 1586, was nominated by the borough patron Leicester; in 1588 he was returned for Winchester where Walsingham was high steward. Beale was elected MP for Totnes and Dorchester as Bedford's nominee in 1572 and 1584; Tomson for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis in 1572, 1584

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<sup>138</sup> TNA, SP 12/209/19, 107, Berden to Walsingham, 14 Mar., 22 Apr. 1588.

<sup>139</sup> Walsingham's secretaries sitting in Parliament:  
 Robert Beale: Totnes (1572), Dorchester (1584, 1586, 1589), Lostwithiel (1593)  
 Nicholas Faunt: Boroughbridge (1584)  
 Laurence Tomson: Weymouth and Melcombe Regis (1572, 1584, 1586), Downton (1589)  
 Francis Mylles: Poole (1584-6), Winchester (1589)  
 Thomas Phelippes: Hastings (1584, 1586)  
 Thomas Lake: Hastings (1572, 1584, 1586)  
 William Stubbs: Yarmouth I.o.W. (1584)  
 Hasler, ed., *The House of Commons*, I, 411-14; II, 109-110, 428; III, 114-16, 219-20, 462, 511-12.

<sup>140</sup> The Duchy of Lancaster in 1589 sent 8 borough members to the Commons. *Ibid.*, I, 60, 87. Simon Adams, 'The Dudley Clientele and the House of Commons, 1559-1586', *Parliamentary History*, 8 (1989), 216-39. J. E. Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons* (London, 1949), 196.

and 1586.<sup>141</sup> Tomson was returned for Downton in 1588, through the offices of Thomas Wilkes.<sup>142</sup> Walsingham placed his men in the Commons not only as payment for client service, but also to defend the Council's (or the Queen's) resolutions. Owing to considerations of secrecy he favoured a limited oligarchy, and sought to narrow the initiative in policy-making to a pivotal group of the Council.<sup>143</sup> With policy already decided, there would be nothing for Parliament to do except legislate. This may be why Walsingham's servants are so silent in the minutes of the Commons proceedings.<sup>144</sup>

Although remunerated in these various ways, it would be wrong to ascribe the allegiance of Walsingham's servants to materialism alone. Conyers Read labelled Walsingham's household as a 'perfect hot-bed of Puritanism', which was based on a shared ideological and religious position.<sup>145</sup> Phelippes was 'all for' Protestantism, albeit 'gredye of honor and profit'.<sup>146</sup> Warcop's religious outlook and his Marian exile

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<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 190

<sup>142</sup> Phelippes was an exception in the parliamentary patronage allotted by the Walsingham-Leicester grouping. He may have been nominated for Hastings in 1584 by the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, Lord Cobham, who belonged to Burghley's group. Hasler assumed that Lord Cobham's brother, Sir Henry Cobham, was Ambassador in France between 1579 and 1583 assisting Walsingham on a special mission. Phelippes was evidently used by him in deciphering. It is reasonable to assume that Phelippes was Cobham's nominee in the Parliaments of 1584 and 1586.

<sup>143</sup> Walsingham's definition of the regime will be presented in Chapter VI.

<sup>144</sup> The two exceptions are Beale and Tomson, both of whom in 1584 were 'overbold in speaking' and accusing the policy of John Whitgift Archbishop of Canterbury in absolute conformity to the Elizabethan ecclesiastical settlement, of being 'proceeding in causes ecclesiastical contrary to the Act for the Submission of the Clergy and in general defiance of the "charters, lawes and liberties of this realme'. Irena Backus, 'Laurence Tomson (1539-1608) and Elizabethan Puritanism', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 28 (1977), 25-26. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments 1584-1601* (London, 1969), 63, 66, 82. Patrick Collinson, 'Puritan, Men of Business and Elizabethan Parliaments', *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1994), 59-86; 'Servants and citizens: Robert Beale and other Elizabethans', *This England: Essays on the English nation and the commonwealth in the sixteenth century* (Manchester, 2011), 98-121.

<sup>145</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, II, 261.

<sup>146</sup> TNA, SP 53/16 f. 50, Thomas Morgan to Mary Stuart, 5 Oct. 1585: 'It is very like that one Phillippes hath great accesse to your Hoste [Amias Paulet]...If you doe use him according to my former Instruction may be that he may be recovered to your service. But trye him long and in small matters before you use him, being a severe Haguenot and all for that state, yet glorious and greedy of honor and profit'.

utterly committed him to Walsingham's radical Protestantism; Tomson's sympathy with Puritanism did likewise.<sup>147</sup> Tomson's working intimacy with Walsingham and linguistic gifts (he spoke twelve languages) gained him access to the making of government policy towards English Puritanism. In 1575 he pleaded with his master to intervene in the dispute then splitting opinion at Magdalen College, Oxford. This caused resentment among some of the Fellows, condemning Tomson as one who 'should goe about to seke the ruine of our Church and establyshed reigion under the pretence of reformation, the subversion of other colleges, namelye of our famous and noble mother Magdalen College'.<sup>148</sup> Between 1577 and 1578, Tomson, on behalf of the ailing Walsingham, cooperated with Davison, Elizabeth's envoy in the Low Countries, and Rossell, a French Protestant in English espionage, to promote Walsingham's proposed Anglo-Dutch alliance against Spain.<sup>149</sup> In December 1586 Davison, seeing that Tomson would have no prospects after Walsingham's death, attempted to find him fresh preferment. Tomson declined; he was not 'desirous to turn my cogitations that way, for that I have spent now almost twelve years in those service without any regard or recompense any manner of way, and to my great charges and decay of health'.<sup>150</sup> He resigned from his public career when Walsingham died in 1590.

The privatised nature of Walsingham's clientele-intelligence system was a double-edged sword. Walsingham's substantial debts at his death in April 1590 suggest

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<sup>147</sup> TNA, SP 83/16 f. 26, T. Longston to Tomson, 2 Jun. 1582; Backus, 'Laurence Tomson (1539-1608) and Elizabethan Puritanism', 17-27.

<sup>148</sup> TNA, SP 12/125/38, Richard Stanclyff to Tomson, 24 Jul. 1578.

<sup>149</sup> Backus, 'Laurence Tomson (1539-1608) and Elizabethan Puritanism', 20-21.

<sup>150</sup> P. W. Hasler, ed., *The House of Commons, 1558-1603* (London, 1981), I, 18.

that despite state subventions, his spying expenses had been exceeding his own resources. And his espionage system based on a clientele collapsed immediately after his death without any male heirs. It was not uncommon in the workings of a household clientele that if—due to decease or a decline in power—patrons were unable to offer patronage, then clients would without hesitation transfer their loyalty elsewhere. Unlike Burghley's aristocratic protégés, in the absence of patronage Walsingham's low-born clients lacked any protection and could easily become financially encumbered. Therefore, after Walsingham died, the majority of his secretaries and spies salvaged their careers by soon turning either to Walsingham's son-in-law Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, or to the Cecils.<sup>151</sup>

On the other hand, this system of private intelligence employees paid by patronage instead of an official salary ensured that their fidelity and the intelligence they gathered were devoted in the first place to their patron Walsingham, and not the state.<sup>152</sup> And the tolerant employment of people from a wide range of backgrounds, speedily elevated Walsingham's system to a high degree of efficiency, presumably between 1581 and 1586 when he monopolised the Secretaryship. A surprising number of his private spies started being dispatched overseas (particularly to Paris), were placed in the French embassy in London, and were even set on Walsingham's opposing colleagues. Certain exiled Catholics and some of Burghley's spies also turned their service to Walsingham. His mature system of espionage hence started to compete with Burghley's, at home and abroad, particularly in matters concerning English interventionism—whether in the interests of ruling legitimacy or for God's glory,

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<sup>151</sup> The collapse of Walsingham's intelligence system is described in the Conclusion.

<sup>152</sup> TNA, SP 78/19 f. 16v, Peter Proby to Walsingham, 14 Jan. 1589.

whether to be excluded from or to advance the continental Reformation. The next two chapters will investigate the rivalry between the two divided spy systems in a series of events concerning Catholic exiles in Paris and domestic counter-plots.

### Chapter III: Spying on Catholic Exiles in Paris in the 1580s

Walsingham's intelligence system, newborn in the late 1570s, reached a high degree of efficiency in the 1580s.<sup>1</sup> Its spectacular growth was a result of: first, Elizabeth's tightening policy against Catholic recusancy; second, an increase in the number of Catholic exiles converting to support of Elizabeth's regime; and finally, the fact that the international climate, newly unfavourable to Protestantism, was pushing Walsingham to improve his espionage in order to drive England towards armed interventionism. Accordingly, the competition for intelligence played out between Walsingham's system and Burghley's reached a climax at home and in Paris, the new refuge of English Catholic exiles in the final quarter of the sixteenth century.

The studies of John Bossy and recently Catherine M. Gibbons offer the best guide to the movements of Elizabethan exiles in France.<sup>2</sup> Around 1580, a new kind of Roman Catholic infiltration—three Jesuit missionaries Edmund Campion, Robert Persons and Ralph Emerson landed in England, and in 1581 the Pope's emissary Nicholas Sander, whose *De Visibili Monarchia* (1571) justified deposing Elizabeth as a heretic, interfered in the Irish rebellion—called for new legislation. Parliament passed an 'Acte to retayne the Quenes Majesty's Subjects in their due Obedyence', extending the crime of treason to any Englishman who reconciled others or himself to Catholicism, or sought to withdraw others from the established church or 'from the

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<sup>1</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, II (Oxford, 1925), 287.

<sup>2</sup> John Bossy, 'Rome and the Elizabethan Catholics: A Question of Geography', *The Historical Journal* 7 (1964), 135-42; *The English Catholic Community 1570-1580* (Oxford, 1976); Catherine M. Gibbons, 'The Experience of Exile and English Catholics: Paris in the 1580s' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of York, 2006).



acknowledgement of their natural duties unto Her Majesty'.<sup>3</sup> The forfeit for absence from divine service at the parish church rose greatly to £20 monthly for the first offence, and for the fourth a cumulative penalty of praemunire was imposed.<sup>4</sup> The statute of 1585 declared that missionary priests sent by the Pope to England were 'traitors, practisers of treasons, and the seed-men of sedition and rebellion'.<sup>5</sup> To escape persecution and to enjoy greater liberty of faith, from 1580 there was a notable outflow of English Catholics to the Spanish Netherlands, Spain and France, countries that were both Catholic and geographically convenient. According to John Bossy, the foundation of the seminary at Douai in 1568 and the Dutch revolt from 1578 encouraged the use of the French route. By 1589 when the final French civil war broke out, over a thousand English exiles had assembled in the major cities in France: Orléans, Rouen, Bordeaux and Reims. In 1582, there were more than 300 in Paris alone.<sup>6</sup> In 1584, after being ingloriously expelled from England for his collusion in the Throckmorton Plot, Bernardino De Mendoza assumed the Spanish embassy in France, giving a new impulse to anti-Elizabeth conspiracies in Paris. During his preceding London embassy, Mendoza had asserted that any business promoting Catholic restoration in the British Isles 'would have to be directed from France'.<sup>7</sup> After arriving in Paris, Mendoza soon

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012), 99; 23 Eliz. I. c.1. *Statutes of the Realm* (London, 1963), IV, 657-58.

<sup>4</sup> J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and Her Parliaments 1559-1581* (New York, 1958), 369-92.

<sup>5</sup> 27 Eliz. I. c.2. *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 706-708.

<sup>6</sup> Bossy, 'Rome and the Elizabethan Catholics', 135-42; Gibbons, 'The Experience of Exile and English Catholics', 149.

<sup>7</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 20 Oct. 1581; 6 May 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 197, 471. Gibbons, 'The Experience of Exile and English Catholics', 103-20, 149. Mary Stuart shared Mendoza's France-based strategy, and begged King Philip to assign the French embassy to Mendoza, through Francis Englefield, a leading English Catholic exile in Madrid, who was a pensioned adviser of Philip's on English affairs. She tried to persuade Mendoza into seconding this assignment 'in the interests of the business, because not only have you a full knowledge of my intentions, and of the state of affairs here, which makes you more capable than anyone else to deal with these people, as will be necessary'. De Lamar Jensen, *Diplomacy and Dogmatism: Bernardino de Mendoza and the French Catholic League* (Cambridge, 1964), 103-105. Mary to Mendoza, 29 Jul. 1582, 28 Feb. 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 329-24, 448.

allied himself with the Guises, who were shocked that Anjou's death in June 1584 had almost confirmed the Huguenot Henri de Bourbon as claimant to the French crown.<sup>8</sup> The Guise–Spanish alliance, along with numerous English exiles in the city, gave the anti-Elizabeth schemes a fresh start. In order to monitor these traitorous, rebellious and seditious practices, England needed a highly efficient espionage network in Paris, which hence became the main overseas arena in the struggle between Burghley's system and Walsingham's.

This chapter focuses first on the competition in espionage between Edward Stafford's embassy and Walsingham's spy network, revealing how the two systems monitored, defamed, and impeded each other, as well as contended for the Catholic intelligence that would benefit their patrons in policy debates. Second, an unusual increase in Catholic apostasy and semi-conformity to Elizabeth's Protestant rule will be analysed, looking particularly at the English operation of coercion and mercy, exiles' desire for keeping life and faith intact, and Catholic internal division. This research reveals the anxiety Burghley shared with Queen Elizabeth concerning Walsingham's rising monopoly on information, and their efforts to restore the balance of power in the regime.

### **1. Sir Edward Stafford in the Paris Embassy**

The 1580s saw the power rivalry inside Elizabeth's government extend to Paris, where Walsingham installed his personal spy network in competition with Edward Stafford's embassy which was favourable to Burghley. The two sides competed for intelligence in

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<sup>8</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and The Making of Europe* (New York, 2009), 242-55.

order to ensure their respective patrons could take a leading role in policy debates. The uniqueness of the English embassy in Paris gained remarkable strength in the 1580s, initially from the rising importance of the French route to Rome. The expulsion of Mendoza from Elizabeth's court in 1584 excluded the Spanish embassy from England until 1603, consequently burdening the English embassy in Paris with an extra duty to supply its home government with Spanish information. This embassy, 'the crossroads of the diplomatic world where Huguenot, Guise, Spanish, English and Catholic exile interests all co-existed', formed a sensitive part of Secretary Walsingham's empire of espionage.<sup>9</sup>

Stafford's assumption of the Paris embassy from 1583 to 1590 interrupted Walsingham's dominance of continental intelligence. Despite the fact that as Secretary it was under his nominal jurisdiction, Walsingham relied more on his own spy system than on this embassy, which in itself implies his suspicion of the newly assigned Ambassador Stafford. There was a grave charge of treachery levelled at Stafford, which has received sustained scholarly attention. Martin Hume, Albert Pollard, Conyers Read, and John Neale found themselves drawn to two opposing positions, either in defence or refutation of the charge that Stafford, lacking money, sold national secrets to the Guises and to Spain.<sup>10</sup> More recently Mitchell Leimon and Geoffrey Parker have re-identified him as a self-serving double agent, whose political ambition to solidify his prominence in Elizabeth's regime and to assure his future career in the

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<sup>9</sup> Mitchell Leimon and Geoffrey Parker, 'Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy: "The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford" Reconsidered', *English Historical Review* 111 (1996), 1139.

<sup>10</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, VII-LXVIII. A. F. Pollard, 'Reviews of Books', *English Historical Review* 16 (1901), 572-77; Conyers Read, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', *American Historical Review* 20 (1915), 292-313, and 35 (1930), 560-66; J. E. Neale, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', *English Historical Review* 44 (1929), 203-19.

post-Elizabethan dynasty drove him to intelligence work for both sides.<sup>11</sup> There is no intention here to continue the debate on Stafford's treachery, but rather to point out that factionalism caused Stafford to be an ineffectual ambassador, hindered by Walsingham's party in fulfilling his service for Burghley as a medium in espionage and secret diplomacy.

Conyers Read believed Walsingham's private spying in Paris started in 1587 when Stafford's treachery became certainties. However, in actual fact, most of the reports from Walsingham's spies in France concentrated around 1585, indicating that these spies had been trained and dispatched before then; Stafford's integrity had not yet been called into question, with accusations only surfacing in January 1587. Walsingham pre-arranged spying on Stafford, presumably from the latter's initial embassy, for two reasons. First, Walsingham was prejudiced against this new ambassador's closeness to Catholicism, which stemmed from the backgrounds of his mother Dorothy Lady Stafford and his second wife Douglas Howard (Lady Sheffield), both of whose families (the Poles and the Howards) embraced the Roman Church and were politically inclined to conservatism. Second, and more offensive to Walsingham, was Stafford's access to Queen Elizabeth via her female privy chamber and his partiality for Burghley. Ironically, it was these two things that redeemed the disadvantage of Stafford's inexperience in diplomacy—limited to an apprenticeship under Ambassador Henry Brooke during the Anjou marriage negotiations (1578–1581)—earning him the support of Elizabeth and Burghley for the Paris post.

It had been one of Queen Elizabeth's habits to employ her female chamber in

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<sup>11</sup> Leimon and Parker, 'Treason and Plot in Elizabethan Diplomacy', 1134-58.

diplomacy as an extension of her royal body. After 1576, Elizabeth shared Burghley's jealousy towards her new chief Secretary Walsingham's increasing control over state information and policy formation; from 1581 Walsingham's monopoly in that post intensified this fear. She started conducting diplomatic and intelligence matters by occasionally bypassing the Secretary's formal procedure, and instead working via her female chamber or else through Burghley, who shared her conservative outlook.<sup>12</sup> This is reflected in the fact that from 1579 to 1590 she selected her representatives at Paris from Burghley's party and from those with ties to her gentlewomen of the bedchamber: Henry Brooke and later Stafford. In 1578, the second Anjou match entered into formal consultation in the Council, and suffered strong opposition from the radical Protestants headed by Walsingham and Leicester. Thereafter Elizabeth began isolating their party from this scheme, having their staunch ally Amias Paulet replaced by Henry Brooke as new ambassador in France in October 1579, and later in 1580 excluding Walsingham from her communications with Anjou. The Brookes retained a strong allegiance to Burghley, who was a close ally of Sussex, the outspoken promoter of the Anjou match; Henry's sister-in-law Frances Lady Cobham, one of Elizabeth's bedchamberers, committed herself to the Cecils only. Brooke's appointment announced Elizabeth's willingness to grasp her last chance for marriage.<sup>13</sup>

Stafford, Brooke's successor in 1583, also had family connections that were naturally attractive to Elizabeth, whose aunt Mary Boleyn was the first wife of Stafford's father William. His mother Dorothy Lady Stafford, acting Mistress of the Robes from 1564, was one of the Queen's favourite sleeping companions, and his sister Elizabeth Lady

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<sup>12</sup> Neale, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 218.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth's use of her female chamber in her matrimonial diplomacy is discussed in Chapter VI.

Drury-Scot joined the Privy Chamber from 1569 until 1599: their royal attendance provided Stafford with chamber access directly to the Queen. Stafford's political fidelity to Burghley was undoubted.<sup>14</sup> Between 1574 and 1576, he had undertaken business in Emden and France for Burghley. In June 1583, Walsingham asked Stafford about his intention of accepting the embassy offer, seeking to lure him with promises of support: 'yff I [Stafford] lyked to have him [Walsingham] to presse her [Queen Elizabeth] any farther, he woulde dare ytt yff I woulde'. Stafford rejected Walsingham's offer, and soon invited Burghley to play his patron, declaring 'I desired him not by any meanes, and so left. For I have whooly disposed myselfe to depend of your good counsell and helpe, to doe whatt you thinke best and to goe as farre, and to doe as much and as lyttell as you shall thinke good.'<sup>15</sup> In May 1586, Paul Choart de Buzenval, a French agent in London, confirmed the consistent partiality of Ambassador Stafford, who 'depends only upon him [Burghley]; but it may cost him dear, and he may be sure that the greatest advancement he will ever have is where he is; I am astonished that he does not see that this one [Walsingham] is better, and at the end of his days begin to depend on him, which he had never done'.<sup>16</sup> In January 1587, Mendoza also described Stafford as a 'creature' of Burghley's and deeply in his confidence.<sup>17</sup> Stafford's heading of the Paris embassy and his bedchamber influence on the Queen could reinforce Burghley's position at court. This threefold connection—Burghley, the Paris embassy, and the female chamber—offered Elizabeth an alternative intelligence-diplomacy route, regulating the power balance by restraining Walsingham's expanding control over foreign affairs and information

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<sup>14</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587. *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7.

<sup>15</sup> BL, Harley MS 6993 f. 44, Stafford to Burghley, 12 Jun. 1583.

<sup>16</sup> Buzanval to Abbot Albene, 26 May 1586, *CSPF, 1585-1586*, 672.

<sup>17</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7.

circulation.

Stafford did deliver on Burghley's anticipation of hidden espionage and diplomacy. He sent Burghley regular copies of his reports to Secretary Walsingham and the Queen, now preserved in the Hatfield Library, and highly classified papers which 'no lyvinge creature knew of' aside from the Queen and Walsingham.<sup>18</sup> This private intelligence would reach Burghley not through formal ambassadorial channels, but initially through Robert Cecil, Burghley's second son, who during 1583 and 1584 was on his grand tour. Robert cooperated with Stafford until August 1584, collecting information about the tumultuous French political situation after Anjou's death. Two of their informants were Stafford's gaming partners, Marchaumont and Simier, Anjou's closest confidants.<sup>19</sup> Robert informed his father of intelligence in the form of letters home, in order to evade any official inspection. More often, Stafford passed intelligence to Burghley through his mother Lady Stafford. The outgoing Henry Brooke left his successor few documents, and refused to acquaint Stafford with his local informants in the houses of either the Spanish ambassador or the Scottish, or of his connections in the Guise household. (This was probably due to an old grudge that Stafford, during his involvement in the Anjou marriage negotiations, had questioned the intelligence supplied by William Waad, who was valued highly by Brooke.<sup>20</sup>) Stafford responded by sending Burghley a copy of all his and Brooke's dispatches, submitted to the Secretary 'in a packet to my mother'. Burghley was reminded 'to seal up this in

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<sup>18</sup> TNA, SP 78/18 f. 108, Stafford to Burghley, 31 Mar. 1588.

<sup>19</sup> David Potter, ed., *Foreign Intelligence and Information in Elizabethan England: Two English Treatises on the State of France, 1580-1584*, Camden Fifth Series, Vol. 25 (Cambridge, 2004), 1-8.

<sup>20</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 58, Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583; TNA, SP 78/10 f. 61, Stafford to Walsingham, 21 Oct. 1583; TNA, SP 78/10 f. 68, same to same, 31 Oct. 1583. 'Brooke, Sir Henry (1537-1592)', Julian Lock in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/5743> (accessed September 27, 2012).

another Paper, and deliver ytt to my mother, sealed, as all Coppyes else that heereafter I shall send you'. Presumably they were to be passed to the Queen via Lady Stafford.<sup>21</sup>

Walsingham tried to obstruct this flow of information. In December 1583, three months after Stafford's arrival in Paris, Walsingham had suggested he should write home less often, with the excuse that the Queen 'is many tymes so offended with the charges of often posting as I dare not make her prevy of all the dispatches I receive from you'.<sup>22</sup> In March 1584, Stafford's private letters were intercepted, opened and read by Walsingham's searchers at the port of Rye. Stafford's remonstrance received Walsingham's insincere apology, accompanying a caution to 'do well to packet up all your private letters in a packet directed to me'.<sup>23</sup> Stafford complained to Burghley sarcastically: 'I am contented Mr Secretarye shall think I am childe and canne nott fynde the bondage he would bringe me in'.<sup>24</sup> Walsingham's intervention was indeed in vain. The King of Navarre, Henri de Bourbon, informed Elizabeth in early 1587, that the Duchess of Guise was aware of certain of Elizabeth's private affairs which 'could not possibly have reached her except through this ambassador'.<sup>25</sup> Predictably, Stafford's route via the bedchamber still worked, assisting foreigners in correspondence direct with Queen Elizabeth without going through a formal diplomatic channel under Walsingham's control.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 58, Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583. Same to same, 31 Oct. 1583, W. Murdin, *Collection of State Papers Relating to Affairs in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth from Year 1571 to 1596* (London, 1759), 380. TNA, SP 78/11 f. 85, Stafford to Burghley, 1 May 1584.

<sup>22</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 107, Walsingham to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 65, Walsingham to Stafford, 27 Mar. 1584.

<sup>24</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 76, Stafford to Burghley, 14 Apr. 1584.

<sup>25</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7.

<sup>26</sup> See Chapter VI.



Stafford also served Burghley by collecting intelligence that was only available to him because his Catholic background was attractive to Mary's partisans and encouraged émigrés to establish contact. As soon as he arrived in Paris in October 1583, Stafford confidentially received the Archbishop of Glasgow James Beaton, Mary Stuart's representative at the French court. Mary expected to improve the situation of her captivity in England through Stafford's powerful friend Burghley, who was suspected of befriending Mary.<sup>27</sup> Certain émigrés sought, via Stafford, to make contact with Burghley with regard to their home interests.<sup>28</sup> Some were taken with Burghley's comparatively moderate attitude towards the Elizabethan Reformation, which had been propagandised in his pamphlet *The Execution of Justice*.<sup>29</sup> Published in December 1583, this text acted as an appeasement to the Catholics recently disappointed by the failed Anjou–Elizabeth match earlier that year. This failure, followed by Anjou's death, disappointed Elizabethan Catholics in their hopes of religious toleration, and drove malcontents towards the Catholic League, organised by the Guises with Spanish support in 1584.<sup>30</sup> In a timely move, Burghley's pamphlet aimed to pacify this uneasiness. He first condemned the pretensions of rebels. 'It hath been in all ages and in all countries a common usage of all offenders..., to make defense of their lewd and unlawful facts by untruths and by coloring and covering their deeds (were they never

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<sup>27</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 66, Stafford to Walsingham, 27 Oct. 1583. Burghley to Shrewsbury, 24 Dec. 1575, Edmund Lodge, ed., *Illustrations of British History* (London, 1838), II, 52-56. Mary to Guillaume de l'Aubépine, French ambassador (1585-9), 17 Jul. 1586, Read, *Walsingham*, II, 51. Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7. John Daniel Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity* (Sheffield, 1880), 287.

<sup>28</sup> The issue respecting Burghley's control over exiles' home interests is discussed in the final section of this chapter.

<sup>29</sup> Robert M. Kingdon ed., *The Execution of Justice in England by William Cecil and A True, Sincere, and Modest Defense of English Catholics by William Allen* (Ithaca, 1965), xvii-xviii.

<sup>30</sup> Gibbons, 'The Experience of Exile and English Catholics: Paris in the 1580s', 81.

so vile) with pretenses.’<sup>31</sup> Burghley made clear that there was no real persecution for religion in England, but only for treason and sedition. Only traitors, in the service of the Pope, who imperilled their country and Queen, would be treated with the penalties of expulsion, torture, or execution. Burghley promised a conditional toleration in religion: any man who resisted foreign invaders and eschewed civil rebels, should be allowed ‘in their own like cases for a truth and rule’.<sup>32</sup> His distinction between faith and treason earned him goodwill from certain moderate Catholics. Charles Neville, Earl of Westmorland, who was exiled for raising an insurgent force in the Northern Rising of 1569 and who had reached Paris in June 1580, aspired after ‘assurance of his lyfe...to keepe lyfe and soule together’. In 1586 he resumed pleading for Burghley’s help via Stafford.<sup>33</sup> The Jesuit historian Leo Hicks asserted that Burghley’s work aimed to divide Catholics, in order to prevent or delay any concerted movement from abroad.<sup>34</sup> Actually, it was Catholic domestic difficulty that had sowed the seed of their inner dissension.

Stafford declared he would treat these exiled suitors well in order to get intelligence serviceable to Queen Elizabeth: ‘for my parte I am of a mynd to use the Divell himselfe well yf he co[u]ld come to me in the lykenes of a man to serve the Queene with all’.<sup>35</sup> He defended himself thus: ‘I never knowe nor h[e]arde of any Ambassador

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 3. Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven & London, 2008), 248-51.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 21.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 154, Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586. TNA, SP 15/30 f. 190, Richard Hakluyt to Burghley, 11 Apr. 1588. BL, Harley MS 288 f. 187, Stafford to Walsingham, 25 Apr. 1588. Alford, *The Watchers*, 140.

<sup>34</sup> Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem*, 136-37.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 66, Stafford to Walsingham, 27 Oct. 1583.

thatt was blamed for seekinge intelligence anye waye thatt he coulde'.<sup>36</sup> Stafford promised to prevent them 'from doing any good of me', though as it turned out he reneged on this promise.<sup>37</sup> In early 1584 he developed a connection with Charles Arundel, his kinsman by marriage, who had fled to Paris late in the autumn of 1583 in consequence of the discovery of the Throckmorton Plot and was now receiving a pension from Spain. Arundel acquainted Stafford with Spanish intelligence and with the Guises and Mendoza.<sup>38</sup> Also through Arundel, Stafford sold the Guises and Mendoza English intelligence in order to pay for his costly gaming and embassy expenses.<sup>39</sup> By May 1586, the Duke of Guise had given the needy Stafford 3,000 crowns; in return Stafford sent him certain information through Arundel.<sup>40</sup> In June, Walsingham's spy Nicholas Berden, alias Thomas Rogers, accused Stafford of being bribed by the Duke of Guise to the sum of 6,000 crowns to show his diplomatic dispatches.<sup>41</sup> Mendoza suggested to the Spanish King that 'now was the time for your Majesty to make use of him [Stafford] if you wished any service done', because 'this ambassador is much pressed for money, ... his poverty is reason enough to expect from him any service, if he saw it was to be remunerated'. Mendoza advised sending 2,000 crowns to Stafford, who through Arundel had offered some intelligence about a fleet soon to be despatched from England against Portugal, as 'a sample and hanel of his

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<sup>36</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 85, Stafford to Burghley, 1 May 1584.

<sup>37</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 68, Stafford to Walsingham, 31 Oct. 1583. Bishop of Glasgow to Mary Stuart, 21 Mar. 1586, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 255-62. [Walsingham] to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583, *CSPF, 1583-1584*, 272; Stafford to Walsingham, Jan. 1588, *CSPF, 1586-1588*, 664.

<sup>38</sup> Philip II to Juan Bautista De Tassis, 8 Oct. 1584, Mendoza to Philip II, 11 May 1586, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 528-29, 575; 24 Jan. 1587, 28 Feb. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 7-8, 25.

<sup>39</sup> Read, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 294.

<sup>40</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 11 May 1586, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 575.

<sup>41</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 50, [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mylles, [Jun.] 1586.

goodwill'.<sup>42</sup> Then in February, Mendoza again verified that Stafford had 'offered himself entirely through me, in the assurance that your Majesty would not order him to do anything against the interest of his mistress the Queen'.<sup>43</sup> King Philip praised the use of 'the new correspondent' Stafford, and 'the third party' Arundel as being 'very appropriate'.<sup>44</sup>

Presumably Stafford sometimes sold national secrets to Catholics with Burghley's connivance, on the grounds that certain highly secret intelligence he passed on came from Burghley, whereas Walsingham had deliberately kept Stafford ignorant of the state of affairs in England.<sup>45</sup> But it would have been impossible to sell valueless intelligence to the Guises and Mendoza, who were not innocents squandering money on insignificant or outdated news, current gossip, or misinformation; only high-level intelligence could maintain their interest. Burghley was under great suspicion of offering this information. In early 1587, Stafford supplied Mendoza with the most important secrets regarding a proposed expedition by Francis Drake: the number of ships, their crews, their armaments and possible destinations, which were known at the court by 'no living soul but the Queen and the Treasurer'.<sup>46</sup> But either Elizabeth, or Burghley more probably, hoodwinked Spain by divulging false news via Stafford: the fleet's destination was not Lisbon or Cape St. Vincent, but Cadiz.<sup>47</sup> It is unclear whether Stafford knew or not.

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<sup>42</sup> Mendoza to King Philip, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1604*, 7-8.

<sup>43</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 28 Feb. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 25.

<sup>44</sup> King Philip to Mendoza, 28 Feb. 1587; Mendoza to King Philip, 26 Mar. 1587; Mendoza to King Philip, 25 Apr. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1604*, 25, 46, 74-75.

<sup>45</sup> Neale, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 217-18.

<sup>46</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 8, 27, 69, 72, 87.

<sup>47</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, VII-LXVIII.

Stafford's intelligence business with Mendoza fitted him to act as a go-between in Burghley's secret diplomacy with Spain in early 1587. When Mary was convicted of high treason for her collusion in the Babington Plot, Burghley, through Stafford and Arundel, guaranteed Mary's life to the Madrid court. He complained about 'his enemies' Leicester and Walsingham, of their action 'to set the Queen against him by saying that he was more devoted to the queen of Scotland than anyone'.<sup>48</sup> When Mary was executed in February 1587, Burghley, again via Stafford and Arundel, repeatedly exculpated himself, stating that Mary's death 'has been against his will'. This tragedy for both monarchy and Catholicism was contrived by 'a pair of knaves': Leicester and Walsingham. Burghley reproached them for taking advantage of his absence through illness, allying themselves with Lord Hunsdon and the Lord Admiral to force the Queen to execute Mary, otherwise they would veto 'any money to maintain the Dutch war or to fit out a naval force to help Don Antonio'.<sup>49</sup> In actual fact, Burghley was the helmsman in the whole process of Mary's execution. After Mary's trial at Fotheringay in October 1586 had delivered a verdict of guilty, which was then proclaimed in Parliament in November, early the next month Burghley started drafting her execution warrant.<sup>50</sup> Secretary William Davison confirmed that Burghley handed him the final version of the death warrant, 'to be engrossed and brought unto her [Queen Elizabeth] to signe'.<sup>51</sup> On 3 February 1587, Burghley called the Council to dispatch this signed

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<sup>48</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

<sup>49</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan., 28 Feb., 6 Mar., 26 Mar. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9, 25, 26-28, 47-48.

<sup>50</sup> 'A Warrant for a Direction against the Scottish Queen', 1 Dec. 1586; 'Warrant to Sir Amyas Paulett', 10 Dec. 1586, Murdin, ed. *A Collection of State Papers... 1571 to 1596*, 576-77, 574-75.

<sup>51</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 222r, 'Relation by Mr. William Davison', 20 Feb. 1586/7.

warrant for Mary's execution, without his Queen's knowledge.<sup>52</sup> Burghley's double dealings may have been aimed at gaining more buffer time for England to equip itself for the impending wars. But it was also a whitewash of his act of 'regicide', protecting the Cecils from the malice of the motherless James VI of Scotland, heir presumptive to the English throne.<sup>53</sup>

Suspicious of Stafford's undue intimacy with Catholics, from the beginning of his embassy Walsingham had warned him not to be remiss in performing his duty, which might be compromised by contact with Catholic émigrés through his wife Lady Sheffield.<sup>54</sup> Simultaneously, Walsingham proceeded with diplomacy via his man Henry Unton and Michel de Castelnau, seigneur de Mauvissière, the French ambassador in London, by whose means business was channelled directly to King Henri III. Faced with Stafford's protest against being kept in ignorance, Walsingham defended himself ironically: 'it is often seen if when Ambassadors were not made acquainted with matters, they seake by all the matters...to crosse them'.<sup>55</sup> Aware of Walsingham's antipathy towards him, to his 'only friend' Burghley Stafford hardly stopped complaining of Walsingham's interference in his embassy.<sup>56</sup> He attributed the rebuff of his espionage schemes for obtaining news of the Jesuits and Mary's adherents,

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<sup>52</sup> Burghley's role in Mary's execution will be discussed in Chapter VI.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter IV.

<sup>54</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 95, Walsingham to Stafford, 1 Dec. 1583.

<sup>55</sup> *CSPF, 1583-1584*, 476; *CSPF, 1584-1585*, 11-12; TNA, SP 78/12 f. 282A, Walsingham to Stafford, 26 Oct. 1584.

<sup>56</sup> BL, Cotton MS Galba E/VI f. 210, Stafford to Burghley, 6 Apr. 1584, cited in Neale, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 215; TNA, SP 78/11 f. 79, same to same, 16 Apr. 1584, but the extract cited from Walsingham's letter on 6 April 1584, at the bottom, seems lost in the archives; TNA, SP 78/11 f. 85, same to same, 1 May 1584.

which were often rejected by Elizabeth, to Walsingham's jealousy.<sup>57</sup>

More significantly, Walsingham set his sights on this untrustworthy ambassador.<sup>58</sup> In 1584, a new chaplain, Richard Hakluyt, had been ordered to monitor the embassy, and was also responsible for gathering information about America for the English colonists.<sup>59</sup> Thereupon, two of Stafford's senior servants, Michael Moody and William Lilly, were detained by Walsingham in 1584 and 1585, on the charges of conveying letters to and from Catholics, of selling intelligence to Thomas Morgan, an English exile serving Mary Stuart as her chief cipher clerk, and of reading *Leycester's Commonwealth*, a scandalous pamphlet published in September 1584.<sup>60</sup> In mid-1585, Mylles sent Nicholas Berden into France, where he investigated the matter concerning Ambassador Stafford, which 'being both dishonourable and very perilous is worthy to be noted and wisely to be foreseen'. The allegations in Berden's report of 1586 were severe: he accused Stafford of selling information to the Duke of Guise; of imparting secrets to Arundel; of offering the means for Catholic émigrés to forward letters and messengers to their partisans in England; and, most gravely, of being bribed by the Guises to show them diplomatic letters.<sup>61</sup> Stafford certainly knew these 'badd disposed people' were spying on him. He refuted Berden's accusations, calling him a 'very a knave and as very fal[s]e withall as many is in England or France'.<sup>62</sup> Walter Williams,

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<sup>57</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 61, Stafford to Walsingham, 21 Oct. 1583; TNA, SP 78/10 f. 107, Walsingham to Stafford, 16 Dec. 1583; Stafford to Burghley, 1 May 1584, *CSPF, 1583-1584*, 474-76; 9 Aug. 1585, *CSPF, 1584-1585*, 653-54.

<sup>58</sup> Neale, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 218-19.

<sup>59</sup> Alan Haynes, *Walsingham: Elizabethan Spymaster & Statesman* (Stroud, 2007), 41.

<sup>60</sup> Read, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 298; Leimon and Parker, 1143. TNA, SP 78/11 f. 76, Stafford to Burghley, 14 Apr. 1584.

<sup>61</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 50, [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mylles, [Jun.] 1586.

<sup>62</sup> TNA, SP 78/15 f. 107, Stafford to Walsingham, 24 Apr. 1586.

sent to the embassy in 1586, was derided as ‘a drunk knave’.<sup>63</sup> In late 1587, some copy letters of Gilbert Gifford’s, assigned by Phelippes to monitor the French embassy, fell into Stafford’s hands when Gifford was arrested in Paris. Stafford criticised these letters as ‘the most villainous against me and mine that could be’. To Burghley he condemned Gifford’s charges, complaining ‘both I and mine are in worse predicament than the confessed traitors that are on this side the sea’.<sup>64</sup>

It is worth noting that the reports of Walsingham’s spies can hardly be taken as proof of Stafford’s treachery, owing to their potential influence in the rivalry between the government system and the network of private clientele. Clients’ livelihoods were insecure and reliant on their spymasters’ patronage. Degrading the government system would enhance or ensure private employment. Sniffing out Walsingham’s hostility to this pro-Cecil embassy, naturally these opportunistic spies would bear false witness or exaggerate discord, in order to increase Walsingham’s reliance on them, his private clientele.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, blackening Stafford (or other officials) became a ‘custom’ for spies.<sup>66</sup> Espionage was not just a game played between Elizabeth’s Protestant regime and her traitorous Catholics, or even between Walsingham and Burghley in their antagonism over policy. Another competition for patronage was in progress, between official systems and private spies, who often stumbled across and over one another.

Stafford’s secret work for the Queen and Burghley ensured his place, despite the fact

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<sup>63</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 157, SP 78/18 f. 14, Stafford to Burghley, 6 Nov. 1586, 8 Jan. 1588.

<sup>64</sup> Stafford to Burghley, 8 Jan. 1588, *CSPF, 1586-1588*, 485.

<sup>65</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 50, [Thomas Rogers] to Francis Mylles, [Jun.?] 1586.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, SP 78/15 f. 107, Stafford to Walsingham, 24 Apr. 1586.



that his treachery had been widely speculated on. Walsingham never gave up hoping to monopolise the official intelligence resources by expelling Burghley's men. From January 1585 his adherent Paulet replaced the pro-Cecil Earl of Shrewsbury as Mary's final warder. This transfer announced Burghley's withdrawal from, and thereafter Walsingham's monopoly on, first-hand intelligence plotting around the captive Mary. It had been planned to replace Stafford with a friendly or neutral official like Edward Wotton. When the rumours about Stafford's treacherous sale of national intelligence spread back to the home government, Leicester and Walsingham seized the chance to attack him.<sup>67</sup> Surprisingly, Stafford would not be recalled until 1590. Read ascribed his survival to the insufficiency of evidence carried by Walsingham's spies.<sup>68</sup> It is also possibly because Walsingham feared that Stafford's recall might recoil against him; it had been the custom in Elizabeth's government that returning ambassadors would become prime candidates for significant domestic offices of state, especially for the Secretaryship. Smith and Walsingham had been ambassadors in France, Thomas Wilson in Brussels, and William Davison in the Low Countries. Besides, in early 1587, the Elizabethan political rivalry had eased—Burghley had assisted Walsingham in the matter of the late Philip Sidney's debts, and both the execution of Mary Stuart and military policy against Spain were almost confirmed. Stafford took advantage of the changed political climate. But, controversially, after his exceptionally long embassy of eight years, except for a seat in the Commons there was no office of significance assigned to him. Stafford's suspected treachery was not an obstacle to his political future; a few years later he nearly assumed the Secretaryship. At the end of August 1591, 'no secretary has yet been appointed, though the Queen had given it out, and the

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<sup>67</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

<sup>68</sup> Read, 'The Fame of Sir Edward Stafford', 312-13.

parties, Sir Edw. Stafford and Mr. Wotton, were ready to be sworn at Nonsuch'.<sup>69</sup> This proposed appointment came to nothing, because 'it pleased nobody', notably Burghley who had reserved this post for his son Robert.<sup>70</sup>

## 2. Walsingham's Espionage in Paris

The limited influence exerted by Secretary Walsingham over Ambassador Stafford forced the former to develop his own espionage in Paris instead of relying on the embassy intelligence service. By 1585 at the latest, Walsingham was either dispatching numerous spies over to France, like Nicholas Berden, Thomas Bernes, Walter Williams, Maliverey Catilyn, or recruiting the local exiles for his espionage, such as one Barnard, Gilbert Gifford, and Solomon Aldred. The value of these spies to Walsingham lay in their credibility within Catholic circles, either because of their Catholic origins and careers in exile, or because of their infiltration into Catholic networks.<sup>71</sup>

However, prisons offered Walsingham's spies the easiest access to Catholic circles. As early as 1572, the Privy Council noted its increased concern about the potential disorder of Catholics, who had been scattered in prisons and 'as well by their craftie intelligences with other prysoners as by their prectyses abroad corrupt others in stubbornes'.<sup>72</sup> In 1586, while visiting the priests imprisoned in Newgate, Maliverey Catilyn suggested that 'the prysones of England are very noursseryes of Papiste,

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<sup>69</sup> [Thomas Phelippes to Thomas Barnes], 31 Aug. 1591, *CSPD, 1591-1594*, 97.

<sup>70</sup> Florence M. Greir Evans, *The Principal Secretary of State: A Survey of the Office from 1558 to 1680* (London, 1923), 54.

<sup>71</sup> By 1582, Walsingham had recruited one Barnard, alias Robert Woodward or Robert Wood, as his mole, whose attendance on the exiled Nicholas Wendon in Paris offered him free access among that city's Catholic circle. Alford, *The Watchers*, 119-22.

<sup>72</sup> Patrick McGrath, *Papists and Puritans Under Elizabeth I* (London, 1967), 108.

banishe them for god sake, or lett them remayne close prysoners, that they may not dayly poyson others'.<sup>73</sup> A memorandum of 1586, prepared at Elizabeth's court for espionage in Spain, advised that the only way for spies to gain 'creditt and safetie there in Spaine' was to simulate being Catholic and to make visits to Catholics in jail, where pretended friendliness would 'fain some friends for his better access into foreign parts and Catholike countries'.<sup>74</sup> Some spies went further, cultivating intimacy with Catholic captives.

Walter Williams served Walsingham by monitoring the Earl of Oxford, and later from 1575 an exile Thomas Copley on the Continent.<sup>75</sup> Returning in 1582, this 'trusty servitour' was thereupon infiltrated into the jail at Rye, to extort intelligence from Catholic captives. But Catholic suspicion terminated his espionage in the prison in 1583. A mock letter, signed by Pasquinus Romanus to 'the most reverent Signor' at Paris, reported,

Having the opportunitie of this bearer, Mr. Walter Williams, gentleman, who of long time hath byn my fellow prisoner, onely taken vpon suspition, I cold not but, at his speciall request, write this much of his conversation since his abiding with me, which is that his devotion towards the good ale is very substantiall, for every morning he hath great conference with the Clerk of the Town touching the same. He is a great faster, but he

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<sup>73</sup> BL, Harley MS 286 f. 97, Maliverey Catilyn to unknown recipient, 29 Dec. 1586. John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 146.

<sup>74</sup> BL, Harley MS 295 f. 195, cited in Adrian Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (London, 1978), 130-31; Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (London, 1963), 72-73.

<sup>75</sup> Walter Williams to Walsingham, 9 Jul. 1575, *CSPF, 1575-1577*, 85-86; Sir T. Smith to Burghley, 21 Aug. 1575 *CSPD, 1547-1580*, 502; Burghley to Cobham and Walsingham, 18 Jul. 1578. *CSPF, 1578-1579*, 74-75. In certain officers' letters sent to Walsingham, Williams was called 'your man', or 'your servant'. Leicester to Walsingham, 7 Aug. 1578, *CSPF, 1578-1579*, 121-23. George Gilpin to Walsingham, 19 Nov. 1580, *CSPF, 1579-1580*, 484. Stokes to Walsingham, 29 Dec. 1581, *CSPF, 1581-1582*, 419. Spying on Oxford and Copley: Paulet to Walsingham, 10 Jul. 1577, *CSPF, 1577-1578*, 14-15. TNA, SP 12/155/31, The confession of a servant of Sir Thos. Copley's, a papist, being prisoner at Rye. 27 Aug. 1582.

praieth little.<sup>76</sup>

Walsingham intercepted this letter, consequently transferring Williams first to penetrate the French embassy in London, and then from 1586 to infiltrate Stafford's embassy in Paris.<sup>77</sup>

Maliverey Catilyn was a master in prison spying. He served Walsingham in espionage for godly glory and patriotism, promising 'such service as might witness what vnfagned dutie I owe to Gode religion, to her majestie's person, and to my Countreie preservation, for the better performance whereof I have hetherto nether resspectd danger of my Life nor expence of my pore living'.<sup>78</sup> Having ceased his intelligence work for a time, probably for military service in the Low Countries, in 1580 he prayed to resume Walsingham's service, 'his most desyred favor'.<sup>79</sup> In mid-1581 Catilyn posed as a Catholic, meeting some contacts somewhere near the Sussex coast. These 'bad men', and one unnamed 'who exceedeth all the rest', 'greatly pyttied my [Catilyn's] case', and allowed Catilyn to join them.<sup>80</sup> One of his new companions, in March 1581 had smuggled back from France into England a priest named John Adams, who had been arrested at Rye and sent to Walsingham to be examined. Catilyn's companion also had a brother 'on the other syde' named Gyles Whyte alias Richard Thomas, 'ffrom whom he receyveth lettres and books for his frends thre or foure tymes every yeare' and then conveyed to a merchant at Billingsgate called Cox. In

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<sup>76</sup> TNA, SP 12/158/51, Anonymous (under the signature of Pasquinus Romanus), to the most reverent Signor [?], 1 Feb. 1583.

<sup>77</sup> Walter Williams's spying on the French embassy in London will be presented in Chapter IV.

<sup>78</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 152, Catilyn to Walsyngham, 22 Apr. 1586.

<sup>79</sup> TNA, SP 12/146/15, Catilyn to Walsyngham, 1580.

<sup>80</sup> *CSPD, 1547-1580*, 693; BL, Harley MS 286 ff. 102, 266, 63.

midsummer he had kept some jewels belonging to the Jesuit Edmund Campion, who had entered England disguised as a Dublin jeweller, and had helped another priest to land secretly in England at Stokes Bay near Portsmouth, giving him ‘dyrections what course he should take’. Catilyn ended this report hastily and pardoned his scribbling, because his companions ‘heare with me...cry to me for speed because they would be this night at London and for the avoyding of susspicion I dare not be tedious’.<sup>81</sup>

To discover more, later in April 1586 Catilyn prepared to be a prison spy by associating with Catholic exiles. In Rouen, through Jacques Servile, Catilyn befriended Thomas Myttoy, an Englishman serving as a papal spy. Servile and Myttoy commended Catilyn as a ‘man fytt to be imployed in matters of high moment’, instigating his return to England, to ‘fetch the comendacions of Catholiques such as he woulde name’.<sup>82</sup> Back in England in mid-1586, Catilyn submitted a long list of the names and descriptions of Catholic recusants throughout England, on which Phelippes endorsed ‘Catclins observations touching corrupt subjects’.<sup>83</sup> In early summer, Walsingham embedded Catilyn as a prison spy at Portsmouth, where Catilyn noted his observations in ‘a payre of writing tables’ [table book] hidden in ‘the bombast [padding] of my doblett’.<sup>84</sup> In response to his wishes, Catilyn was then transferred to the Marshalsea, where he was assured by one Jackson, a fellow priest-inmate, that a Franco-imperial invasion and popular Catholic uprising would free them before the harvest was in. In order to transmit the intelligence he received out of prison, Catilyn struggled hard to get hold of paper and ink, and had to allay the suspicion of his keeper

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<sup>81</sup> TNA, SP 12/151/5, Catilyn to Walsyngham, 1581.

<sup>82</sup> TNA, SP15/29 f. 152, M. Cat. to [Sec. Walsyngham], 22 Apr. 1586.

<sup>83</sup> TNA, SP 12/190/62, ‘Information against priests and recusants’, May-Jun. 1586.

<sup>84</sup> TNA, SP12/190/51, Catilyn to Walsyngham, 25 Jun. 1586.

who ‘in truth useth me lyke a prisoner commytted for high treason, so that I was forced to charge hym in her majestie’s name to delyver this to your honour’.<sup>85</sup> On 9 August, Catilyn informed Walsingham that Babington was then in Derbyshire but shortly would be leaving.<sup>86</sup> When Walsingham had discovered all he could, in August Catilyn was transferred to survey the strength of Catholicism in the north. In an anonymous letter to Walsingham, possibly from Catilyn, John Taylour of Newcastle, John Gastell, and other gentlemen, were accused of being the handlers of correspondence between the ‘papists on this syde and beyond the Seas’.<sup>87</sup>

Likewise, Nicholas Berden also successfully familiarised himself with the Catholic community in Paris through imprisonment. In 1581 he had been in the service of the exile George Gilbert, a wealthy Suffolk gentleman who had converted to Catholicism while touring the Continent two years before, and was now exiled in Reims and Rome. Berden was recommended to Walsingham by Horatio Palavicino, a merchant who served Walsingham by collecting intelligence. In a letter full of nationalistic rhetoric, in January 1584 Berden wrote to Walsingham from Rome, to excuse his betrayal of the Catholicism that had nurtured him:

When soever my occasion shalbe offered wherin I may adventure some rare and desperate exploit such as may be for some of my countrie and my own credit, you shall always fynde me most resolute and ready to performe the same...The only I crave that though I professe myself a spye which is a profession...that I prosecute the same nott for gayne, butt for the safete of my nature country.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> BL, Harley MS 286 f. 266, Catilyn to Walsingham, no date.

<sup>86</sup> BL, Harley MS 286 f. 266, Catilyn to Walsingham; TNA, SP 12/192/20, ‘Secret advertisements sent to Walsingham’, 9 Aug. 1586.

<sup>87</sup> TNA, SP 12/200/44, [Catilyn?] to Walsingham, 26 Apr. 1587.

<sup>88</sup> TNA, SP 12/167 f. 5, Nicholas Berden to Phelippes, 1 Jan. 1584.

However, Berden also worked for money. He used his working intimacy and influence with Walsingham to extract bribes from the Catholics who were soliciting for mercy. On 11 June 1586, he begged Phelippes to procure him the liberty of Ralph Bickley, a seminary priest in the Gatehouse Prison, which would be worth £20 for Berden, and also the freedom of Richard Sherwood alias Carlton, a prisoner in the Counter in Wood Street, worth £30. ‘This monye will do me great pleasure being now in extreme nede thereof; neither do I know how to shyft any longer without yt’.<sup>89</sup>

From March to May 1585, Berden infiltrated the Catholic underground in London, and filed despatches every few days: he dined with Father William Weston, from whom he learned of certain refuges for English recusants, and that ‘the Papists do expect forty or fifty preists from Rome, and Rammys, to arryve here in England’.<sup>90</sup> He also learned of the means by which Catholic prisoners corresponded between the Clink, the Marshalsea, and the Martyn Tower;<sup>91</sup> and of the manner by which newly ordained priests and popish books were stowed away on French boats bound for Newcastle, where the royal officer Robert Higheclyf ‘is a papiste in harte & made acquaynted with there comynge’.<sup>92</sup> Berden in addition informed Walsingham of the conveyance of messages to Mary Stuart by Ralphe Elves, servant to Mr. Fenton of Norleaze,<sup>93</sup> and

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<sup>89</sup> TNA, SP 12/195/75, Berden to Phelippes, [11 Jun. 1586]; Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 184-85.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, SP 12/177/48, ‘Secret advertisements, by the relative to Richard, servant to Dr. Allen, addressed to Walsyngham’, Mar, 1588. John Morris, *The Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers related by themselves*, second series (London, 1872), 152-55.

<sup>91</sup> TNA, SP 12/178/11, ‘Secret advertisements addressed to Walsyngham’, 6 Apr. 1585.

<sup>92</sup> The Catholic pamphlets included *Leycester’s Commonwealth* (1584), John Leslie’s *Treatise touching the Right, Title, and Interest of the most Excellent Princess Marie, Queen of Scotland* (1584), and William Allen’s *True, Sincere and Modest Defence of Catholics* (1585). TNA, SP 12/178/19, ‘Secret advertisements addressed to Walsyngham’, 13 Apr. 1585.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, SP 12/178/52, ‘Information sent to Sir Fr. Walsyngham’, 11 May 1585.

the networks supporting seminary priests in England.<sup>94</sup> In July 1585 Walsingham arranged for Berden to be arrested together with a priest Edward Stransham (or Transome, alias Barber), and committed to jail. There Berden befriended Stransham, and secured an introduction to Thomas Fitzherbert, a Jesuit at the heart of the English exiles in France.<sup>95</sup>

Having obtained letters of reference, Berden was discharged from the prison and sent by Mylles to France. There he spied on Ambassador Stafford, and provided Walsingham with a valuable alternative means of intelligence. By early August he had arrived in Rouen, where, with Stransham's guarantees, he met Thomas Fitzherbert, who 'received me into his Companye moste willingly & hathe given me credytt with all the Papists here'.<sup>96</sup> Fitzherbert imparted to him the details of an impending Catholic invasion of England:

Charles Arundell with the Duke of Guyse shall conduct some part of an army vpon the west parts of England, the Erle of Westmorland, whoe is also at Parys, is promised to receive x thousand men & c thousand crownes of the D. of Guyse to invade the Northe parts vpon the Southe parts, that Thomas Throgmorton shall invade with Spanishe Forces. The duke of Guyse will invade England by way of Scotland, and other Spanish Forces to enter vpon Ireland. This is thought to be performed this winter.<sup>97</sup>

More significantly, he disclosed the worsening dissension within Catholic circles. In June 1585, the Catholic League gained an overwhelming success in the Treaty of

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<sup>94</sup> TNA, SP 12/178/39, 'Secret advertisements from A. B., sent to Walsyngham', 2 May 1585.

<sup>95</sup> 'The Information of Nicholas Berden, Spy, 1585, 1586', in John H. Pollen and William MacMahon, eds., *The Venerable Philip Howard Earl of Arundel 1557-1595*, Catholic Record Society 21 (1919), 77.

<sup>96</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/39, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug, 1585.

<sup>97</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/39 f.54r-v, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug, 1585.



Nemours, consequently dividing itself between pro-Jesuit extremists and anti-militants. They 'are devided in Factions, viz., the Bishoppe of Rosse, Charles Padgett, Thomas Morgan & Thomas Throgmorton & some few Prests; & on the other parte is doctor Allen, he playeth on both hands & Thomas Throgmorton is Rather with the Jesuyts & ther partie then agaynst them.'<sup>98</sup> The neutrality adopted by Berden ensured that he did not miss any intelligence from either faction.<sup>99</sup> By late August he had headed for Paris, staying there till the early months of 1586. He acted as a letter-carrier from Edward Grately, alias Bridges, to Henry Donne, who was privy to all the proceedings and correspondence concerning the Catholic invasion, so Berden sent Walsingham verbatim copies of these.<sup>100</sup>

Berden's intelligence regarding the Catholic rift was confirmed by another spy Solomon Aldred, who calculated that this could only benefit the Queen.<sup>101</sup> Walsingham had the chance to use his spies to enlarge the discord between these two main Catholic factions. Walsingham chose to infiltrate the anti-militant group, which was led by secular priests and exiles like Morgan and Paget, partly because some of his spies came from that side or had infiltrated it, and partly because this faction showed

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<sup>98</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/39 f. 54r, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug, 1585. John Leslie, the Bishop of Ross, served Mary Stuart as her envoy in Rome. His favour towards the Morgan-Paget faction was due to his disagreement with another of Mary's ambassadors, the Archbishop of Glasgow, on the grounds of Mary's dowry and personal life. There was also a suspicion that he had submitted to Elizabeth in order to regain his liberty. Allen's playing of both hands is an interesting issue. With a gentry background, in origin he belonged to the faction of secular priests and was a significant leader. But while the Jesuits speedily rose in the Catholic community, possibly in order to keep his leadership amongst the Catholics he started to ally himself on the side of this new power. This is why he simultaneously played 'on both hands'.

<sup>99</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/39, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug, 1585.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, SP 15/29 f. 59, Rogers to Walsingham, 25 Aug. 1585. TNA, SP 15/29/55, Rogers to Walsingham, 16 Dec. 1585.

<sup>101</sup> Henry Unton to Walsingham, 12/23 Apr.; 2/12 Jun., 1583, *CSPF, 1583*, 261-63, 382-83. Alford, *The Watchers*, 149. Read, *Walsingham*, II, 427-28.

more disposition to compromise. To this scheme, Solomon Aldred and Gilbert Gifford were well placed to act as lobbyists. Aldred was one of the heads of the Welsh grouping in the English College at Rheims. He was introduced to Walsingham by Henry Unton in 1583, and in November 1584 placed himself at Walsingham's service.<sup>102</sup> Gifford kept up his acquaintance with the Welsh group at Paris and at Rome, including some of its leaders like his cousin Dr. William Gifford.<sup>103</sup> Their apostasy enabled the Secretary to step up his intrigues amongst the Catholic exiles. Aldred acted initially as a carrier of division into the College at Rome.<sup>104</sup> In 1585, Aldred and Gifford (alias Francis Hartley) reached Paris, and there also started dismantling the Catholic community from the inside.

Firstly, from early 1586 Aldred lobbied Dr. William Gifford and Father Edward Grately, probably in order to obstruct the preparations for an invasion of England and the Babington Plot, both in active progress. William Gifford, then Professor of Theology at the English College in Reims, was one of the younger leaders of the 'Welsh' party—the anti-Spanish party in the College—in northern France; Grately was chaplain at the Earl of Arundel's house and now Gifford's companion in exile.<sup>105</sup> Discord with the Jesuits pushed William Gifford to set up a faction. There would be 'five or six scholars of the best' following his course against Robert Persons, a leading

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<sup>102</sup> BL, Harley MS 286 f. 56, Solomon Aldred to Walsingham, 15 Nov. 1584.

<sup>103</sup> Confession of Gilbert Gifford, 6 Dec. 1588, 'He had been persuaded by an English gentleman named Morgan to practise with the Huguenots of England and principally with Sir F. Walsyngham'. *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 563.

<sup>104</sup> *CRS*, II, 88-9, 185, 204.

<sup>105</sup> E. C. Butler, 'Dr. William Gifford in 1586', *The Month* 477 (1904), 243-58. J. H. Pollen, 'Dr. William Gifford in 1586: in Response to an Article by Dom Butler in the March Number', *The Month* 478 (1904), 348-66.

light of the Jesuits and ‘a wily ffox seyng the world is turned revers on his syd’.<sup>106</sup> Unpredictably, Ambassador Stafford intervened in this process of lobbying which should have been exclusively undertaken by Walsingham’s men, having ‘sweet speches’ with Gifford in Aldred’s lodging. Walsingham cannot have been informed of this in advance; Aldred was ‘persuaded you [Walsingham] will not mislike’ Stafford’s sudden attendance. Presumably Stafford’s involvement was required by Dr. Gifford—as an ambassador, Stafford was more trustworthy than a personal spy. The exiles’ preference for negotiating with Ambassador Stafford rather than with Walsingham’s spies was often evidenced, and at times frustrated Walsingham’s private espionage. In the negotiations with the Earl of Westmorland about his return to England, for example, the Earl begged Aldred to ‘get the Ambassador to talk with him’.<sup>107</sup> Stafford’s control of the embassy system helped Burghley to learn of, or interfere in, his colleague Walsingham’s espionage.

Compared with the irresolute Dr. Gifford, Grately was zealous from the beginning. Grately’s correspondence with Walsingham has been neglected by historians working in this field. In his two letters to Walsingham, under the alias John Foxley, Grately offered his loyalty, promising to be ‘so forward’ and ‘very affectionate to follow the course that you expected’.<sup>108</sup> He also praised Queen Elizabeth’s recent clemency towards her Catholic subjects. The freedom and toleration in faith the Queen granted would ‘enforce any disconted mindes to excessive joye’. Her ‘prudente relaxation’, moreover, would help subvert any treasonable intention which any strangers had to

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<sup>106</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/95, SP 15/29/102, Solomon Aldred to Walsingham, 27 Mar./6 Apr., 14/24 Apr. 1586.

<sup>107</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/102, Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586. TNA, SP 78/12 f. 94, Stafford to Walsingham, 15 Apr. 1586.

<sup>108</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/100, SP 15/29 f. 177, John Foxley to Walsingham, 20 Apr., 18 Jun. 1586.

disturb the peace of the state. He promised to endorse this English moderation and bloodless policy, and persuade both English and foreign Catholics to accept the authority of Elizabeth's Protestant regime. It is interesting that in both letters Grately took a positive view of Secretary Walsingham, modifying this well-known radical Protestant into a gentleman who was not extremely cruel, and who sought 'not the death or ruin of any subject'. Later, Grately worked with Gilbert Gifford to produce a book that attacked a pamphlet written by William Allen and Robert Persons to justify Henry Stanley's treachery against Queen Elizabeth in the Low Countries.<sup>109</sup> This book had Grately detained by the Inquisition at Padua in 1588, and later in 1590 transferred to the Inquisition at Rome for five years.

Aldred's group at Paris became 'so strong that many good Catholics feared them'.<sup>110</sup> A French Jesuit priest De la Rue, alias Samerie, who acted as chaplain for Mary Stuart disguised as her valet and her physician, in October 1585 informed Mary of this worsening dissension.

Many English with certain intelligence which they have at Rome and in England spread abroad the bruit that the Queen of England is for the present very benign and clement, and that she no longer prosecutes any one for the Catholic religion, and that they do not care to use arms against others, that they do not wish, and will not permit, the foreigner to enter England, and that—such is your fortune—they have fallen into so great suspicion of those who have treated your affairs that no one dares to trust them any longer, and they desire to have another way to signify everything to your majesty; and the English are in dissension and division.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/102, Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586.

<sup>110</sup> Hicks, 'An Elizabethan Propagandist: The Career of Solomon Aldred', *The Month*, 81 (May-June 1945), 189. TNA, SP 15/29 f. 65, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 30 Sept. 1585.

<sup>111</sup> 24 Oct. 1585, *CSP Scotland, 1585-86*, 145-49.

He alerted the Catholics that Elizabeth's government had skilfully used the propaganda of religious toleration and patriotism against foreign invasion, to deepen the division within Catholicism. Likewise, the Pope suspected that English Protestants had prompted certain cardinals to acts which would lead to Mary's ruin. Two pro-Jesuit partisans, Allayn and Eusebius, hence headed for Rome to investigate the truth. Morgan, then imprisoned in the Bastille, complained that England—or 'that ungracious State', as he called it—had 'lately entred into a pra[c]tise to move some division and difference in opinion in some poyntes between the Catholike priestes themselves'. It was appealing for some priests banished overseas to resume consultations with the Secretary. Their conversion, Morgan supposed, aimed to 'proffitt theyr country and not to serve Secretary Walsingham'.<sup>112</sup> More interestingly, he revealed that the apostasies of Dr. Gifford and Grately were pretended, and that 'if the purpose goes forwardes' they would then turn from the Secretary and serve Mary. This letter fell into Walsingham's hands, leading thereby to an unhappy break in this plan.<sup>113</sup>

When discussing Walsingham's scheme for disrupting Elizabethan Catholicism, a suggestion by Conyers Read is worth considering. He asserted that the Secretary did not merely attempt to increase the breach between 'the Jesuits' and 'the Seculars'. He aimed further to create a split within the latter, by dividing the secular priests from the laity. Walsingham may have believed that, in contrast with the priests whose grievances against the government were purely religious, the lay group was more dangerous since they used a cloak of religion to conceal their political plots. In other

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<sup>112</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/51, Thomas Morgan to Mary, 24 Apr. 1586.

<sup>113</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/63, Walsingham to Thomas Phelippes, 28 Aug. 1586, 'I returne you Morgan's letter, by the which yt appea[r] what trust is to be gyven to papists. Yt shall now suffice to assure G.G. [Gilbert Gifford] that bothe he and I have ben greatly abused, and that there shall be that consyderatyon had of his travayl as shall be to his contentement'.

words, the anti-Jesuit secular priests, with purely religious motives, would be easier to draw towards the English side.<sup>114</sup>

Read's suggestion is questionable. First, the statute in 1585 specifically denounced Catholic priests as 'traitors' and 'the seed-men of sedition and rebellion', acknowledging priests as more politically dangerous than lay Catholics.<sup>115</sup> Second, certain intelligence reports to Walsingham and correspondence between English exiles show that more and more lay people in exile, especially high-born gentry, were suspected of being, or actually turned out to be, English informants. They may have included the anti-Jesuits Thomas Morgan, Charles Paget, Charles Neville, Solomon Aldred and Gilbert Gifford. Among the pro-Jesuits was Charles Arundel; other individuals included George Norton and Ralph Liggons. The dual strategy of the English—enforcing punishment and showing mercy—was not the only reason for them to betray Catholicism. Disapproval of the Jesuits' extremism, a desire to secure a better Catholic future, and concern for their own interests in England, were prime inducements for their conditional conformity. It is to this theme that we now turn.

### 3. Faith or Survival?

In the final two decades of the sixteenth century, unusually high numbers of Catholic exiles were either under suspicion of serving Protestant England as spies, or accused of doing so by their co-religious opponents. Roger Yardley, alias Bruerton, a servant of George Gilbert's, was sent by the Catholic authorities to Castel Sant Angelo in Rome on suspicion of being a spy; ultimately he proved his loyalty through long

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<sup>114</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, II, 431.

<sup>115</sup> 23 Eliz. I. c.1 and 27 Eliz. I. c.2, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV. 657-58, 706-708.

imprisonment in England.<sup>116</sup> Charles Paget and Charles Arundel accused each other of being a spy ‘on all sides’. Thomas Morgan was ‘of all the Papists here’ generally accounted a spy.<sup>117</sup> In 1590, the anti-Jesuit Morgan was arrested and detained by the Duke of Parma in the Low Countries. At his trial in Flanders, three witnesses, Charles Browne, Colonel William Stanley and Hugh Owen, all of whom were on the side of the Jesuits and Spain, together testified against him. He was denounced as a ‘vile spy’ for Queen Elizabeth, intent on discovering plans against her and cultivating division amongst the English Catholics.<sup>118</sup>

This indictment has driven the historiography about Morgan in opposite directions. The Jesuit historians John Hungerford Pollen and Leo Hicks levelled the severest criticisms, condemning both Morgan and Paget as ringleaders under English direction who encouraged Catholic dissension and lead Mary to the scaffold.<sup>119</sup> Morgan was denounced as an agent provocateur who recommended Mary to trust in Walsingham’s men like Gilbert Gifford and Robert Poley, and Leicester’s men like Christopher Blunt and William Greene.<sup>120</sup> He encouraged Mary to communicate with Babington, describing the latter as trustworthy and encouraging Mary to ‘write three or foure Lines of your owne hande to the sayd Babington declaring your good conceipt of him and the confidence you repose in him...in so doing your Majesty shall much increase

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<sup>116</sup> Pollen and MacMahon, eds., ‘The Information of Nicholas Berden, Spy, 1585, 1586’, 67.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 80. TNA, SP 15/29/39 f. 54, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug. 1585; TNA, SP 15/29/45, same to same, 30 Sept. 1585. TNA, SP 53/16/51, the extracts of letters from Paris, 8 Oct. 1585.

<sup>118</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 565-69.

<sup>119</sup> John Hungerford Pollen, ed., *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot* (Scottish History Society, 1922), xxxiii-v. Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem*.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas Morgan to Mary, 5 Oct., 10 Jul. 1585; 21 Mar. 1586, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 10-11, 120-21, 262-78.

Babington's good affection towards you'.<sup>121</sup> Morgan's suggestion alerted Walsingham to a loophole in Mary's correspondence, allowing him to intercept Mary's letters to Babington, especially the one written on 17 July 1586. It became the key evidence for her charge of high treason.<sup>122</sup> Recently, another Jesuit Francis Edwards, and John Bossy who has researched in the archives of the Elizabethan French embassy in London, have rejected such criticisms of Morgan. They commended him as a 'perfectly serious political figure' who devoted himself to looking after Mary's correspondence abroad.<sup>123</sup> For many today, this English exile remains an enigma, with questions over his dubious Catholic faith, his secret contact with the English envoys in Paris, and his relationship with Burghley.<sup>124</sup> Morgan's fidelity to Catholicism and Mary Queen of Scots is undoubted. But, occasionally, prompted by fear for his survival, and driven also by the partisan strife within the exiled Catholic community, the evidence implies that he served Elizabeth's Protestant regime as a temporary double agent. Like many exiles such as Thomas Copley, Morgan limited his conditional conformity to intelligence business, and was not complicit in Mary's death. Such men never doubted that Mary's accession to the throne of England was the only hope of restoring both their reputations at home and English Catholicism.

The English authorities had planned to employ this exiled group as intelligence moles.

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<sup>121</sup> CP 164/56, Thomas Morgan to Mary, 9 May 1586.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/51, Queen of Scots to Anthony Babington, 17 Jul. 1586.

<sup>123</sup> Francis Edwards, *Plots and Plotters in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Dublin, 2002), 137. John Bossy, *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (New Haven & London, 2002), 141-42.

<sup>124</sup> William Wade to Walsingham, 1 Apr. 1585, *CSPF, 1584-1585*, 391. Amias Paulet to Walsingham, 26 Oct. 1579, *CSPF, 1579-1580*, 78. Morgan was recommended by Cecil to join the staff of the Earl of Shrewsbury, Mary's jailer at Tutbury. Cecil to Shrewsbury, 15 May. 1569, Lodge, *Illustrations of British History*, I, 473. Francis Edwards suggests that Morgan's being Shrewsbury's secretary was recommended by the Earls of Northumberland and Pembroke. Cecil only endorsed it. Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 79. Mendoza to Zayas, 26 Jul. 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 682-83.



In 1578, Ambassador Paulet had suggested Walsingham should handle Morgan carefully, as he would be helpful to discovering many things ‘which are now secret’.<sup>125</sup> When Morgan was detained in the Bastille in 1585, Queen Elizabeth promised, that if this traitor ‘carries himself dutifully in discovering what he knows, she would “for his sake, if he desire it,” extend extraordinary grace to him’.<sup>126</sup> The pro-Spanish Charles Arundel was inducted into Burghley’s espionage through Stafford. Other refugees, like William Gifford, spontaneously reconciled themselves with the Elizabethan regime because of theological differences with the Jesuits. Still others, such as the laymen Charles Neville and Ralph Liggons, and the priests Anthony Tyrrell and Richard Baynes, did so for self-survival. They begged to be pardoned, to receive their liberty, family estates, and licences to return home.

Under torture or on the gallows, liberty and life might become dearer than faith.<sup>127</sup> It was the custom in the English Council that ‘no prisoner for high treason escapes with his life, unless he be absolved and swears to do some signal service’.<sup>128</sup> Restraint and release was a prerogative of Elizabeth’s councillors, which enabled them to arrange their spies in and out of jail, and to surrender prisoners for intelligence work. On the day of Edmund Campion’s execution on 1 December 1581, a Catholic priest John Hart, convicted of treason for his preaching on the subject of martyrdom, pleaded with

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<sup>125</sup> TNA, SP 78/2 f. 5, Amias Paulet to Walsingham, 24 Jan. 1578. Same to same, 26 Oct., 1579, ‘Morgan tells me that M. Wilson opened a packet of letters sent by her of Scotland, wherein were letters for the Emperor, the Empress, Archduke Ernest, the King of France, the Queen regnant, the Bishop of Ross, and that after being seen they were returned. He tells me that they dealt only with certain abbeys and benefices affecting the Scots and the Bishop of Ross; and that if they had been on business of consequence they would have gone by that hand; albeit I doubt the Queen his mistress and her council have another object’. *CSPF*, 1579-1580, 78.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, SP 78/13 f. 28, Walsingham to Stafford, 12 Feb. 1585.

<sup>127</sup> Patrick McGrath and Joy Rowe, ‘The Imprisonment of Catholics for Religion under Elizabeth I’, *Recusant History* 20 (1991), 415-35.

<sup>128</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 567.

Walsingham for ‘such undoubted hope of my life if my conformity shall be agreeable thereunto’. In exchange for remission, he confessed ‘some great matter’ intended against England, and promised to spy on William Allen to learn ‘the very secret of his whole heart’. His hopes came to naught. This was probably because Walsingham, who in 1571 had mistakenly discharged Ridolfi, setting him at liberty to plot against the realm again, refused to commit the same error twice. Hart remained in the Tower, but cheated the executioner in May 1582, possibly by reiterating his offer of conformity. He was expelled from England in 1585 and died a year later in Poland.<sup>129</sup>

Thomas Morgan’s complicity in the Parry Plot of 1585 infuriated Queen Elizabeth, who requested King Henri of France to extradite Morgan and Charles Paget, both ‘disturbers of the common quiet of the realm’. But her requests were rejected; instead Morgan was cast into the Bastille under the joint protection of King Henri and the Guises.<sup>130</sup> Impatient at the endless captivity, in 1586 Morgan, through Giordano Bruno, a pensioner in the French embassy in London, conveyed his yearning for release to Ambassador Stafford. Morgan promised

to reveal many things if the queen is prepared to get him out of prison. I think it is likely that he will keep his promise. First, to get out of the Bastille. Also because he regards himself as having been abandoned by those who employed him in this matter [i.e. the conspiracy: meaning Beaton and Guise] who do nothing to procure his release. Further, long imprisonment has got the better of his popish enthusiasm.

His cooperation was suggested by his fellow inmate, the French Protestant noble

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<sup>129</sup> Alford, *The Watchers*, 87-88, 117-18.

<sup>130</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 89, Walsingham to Stafford, 3 May 1584. Derby and Stafford to Walsingham, 6 Mar., 1585. *CSPF, 1584-1585*, 326-29. TNA, SP 12/178/72, ‘Secret advertisements sent to Sir F. Walsyngham’, 26 May 1585.

Comte de la Magnane (René de Montbourcher).<sup>131</sup> It was presumably Stafford, who personally knew the Comte, who arranged for the latter to ‘sometimes haunt him [Morgan] in the Bastille’. It was a good opportunity, Stafford suggested to Burghley, to draw in a leader of the anti-Jesuits by playing on his ‘hope of fair promises and hope of liberty’.<sup>132</sup>

Anthony Tyrrell, another Roman Catholic priest, also preferred life to faith. During his third detention in 1586, he witnessed the execution of his friend John Ballard for participating in the Babington Plot, which served as a turning point. He approached Burghley, who had warranted his first release in 1576. In exchange for pardon, Tyrrell committed himself to ‘dyscover a number of treasonable practyses’ and to apostatize, renouncing his allegiance to the Pope.<sup>133</sup> Again with Burghley’s help, and offering his personal recantation of Catholicism, Tyrrell was set up as a prison spy in another jail, the Clink. There he served the government’s propaganda efforts against Roman Catholicism, and monitored his past companions and gathered intelligence. In terms of Tyrrell’s government service, two points are noteworthy. First, while according to the surviving sources, it was Burghley who pardoned Tyrrell, Michael Questier has located him on Walsingham’s side (although there are few records of relations between them). Second, Questier ascribes Tyrrell’s (and others’) repeated alternation between recusancy and apostasy partly to the fear of losing his life, but more to the offers of mercy from Elizabeth’s government, which proved irresistible.<sup>134</sup> However, for Tyrrell

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<sup>131</sup> John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven, 1991), 246, cited from BL, Cotton MS Nero B/VI f. 389v, Giordano Bruno to Sir Edward Stafford, late Oct. or early Nov., 1586.

<sup>132</sup> TNA, SP 78/16 f. 148, Stafford to Burghley, 6 Nov. 1586.

<sup>133</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 50 ff. 159, 161, 163; BL, Lansdowne MS 51 f. 154.

<sup>134</sup> Tyrrell was imprisoned for his recusancy in 1574, 1581, 1586 and 1588. He altered his religion in 1586, 1587 (twice), 1588 (twice) and 1605. Questier, ‘English Clerical Converts to Protestantism’, 455-77; *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625* (Cambridge, 1996), 44-45, 56, 72-73.

and many of his fellows, conversion to the cause of Elizabeth's regime was motivated not only by time-serving and materialism, but also a shared idea of semi-conformity which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The desire to obtain an official licence to return home was another reason for homesick exiles to surrender themselves to the English authorities. Travel licences had to be signed 'by the Greate Seale of Englaund, Privie Seale or Privie Signet'.<sup>135</sup> As the Secretary from 1573 to 1590, and the Lord Keeper of the Privy Seal from 1576, Walsingham assumed the latter two offices. This authority to grant licences provided Walsingham with a ready means to deliver spies abroad. It also facilitated his spies in their lobbying of émigrés. Solomon Aldred in 1586 tried to persuade a Roger, servant of the Earl of Westmorland, to return home. Aldred even assured Roger that it would be possible to procure the means to absolve him of escaping from the Clink.<sup>136</sup> While being persuaded to defect in early 1586, Dr. William Gifford was provided with 'an ample pasporte to pass into England' by Walsingham.<sup>137</sup> Despite relinquishing the Secretaryship in 1572, Burghley could issue licences indirectly through the office of the Great Seal, which was held by his brother-in-law Nicholas Bacon (1558–1579), and then a gentleman under his patronage, Thomas Bromley (1579–1587). For permission to return home, some gentlemen or even priests, like Ralph Liggons and John Gore, were willing to serve these English ministers.<sup>138</sup> Liggons had been employed in Paris encrypting communications between Mary Stuart and the Duke of

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<sup>135</sup> 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV. 531-34.

<sup>136</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/102, Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586.

<sup>137</sup> William Gifford to Walsingham, 18 Apr. 1586, in Thomas F. Knox ed., *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen* (London, 1882), 262.

<sup>138</sup> Questier, 'English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596', 459.

Parma in the Low Countries.<sup>139</sup> By 1588, he contacted John Conway, an official agent and probably Burghley's informant, declaring his wish to go home and return 'himself under her Majesty's most obedience and to become her reformed good subject'.<sup>140</sup> Because of his many years' acquaintance with the Catholic network in England, this refugee hoped to provide intelligence in exchange for a licence to return.

In lobbying gentry exiles, Burghley apparently had greater success than Walsingham, probably as a result of his man Stafford's control over the official embassy channels in Paris, and because of Burghley's own exclusive influence over exiles' family estates. *An Acte agaynst Fugytyves over the Sea* of 1571 decreed that those going overseas without special licence, and who did not return within six months, should forfeit 'all theyre Manors Lands Tenementes and Hereditamentes'.<sup>141</sup> This severe economic punishment extended also to the families of those denounced as 'dysobedyent trayerous and rebellious Fugytives'. The Lord Chancellor Thomas Bromley presided over allocating and recovering exiles' properties. To their desolate wives and children, he had only to provide between one-third and one-quarter of their estates. If a refugee returned to England, agreed to 'yeeld himself to any one of the Queenes Majesty Privy Counsell, acknowledging his Faulte', and submitted himself to the Queen, after one year he would be permitted to restore 'all his Landes and the Profittes'.<sup>142</sup> Under the terms of *An Acte for the explanacon of a Statute made againste Fugitives over the Seas* of 1572, the property of exiles was forfeit, and under the oversight of the Exchequer

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<sup>139</sup> Mendoza to the King, 4 May 1581, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 109.

<sup>140</sup> TNA, SP 84/26 f. 298, Sir John Conway to Burghley, 14 Sept. 1588.

<sup>141</sup> 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 531-34.

<sup>142</sup> 13 Eliz. c. 3, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 531-34. After 1587 this post was filled by Christopher Hatton, who sided with Leicester.

became part of the possessions of the Duchy of Lancaster.<sup>143</sup> In other words, confiscated lands would merge with royal property, under the supervision of Lord Treasurer Burghley. The guardianship, education, marriage, or even public service of the children of exiles was completely dominated (or transacted) by Burghley as the Master of the Court of Wards. In short, control of exiles' families in England fell almost wholly into the hands of William Cecil.

Some exiles, fervently hoping to recover their property, chose adherence to Burghley. In May or June 1573, Thomas Copley repeatedly begged Burghley to retain his stable revenues from his confiscated property.<sup>144</sup> Copley hoped to recover some of this money to fund his life overseas. He repaid the Treasurer with some low-level intelligence. The exiled Paget brothers were also eager to restore their family possessions. But the stewardship of the Paget estates in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, belonging to Thomas Lord Paget, had been assigned to Amias Paulet in 1585. During the time when Paulet was requesting this perquisite—continuously from May until the summer of 1585—Paulet, whose patrons were Leicester and Walsingham, offered Burghley copies of almost every dispatch between him, Walsingham, and Leicester. This was at the very sensitive period when he was keeping guard over Mary Stuart in Tutbury, and Walsingham's secret plan against the Babington Plot was almost ready. Paulet acquainted Burghley with some details about Walsingham's impending counter-plot, from which Burghley was isolated.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> 14 Eliz. c. 6, *Statutes of the Realm*, IV, 598-99.

<sup>144</sup> Lord Howard of Effingham took possession of his house at Gatton. Richard Copley Christie, ed., *Letters Sir Thomas Copley of Gatton, Surrey, and Roughey, Sussex, Knight and Baron in France to Queen Elizabeth and Her Ministers* (New York, 1970), xxvi-xxvii. Copley to Burghley, 23 May, 18 June 1573, 18-22. From 1582 the letters Copley sent to Walsingham, who at that time was the only Secretary, significantly increased.

<sup>145</sup> Read, *Lord Burghley*, 342. Charles Paget to Mary Stuart, 14 Feb. 1584. *CSP Scotland, 1584-1585*, 28-32. Paulet to Burghley, 28 May, 8, 10, 16, 22, Jun., Jul., 8, 18 Aug. 1585, 10 Jan. 1586, John Morris,

The English authorities also gave recusants rewards as inducements to surrender. John Nichols and Christopher Perkins converted to the established church in return for benefices granted by the Privy Council; Lawrence Caddy for an allowance to return to Oxford and an annual pension of sixty crowns.<sup>146</sup> Through these dual strategies of coercion and mercy, some recusants in overseas exile and in English prisons were conquered by Elizabeth's ministers, to the point where they joined in espionage.

#### 4. Occasional Conformity

It would be a misconception, however, to ascribe the increasing Catholic apostasy in the 1580s only to the English manipulation of material considerations. An internal factor is also worth considering: the divisions within Roman Catholicism itself. For reasons of both survival and faith, certain Catholic moderates or 'deviationists' from the Allen–Persons line tried to adopt a new position: occasional conformity to Elizabeth's Protestant regime. This stance reflected their patriotic resistance to the armed invasion led by the Jesuits and Spain, and the significant increase of Catholic apostasy. In the following discussion, this new Catholic moderate attitude will be analysed through the example of the pro-Jesuit enterprise.

Patriotism encouraged certain Catholic exiles to work for their Protestant-ruled state. The invasions attempted under Philip II's leadership never won full agreement amongst English exiles. The military strategy was particularly boycotted by anti-Jesuit

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ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet* (London, 1874), 32-33, 35-36, 44, 47-48, 66-67, 75, 83, 129-30. The suspicion of Poulet's double dealings will be discussed in Chapter IV.

<sup>146</sup> Questier, 'English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596', 455-77. Baynes, who was ordained in 1581, became a spy for the English government in the Reims seminary. In 1582 he was arrested and imprisoned.

émigrés, including secular priests like Owen Lewis and William Gifford, and the laymen Charles Neville, Morgan, and the Pagets. Neville, Earl of Westmorland, was the one whose patriotism at the last moment before the wars overrode his faith. In the spring of 1586, he approached Walsingham through Solomon Aldred, acknowledging his great fault committed in his young days. He pledged that if the Queen promised him grace and a pension, ‘whatever service she commanded him to do, he would do it so effectually, against the Spaniard or anyone else, that she should find herself satisfied for the past injury’.<sup>147</sup> Simultaneously, the Earl demanded another formal meeting with Ambassador Stafford, probably due to his greater trust of an official representative and his preference for the moderate Burghley. On the eve of the Spanish Armada, the Earl, through Richard Hakluyt, again begged Burghley to move the Queen ‘to become his gracious maistresse’ once again. Burghley was beseeched to ‘have hym in remembrance and to vouchsafe by one or other means to let hym [be] heard’.<sup>148</sup> As repayment he offered some intelligence touching ‘the archtraitor’ Morgan in Paris, and the Duke of Parma in the Low Countries. Later, through Stafford, Neville continued to plead for royal mercy, and sent some intelligence ‘touching the intended Spanish invasion’. He declared ‘his stomak is against a stranger’s settinge foote in his countrie’.<sup>149</sup>

The enmity of the anti-militant group of Catholic exiles against Spanish hegemony is clear. In the examination of 1590, Morgan ‘frankly confesses that he would be sorry to see his country subjugated by foreigners, and especially Spaniards’.<sup>150</sup> By 1597, Ralph

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<sup>147</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/102, Aldred to Walsingham, 14/24 Apr. 1586.

<sup>148</sup> TNA, SP 15/30/96, Richard Hakluyt to Burghley, 11 Apr. 1588.

<sup>149</sup> BL, Harley MS 288 f. 187, Stafford to Walsingham, 25 Apr. 1588.

<sup>150</sup> *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 565-69.



Liggons had been identified by both Spanish and English agents as one of the most dangerous of the anti-Spanish group. King Philip III of Spain was advised to banish Liggons to Sicily, together with Charles Paget and William Tresham, far away from the Catholic power centres.<sup>151</sup> There are two main reasons for this exiled group of English gentry to have so strongly opposed the invasion scheme: the interdependence between their hereditary estates and the English regime, and their disagreements with the Jesuits over the Catholic restoration.

Peter Holmes has researched the theological and moral arguments behind the Catholic tendency towards anti-recusancy in the 1580s.<sup>152</sup> While the official pressure on Catholic conformity became intense, notably after 1581, a call for anti-recusancy (occasional conformity) began to rise amongst the Catholics. In England, the validity of attendance at Protestant churches was one of the main issues debated. Alban Langdale and Thomas Bell, on theoretical and casuistical grounds, defended ‘church papistry’ as lawful in specific circumstances. Church attendance was only to ‘give a sign of allegiance and due loyalty to my prince’. ‘Church papists’, Alexandra Walsham observes, could maintain a good conscience and faith in God when performing this civil obligation.<sup>153</sup> They didn’t give internal assent; their outward compliance was performed only as a formality to avoid ‘just fear’ of official punishments. Human law, Langdale stated, could not oblige a man to put his life in danger, unless this secular obedience imperilled the Catholic faith and their common interests.

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<sup>151</sup> Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*, 122.

<sup>152</sup> Peter Holmes, *Resistance and Compromise: The Political Thought of the Elizabethan Catholics* (Cambridge, 1982), 90-125.

<sup>153</sup> Alexandra Walsham, *Church Papists: Catholicism, Conformity and Confessional Polemic in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 1999).

This issue of occasional conformity spread to the Continent where printed propaganda acquainted exiles with this new moderate way. Exiles fell into the same dilemma between survival and faith—whether to submit to their temporal sovereign Elizabeth in order to protect their home interests and family future. For both their own survival and the survival of their religion, certain exiles redefined the division between divine faith and temporal allegiance. As early as 1574, Anthony Tyrrell had asserted that ‘it is lawful for Christian Catholic men to fly and save themselves in the time of persecution, not so much for their own private safety as to do good in time to come unto others’.<sup>154</sup> During his third captivity in 1586, this Catholic priest agreed to set ‘my religion and Order’ apart, and asserted that he would be glad to perform the natural duty ‘I doe owe unto Her Majesty both before God’.<sup>155</sup> Almost at the same time, to Walsingham, William Gifford declared that upon ‘assurance of freedom in religion and conscience’ he would like to ‘live in oure naturall soyle under the protection of hir Majesty’. He advocated reconciliation between the Catholic gentry and Elizabeth’s regime, in order to obstruct ‘the subversion of hir Majesties estate and the utter ruininge of all oure families without any regarde of religion’.<sup>156</sup> In short, this group hoped to achieve a win–win deal, keeping both body and soul intact. Unfortunately, the Roman leaders and the Jesuits, who from the 1580s had dominated in internal conflicts, overruled their appeal for semi-recusancy. Robert Persons insisted that the Church might tolerate, but would not necessarily approve of them.

Why did Persons reject this idea of occasional conformity? The Jesuits’ resistance can

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<sup>154</sup> Questier, ‘English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596’, 465.

<sup>155</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 50 f. 159, Anthony Tyrrell to Burghley, 1586.

<sup>156</sup> William Gifford to Walsingham, 18 Apr. 1586, in Knox, *The Letters of Allen*, 262-63.

be explained by the worsening ‘domestical difficulties’ within Catholicism.<sup>157</sup> The rivalry between different factions was a result of divisive ideologies towards Catholic restoration in England, which arose from different backgrounds between the secular exiles and the priests. This discord stimulated an increase in secular apostasy, benefiting Elizabeth’s regime and espionage, and hampering the Jesuit-led conspiracies. John Bossy defined this divisive Catholic exile community as a missionary group, formed on separatist principles.<sup>158</sup>

The first disagreement within the group was around the expectation of divine providence. The secular priests believed that the Catholic restoration would come to England in God’s good time. What Catholics had to do, while awaiting the outcome of providence, was to perfect themselves in both spirit and intellect, in monasteries or in colleges. Through the practice of semi-conformity, like ‘church papistry’ at home and civil obligations abroad (like offering information), these moderates expected to win a little room for the Catholic restoration, and more time for God’s providence.<sup>159</sup> It was unnecessary to make an immediate change by force. This moderate concept was welcomed by certain lay exiles mired in the dilemma between loyalty and faith. They preferred to wait patiently for the natural death of Queen Elizabeth, who was known to be in ill health and had no heir, and then to welcome the accession of the Catholic Queen Mary and a Catholic return to England.

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<sup>157</sup> ‘If we caste back our eyes unto the former tymes in England, we shall find that for above five hundred yeares, even from the Conquest and entrance of the Normans & Frenche Governours over our Countrey, there hath ever continued a certaine faction and emulation of the Laitye (especially those that were great men) against the Clergie, which did make the path by little and little unto that open schisme, heresy, and Apostacie, whereunto at length it fell.’ Robert Persons, ‘Storie of Domesticall Difficulties’, *CRS*, II, 50-51.

<sup>158</sup> Bossy, *The English Catholic Community 1570-1580*, 11-48.

<sup>159</sup> Michael C. Questier, ‘Conformity, Catholicism and the Law’, in Peter Lake and Michael Questier, eds., *Conformity and Orthodoxy in the English Church, c. 1560-1660* (Woodbridge, 2000), 237-61.

These moderate views were opposed by members of the younger pro-Jesuit generation, like Gregory Martin, Edmund Campion, William Reynolds, and Robert Persons. Few of them were of the gentry class, or came from areas of the country where 'seigneurial Catholicism' remained strong. 'They were clerks first and last'.<sup>160</sup> According to their beliefs, the time of restoration should be achieved by working, not by waiting; by bloody recusancy or military action, not by passive compromise. The holy mission from 1580 was oriented toward a renaissance of the Roman Church. Naturally, they rejected the hoped-for semi-conformity of the moderates.

A different expectation of public service was a further reason for this division. From 1580, under the leadership of the Jesuits, the new public role of the clergy was established. Ecclesiastics were encouraged to extricate themselves from nostalgia for the medieval church, urged to step out of monasteries into colleges and improve their clerical professionalism in public service. This active interference in secular politics was unwelcome among the gentry, the traditional ruling class in England.<sup>161</sup> There was a significant shift in power in early modern Europe, which the Jesuits may have ignored or refused to confront. In sixteenth-century European society, a less reversible change was proceeding: a transfer of ruling power from the ecclesiastical towards the lay aristocracy. And in English households, a priest often worked under the household patronage of a Catholic nobleman, as his domestic chaplain. In other words, the English aristocracy, whether on the basis of social class or of the patronage system, was perceived as superior to the clergy. According to Robert Persons's ideal of a

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<sup>160</sup> Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism,' *Past & Present* 21 (1962), 39-59.

<sup>161</sup> Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I*, 200.

clerk's public role and that of a church state, church authority supervised the lay through an ecclesiastical commission. This wishful attempt to resume the dominant role of the church would doubtless be boycotted by the English gentry class. It was antipathetic, seen as a kind of encroachment on secular rule. Charles Paget blamed the priests and Dr. Allen for their meddling 'in public matters of our country', wondering 'why priests did not meddle with their breviaries only and the like'.<sup>162</sup> Another exile William Tresham opposed 'hym self directly with Padget and Throgmorton against the proceeding of Persons, for he did not lyke that gentlemen shoold be directed by Prests'.<sup>163</sup> A part of the English Catholic gentry came to see that they would be better off being a minority Catholic sect ruled by their Protestant counterparts, than playing inferiors to an ecclesiastical establishment contrived by the clergy. This antipathy among the laity may be an alternative explanation for Catholic resistance to the Jesuits.

Despite opposition from the Jesuits, many anti-Jesuit moderates still advocated separation between politics and religion, and for survival pledged loyalty to the English Protestant regime. Hence between 1580 and 1598 there was a significant increase in apostasy, recantation or dual service, on the part of seminary priests and lay exiles.<sup>164</sup> For instance, George Norton, an exiled rebel from 1569, began his career as a double agent in the early 1580s. He was closely involved with the circle of Scottish exiles in Paris, and in 1581 joined the Duke of Lennox's government in Scotland. Using the alias William Robinson, he supplied Walsingham with intelligence on

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<sup>162</sup> Bossy, 'The Character of Elizabethan Catholicism', 51, cited from *CRS*, XXXIX, xxxi f.

<sup>163</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/55, Rogers to Walsingham, 16 Dec. 1585.

<sup>164</sup> Questier, 'English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596'; Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England, 1580-1625*; Questier, 'Conformity, Catholicism and the Law', 237-61.

Scotland or on English exiles, including Morgan and the Pagets.<sup>165</sup> ‘He is willing to be employed, and to do all that he can to deserve her Majesty’s grace’.<sup>166</sup> Norton’s intelligence of the Scottish Catholics’ intrigues earned him a pardon and a return home in 1586.<sup>167</sup>

However, a dangerous shadow existed in this delicate operation between faith and allegiance. Some semi-conformists were thus pronounced apostates or spies for England. Certain temporal apostates, like John Hart, Robert Gray, and Martin Nelson, were never sure of how far they could adopt occasional conformity. In fact, it had probably become a kind of free evaluation through inner conviction and personal conscience. Aside from certain irregular conformity approved by papal dispensation, everyone could refer his obedience to the princes as lawful in religion. Keeping on testing the bottom line of the Roman Church, these opportunists hoped for an easy co-existence between survival and faith.

Regarding Catholic semi-conformity, there are two points worth noting. First, the emergence of semi-separatism gave an impulse to a further separation between politics and religion in the Catholic Church. Questier suggests that from the late sixteenth century numerous Catholics were inspired (or compelled) to consider whether it was necessary for a theocracy to be established. Edmund Bunny wrote to Persons, asking whether ‘their religion and regiment [could] be parted’.<sup>168</sup> More and more Catholics

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<sup>165</sup> TNA, SP 78/11 f. 103, William Robinson to John Robinson, 20 May 1584.

<sup>166</sup> TNA, SP 52/34/12, Robert Bowes to Walsingham, 24 Jan. 1584.

<sup>167</sup> TNA, C 66/1127, m. 15. Translated and printed in ‘Draft Calendar of Patent Rolls, 28-29 Elizabeth I 1585-1587’, List and Index Society 242 (1991), 8, cited in Gibbons, ‘The Experience of Exile and English Catholics: Paris in the 1580s’, 196, 298.

<sup>168</sup> Edmund Bunny, *A Booke of Christian Exercise* (1585), sig. Yvii., cited in Questier, *Conversion, Politics and Religion in England*, 5.

preferred keeping politics and religion apart. A priest, Thomas Wright, abandoned the Jesuit enterprise in 1593 on purely political grounds, because he was a loyalist and was given official permission to exercise liberty of conscience in religion.<sup>169</sup> John Ashton, a Lancashire gentleman, also decided to conform to the royal supremacy rather than the established church. Hence, towards the end of the sixteenth century, the idea of the separation of the Church of Rome from the Court of Rome had started to be promoted by certain loyalists, like Richard Montagu. A pure religion excluding politics was forming.

Secondly, for the English authorities, instigating Catholic exiles to undertake pro-English spying was a dangerously double-edged sword. Exiles' 'occasional conformity' might easily become 'occasional recusancy.' Elizabeth's government could use exiles to disclose plots and polarise Catholic circles, but sometimes the tactic could backfire. For example, the opportunist Charles Paget has often been criticised by historians for his dishonesty in begging for pardon, and his lack of loyalty to either side.

It is not sufficient to accept the Jesuit scholar Leo Hicks's assertion that the chief purpose of English governmental propaganda like Burghley's was to sow division among Catholics.<sup>170</sup> The dissension already existed; what England did was only to accelerate it. This inner crisis was fatal in the Catholic war against Protestant England, and Elizabeth's cunning ministers seized the opportunity. By granting pardon through official authorities, they competitively drew the exiles into their personal service.

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<sup>169</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 109 f. 48.

<sup>170</sup> Hicks, *An Elizabethan Problem*, 136-37.

Discontented with the Jesuit leadership and facing the English strategies of coercion and mercy, many exiles became hesitant. Eventually, for survival, some of them chose conversion, apostasy or the service of two sides.

### **Conclusion**

This chapter clarifies three misconceptions evident in previous discussions of Elizabethan espionage, which concern competitiveness, Burghley's continuing prominence in both intelligence and policy-making, and Elizabeth's royal superiority over factions/parties. Firstly, the Parisian example shows that far from being united, Elizabethan espionage was divided into competitive networks. True, there was no absolute separation between Stafford's embassy system and Walsingham's personal one—Walsingham continued his secretarial contact with Stafford, both in official business and some necessary intelligence missions. But when touching on key espionage activities, like the lobbying of exiles, Walsingham employed his own system. Working to benefit their respective patrons in the supply of information for policy, the two systems monitored, suppressed and even expelled each other, in order to monopolise the intelligence market in Paris.

Second, Alan Haynes's assumption that from the late 1570s Burghley had been reduced to reading second-hand information can be overridden by the fact that Stafford was secretly employed by Burghley.<sup>171</sup> And in the competition to secure the cooperation of English Catholics abroad, the majority of gentry exiles preferred to approach Burghley via Stafford, partly because of the credibility of Stafford's embassy and Burghley's authority over their home interests, and partly because some favoured Cecil's moderate

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<sup>171</sup> Alan Haynes, *The Elizabethan Secret Services* (Stroud, 2000), 35.



stance. Their preference reflects Burghley's ceaseless supervision of the regime in the 1580s, not its decline as is often supposed. Even in overseas exile, these Catholic gentry still retained a high degree of sensitivity about home politics, in which Burghley was still at the very top.

Finally, although Queen Elizabeth remained silent in this intelligence rivalry in Paris, her royal prerogative over official appointments did break Walsingham's governmental intelligence monopoly very cunningly and at crucial times. This restored the power balance of her regime; her supreme authority was safeguarded.

An alternative interpretation of the unusual increase in Catholic double agents or converts during the final two decades of the sixteenth century has also been provided in this chapter. Suffering internal divisions and subject to the English strategies of coercion and mercy, some exiles preferred following the model of 'church papistry', and tried to set up a new way, creating a distinction between politics and religion. Through a peaceful compromise with their Protestant government, they were striving to win more space for personal survival, and more time for a future Catholic restoration. Unsurprisingly, their apostasy was denounced as heresy or atheism by their pro-Jesuit opponents, who accused them of protecting temporal good at the cost of spiritual welfare.<sup>172</sup> However, their anti-militant moderation has met with applause from certain historians. Bossy recognises Thomas Morgan as someone who 'did a good deal to maintain the traditionalist force among the Elizabethan aristocracy.'<sup>173</sup> His anti-militant insistence and that of the Morgan-Paget grouping perhaps won more room for Catholic survival in England, whether for other moderate exiles abroad or the

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<sup>172</sup> Arnold Pritchard, *Catholic Loyalty in Elizabethan England* (London, 1979), 13-14.

<sup>173</sup> Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, 141-42.

semi-conformists at home.

In the competition for intelligence in Paris, Burghley and his party, through Stafford's embassy, won an absolute advantage. Walsingham, however, made a successful comeback in the matter of home counter-plots. The secret manipulations against Mary Queen of Scots held in English captivity were almost exclusively monopolised by Walsingham. Burghley and his men were gradually withdrawn and isolated from these. It is to these issues that we now turn in the next chapter.

## Chapter IV: Plots and Counter-plots

*My only feare is that her majesty wyll not use the matter with that secreacye that apperteyneth, though yt import yt as greatly as ever any thing dyd sythenceshe cam to this crown. And surely yf the matter be well handeled yt wyll breacke the necke of all dayngerowse practyces duryng her majestyes reygne.<sup>1</sup>*

The above comes from a confidential letter Secretary Francis Walsingham wrote on 9 July 1586 to the Earl of Leicester, who was then heading to the Low Countries to fight the Spaniards. It alludes to a great event impending at home: the discovery of Anthony Babington's conspiracy. Certain sensitive words were expunged, probably by Leicester, in accordance with Walsingham's instructions to burn this letter. The partially concealed information underlines three important themes for discussion when considering Elizabethan plots: namely counter-plots, partisanship, and queenship. The modern term 'counter-plot' here means a scheme designed to subvert any regicidal and treasonable revolt (usually accompanying a foreign invasion) that was either brewing or was in process against the life of Queen Elizabeth, and the safety of England and its Protestant establishment. There have for centuries been polemical arguments about the truth behind these Elizabethan plots. Catholic apologists have ceaselessly accused Elizabeth's Protestant ministers of fabricating plots in order to eradicate the Catholic Church from England. However, under conditions of risk to national security, it may be that certain political parties manipulated counter-plots as a tool in their struggle for dominance over policy. The scheme to counter the Babington Plot was so highly secret that Walsingham made 'none of my fellows here privy thereunto', except for Leicester. Burghley seems to have been excluded from Walsingham's clandestine plan, and the

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<sup>1</sup> BL, Cotton MS Galba C/IX f. 290, Walsingham to Leicester, 9 Jul. 1586.

probable alienation between them reflects the worsening partisan polarisation within Elizabeth's regime. Lastly, this confidential letter sent by Walsingham disclosed his intention to nurture a regicidal plot, in order to urge the irresolute Elizabeth to execute Mary Stuart and also to participate more actively in the continental Protestant wars. Walsingham's highly efficient espionage not only drew the Queen towards the military Protestantism he favoured, but weakened her queenship within the patriarchal Council.

A great deal of attention from scholars like Francis Edwards and, recently, Stephen Alford, has been paid to the workings of the Elizabethan plots and government counter-measures.<sup>2</sup> For centuries, the controversy surrounding them has drawn historians to two opposing positions, either in defence or refutation of the reality, legitimacy and motives of these uprisings and of the tragic figure of Mary Stuart. The diverse arguments have hinged on patriotism, dynastic fidelity to the ruling regime, political partiality, clientele, and especially the different religious convictions held by the Jesuit historians (John Hungerford Pollen and Leo Hicks) and their non-Catholic counterparts. Martin Hume (the compiler of the *State Paper Calendars*) and Francis Edwards have tried to understand these intrigues in terms of factiousness, by which means explaining the sudden absence of plots from 1573 to 1583, and an unusual blank in both the archives and historiography around Burghley's participation in the home counter-plots of the 1580s.

This chapter begins by exploring scholarly arguments over the reality of the plots, moving on to explain the unusual absence of intrigues from 1573 to 1583 in terms of factiousness or party rivalry. This perspective is also helpful in explaining why and

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<sup>2</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012). Francis Edwards, *Plots and Plotters in the Reign of Elizabeth I* (Dublin, 2002).

how Walsingham isolated Burghley from his domestic counter-plots in the 1580s. In looking at the Walsingham-led discovery of the Babington Plot, the chapter will reveal the delicate division of spying labour and the workings of Walsingham's fully empowered intelligence secretariat. The final section will contend that Burghley was not, however, completely excluded from intelligence matters. By being held in absolute trust by Queen Elizabeth, through his patronage of wardships, and as a result of his spies doing service for both sides, Burghley avoided being ignorant of the espionage monopolised by the Walsingham-Leicester party.

### 1. Plots Real or False

Within months of Mary's death in February 1587, indignation was stirring throughout the Catholic world at her 'cruel murder' by the English government. She was soon listed in Catholic martyrologies like Richard Verstegan's *Theatrum Crudelitatum* of 1587, which denounced as groundless treason the charges against her. In the following year, her Scottish adherent Adam Blackwood completed the *History of Mary Queen of Scots*, describing 'the sawage Englishe' as 'more brutishe and sawage then the most sawage brutish beast we can reade', and their sovereign Elizabeth as a 'monster of all womankinde'.<sup>3</sup> Any form of representation of the martyr Mary was prohibited inside England until the end of the Tudor period. Instead, Mary's guilt was propagandised into popular memory indirectly through text and drama such as John Lyly's *Endimion* in 1590 and Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* in 1596.

The accession of King James I to the English throne rehabilitated his mother's

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<sup>3</sup> Adam Blackwood, *History of Mary Queen of Scots* (Edinburgh, 1834), 197, translated from the original French of Adam Blackwood, *Martyre de la Royne d'Escosse, douairiere de France* (A Edimbourg, 1588).

reputation. He never let ‘a day pass without lamenting that his mother’s head fell’.<sup>4</sup> After his succession, the Venetian envoy wrote that ‘Elizabeth’s portrait is being hidden everywhere, and Mary Stuart’s shown instead with declaration that she suffered for no other cause than for her religion’.<sup>5</sup> Henry Howard, one of Mary’s surviving partisans who had been appointed to the new King’s Privy Council and created Earl of Northampton in 1604, in 1612 received a royal mandate to translate ‘our dearest mother’ Mary’s remains from Peterborough Cathedral to Westminster Abbey. In the Latin elegy Northampton composed for her new tomb, Mary was remoulded into a courageous figure fighting during her English captivity against ‘the obloquies of her foes, the mistrust of the faint-hearted, and the crafty devices of her mortal enemies’. Regrettably her struggle culminated in an ‘unhappy murder’.<sup>6</sup>

Who were Mary’s ‘mortal enemies’ to whom Northampton alluded? He was hardly likely to be referring to a ‘faint-hearted’ Queen Elizabeth. Earlier Catholics like Robert Persons and John Gerard had vindicated Mary at the expense of Elizabeth. Defaming an esteemed Tudor monarch, native born and bred, would however have easily aroused English anxiety over the foreign Stuart succession.<sup>7</sup> On behalf of King James therefore, Northampton’s lament may have set an official precedent for Stuart encomiums or historiography: to exonerate the King’s natural mother Mary without implicating his metaphorical progenitor Elizabeth. In a later letter to Rochester, Northampton accused

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<sup>4</sup> Giovanni Carlo Scaramelli, Venetian Secretary in England, to the Doge and Senate, 22 May 1603, *CSP Venice, 1603-1607*, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Scaramelli to the Doge and Senate, 24 Apr. 1603, *CSP Venice, 1603-1607*, 10.

<sup>6</sup> The translation of the Latin inscriptions on Mary’s tomb in Westminster Abbey: <http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/burials/mary-queen-of-scots>

<sup>7</sup> John Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England: Literature, History, Sovereignty* (Cambridge, 2002), 22.

Burghley and his son Robert of being the ‘chefe artificeres’ who inflamed Queen Elizabeth’s ‘feares and ielousies’, in order to engineer Mary’s tragedy.<sup>8</sup> Not surprisingly, Northampton made this charge to blacken the posthumous reputation of the Cecils as part of an ongoing political feud between the two families. This hostility originated with the courtly competition between Thomas Howard, the fourth Duke of Norfolk (who was eventually executed in 1572), and Burghley, and continued into antagonism in the Stuart period between the Duke’s brother, Henry Howard himself, and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury.

By contrast, William Camden, another commentator on the same Elizabethan politics, in his work the *Annales* insinuated that Leicester and Walsingham were the leading contrivers of Mary’s death.<sup>9</sup> And he underplayed Elizabeth’s involvement in Mary’s death by picturing both Elizabeth and Mary as innocent women undone by ‘the political machinations of English, Scottish, and French courtiers’. Mary’s ‘unthankful and ambitious subjects’ and Elizabeth’s male counsellors kept fomenting the mutual distrust between the two ‘sisters’, nudging it towards grudges and ‘emulation’ that eventually ‘could not be extinguished but by death’.<sup>10</sup> By this means, John Watkins suggests, Camden fulfilled King James’s commission to exonerate Mary from the charge of high treason.<sup>11</sup> This has implications for a controversy regarding whether Camden was impartial, or whether his writing of history was influenced by Stuart patronage.<sup>12</sup> Watkins emphasises Camden’s fidelity to the new dynasty and sympathy

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<sup>8</sup> TNA, SP 14/71/16, the Earl of Northampton to Rochester, 10 Oct. 1612.

<sup>9</sup> See Introduction.

<sup>10</sup> William Camden, *Annales or the Histories of The Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse ELIZABETH, Late Queen of England* (London: [Thomas Harper], 1635), STC 4501, 343.

<sup>11</sup> Watkins, *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England*, 61-63.

<sup>12</sup> William Camden, *The History of the Most Renowned and Victorious Princess Elizabeth, Late Queen*

for Mary, though in his narrative Camden did not hide her collusion in various treasonable plots. Wallace MacCaffrey believed in Camden's integrity as a historian, praising him for having cautiously matched the government's accusations and the private apologies of Mary's supporters. And 'while he had lived close to the world of high politics and the men who ruled England, he had not lost the freedom and detachment which differentiated the observer from the participant'.<sup>13</sup> But, in actual fact, Camden had not detached himself from the courtly factions. The *Annales* show his political partiality for Burghley, which was partly affected by his privileged access to Burghley's voluminous papers, and partly by his own inclination towards moderate Protestantism. Camden did not skimp in his criticism of Burghley's antagonists—Walsingham and particularly Leicester, the leaders of the militants—positioning them as being guilty of personal immorality and political aggression. A suspicion was left for his readers that in 1586 Leicester had poisoned Walter Devereux, the first Earl of Essex, in an inglorious attempt to marry the widowed countess Lettice.<sup>14</sup> Camden also imputed Mary Stuart's death to the 'subtill practises' engineered by Leicester and Walsingham:

Leicester (who was thought to cast in his head to prevent the lawfull succession) sent privily certaine murders (as some say) to take away her life. But Drury being a most sincere honest man, and detesting from his heart to so foule a fact, denyed them all access. Neverthelesse there crept forth certaine spies, and letters were secretly sent as well as fained as true, whereby her womanish impotency might bee thrust on to her own destruction.<sup>15</sup>

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*of England*, edited and with introduction by Wallace T. MacCaffrey (New York, 1970), xxxvi.

<sup>13</sup> MacCaffrey, ed., *Annales*, xiv, xxxvii.

<sup>14</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 290-91.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 261, 269.



And Camden expunged Burghley's role entirely from his accounts of these anti-Mary intrigues from 1583 until Mary's final trials in 1586. He tried to whitewash Elizabeth and his old patrons the Cecils, exonerating them from culpability in a Stuart sovereign's death.

The disagreements between Northampton and Camden as contemporary witnesses to Mary's demise raise a question about the reality of her plots; this question in turn impacts on the nature of Mary's execution, whether it is to be understood as an act of legal retribution, a political murder, or religious persecution. But a supplementary question is often ignored: who was the leading figure who discovered (or fabricated) these plots that were to prove so fatal for Mary? Was it the silent Burghley whose voice was nearly eliminated from the archives and historiography until Mary's trial, or the blackened Leicester, or Walsingham who owned the foremost Elizabethan espionage network, or Queen Elizabeth herself? Touching Elizabeth's involvement in Mary's death, both Northampton's and Camden's accounts downplayed her absolute monarchy, saying her 'womanish impotency', like Mary's, was manipulated by her male ministers. Even though Camden attempted to redeem the image of her royal supremacy in terms of the Queen's two bodies, the natural and politic, her role in patriarchal government still seemed relatively slight. In the later historiography relevant to Mary's plotting, Elizabeth I, compared to her active male councillors, appeared either as a passive listener or as an indecisive woman. Elizabeth's male ministers' traditional bias against perceived female inferiority, and their antipathy towards Elizabeth's habitual irresolution on policy, would sometimes isolate her queenship from the male-dominated circle of intelligence, indirectly depriving her of initiative in policy-making. This action encouraged a power transfer from absolute monarchy to a

mixed rule with the Council.<sup>16</sup>

The authenticity of the Elizabethan plots is rarely admitted by Catholics, who instead declare them to have been a government fabrication. Their attempts to expunge past discrimination against Catholic ‘treachery’ became more intense during the nineteenth century, as a result of a great Catholic influx into Britain, of French exiles feeling the Revolution and of Irish immigration following the creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. They pressured the government on the issue of Catholic Emancipation, seeking to abolish anti-Catholic laws and grant Catholics civil equality and religious freedom. Victorian Catholicism also initiated a canonisation movement for English and Welsh martyrs; so did the Scottish for Mary Stuart’s beatification. This means of exculpation sought to establish Catholics as innocuous and loyal to the state. Accordingly, from the late nineteenth century, certain Jesuit historians, including John Hungerford Pollen and recently Francis Edwards and Thomas McCoog, have rewritten the history of Elizabethan plotting, redefining the beheaded Mary Stuart as a tragic martyr, instead of a murderous traitor.

Pollen conceded that rising discontent over the English government’s persecution had unavoidably provoked the exiles into running hazards, which for a time involved Catholics at home. But none of these ‘would ever be hatched on English soil, nor would the Queen’s life ever be for a minute in danger’.<sup>17</sup> The so-called plots were either rumours, or deceptions instigated by Elizabeth’s Protestant ministers to falsely incriminate Mary; they announced they were carrying out an obligation imposed by the

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<sup>16</sup> See Chapter VI. Patrick Collinson, ‘The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), 110-34.

<sup>17</sup> John Hungerford Pollen, *The English Catholics in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth: A Study of Their Politics Civil Life and Government (1558-1580)* (London, 1920), 296.

Bond of Association and its legislation *Act for the Queen's Safety*. The former, drawn up by Walsingham and Burghley in 1584, required all the signatories 'to the uttermost of their power, at all times, to withstand, pursue and suppress all manner of persons that shall by any means intend and attempt any thing dangerous or hurtful to the honours, estates or person of their sovereign'.<sup>18</sup> If there was a real plot in Mary's favour, Pollen maintained, it must have been hatched by her 'unscrupulous, quarrelsome, and reckless' adherents, Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget, without her knowledge.<sup>19</sup> Even though Mary did partake in murderous rebellions, Pollen and George Turner still vindicated her on a nearly sophistic excuse: justified self-protection. 'If the assassination was a crime, Mary was not free from guilt', Pollen proclaimed, 'if it was not a crime, but an inevitable incident in the struggle for liberty, Mary was free from blame'.<sup>20</sup> Turner echoed that 'she plotted unceasingly to escape, but never against Elizabeth's life—and even had she done so, no less an authority than Lord Brougham has laid it down that she would have been amply justified'.<sup>21</sup> Her intriguing was a proper self-defence against a variety of alleged murders designed by Queen Elizabeth, who, Turner condemned, should hardly have complained even if Mary had plotted against her life.

Pollen's works need to be considered carefully, for they remain affected by a centuries-long antagonism between the Jesuits and Appellants, or priests opposed to Jesuit control. How far Pollen's work has influenced modern historical debates is

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<sup>18</sup> John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 194.

<sup>19</sup> J. H. Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot* (Edinburgh, 1922), xxxv; 'Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot', *The Month*, 109 (1907), 358.

<sup>20</sup> Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, cxliv.

<sup>21</sup> George Turner, *Mary Stuart: Forgotten Forgeries* (London, 1934), 249.

doubted by the Catholic scholar John Vidmar. His investigation into English Catholic historiography between 1585 and 1954 suggests that Philip Hughes's *Reformation in England* (1954) led the debate on the Reformation into 'a new phase with the ground-breaking work of A. G. Dickens and G. R. Elton (non-Catholics) and the Catholic scholars Dom David Knowles, J. J. Scarisbrick and Eamon Duffy'.<sup>22</sup> The religious zeal faded away from the true work of history. In 2002 Francis Edwards observed that 'one would hope that nowadays the prejudices and crude emotions which accompanied historical writing in the past are much diminished if not eliminated. The religious spirit does not invariably assist the cause of truth'.<sup>23</sup> However, notwithstanding this modern trend for less emotional historiography, Pollen's work still continued to receive some support from likes of the Jesuit Leo Hicks, who coloured his *An Elizabethan Problem* (1964) with strong Catholicism and, much like Pollen, remained hostile to both Thomas Morgan and Charles Paget.

Martin Hume likewise looked askance at the official judgements on the treasonable plots, and have ascribed them instead to government policy. He in his 1901 book *Treason and Plot*, declared that the indictments, made by the government and having been repeated by nearly every English historian, 'are to a large extent unsupported by serious evidence'.<sup>24</sup> Stephen Alford agrees that the lack of decisive proof for certain Elizabethan plots, in some degree, discredited the relevant trials and convictions, and reduced them to the level of historical controversy. In Mary's trial on 11 October 1586, respecting her complicity in the Babington Plot both she and the English commission

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<sup>22</sup> John Vidmar, *English Catholic Historians and the English Reformation, 1585-1954* (Brighton, 2005), 2-3.

<sup>23</sup> Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 16.

<sup>24</sup> Martin Hume, *Treason and Plot: Struggles for Catholic Supremacy in the Last Years of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1901), 113.

‘were on decidedly uneven ground’.<sup>25</sup> Mary did not deny her correspondence with Babington, which had been confessed by her two intimate secretaries Jacques Nau and Gilbert Cull. But the commission found their charge embarrassed by the lack of evidence in Mary’s own hand, notably of her decisive reply on 17 July 1586 to Babington’s regicidal plan. They only held the copies Thomas Phelippes made when he intercepted the letter. Mary grasped this advantage of evidentiary insufficiency. She blamed Walsingham, accusing him of wanting ‘to bring her to her death, who (as she heard) had practised against her Life and her Son’s’. Thereupon she softened to appeal to him: ‘I think you are an honest man. And I pray you in word of an honest man whether you have been so or no.’ Walsingham, joining the trial as one of the commissioners, rose to protest that ‘his Mind was free from all Malice’. He added:

I call God to record, that as a private Person I have done nothing unbecoming an honest Man; nor as I bear the place of a publick Person, have I done anything unworthy my place. I confess, that being very careful for the Safety of the Queen and Realm, I have curiously searched out the Practices against the same.<sup>26</sup>

According to David Jardine writing in the nineteenth century, such practices were the ‘consummate art’ of Elizabeth’s councillors, which deceived the masses into an unsuspecting belief in the whole political narrative.<sup>27</sup> Their criticism earned an echo from the Catholic side. Edwards demonstrates it through a confession made by the Elizabethan politician Edward Coke during the trial of Henry Garnet, a Jesuit accused of involvement in the Gunpowder Plot, on 28 March 1606, that,

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<sup>25</sup> Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven & London, 2008), 275.

<sup>26</sup> William Cobbett and Thomas Bayly Howell, ed., *A Complete Collection of State-Trials, and Proceedings For High-Treason, And Other Crimes And Misdemeanours; From the Reign of King Richard II to the Reign of King George II* (London, 1762), I, 152.

<sup>27</sup> David Jardine, *A Narrative of the Gunpowder Plot* (London, 1857), vii-viii.

There was a particular apology spread abroad for this man, and another general for all Jesuits and priests, together with this imputation, that king-killing and queen-killing was not indeed a doctrine of theirs, but only a fiction and policy of our State thereby to make the popish religion...despised and in disgrace.<sup>28</sup>

Adrian Morey and Albert Loomie also reproved the Elizabethan government for contriving plots. By doing so it would have been easy, they stated, to stir up popular horror and animosity, together with civil patriotism against Catholicism and Spain.<sup>29</sup>

A more considerable claim made by Hume is that the manipulation of plots may have become a necessary instrument for Elizabeth's ministers in their struggles for power. Certain intrigues, like the one involving William Parry, and that of Michael Moody and William Stafford, were 'more or less bogus plots, in which agent provocateurs were sacrificed to exigencies of party politics'. He further argued that,

One of the secrets of Burghley's great influence had been his elaborate system of spies everywhere, which had given him a monopoly of information, and an unrivalled control over affairs. Essex determined to organise a similar system, which should enable him to countercheck the Cecils...to draw England into war with Spain, and so to vanquish the moderate policy of Cecil.<sup>30</sup>

Hume wrongly located the so-called sham plots in 1586 and 1587 as part of the factional rivalry between Burghley and Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, in the 1590s; he neglected the real opposition rising during the 1580s between the moderate Burghley and the militants Leicester and Walsingham. Additionally, Francis

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<sup>28</sup> Donald Carswell, ed., *The Trial of Guy Fawkes* (London, 1934), 135, cited in Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 20.

<sup>29</sup> Adrian Morey, *The Catholic Subjects of Elizabeth I* (London, 1978), 82; Albert J. Loomie, *The Spanish Elizabethans: The English Exiles at the Court of Philip II* (New York, 1963), 9-10.

<sup>30</sup> Hume, *Treason and Plot*, 88-89.

Edwards attributes the Ridolfi Plot to faction fighting rather than Mary's treachery, accusing Cecil of 'contriving' this plot and its trials to eliminate his prime opponent, Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk. True, the disclosure of this plot was far from being what Burghley announced to the public as an 'act of providence'.<sup>31</sup> Rather, its discovery was owing to a combination of Cecil's intense intelligence network, overseas espionage by William Sutton, Walsingham's Paris embassy, and Herle's spying in the Marshalsea prison. The successful discovery of the Ridolfi Plot rearranged power politics within Elizabeth's regime: Burghley replaced the executed Norfolk, to become 'the principal person in the Council at present'.<sup>32</sup> Edwards also accused Cecil of falsely impugning Mary Stuart's innocence as part of his power struggle. In other words, the initiation of plots depended not on whether Mary yielded obediently to English captivity, but on the stability of Elizabethan power politics. A stable and absolute dominance by a specific party under the regime would see no plot 'created' as it was unnecessary, until a new opposing power rose. This claim gives a possible explanation for the apparent absence of plots in England between 1573 and 1583; during this decade Burghley and his conservative group retained their dominance over national policy.

## **2. The Absence of Plots: 1573-1583**

In contrast to the earlier period 1568–1572 and the later 1583–1587, both of which were rife with plots and appeals for her execution, the middle period of Mary's nineteen-year captivity, from Norfolk's death in 1572 until the Somerville Plot in 1583, is unusually silent. No plots were devised (or at least none was exposed). When the

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<sup>31</sup> Alford, *Burghley, 177-78*. Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1960), 41.

<sup>32</sup> Read, *Lord Burghley*, 45.

Ridolfi Plot was disclosed with the arrestment of Charles Bailly at Dover in 1571, the hostile voices in the Parliament of 1572 for ‘cutting off the heads of the Scottish Queen and the Duke [of Norfolk], taking away Mary’s title to the succession, and the establishment of a certain successor’ won support from an overwhelming majority in both Houses.<sup>33</sup> However, in the later Parliament of 1576, suddenly, ‘all was so quiet on the Marian front’.<sup>34</sup> Burghley fell into similar calm. His spy William Parry began one letter to Burghley in 1580 with worry ‘of your longe sylene’, ‘in so daungerouse a tyme’.<sup>35</sup> This mysterious blank in the official papers has created an obedient Mary in the historiography. Historians emphasise her day-to-day captive life, declining health, financial problems, and her time at a spa in Buxton, and not her political intrigues.<sup>36</sup>

However, some of Mary’s letters, particularly those collected in Prince Alexander Labanoff’s *Recueil Des Letters De Marie Stuart*, reveal that Mary’s custody during this decade was not as peaceful as it appears in official or scholarly documents.<sup>37</sup> After the northern uprising in 1569 and the Ridolfi Plot in 1571, the conditions of her captivity had been increasingly intensified. She was transferred further south to Sheffield Castle, far away from her party in Scotland and the traditional Catholic forces in the far north of England. Under the guardianship of George Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury, ‘no restore of strangers should be suffered to come near her’. Numbers of armed men were ‘under her windows, over her chamber, and of ever side her’, day and night. Her escape was

<sup>33</sup> J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1559-1581* (New York, 1953), 250.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid; J. E. Neale, *Elizabeth I and her Parliaments, 1584-1601* (London, 1969).

<sup>35</sup> TNA, SP 15/27/27, Parry to Burghley, 30 Jul. 1580.

<sup>36</sup> Jenny Wormald, *Mary, Queen of Scots: Politics Passion and a Kingdom Lost* (New York, 2001), 170-97; Patrick Collinson, *The English Captivity of Mary Queen of Scots* (Sheffield, 1987); John Guy, *‘My Heart is My Own’: The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2004), 437-78; Antonia Fraser, *Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1998), 510-59.

<sup>37</sup> Turnbull, *Letters of Mary Stuart*.



impossible ‘unless she could transform herself to a flea or a mouse’.<sup>38</sup>

Even in such restricted custody, Mary did not stop her illicit correspondence. She devoted a great majority of her French dowry, up to £12,000 annually derived from lands in the Duchy of Touraine, to sustain her intelligence work and finance her exiled partisans. Some of Shrewsbury’s household servants—his secretary Thomas Morgan and the family tutor Alexander Hamilton—and local residents, like Thomas Burley, a glover from Sheffield, and Henry Cockyn, a London bookseller, were engaged in conveying messages either to or from her. This intelligence channel was disclosed at the beginning of 1575. Cockyn’s confession thoroughly acquainted Walsingham, newly assigned to the Secretaryship, with the details of Mary’s custody: her covert correspondence with discontented recusants and her exiled adherents, the negligent guardianship of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and Queen Elizabeth’s irresolution and mercy towards her Stuart kinswoman. Through the French ambassador Monsieur de la Mothe Fenelon and her envoy James Beaton in Paris, Mary transferred Morgan and Cockyn to France with substantial pensions as reward.<sup>39</sup> In addition, from 1573 she had jointly designed a Spanish-led military invasion, grounded on the basis of two Stuart–Habsburg marriages, between Mary and Don John of Austria, and between her son James of Scotland and the Infanta Isabella Eugenia, the second daughter of Philip II.<sup>40</sup> Don John hastened this enterprise as ‘next to the service of God’, when he

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<sup>38</sup> Elizabeth I to Shrewsbury, 18 Aug. 1573, John Daniel Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity: Narrative of Events from January 1569 to December 1584, Whilst George Earl of Shrewsbury Was the Guardian of the Scottish Queen* (Sheffield, 1880), 301-302. Gilbert Talbot to Shrewsbury, 11 May 1573, Edmund Lodge, ed., *Illustrations of British History* (London, 1838), II, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Mary Stuart to the Archbishop of Glasgow, 4 Aug. 1574, Turnbull, *Letters of Mary Queen of Scots*, 243.

<sup>40</sup> Margaret Yeo, *Don John of Austria* (London, 1934), 285.

became the governor of the Netherlands in 1576.<sup>41</sup> In 1577 there had been ‘divers practesis’ by two leading English Catholic exiles in Madrid, Francis Englefield and Anne Percy (née Somerset), Countess of Northumberland. They informed Don John that ‘with a smale number of horsemen, upon the suddane it is verie easy to carry her [Mary Stuart] away’.<sup>42</sup> This plan would be repeated in the later Babington Plot: writing to Anthony Babington on 17 July 1586, Mary suggested that ‘at one certeine daie apointed in my walking abroad on horsback on the moore betwixt this and Stafford, where ordinarily you knowe verie fewe people doe passe, a fiftie or threescore men well horsed and armed come to take mee there, as they maie easely’.<sup>43</sup>

The English government were aware of Mary’s tricks.<sup>44</sup> In early 1575, Elizabeth warned Shrewsbury that his household servants were transmitting letters for his royal prisoner.<sup>45</sup> Touching Mary’s collusion in Don John’s armed invasion, Walsingham kept receiving relevant intelligence papers, partly from Thomas Wilson, Elizabeth’s envoy in the Low Countries, partly from Ambassador Paulet in Paris, and notably from his closest Protestant ally William of Orange.<sup>46</sup> The Prince showed Walsingham some of Don John’s letters, which had been intercepted by his right-hand man La Noue in France, and deciphered for Daniel Rogers, another of Elizabeth’s envoys in the Low Countries. On 20 July 1577, Rogers sent two detailed reports individually to

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<sup>41</sup> George Slocombe, *Don John of Austria: The Victor of Lepanto (1547-1578)* (London, 1935), 127.

<sup>42</sup> TNA, SP 70/143 f. 148, Advertisements from Hoyer, 20 Feb. 1577.

<sup>43</sup> Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, 44.

<sup>44</sup> Mary Stuart to Elizabeth I, 20 Feb. 1574, Strickland, ed., *Letters of Mary, Queen of Scots*, I, 258-60.

<sup>45</sup> Shrewsbury to Burghley, 3 Mar. 1575, *HMC VI II Talbot*, Vol. P, f. 1023, 384.

<sup>46</sup> Thomas Wilson to Walsingham, 24 Jan. 1577; Paulet to Walsingham, 28 Apr. 1577, *CSPF, 1575-1577*, 490-91, 565.

Walsingham and to Leicester.<sup>47</sup> William of Orange also sent an envoy, M. de Famars, to reveal their content to Queen Elizabeth.<sup>48</sup>

Elizabeth's sympathy for her abdicated Stuart cousin was eventually exhausted by the daily increasing intelligence of the latter's disobedience. In 1578 in an audience with the French envoy, the Count de Retz, Elizabeth said loudly that 'she know very well he had come to disturb her country and to act in the favour of the worst woman in the world, whose head should have been cut off years ago'. She declared angrily that Mary would never be free 'as long as she lived' even if this would cost 'her realm and her own liberty'.<sup>49</sup> In 1581 Elizabeth even considered no longer defraying the cost of Mary's captivity, stating that if Mary had to maintain herself, she would hardly spare money to promote plots and mischievous practices against England.<sup>50</sup> Despite all this, if Elizabeth's government had indeed penetrated Mary's collusion with foreign powers, why were none of these intrigues disclosed until 1583? If, in contrast, Edwards's view of the factional value of plots is correct, why did no ministers exploit the situation to foment plots to empower themselves? As for Burghley, had his status and following within the regime become so invincible that 'creating' plots had become unnecessary? It is by turning to contemporary international politics that we can explain these questions.

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<sup>47</sup> Daniel Rogers to Walsingham, 20 Jul. 1577, *CSPF, 1577-1578*, 22-25; BL, Cotton MS Galba C/VI ff. 72-76, same to Leicester, 20 and 26 Jul. 1577. Read, *Walsingham*, II, 358-59.

<sup>48</sup> 'Instructions for M. de Favars sent to the Queen of England from the Prince of Orange', 10 Feb. 1577, *CSPF, 1575-1577*, 515-16.

<sup>49</sup> Mendoza to Secretary Gabriel de Zayas, the Secretary of the Council of State and a trusted advisor of Philip II, 5 May 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 581.

<sup>50</sup> Mauvissiere to Henry III of France, 10 Feb. 1581, Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity*, 456-57.

The international climate in the late 1570s was far from ideal for Mary's intriguing. Some plans came to nothing, such as the one that foundered at Don John's death in 1578. Mary had also been forsaken by her Scottish homeland, which under the leadership of the Anglophile Regent Morton from 1572–1580 had politically adhered to England.<sup>51</sup> Mary's French relatives either treated her with extreme coldness or were too weak to help her. The House of Valois had less sympathy for their Scottish daughter-in-law, partly because of her loathsome Guise blood, but chiefly because of the impending Valois–Tudor alliance that was being attempted through Anjou's courtship. In an audience of 1578, Henri III told Ambassador Paulet that he preferred Elizabeth's 'friendship before that of the Scottish Queen'.<sup>52</sup> The Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, was also 'no friend' of Mary. She refused James Beaton's request to support Mary's party at Edinburgh in 1573, and ingratiated herself with Elizabeth.<sup>53</sup> When placed beside questions of the royal supremacy and the national interest, for the Valois the fate of an unlovable daughter-in-law was trifling.<sup>54</sup> As for Mary's two remaining allies, the Guises were feeble and Philip II was hesitant. By March 1579 the Guises had lost what influence they had once had from their niece Mary's being the Queen of Francis II. Losing access to the king's ear, Henry Duke of Guise's credit fell and his financial affairs became pressing.<sup>55</sup> At this point, the far more powerful Philip II, besieged with domestic troubles, became hesitant. Geoffrey Parker pictures him as a

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<sup>51</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy 1572-1588* (Princeton, 1981), 405; George R. Hewitt, *Scotland under Morton 1572-80* (Edinburgh, 1982), 168-87; Gordon Donaldson, *The First Trial of Mary, Queen of Scots* (London, 1974), 224.

<sup>52</sup> Paulet to Queen Elizabeth, 19 Feb. 1578, *CSPF, 1577-1578*, 505-507. In 1579 Henry III warned Queen Elizabeth of an intrigue designed by Philip II and some English exiles to liberate Mary. Mendoza to Philip II, 27 Jan. 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 637.

<sup>53</sup> Queen Mother to Queen Elizabeth, 10/20 Dec. 1583, *CSPF, 1583-1584*, 264.

<sup>54</sup> Paul Van Dyke, *Catherine de Medicis* (London, 1923), II, 337-38.

<sup>55</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and The Making of Europe* (New York, 2009).

‘Messianic’ king whose absolute enthusiasm to reunite Christendom drove him to involvement in the early Ridolfi Plot.<sup>56</sup> However, worsening Spanish finances had twice led to bankruptcy (in 1557 and 1575), there was continuing domestic resistance to the Castile-based centralisation, and differences in policy between the Duke of Alba in Brussels and the court in Madrid resulted in stalemate. King Philip hence preferred a temporary truce, and repudiated the scheme—‘the conquest of England’—that the Pope insistently pressed on him.<sup>57</sup>

In the context of this adverse international climate of the 1570s, it is definite that none of Mary’s intrigues could have reached maturity or obtained sufficient aid from foreign powers. This may explain why few plots matured enough to be disclosed in this decade. The weakness of the Mary–Guise party and Spain’s hesitation over war strengthened the power of Burghley’s conservative group. With the likewise conservative Queen’s support, their anti-military claims not only led English diplomacy towards peaceful negotiations and alliances, but strengthened Burghley’s dominance in high politics. Burghley of course still had rivals in the regime. But the international atmosphere in favour of peace, in which the Catholic powers were either weakened or were unwilling to initiate costly wars, left little room for his aggressively bellicose opponents. Therefore, at this moment, it was not necessary for Cecil to ‘create’ plots to enhance his status. But when the fog of war rose again between the Catholic and Protestant worlds, the advantage would switch to the opposing militants. This may explain why in the 1580s there was an unusually high intensity of plots and plot discoveries, by an intelligence service now led by Walsingham. By manipulating Catholic plots, Leicester

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<sup>56</sup> Geoffrey Parker, ‘The Place of Tudor England in the Messianic Vision of Philip II of Spain: The Prothero Lecture’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, Sixth Series* 12 (2002), 167-221.

<sup>57</sup> Henry Kamen, *Philip of Spain* (New Haven, 1997), 252-53.

and Walsingham hoped to serve God by opening the eyes of their Queen who was slow to believe that a great increase of papists was a danger to her realm, and thereby draw England into the Protestant wars.<sup>58</sup>

### 3. Walsingham's Monopoly on Counter-plots

According to Christopher Haigh, except for John Somerville's regicidal plan of 1583 and John Hacke's self-announcement as the new Messiah in 1591, both of which he ascribed to 'far-fetched stories and lunatic plots', the Elizabethan assassination intrigues worked mostly under government supervision.<sup>59</sup> Elizabethan plots did arise from Catholic ambition—though the plotters did not realise that how far they could go was decided not by their own efforts, but by the English government, more precisely by the spymaster Walsingham. Instead of nipping them in the bud, Walsingham's espionage adopted a wait-and-see strategy, allowing plots to develop until he could obtain enough fatal evidence to put Mary on trial.

Walsingham's leading spy Walter Williams advocated this strategy in his letter of 31 August 1583, praying that Queen Elizabeth would have more patience with his spymaster's counter-plots. 'Tyme breadeth daylie newe matters and ripe[n]ing of the oulde, so a fitter tyme maye serve to take the practisers and dealers agaynst your highnes' state and quiet, with lesse suspition for your servantes discoverye, and greater confusion and shame to the trecherous and evell mynded agaynst your Majestie.'<sup>60</sup> The more time the government gave recusants to mature their rebellions, the more

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<sup>58</sup> TNA, SP 12/155/42, Leicester to Walsingham, 5 Sept. 1582.

<sup>59</sup> Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (New York, 1998), 149-50.

<sup>60</sup> John Bossy, *Under the Molehill: An Elizabethan Spy Story* (New Haven & London, 2002), 44-45. CP 162/114, Walter Williams to [Mary Queen of Scots] (*sic*, it should be Queen Elizabeth), 31 Aug. 1583.

damning evidence the treacherous parties would provide. 'If Mary was bent upon the queen's destruction, she would become hopelessly entangled in a conspiracy against her life, and therefore liable to the penalties laid down' in the new 1584 statute.<sup>61</sup> Mary's appetite for freedom and the English crown, and the recusants' for Catholic restoration in England, had prepared the gallows ready for them. Elizabeth's government only made plots practically certain, by activating Catholics' potential rebellious ambitions, arranging watchful control over their communication routes, and then waiting for the best chance to entrap Mary in her own intrigues.

Generally, Elizabeth's Protestant ministers are acknowledged as having been the contrivers of these counter-plots; Queen Elizabeth, stated Pollen, was led by her ministers' hostility to acquiesce in their plans.<sup>62</sup> Robyn Adams's investigation into Herle's spying in the Marshalsea in 1571 has illustrated Cecil's delicate espionage that led to the disclosure of the Ridolfi Plot.<sup>63</sup> In the plots during the 1580s, Walsingham's espionage system, presumably having reached a high level of efficiency, monopolised the leadership over any involvement of Burghley's party.<sup>64</sup>

The Protestant zealot Walsingham's burning animosity towards Mary brought this Catholic pretender to the English crown to the executioner's block.<sup>65</sup> As far back as his French embassy, he had announced that 'as long as that develyshe woman lyve

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<sup>61</sup> G. R. Elton, *England Under the Tudors* (London, 1997), 363-64. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603*, 379. Susan Doran, *Queen Elizabeth I* (New York, 2003), 98-100.

<sup>62</sup> Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, xiv.

<sup>63</sup> Robyn Adams, '“The Service I am here for”: William Herle in the Marshalsea Prison, 1571', *Huntington Library Quarterly* 72 (2009), 217-38.

<sup>64</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, II, 287. Derek Wilson, *Sir Francis Walsingham: A Courtier in An Age of Terror* (New York, 2007), 142.

<sup>65</sup> Walsingham to Thomas Randolph, 19 Apr. 1572, *CSP Scotland, 1571-1574*, 238-39.

neyther her Majesty must make accounte to contyneue in quyet possession of her crowne nor her faythfull servantes assure themselves of savetye of their lyves. God therefore open her Majesty's eyes to see that which may be for her best suartye [surety]'.<sup>66</sup> His hostility was too hard to be softened by later goodwill from Mary's party. Between 1579 and 1582, Michel de Castelnau, the French ambassador in London who was sympathetic towards Mary, kept lobbying her 'mortal enemy' Walsingham for improvements in the conditions of her captivity.<sup>67</sup> He urged Walsingham to 'warm yourself up, therefore, a little with the grace and beauty of this fair Queen, and make yourself a suitor to make her position in her Majesty's good graces a little better than it is at present'.<sup>68</sup> Walsingham was extolled as a 'sincere and honest man' trusted by the Scottish Queen: 'the more sincere and loyal you are in the service of your mistress, the more cause she will have to trust in you'.<sup>69</sup> These compliments, appearing only in Castelnau's letters but never in Mary's, were presumably not given under Mary's instructions. Until 1580 she still called Walsingham and the Earl of Huntingdon 'the leaders of my enemies in this kingdom'.<sup>70</sup>

### 3.1: The Throckmorton Plot

From the early 1580s Walsingham's spying arrangements became more intensive, closing in on the moment when he would be ready to grasp Mary's neck. John Bossy draws attention to the success of Walsingham's spies—Walter Williams, William

<sup>66</sup> TNA, SP 70/122 f. 148, Walsingham to Cecil, 31 Jan. 1572.

<sup>67</sup> Mary Stuart to the Archbishop of Glasgow, 4 Aug. 1574, William Turnbull, ed., *Letters of Mary Stuart, Queen of Scotland, selected from the "Recueil Des Lettres de Marie Stuart," together with the chronological summary of Events during the Reign of the Queen of Scotland, by Prince Alexander Labanoff* (London, 1865), 240.

<sup>68</sup> Mauvissiere to Walsingham, 24 Jan. 1578, *CSPF*, 1577-1578, 473.

<sup>69</sup> Mauvissiere to Walsingham, 23 May, 16 Oct. 1582, *CSPF*, 1582, 41-42, 391.

<sup>70</sup> Mary Stuart to the Archbishop of Glasgow, 18 Mar. 1580, Turnbull, ed., *Letters of Mary Stuart*, 289.



Fowler and William Herle—in infiltrating the French embassy in London by the eve of the Throckmorton Plot, a process which has received too much scholarly discussion to be repeated here.<sup>71</sup> In May 1583, the mole Giordano Bruno, alias Henry Fagot, reported to Walsingham the secret visits of Francis Throckmorton and Henry Howard, ‘the chief agents for the Queen of Scots’, to Ambassador Castelnau’s residence at Salisbury Court. They ‘never come to bring things from her [Mary] except at night, and the ambassador does the same (when he is sending to her)’.<sup>72</sup> In November, Herle confirmed a Catholic enterprise underway inside the embassy, designed by the Duke of Guise and Castelnau, as well as by Howard and Throckmorton, ‘a partye very busy & an enemye to the present State’, to overthrow the English Protestant establishment.<sup>73</sup>

The discovery of this plot surprisingly brought the French and Spanish ambassadors, both of whom were accused similarly of intriguing, completely different fates. Mendoza suffered an immediate expulsion in disgrace; henceforth no more Spanish embassies resided in Elizabethan England. Castelnau, however, was treated with respect until his successor Guillaume de l’Aubépine arrived in 1585. Bossy assumes it was because Walsingham preferred to publish evidence adverse to Mendoza but hide the part played by the French, in order to achieve Mendoza’s expulsion and a closer Anglo-French alliance. As soon as Mendoza had assumed the London embassy in 1578, Walsingham and Leicester had endeavoured to persuade the Queen to dismiss him, as ‘she had none resident’ in Madrid.<sup>74</sup> By contrast, Burghley had consistently apologised

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<sup>71</sup> John Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and the Embassy Affair* (New Haven, 1991); *Under the Molehill*.

<sup>72</sup> Henry Fagot to Walsingham, May 1583, Bossy, *Giordano Bruno and Embassy Affair*, 199-200.

<sup>73</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 39 ff. 189r-192v, Herle to Burghley, 15 Nov. 1583; BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/ VIII ff. 204r-206v, same to same, 23 Nov. 1583.

<sup>74</sup> Mendoza to Zayas, 16 May 1578; 15 Jan. 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 584-85, 629; Mendoza to Philip II, 4 Jul. 1581; 25 Apr. 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 140-41, 345.

to Mendoza for Elizabeth's refusal to receive him.<sup>75</sup> When ignominiously expelled in January 1584, this *persona non grata* at the English court swore that he would let Elizabeth learn that 'Bernardino de Mendoza was not born to disturb countries but to conquer them'.<sup>76</sup> His new embassy assignment to France moved the plotting centre away from London to Paris, where Mendoza promoted a more belligerent Catholic League between the Guises and Spain.<sup>77</sup>

Walsingham, however, concealed the evidence detrimental to Castelnau, avoiding further infuriating Queen Elizabeth, who had been in an uncontrolled rage when formally confronted with a Catholic coalition to overthrow her. Walsingham knew well the necessity for England's survival of having a powerful Catholic ally, and he preferred that it be France. Therefore, even though commanded by the Queen 'to gather the particularytes against Moversier [Castelnau] for secreat dealing with the Scot[tish] Q[ueen]', Walsingham may have declined to make such proof public. 'If he had put his cards on the table', Bossy concluded, 'a weighty case against Castelnau could have been constructed'.<sup>78</sup> By such moves, Walsingham broke off the traditional Anglo-Spanish alliance, and confronted Burghley and the Queen with the only other choice: France. Burghley's party, originally being pro-Spain, was compelled to follow Walsingham, together defying Elizabeth's 'disposition' to disclose the complicity of France, and saving the diplomacy between England and France. Ambassador Stafford refused to forward a very ferocious complaint to Henri III. England formally left the

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<sup>75</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 4 Jun. 1581, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 140-41.

<sup>76</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 30 Jan. 1584, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 516.

<sup>77</sup> Stuart Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: The Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford, 2009), 250, 282.

<sup>78</sup> Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, 95, 100-105.

traditional amity of Spain for France. This conflict again indicates that Elizabeth's temper, irresolution, and inferiority in the collection of intelligence meant that her female authority was easily manipulated by her Council and their intelligence operations.

The successful discovery of the Throckmorton Plot also resulted in the Earl of Shrewsbury, who had served as Mary's keeper for more than a decade, being temporarily replaced in April 1584 by Ralph Sadler and John Somers, and ultimately by Amias Paulet in January 1585. The substitution announced Burghley's forced withdrawal from first-hand intelligence concerning the imprisoned Mary, a position taken over by Walsingham. Shrewsbury's tolerant guardianship had put him under suspicion of undue friendship towards Mary. Cockyn's confession in 1575, and the complicity of his household secretary Thomas Morgan and tutor Alexander Hamilton in Mary's illicit correspondence, provoked Walsingham to further discredit the Earl's efficiency as Mary's gaoler. Walsingham is assumed to have arranged spies around the Earl, who in July 1582 was to complain, 'I have too many spies in my house already.'<sup>79</sup> A series of rumours further destroyed Shrewsbury's reputation at court. At the end of 1583 there was scandalous gossip concerning an alleged affair between the Earl and his royal prisoner, and an accusation of having fathered two bastard children by her.<sup>80</sup>

The Earl's friend, Burghley, also fell under suspicion of exercising undue goodwill towards Mary. Burghley's fidelity to Queen Elizabeth is indisputable, but as

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<sup>79</sup> *HMC VI II Talbot*, Vol. G, f. 120; ff. 170, 118, 122.

<sup>80</sup> *HMC VI I Shrewsbury*, MS 698 f. 39 v. 52; Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity*, 547-49, cited in Prince Labanoff, *Recueil des Lettres de Marie Stuart*, V. 5, 389-92. In 1583 Mary informed her adherent that she had won over the Earl to 'free herself when she pleases'. Thomas Francis Knox, ed., *The Letters and Memorials of William Cardinal Allen (1532-1594)* (London, 1882), xlvi, 412.

Elizabeth's fertility became less hopeful and the Stuart succession seemed more likely, he needed to pretend friendliness towards Mary. The resulting rumours were spreading as early as 1574, coincidentally shortly after Walsingham left Paris to take up the Secretaryship. Cecil's meetings with Mary at Buxton in 1574 were used by 'some that loved me [Burghley] not', to defame him for his friendliness towards the Scottish pretender, and for his attempt 'to enter into intelligence with the Queen of Scots' via routes known to the Earl and his wife. Burghley defended himself, asserting that 'I am the most dangerous enemy, and evil-willed to her, and her title, ...If she shall intend any evil to the Queen Majesty, my sovereign, for her sake, I must and will mean to impeach her; and therein I may be her unfriend or worse'. To avoid all possible excuses used by 'unfriendly persons to calumniate my actions', in 1575 he declined a proffered marriage between his daughter Elizabeth and Shrewsbury's son Edward Talbot.<sup>81</sup> But the rumours ceaselessly spread through foreign embassy reports to their home governments. In 1580 Ambassador Castelnau reported: 'I found the Lord Treasurer for the present to be very favourable towards her [Mary], and to hold the counterpoise against those who wish to do her an injury...he assists me very willingly in all things which concern her, and is very disappointed when things do not turn out well.'<sup>82</sup> When Mary was beheaded in 1587, Giovanni Dolfin, the Venetian ambassador in France, understood her demise in the following terms: that Burghley, 'a person of the highest authority, who had always favoured her cause, has now fallen from the Queen's favour', while Mary's mortal enemies, Leicester and Walsingham, had kept urging Queen Elizabeth to 'grant her subjects that satisfaction'.<sup>83</sup> Mendoza also

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<sup>81</sup> Burghley to Shrewsbury, 24 Dec. 1575; 1 Jan. 1576, *ibid.* II, 52-57; *HMC. VI II Talbot*, Vol. F., f. 117, 96-97.

<sup>82</sup> Castelnau to Henry III, 27 May 1580, John Daniel Leader, *Mary Queen of Scots in Captivity*, 436.

<sup>83</sup> Giovanni Dolfin to the Doge and Senate, 2 Mar. 1587, Paris, *CSP Venice, 1581-1591*, 250.

reported on Burghley's public opposition to this execution.<sup>84</sup> It was a means for Burghley to extricate himself, as well as his Queen, from the international implications of a Catholic sovereign's death. He tried to guarantee the Cecils' political future by saving their reputation from a regicidal charge: killing the heir presumptive, the likelihood of whose son being the next ruler of England was increasing daily.

Walsingham or Leicester may have been covertly working for years to remove Mary from the pro-Cecil Shrewsbury's charge at Sheffield, to some place 'where she might be more narrowly looked into and more safely kept' by their own men.<sup>85</sup> Burghley, in a Council meeting at the end of 1582, had opposed 'her being removed from where she had remained for 15 years, especially as Shrewsbury had not failed to carry out any point of his instructions'; 'her removal would scandalise the country.'<sup>86</sup> The discovery of the Throckmorton Plot succeeded in transferring Mary's guardianship from Shrewsbury to Paulet, a client of Leicester's, who in Morgan's words was 'a Puritan in religion and very ambitious', after Walsingham's own heart.<sup>87</sup> For this new responsibility, Paulet gave a loyal oath to the Secretary, that

Touching the safetye, and forth cominge of this Q[ueen's] person, I will never aske pardon, if she depart out of my hands by any treacherous slight, or cuninge advise, because I must confesse that the same canne not come to pass without some grose negligence, or rather traiterous carelesnes; and if I shalbe assaulted with force at home or abrode, as I will not be beholdinge to traitors for my lyfe, wherof I make little account, in respect of my alleageanuce to the Q[ueen] my Sovereign, so I wilbee

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<sup>84</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 28 Mar 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 48.

<sup>85</sup> John Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet: Keeper of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1874), x; Read, *Walsingham*, II, 354-55.

<sup>86</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 31 Dec. 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 432.

<sup>87</sup> Thomas Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, 30 Mar. 1585, *CSP Scotland, 1584-1585*, 606. Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, xxii, 20.

assured by the grace of God, that she shall dye before me.<sup>88</sup>

Under his charge Mary was first removed to Tutbury in Staffordshire in January 1585. In September, in accordance with Walsingham's instructions, Paulet closed Mary's last legitimate channel via the French embassy with the outside world. 'To tell her understand that all the pasquettes that she doth hereafter send into France must be directed unto me [Walsingham], and not unto the newe frenche ambassador, for that her majesty[']s meaninge is that he shall not have ane thinge to do with the conveyance of her letters into France, havinge also geiven order unto the Bishop of Glascoe, that such letters as he shall send from thence shalbe delivered unto Mr. Stafforde.'<sup>89</sup> This closure originated in Walsingham's fear that it would become difficult to continue his spying on the newly assigned French ambassador Châteauneuf, who had suspected that Laurent Feron—the former Ambassador Castelnau's clerk who had been passing information to Walsingham—was a spy. Even so, at this time Mary's correspondence with her partisans was not shut down as effectually as Conyers Read has believed.<sup>90</sup> Paulet still suspected her of continuing to send and receive letters at Tutbury via her laundresses.<sup>91</sup> In December Mary was again transferred to Chartley, an estate owned by Leicester's stepson Robert Devereux. There Paulet was convinced of the impossibility of any of Mary's men being able to 'convey a piece of paper as big as my finger' out of or into the castle.<sup>92</sup> Hereafter, Walsingham and Leicester had Mary under their absolute control, in terms both of her gaoler and her location. Their

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<sup>88</sup> BL, Harley MS 6993 f. 93, Paulet to Walsingham, 5 Jul. 1585.

<sup>89</sup> TNA, SP 53/16/40, 'The heades of a letter unto Sir Amyas Paulett', 13 Sept. 1585.

<sup>90</sup> The Archbishop of Glasgow to Mary, 8/8 Jul. 1585. He mentioned that the letter to her on 20 January had been detained, and that he had not heard from her since 4 January. Read, *Walsingham*, III, 7.

<sup>91</sup> Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, 50-52, 64, 94, 108.

<sup>92</sup> Paulet to Walsingham, 10 Jan. 1586, *ibid.*, 126.

systematic elimination of loopholes and the tightening of the net around her stimulated Mary's hunger for intelligence, tempting her into the fatal Babington Plot. However first, and unexpectedly, came the Parry Plot of 1585.

### 3.2: The Parry Plot

The man behind it was a Welshman called William Parry, who had served Burghley as a voluntary informant while travelling in Rome and Siena from May 1577.<sup>93</sup> Around about early 1580, forced to flee his creditors, Parry abruptly left for Paris.<sup>94</sup> There he rehabilitated himself through further work for Burghley, monitoring the city's exiles and recruiting some like Charles Neville and Thomas Copley, who solicited Burghley's influence to intercede for Queen Elizabeth's pardon.<sup>95</sup> On 1 May 1580, to Burghley, Parry swore his fidelity to the Queen and his support of her practices against her Catholic enemies in Paris:

The name and title of a true subiect have bene alwayes so dere unto me, that I cannot but hould hym and his religion for suspected that practiseth any thing against Her Majesty, whose governement and fortune have bene no lesse comfortable to all good men at home, then straunge and fearefull to her ennemyes abrode.<sup>96</sup>

Back in London in September, Parry became involved in an affray with the moneylender High Hare, and was imprisoned for burglary and attempted murder. Freed in August 1582, Parry immediately received a licence to travel abroad for three years. Firstly reaching Paris, he won the trust of Allen, Persons, Paget and Morgan. By

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<sup>93</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 25 ff. 125r-126r, Parry to Burghley, 23 May 1577.

<sup>94</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 29 f. 126r, Parry to Burghley, 15 Jan. 1579/1580.

<sup>95</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 31 f. 2r-v, Parry to Burghley, 7 Apr. 1580. TNA, SP 15/27/25, same to same, 20 Jul. 1580; BL, Lansdowne MS 31 ff. 18r-v, same to same, 30 Jul. 1580. Edwards, *Plots and Plotters*, 102. Alford, *The Watchers*, 139-40.

<sup>96</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 31 f. 6r, Parry to Burghley, 1 May 1580.

January 1583, in Venice, the Jesuit Benedetto Palmio introduced him to Campeggio, the papal nuncio to Venice, to whom Parry acted as outwardly reconciled to Catholicism.<sup>97</sup>

After twelve years in the service of the Queen...I came to the conclusion that it was both dangerous to me and little to my honour. I have accordingly changed my mind and made a firm resolution to relinquish the project assigned to me and, with determined will, to employ all my strength and industry in the service of the Church and the Catholic faith.<sup>98</sup>

Campeggio passed this letter to the Cardinal of Como, the cardinal Secretary of State. By May, Parry flourished this achievement to Burghley: ‘if I be not deceived I have shaken the Foundation of the English Seminary, that at Rheims; and utterly overthrown the Credit of the English Pensioners in Rome.’ Inevitably, he requested more money for espionage: ‘if I were well warranted and allowed I would either prevent and discover all Romayne and Spaynish practises against our state, or lose my life in testimony of my loyalty to the Queen Majesty and the duty to my honorable frendes that have protected me.’<sup>99</sup> Almost simultaneously, he sought employment with Walsingham, who had become the sole Secretary from 1581, in order to escape arrest for robbery and to solve his financial difficulties.<sup>100</sup> By October 1583, likely directed by Burghley, he headed for Paris to monitor some suspicious preparations for the invasion of England connected with the Throckmorton Plot.<sup>101</sup> The failure of this

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<sup>97</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 40 ff. 55r-v, Parry to Burghley, 18/28 Jan. 1583. BL, Lansdowne MS 37 ff. 70r-v, same to same, 18 Feb./10 Mar. 1583.

<sup>98</sup> Leo Hicks, ‘The Strange Case of Dr. William Parry’, *An Irish Quarterly Review* 37 (1948), 347-48.

<sup>99</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 39 ff. 128r-129r, Parry to Burghley, 10 May 1583, John Strype, *Annals of the Reformation and Establishment of Religion* (London, 1737), III, 82.

<sup>100</sup> TNA, SP 78/9 f. 103, Parry to Walsingham, 10 May 1583. SP 78/10 f. 58, Stafford to Burghley, 21 Oct. 1583. SP 15/28/45, Parry to Walsingham, 6 Dec. 1583.

<sup>101</sup> TNA, SP 78/10 f. 52, Parry to Walsingham, 14/24 Oct. 1583; BL, Lansdowne MS 39 ff. 176r-v, Parry to Burghley, 14/24 Oct. 1583.



intrigue had brought new exiles to Paris, including Thomas Paget and Charles Arundel, with whom Parry ‘had sundry conferences...thereof I means to make your [Walsingham] pryvy upon my returne’. Maybe this intimacy of daily spying excited Parry’s compassion for these exiles: ‘I finde theym not to complayne of Her Majesty’s government, but that, oppressed by ther contraryes, they were either to leave their Countrey or to abide and suffre more disgraces then they deserved or were able to beare.’<sup>102</sup> Between October and December, Morgan persuaded Parry to ‘doe some service for God and his Church’. Parry promised to do it ‘if it were to kill the greatest subject [Burghley] in England: whome I named, and in trueth then hated’. Morgan rejected this proposed target, ‘let him live to his greater fal and ruine of his house’, and suggested instead the assassination of Queen Elizabeth.<sup>103</sup>

Back to London in January 1584, Parry was granted an audience ‘at large’ with the Queen, probably achieved through Ambassador Stafford’s praise and Burghley’s influence. Parry ‘very privately discovered to her Maiestie’ his ability to foment a conspiracy between Morgan, Campeggio and Como to assassinate her and crown Mary. Elizabeth ‘tooke it doubtfully’.<sup>104</sup> In reward for this effort, in May Parry desperately pleaded with Burghley for the mastership of the Hospital of St Catherine in East London, but failed.<sup>105</sup> Despairing of any preferment, Parry left the court in July,

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<sup>102</sup> TNA, SP 15/28/47, Parry to Walsingham, 18 Dec. 1583.

<sup>103</sup> *A True and plaine declaration of the horrible Treasons, practised by William Parry the Traitor, against the Queenes Maiestie. The maner of his Arraignment, Conviction and execution, together with the copies of sundry letters of his and others, tending to divers purposes, for the proofes of his Treasons* (London: [Christopher Barker], 1585), STC 19342, 13-14. William Cobbett and Thomas Bayly Howell, eds., *A Complete Collection of State-Trials, and Proceedings For High-Treason, And Other Crimes And Misdemeanours; From the Reign of King Richard II to the Reign of King George II* (London, 1762), 123.

<sup>104</sup> [Barker], *A True and plaine declaration of the horrible Treasons, practised by William Parry*, 15.

<sup>105</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 43 f. 13, Parry to Burghley, May 1584.

‘utterly rejected, discontented, and as her Majestie might perceive by my passionate letters, carelesse of my self’.<sup>106</sup> Probably aiming to procure patronage, Parry risked resuming the stock trick of instigating plots. In August, Parry lobbied Edward Neville, Walsingham’s spy in Rouen, to murder the Queen for the cause of religion, Mary’s succession, and justice in general. After his second effort at persuasion on 6 February 1585, a day later Neville lodged information about Parry’s treason with the Queen.<sup>107</sup> Quite aware of Parry as an agent provocateur, the Queen assigned Walsingham to conduct a closed examination at his private residence; this was a chance she gave Parry to clear himself. At his trial on 25 February, Parry confessed the indictment: ‘I am Guilty of all that is therein contain’d; and further too, I desire not Life, but desire to die.’<sup>108</sup> Parry was hanged in Westminster Palace yard on 2 March.

The Parry Plot has been a conundrum to generations of historians. According to Penry Williams, the plot uncovered in February 1585 shortly after Parliament reconvened was intended to give urgency to attempts to convert the Bond of Association into a formal statute, ‘For the surety of the Queen’s most royal person’.<sup>109</sup> In actual fact though, through parliamentary patronage exercised by the likes of Burghley, Leicester and Bedford the Council dominated both Houses; any law the Council had decided on could be passed without the help of Parry’s blood. John Bossy calls Parry’s execution a ‘judicial murder’ and ‘a grave discredit’ to Queen Elizabeth: faced with rising indignation from the Council and Parliament at her hesitation over the Bond of Association, the Queen threw the loyal Parry ‘to the hounds in Council and Parliament

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<sup>106</sup> [Barker], *A True and plaine declaration of the horrible Treasons... by William Parry*, 16.

<sup>107</sup> Confession of Edmund Neville, 9 Feb. 1585, *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 226.

<sup>108</sup> *A Complete Collection of State-Trials, I*, 122.

<sup>109</sup> Penry Williams, *The Later Tudors England 1547-1603* (Oxford, 2002), 303.

so as to get them off her back and preserve the integrity of her crown'.<sup>110</sup> Stephen Alford, however, convicts Parry of high treachery. Swayed by materialism and megalomania, he risked playing a double game between Catholicism and his home government, and 'the cold welcome he found in London and fear of financial ruin only fixed in his mind a desperate mission to assassinate the queen'.<sup>111</sup> Alford reads Parry's personality uncompromisingly: 'He was a social climber and something of a snob', 'perilously self-deluding' and 'born for self-destruction'.<sup>112</sup> By contrast, John Cooper agrees with Julian Lock's understanding of Parry, seeing him as a man whose multiple personalities left 'his loyalties irredeemably confused and compromised', and who took a gamble on persuading another spy Edmund Neville to murder the Queen.<sup>113</sup>

Parry died because of his increasing greed for patronage, and for compromising his fidelity to Queen Elizabeth with a growing sympathy for Catholicism. His failure in achieving the mastership of the Hospital of St Catherine in May 1584 and a Deanery (Provostship or Mastership of Request) in September, inevitably led to discontent: 'why should I care for her [Queen Elizabeth]? What hath she done for me? Have I not spent 10000 markes since I knew her service, and never had penie by her?'<sup>114</sup> More fatally, the long-term intimacy of spying on exiles, and the effect of Robert Persons's *De Persecutione Anglicana* (1582), had cultivated his probable sympathy for

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<sup>110</sup> Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, 133-34.

<sup>111</sup> Alford, *The Watchers*, 180.

<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, 83, 88.

<sup>113</sup> 'Parry, William (d. 1585)', Julian Lock in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/21437> (accessed September 27, 2012). Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 198-99.

<sup>114</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 43 f. 34r, Parry to Burghley, 3 Sept. 1584. [Barker], *A True and plaine declaration of the horrible Treasons... by William Parry*, 16.

Catholicism.<sup>115</sup> Sitting in the Parliament of 1584 for Queenborough in Kent, on 17 December Parry made a pro-Catholic protest against the new legislation for the Queen's safety, denouncing the bill as 'full of blood, danger, despair and terrour or dread to the English subjects of this Realm'. Next day, at the Queen's suggestion, he, 'kneeling upon his knee in very humble manner', apologised for his rashness as a new member unfamiliar with the proper way to behave in the House.<sup>116</sup> When under arrest in the Tower, on 14 February 1585 he wrote to Queen Elizabeth, beginning with a confession:

Your Majesty may see by my voluntary confession the daungerouse fruietes of a discontented mynde, and how constantly I pursued my first conceived purpose in Venyce for the relief of the afflicted Catholiks, contyneued yt in Lyons and resolved in Paris to put yt in adventure for restitution of England to the auncient obedience of the sea Apostolike.

The whole second half of this letter he then spent on condemning Elizabeth's intolerance for Catholics, her aid to the Dutch rebels against Spain, and her evil treatment of her relative Mary:

Give some ease to your Cath. Subiects...the indignytyes passed your Majesty and the king Catholike are many. You have disquieted his state, mayneteyned his rebelles and do beare not such as have robbed hym and his subjects...The Qu of Scotland is your prisoner, let her be honourably in treated but yet surely garded. She may do you good she will do you no harme if the fault be not English. Satisfy her reasonably in her keeper...A new governor and a new gard may brede new doubtte. Emulation may do harme, please your selfe in this case, yt importeth you moste, so long as yt is well with her this faulte with you when she is in feare, you are not without peril. Cherish and Love her, she is of your blood and your undoubted heyre in succession.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Alford, *The Watchers*, 143-44

<sup>116</sup> Simonds D'Ewes, *The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1682), 340, 342.

<sup>117</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 43 ff. 117r-118r, 'Dr. Parry's extraordinary letter of confession to the Queen', 14 Feb. 1584.

This part was deleted from the official printed account of the Parry Plot, implying that this official pamphlet was heavily censored by the Council.<sup>118</sup> On 18 February, to Leicester and Burghley, Parry also confessed that ‘my case is rare and strange, and, for any thing I can remember, singular: a natural subject solemnly to vowe the death of his naturall Queene...for the reliefe of the afflicted Catholiques, and restitution of religion’.<sup>119</sup> His sympathy towards Catholicism caused him to unconsciously cross the red line of treason. At the last moment on the scaffold, he finally sobered up: ‘Here I protest vnto you all I am clean of that I am condemned to dye for: I did never intende to laye violent handes on her most sacred Majesty, whome I beseche God longe to preserve from all her enemyes, and here I will take it on my deathe and seale it with my blood.’<sup>120</sup>

It may also be worth considering Parry’s death in terms of personal enmity and the worsening of party rivalries in the mid-1580s. Edmund Neville voluntarily denounced Parry’s treachery, probably out of his hostility towards the Cecils. He even claimed the estates of his late great-uncle, the fourth Lord Latimer, but these had instead been obtained by Burghley’s eldest son Thomas through marriage to Latimer’s heiress Dorothy.<sup>121</sup> After this, Neville devoted himself to Walsingham’s espionage activities in Rouen from 1582, in order to plead for Walsingham’s influence with Queen Elizabeth to restore his family reputation and the lost wardships.<sup>122</sup> More interestingly, Neville

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<sup>118</sup> [Barker], *A True and plaine declaration of the horrible Treasons... by William Parry*, 19-20.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 21-22.

<sup>120</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 ff. 244, 245, Report of Parry’s Execution, 2 Mar. 1585.

<sup>121</sup> Hicks, ‘The Strange Case of Dr. William Parry’, 354.

<sup>122</sup> TNA, SP 15/27/62, Sir Edm. Latimer to Walsingham, 5 Dec. 1582.

disclosed the plot at a very politically sensitive time. A week before, on 30 January failure in a patronage suit and divergence over policy towards the Dutch infuriated Walsingham to the point where he proclaimed that he held Burghley more ‘as an enemy then as a frende’.<sup>123</sup> Parry may have been sacrificed as cannon fodder in Walsingham’s campaign to sustain hostility towards his old patron. A confession by Thomas Harrison, a servant of Walsingham’s, long after the latter’s death admitted that ‘the plot by Parrye was wrocht by thame’: Walsingham, Thomas Phelippes and himself.<sup>124</sup> It happened at an unsuitable time and hence ended in bloodshed.

Burghley kept an unusual silence throughout his spy’s trial. Probably, as Parry’s patron, he avoided suspicion by doing nothing, or else was powerless to rescue him because of his limited access to the workings of Walsingham’s espionage. On 1 March 1585, a day before Parry’s execution, he wrote to Walsingham suggesting the necessity of establishing the official public line about the truth of Parry’s treason because various rumours had spread in print.<sup>125</sup> Three days later, he informed Walsingham again: ‘This after noone my L. of lec. [Leicester] Master vich. [Christopher Hatton] and some others do mete here at my howss [on the Strand] to consider of thynges by us committed this morning to Master att[orney] and Master sollicitor for publication of the truth of parriss fact.’<sup>126</sup> They deleted from the official pamphlet a great part of Parry’s statement favourable to Catholicism. It is not that we can treat Burghley’s two letters to Walsingham as direct evidence that they cooperated, together with Hatton and

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<sup>123</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1585.

<sup>124</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/VIII f. 625, ‘Confession of Thomas Harisone concerning the conspiracy against Mary’, [1587].

<sup>125</sup> TNA, SP 12/177/1, Burghley to Walsingham, 1 Mar. 1585.

<sup>126</sup> TNA, SP 12/177/4, Burghley to Walsingham, 3 Mar. 1585.

Leicester, to bury Parry in obloquy. Rather, their action was a Council measure to suppress the various post-event rumours about the Parry Plot.

Since January 1585, the discovery of the Throckmorton Plot had restricted Mary's correspondence with the outside world; in March 1585 the disclosure of the Parry Plot sent Morgan, Mary's chief cipher clerk, into the Bastille.<sup>127</sup> These efforts were made in readiness for the impending Babington Plot, to entrap Mary, who was hungry for intelligence, into intriguing again. The complicated process and consequent trials of the Babington Plot have received adequate scholarly discussion. The research that follows will thus focus on Walsingham's intelligence operation: the elaborate division of labour and Walsingham's full empowerment of his secretaries.

### 3.3: The Babington Plot

The Babington Plot reveals a well-organised division of labour between Walsingham's overseas and home intelligence networks, and between spies and organisers. A great number of his agents and spies had infiltrated the suspicious community of plotters. Proclaiming himself 'a party in the action', Amias Paulet kept his 'very curious and watchful' eyes trained on the chief conspirator, Mary Stuart.<sup>128</sup> In Paris, in the spring of 1585, Solomon Aldred and Gilbert Gifford lobbied the leading secular priests—William Gifford and Edward Grately—in order to exacerbate the latter's rivalry with their Jesuit opponents. The traditional historiography presumes Gilbert Gifford's work in Walsingham's espionage began in December 1585, when he was detained at the port of Rye as Morgan's courier between the French embassy in London

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<sup>127</sup> Derby and Stafford to Walsingham, 6 Mar., 1585. *CSPF, 1584-1585*, 326-29.

<sup>128</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/1, Paulet to Phelippes, 3 Jun. 1586.

and Mary.<sup>129</sup> Actually, by April 1585 Phelippes may have already directed him to monitor Mendoza and the exiles in Paris.<sup>130</sup> Nicholas Berden landed on France in early August 1585, and soon noticed that Dryland and John Ballard (alias Fortescue) were conversant with the exiled Earls of Cumberland and Rutland.<sup>131</sup>

As the disclosure of the Babington Plot approached, certain spies were recalled to service at home. Around Christmas 1585, Phelippes arrived at Mary's prison residence in Chartley, to contrive a new route for conveying Mary's letters: via a brewer's house in Burton where the letters would be securely sealed in a waterproof tube in an ale barrel.<sup>132</sup> Using this method, Gifford and his substitute courier, his cousin Thomas Barnes, conveyed letters between Mary and the French embassy.<sup>133</sup> In February 1586, Gifford brought Phelippes twenty-one packets 'great and small' from the house of Ambassador Châteauneuf.<sup>134</sup> Protective of Gifford's work, Phelippes advised Walsingham to allay the suspicions of Richard Young, a JP of Westminster, directing him not to penetrate their spying—'it may please you to limit him by some peremptory speche'.<sup>135</sup> In April, Berden left Paris for London, employed as a letter-courier by Charles Paget, Charles Arundel, Stephen Brynkeley, Godfrey Foulgiam and Thomas

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<sup>129</sup> 'Gifford, Gilbert (1560–1590)', Alison Plowden in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/10660> (accessed September 27, 2012).

<sup>130</sup> TNA, SP 12/200/48, [Gilbert Gifford] to [Phelippes], 26 Apr. 1585, Paris.

<sup>131</sup> TNA, SP 15/29/39, Thomas Rogers to Walsingham, 11 Aug. 1585; TNA, SP 12/188/37, same to same, 23 Apr. 1586.

<sup>132</sup> Turnbull, ed., *Letters of Mary Stuart*, 351.

<sup>133</sup> Mary to Châteauneuf, 24 Mar. 1586, Turnbull, ed., *Letters of Mary Stuart*, 340-41; Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Paulet*, 149; Read, *Walsingham*, III, 13; Aug. 11 1586 Confession by John Savage, 11 Aug. 1586, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 611-13; Thomas Barnes to Walsingham, 17 Mar. 1587, *CSP Scotland, 1586-1589*, 335; [Gilbert Giffard] to his cousin Barnes, 27 Jan. 1588, *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 459.

<sup>134</sup> Alford, *The Watchers*, 198-99.

<sup>135</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/28, Phelippes to Walsingham, 19 Mar. 1586.



Fytzharberd, being used to transmit intelligence to them from England. Berden kept up an entire system of correspondence with the above parties using their cipher alphabets: from Paget he was to receive letters from Paget's brother Thomas and others émigrés; from Arundel, letters from Francis Englefield; from Brynkeley, Berden received intelligence of the affairs of Allen and Persons; from Foulgian, all the business of Mary Stuart; from Fytzharberd, the devices of the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici. Berden also requested Walsingham consult with Justice Young, who had nearly arrested him: 'yf the sayd Master Younge be not warned by your honor to be silent my travel wilbe but vayne.'<sup>136</sup> In late April, Berden offered Walsingham a list of the Catholic priests living in London, and cautioned him against Peter Wylkox, a supplier of the royal buttery, who was actually a spy of Morgan's and conversant with Walsingham's chamber employees. Again he called Walsingham's attention to 'Fortescue alias Ballard'.<sup>137</sup> Because of this, on his voyage to France in June Ballard was monitored by Barnard Maude, who successfully made him disclose all his secret dealings with Mendoza.

In England Robert Poley was the key watcher over the main plotter, Anthony Babington. Having served Walsingham since 1582, he was ordered to befriend Morgan, first in 1584 by volunteering his service to Mary, and then in 1585 by making use of a reference from his distant relative, Christopher Blunt. The hoodwinked Morgan admitted Poley, who had a good geographical knowledge of England and Scotland, to his correspondence with Mary and the French ambassador Castelnau. Morgan also

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<sup>136</sup> TNA, SP 12/187/81, Rogers to Walsingham, late Apr. or early May 1586. The calendarer Robert Lemon noted that 'There can be little doubt this important communication was the basis of the secret intelligence which enabled Walsingham to counteract the designs of Spain resulting in the destruction of the Spanish Armada.' *CSP Domestic, 1581-1590*, 317.

<sup>137</sup> TNA, SP 12/188/37, 'Information sent to Sir Fr. Walsyngham relative to Priests and Recusants', 23 Apr. 1586.

placed Poley in the household of Philip Sidney and his wife Lady Frances, Walsingham's only daughter. Now Walsingham directed Poley 'to move Babington to deal with the principal practisers in the state'.<sup>138</sup> And because Phelippes learned from an unknown 'secret party' that the French ambassador 'has been anxious to find some spy means to send a packet into Scotland with some secret matters', he suggested Walsingham should send Poley into that embassy 'to see what he will offer touching the convoy of these letters'.<sup>139</sup> Surely, Walsingham was knitting a delicate spy network in which to smother Mary.

As to the management of Walsingham's espionage, during the Babington Plot, Walsingham left London for his country manor at Barn Elms, partly because of his illness but more possibly because he thereby avoided any direct involvement in this counter-plot. His intelligence team shielded him likewise. Francis Mylles, organising the arrest of John Ballard on 4 August 1586 with the warrant of Lord Admiral Charles Howard, carefully avoided his master being identified.<sup>140</sup> Nevertheless, Walsingham's prominence in the English regime meant he was hardly detached from this secret game. From June 1586, Walsingham in person socialised insincerely with Babington who pleaded via Poley for private interviews with the keeper of the Privy Seal. Walsingham succeeded in manipulating Babington's hunger for a travel licence to obtain still more intelligence. Babington learned from Poley of Walsingham's suspicions of his sincerity, that 'Babington was so close and spare in opening himself "and the means of his offered service" that he [Walsingham] had no great liking of him nor to deal with her

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<sup>138</sup> Alford, *The Watchers*, 198. 207, 220; F. S. Boas, 'Robert Poley: An Associate of Marlowe', *Nineteenth Century and After*, 104 (1928), 543-52. Charles Nicholl, *The Reckoning: The Murder of Christopher Marlowe* (London, 2002), 156-95.

<sup>139</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/28, Phelippes to Walsingham, 19 Mar. 1586.

<sup>140</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/14, Mylles to Walsingham, 4 Aug. 1586.

majesty for him'. Babington therefore confided more ongoing intrigues: the planned murders of the principal governors under Queen Elizabeth, especially Leicester, Burghley and Walsingham.<sup>141</sup>

From his house at Barn Elms, Walsingham fully authorised his secretariat to direct the espionage. Phelippes was nominated to take full charge. He juggled busily between Walsingham's official lodging in London, Barn Elms, and Chartley. Phelippes worked at Walsingham's lodging at court, chiefly to inform the Queen of the latest spying developments and win her support for their schemes.<sup>142</sup> Sometimes he was recalled to Barn Elms to brief Walsingham. In early July when the game was reaching its climax, Phelippes returned to Chartley. On 6 July, Babington addressed Mary, outlining a plot: 'the dispatch of the vsurping Competitor [Elizabeth]' and the release of Mary, with support from an invasion from Spain. 'For the dispatch of the vsurper, from the obedience of whome wee are by the communication of her made free, there bee six noble gentlemen all my private frends, who for the zeale they beare to the Catholick cause and your Majestie service will vndertake that tragicall execution.'<sup>143</sup> Ten days later, Phelippes collected Mary's answer to Babington's plan, the so-called 'bloody letter' dated 17 July 1586; its copy was presented at Mary's trials as the decisive proof of her treason. Walsingham hoped 'ther wyll be a good course haht [held] I this cause. Otherwise we that have ben instruments in the dyscoverye shall receyve lyttle comefort for our traveyle.'<sup>144</sup> Phelippes added to the original letter a postscript to query 'the

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<sup>141</sup> Confession by Robert Poley, [Aug.] 1586, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 595-602.

<sup>142</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/80, 83, 96, Walsingham to Phelippes ('my servant at court'), 3, 4, 10 Sept. 1586.

<sup>143</sup> TNA, SP 53/19/12, Babington to Mary Queen of Scots, 6/16 July, 1586.

<sup>144</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/68, Walsingham to Phelippes, 22 July 1586.

names and qualities of the six gentlemen which are to accomplish the designment'.<sup>145</sup> Pollen believed this postscript was 'the only forgery which Phelippes was allowed'; in other words, the rest of this letter was genuine. On 2 August, Walsingham revealed his fear to Phelippes, of that 'the addytyon of the postscript hath bred the jealousy'.<sup>146</sup> This self-produced evidence that Mary Stuart was guilty of planning the assassination of her royal cousin successfully forced the hesitant Elizabeth to sign the warrant for Mary's execution.

With regards to this plot, MacCaffrey believes that Walsingham kept it top secret, rarely sharing even with Leicester, Burghley, or the Queen. This blockade on intelligence continued until July, at which point Mary's response to Babington's regicidal plan was in hand.<sup>147</sup> On 9 July 1586, Walsingham sent the first hint of his plan concerning the Babington Plot to his ally Leicester, then away in the Low Countries. The Earl was cautiously informed of the progress of this intrigue, albeit surreptitiously by the letter-carrier. The Secretary promised the Earl that, 'I mean, when the matter is grown to a full ripenes, to send some confydential person unto you, to acquaynt you fully with the matter'.<sup>148</sup> This letter reflects their political alliance. However, Leicester did not entirely rely on Walsingham's intelligence supply; there was some overlap or connection between Walsingham's espionage network and Leicester's. The company of players known as Leicester's Men was integral to the new establishment of the Queen's Men. Both were suspected of being employed by their

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<sup>145</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/55, Mary Queen of Scots to Babington, 17/27 July 1586. Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, 45-46.

<sup>146</sup> BL, Cotton MS Appendix L, f. 140, Walsingham to Phelippes, 2 Aug. 1586.

<sup>147</sup> MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I*, 346-47.

<sup>148</sup> BL, Cotton MS Galba C/IX f. 290, Walsingham to Leicester, 9 Jul. 1586.

sponsors in domestic spying and political propaganda.<sup>149</sup> Giordano Bruno, it is possible, can be identified as Henry Fagot, one of Walsingham's informants inside the French embassy, who had been admitted to Leicester's clientele via his devotion to Philip Sidney.<sup>150</sup> In Walsingham's operation around the Babington Plot, Leicester's men were present. Leicester's Master of Horse, Christopher Blunt, may have informed his master in advance of his being introduced by Thomas Morgan into Mary's correspondence, and when he commended Robert Poley to Morgan as a spy.<sup>151</sup> In March 1586 another of Leicester's men, Thomas Barnes, was recommended for Walsingham's service by his cousin Gilbert Gifford. Barnes was involved as a substitute letter-carrier during Gifford's time in France. Accordingly, Walsingham was not the only source of intelligence for Leicester.

Queen Elizabeth, as Pollen stated, was not bent on Mary's death, though she was not entirely innocent of Walsingham's clandestine schemes. In April 1586, she made an inscrutable speech to the French ambassador:

You have much secret intelligence with the Queen of Scotland. But, believe me, I know everything that is done in my kingdom. Beside, since I was a prisoner in the time of the Queen my sister, I know what artifices prisoners use to gain over servants, and to have secret information.<sup>152</sup>

Apparently Walsingham did not hide all of his espionage work from his royal mistress until July, for he needed her financial support for his costly spying. She issued £500 to

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<sup>149</sup> S. McMillin and S. B. Maclean, *The Queen's Men and Their Plays* (Cambridge, 1998), 18, 25, 27-28. Helen Ostovich, Holger Schott Syme, and Andrew Griffin, eds., *Locating the Queen's Men, 1583-1603: Material Practices and Conditions of Playing* (Aldershot, 2009), 15.

<sup>150</sup> Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, 138.

<sup>151</sup> Thomas Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, 10 Jul. 1585, *CSP Scotland, 1585-1586*, 11-18.

<sup>152</sup> Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, lxiv.

pay Walsingham's intelligencers in 1585, and £600 in February 1586, with a further £500 in June as a response to the impending Babington Plot.<sup>153</sup> Besides this, in May 1586 the financially cautious Elizabeth granted Phelippes a pension of a hundred marks; in July Nicholas Berden and Gilbert Gifford shared another piece of royal patronage.<sup>154</sup> She must have learnt about the spying activities of these men before rewarding them. In addition, the prime purpose of Phelippes working at the Secretary's court lodging was to facilitate the Queen's understanding of their latest actions and to obtain her approval. In a letter to Phelippes on 22 July 1586, Walsingham reminded him of this duty, that 'at your return you shall from her Majesty's selve understande howe well she acceptethe of your serveyce'.<sup>155</sup> Through the royal privilege of patronage, Queen Elizabeth prevented herself from being an ignorant puppet on the throne.

Compared with Leicester and the Queen, the intelligence Walsingham passed to Burghley was scant. Whether in the archives or in the historiography, Burghley rarely appears on stage until the plots were disclosed to the public and open examinations were entered into. Even so, some scholars insist that Burghley was the real helmsman behind the English counter-plots and behind Walsingham. Pollen states that 'it is true that Burghley was not quite so bitter a hater as Walsingham, but a mortal enemy for all that, who took the lead in all the proceedings for Mary's death'.<sup>156</sup> Francis Edwards describes Walsingham as an executor, obedient to Burghley. John Guy's use of the term

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<sup>153</sup> TNA, SP 12/229/49, 'Note of the sums issued by warrant to Sir Francis Walsingham', Dec. 1589.

<sup>154</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/60, Walsingham to Phelippes, 3 May 1586. TNA, SP 53/18/32, Walsingham to Phelippes, 7 Jul. 1586.

<sup>155</sup> TNA, SP 53/18/68, Walsingham to Phelippes, 22 Jul. 1586.

<sup>156</sup> Pollen, *Mary Queen of Scots and the Babington Plot*, 130.

‘Cecils’ spymaster’ in his biography of Mary Stuart, subordinates Walsingham to Burghley’s spy network.<sup>157</sup> However, these arguments are doubtful; the intelligence-patronage cooperation between Cecil and Walsingham had foundered by the late 1570s. The question remains, however, as to why Burghley and his system of espionage become so quiet in the 1580s?

Burghley’s absence from the record perhaps represents activity that was intentionally concealed by Burghley himself, as well as by pro-Cecil clients and historians. After Mary died in February 1587, Burghley reiterated to King Philip of Spain his opposition to her execution, sending multiple explanations via Stafford, Charles Arundel, and Mendoza. He imputed her death to his radical rivals—‘a pair of knaves’—Leicester and Walsingham.<sup>158</sup> In 1600, possibly at the request of Robert Cecil, Patrick Lord Gray, the former Scottish ambassador during Mary’s execution, explained to King James that Leicester and Walsingham were ‘the cutters of her throat and inducers of Davison to do as he did...it was far from the Q. [Elizabeth] or his father’s [Burghley’s] mind that she should die when she died’.<sup>159</sup> The Cecils, however, falsified the facts. Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, accused Burghley and his son Robert of Mary’s destruction, by acting as the ‘chefe artificers though covered and shadowed by the passions of Walsingham’.<sup>160</sup> Evidence certainly exists to identify Burghley as the pivotal director in drafting the warrant of Mary’s execution and in calling the Council to dispatch it to completion. Cecil’s patronage network, though, lasted until the modern

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<sup>157</sup> Guy, *My Heart is My Own*, 459, 481, 490-91, 509.

<sup>158</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan., 28 Feb., 6 Mar., 28 Mar. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9, 25-28, 47-48.

<sup>159</sup> The Master of Gray to [the King of Scots], 9 Dec. 1600. *HMC, Salisbury*, X, 412.

<sup>160</sup> TNA, SP 14/71/16, Earl of Northampton to Rochester, 10 Oct. 1612.

period, and this has facilitated the absolution of Burghley from charges of regicide.

The Cecils whitewashed themselves from Mary's execution, in order to sustain the long-term position of their family in English high politics. Mary's death, whether it was promoted by Elizabeth's government or not, would unavoidably incur criticism from Catholics and from her son King James. After the breakdown of matrimonial negotiations with the Archduke Charles and then the Duke of Anjou, the likelihood of Queen Elizabeth having an heir reduced as her age increased, and James VI's succession to the English throne became more probable. Aiming at building a Cecil dynasty under the English regime, Burghley had to avoid possible hostility towards his family from the motherless King James. Walsingham, well known for his enthusiasm for radical Protestantism and his enmity towards Mary, may have been pushed forwards as the best available scapegoat. In the story of English intelligence against the plots of the 1580s, Burghley's dissembling created his absence from both the archives and the pages of written history.

On the other hand, this silence also represents Burghley's real absence from Walsingham's schemes concerning the Babington Plot. By early 1586, Walsingham had held specific intelligence regarding Burghley's undue friendliness to Mary. On 3 May, in a letter congratulating Phelippes on his newly awarded pension, Walsingham stated at the end: 'I have saved that packet that touchethe the great person [Burghley], as neyther he nor the cause shall take lack. Some warning is to be gyvan to G. [Gilbert Gifford] and Foxley [Edward Grately] lookethe for an answer.'<sup>161</sup> Saving this intelligence from becoming public, Walsingham waited for a further investigation by

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<sup>161</sup> TNA, SP 53/17/60, Walsingham to Phelippes, 3 May 1586.



his spies among the exiled Catholic circle. On 15 May, Walsingham received intelligence from Berden, concerning the attempts of the French ambassador to convey letters to Mary by Lord Treasurer Burghley.<sup>162</sup> In the autumn, all his suspicions were verified. At the beginning of October, Burghley sent a ciphered letter to Stafford, urgently warning him that the home government (meaning Walsingham) had intercepted letters to Mary from Thomas Morgan and the Archbishop of Glasgow. What was more hazardous was its unfavourable record of Stafford's favour to her. Burghley was also named, for helping Mary by facilitating her correspondence with the former French ambassador Castelnau, via her guardian Shrewsbury. Burghley thus suggested,

I perceave we both have been sinisterly dealt withal, in that these Matters have been kept close, thereby bredyng Suspicion where I am sure none were deserved. Nevertheless, where Conscience is found, I way not Danger of Detraction. Truth will always have the upper Hand, and so also am I fully persuaded for you.<sup>163</sup>

Evidently, at the moment when such intelligence fell into Walsingham's hands, Burghley and his party had been entirely isolated from Walsingham's counter-plot against Babington, until the plot was disclosed and entered formal court proceedings. The other reason for Walsingham to stop sharing his intelligence with Burghley was their increasing rivalry over policy. Through this monopoly on intelligence, Walsingham hoped to alter the English conservative policy to more active involvement in the Protestant wars; this will be discussed in next chapter. Despite his efforts, however, Walsingham did not succeed in entirely banishing Burghley from his espionage in the 1580s. The following section will examine how Burghley protected

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<sup>162</sup> TNA, SP 12/189/22, Berden to Walsingham, 15 May 1586.

<sup>163</sup> Burghley to Stafford, 2 Oct. 1586, *A Collection of State Papers...Left by William Cecill Lord Burghley. 1571-1596*, 569.

himself from being isolated from knowledge of the counter-plots led by Walsingham. The double service of Burghley's spies, Queen Elizabeth's confidence in him, and his authority over wardships, all helped him to break through Walsingham's monopoly over intelligence.

#### 4. An Ignorant Burghley?

On 10 August 1586, Burghley described to Walsingham a comic encounter he had had on his way home. During the journey he saw groups of ten or twelve men standing together in every town, the watchmen appointed to apprehend three young men concerned in Babington's conspiracy. Burghley asked how they would recognise the targets they were searching for. They responded that 'Marry, my Lord, by Intelligence of their favour'. 'What mean you by that', Burghley continued to ask. 'Marry, one of the parties hath a hooked nose', they replied. After arriving at Theobalds, Burghley wrote without delay to remind Secretary Walsingham of the negligence of the Justices in appointing such foolish men:

And if they be no better instructed, but to find 3 persons by one of them having a hooked nose, they may miss thereof, and thus I thought good to advertise you, that the justyces that had the charge as I thynk may use the matter more circumspectly.<sup>164</sup>

This episode happened between the arrest of John Ballard on 4 August, and that of Anthony Babington and his associates ten days later. It demonstrates the fact that by 10 August Burghley knew about Walsingham's clandestine counter-plot to the Babington conspiracy before it broke. Who offered him access to Walsingham's key secrets?

Anthony Tyrrell, an exiled Catholic priest and a fickle apostate, might be the one who

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<sup>164</sup> TNA, SP 12/192/22, Burghley to Walsingham, 10 Aug. 1586.

offered Burghley news. He had served Burghley as an informant since 1576, when Cecil had ordered his release from prison. During his subsequent second exile he rendered himself popular amongst Catholic émigrés and particularly familiar with John Ballard. From 1584, the two young priests made a grand tour around the continental centres of English exiles, to canvass for the assassination of the queen. Back in England at the end of 1585, they began undertaking their regicidal plan. Unfortunately there is little evidence of Tyrrell's intelligence employment for Burghley during this decade. But in his third captivity in July 1586, or at least after the arrest of his friend Ballard, fearing execution, he may have exposed to Burghley all he knew of this brewing plot in exchange for pardon.<sup>165</sup>

Queen Elizabeth's absolute trust in Burghley also ensured the latter avoided being entirely ignorant of Walsingham's espionage. As Bossy indicates, when Walsingham left for his Scottish embassy in 1583, he had no confidence in letting the Queen and Burghley deputise in his control of the spying arrangements inside the French embassy. In actual fact though, his concern was unnecessary. His well-organised secretariat had been fully empowered in operations. Walter Williams, having penetrated Salisbury Court as a fieldworker and acting as an intermediary with the mole Laurent Feron, Ambassador Castelnau's clerk, was the one assigned a temporary charge inside the embassy during Walsingham's absence. Probably seeking royal patronage, Williams sent an intelligence letter dated 31 August 1583 to Queen Elizabeth, whose name is miswritten as 'Mary Queen of Scots' in the calendar.<sup>166</sup> Bossy has rectified this mistake, believing 'nobody in August 1583 was likely to write to her [Mary] about the

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<sup>165</sup> Christopher Devlin, 'An Unwilling Apostate: The Case of Anthony Tyrrell', *The Month* 6 (1951), 346-58. Michael C. Questier, 'English Clerical Converts to Protestantism, 1580-1596', *Recusant History* 20 (1991), 464-67.

<sup>166</sup> CP 162/114, Walter Williams to [Mary Queen of Scots], 31 Aug. 1583.

peace and quiet of her present state and kingdom'; the 'Sovereign Lady' addressed should therefore be logically assumed to be Queen Elizabeth. Surprisingly, this letter is preserved in the Hatfield archives. Presumably, Queen Elizabeth did not burn it in accordance with Williams's request, but instead forwarded it to Burghley.<sup>167</sup>

Occasionally Burghley's intelligencers also acquainted their patron with Walsingham's moves in the espionage game. Although Burghley and his party were unhappy to see their spies' additional loyalty to other colleagues, this double obligation also acted as a kind of infiltration, by which patrons could learn of the intelligence moves undertaken by their opposition. William Herle had served Burghley since 1559 and Leicester from the early 1560s. By early 1581, owing to his financial difficulties he was again pleading with Secretary Walsingham for 'the dutye I desire to do yow the best service I can'.<sup>168</sup> From April to September 1582, he intensively offered Walsingham intelligence about Antwerp. He then accepted Walsingham's arrangement to act as an intermediary for Henry Fagot in the French embassy. In letters to his old patron Burghley in mid-November 1583, Herle shared intelligence which he had reported to Walsingham, concerning a Catholic enterprise inside the embassy: the forthcoming Throckmorton Plot.<sup>169</sup> The next day, again to Burghley, Herle wrote: 'Those solempne dayes have bred danger mani tymes and the worlld is full of mischeeff, for the enmy slepes nott.'<sup>170</sup> Through dual service therefore, spies not only earned additional patronage from other intelligence systems, but also increased their value to their original patrons.

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<sup>167</sup> Bossy, *Under the Molehill*, 44-45, 75, 81.

<sup>168</sup> TNA, SP 83/15 f. 114r-v, Herle to Walsingham, 8 Mar. 1581.

<sup>169</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 39 ff. 189r-192v, Herle to Burghley, 15 Nov. 1583; BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/VIII ff. 204r-206v, same to same, 23 Nov. 1583.

<sup>170</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 39 f. 193r-v, Herle to Burghley, 16 Nov. 1583.

It is unclear how much the foregoing intelligence access contributed to Burghley's prior understanding of the Babington Plot, shrouded as it was in high secrecy. He must have known some of Walsingham's arrangements through Mary's final custodian, Amias Paulet. As Master of the Court of Wards, Burghley's predominance over the distribution of national patronage lured some claimants to his intelligence system. For a long time historians suspected Paulet of betraying his partisan allegiance, by serving Burghley in order to further his suit for the Paget estates.<sup>171</sup> Walsingham's man and a client of Leicester's, Paulet has been shown to have sent Burghley duplicates of almost every letter he sent to Walsingham in 1585, when he was guarding Mary Queen of Scots in Tutbury. During this time—continuously from May until the summer of 1585—he was pleading with Cecil for patronage. He sent Burghley copies of the dispatches and minutes that circulated between him, Walsingham and Leicester.<sup>172</sup> These evidently revealed some valuable information that should have belonged exclusively to Paulet's ostensible party, including Mary's transfer, her letter-packets and correspondence passed via her laundresses, and most crucially, Walsingham's spying arrangements. 'My purpose and meaning is', Paulet proclaimed to Burghley, 'according to your lordship's grave and most friendly advice, to keep the broad highway in all my actions and doings, and will strive to be blameless', and to 'pray your lordship's favour towards me'.<sup>173</sup> In reward for Paulet's selling out, Burghley granted him his dream piece of patronage. In the summer of 1585, through Burghley's

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<sup>171</sup> Read, *Lord Burghley*, 342.

<sup>172</sup> Paulet to Burghley, 28 May, 10, 16, 22, Jun. 1585, 10 Jan. 1586, Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, 32-33, 36, 44, 47-48, 129-30. BL, Harley MSS 6993 ff. 84, 98, 102, Paulet to Burghley, 8 Jun., 8, 17, Aug. 1585.

<sup>173</sup> BL, Harley MSS 6993 ff. 84, 93, Paulet to Burghley, 8 Jun., 5 Jul. 1585.

influence Paulet procured the stewardship of the Paget lands in Staffordshire and Derbyshire, which belonged to the exiled Thomas, Lord Paget.

However, it would be improper to blame Paulet's treachery entirely on his desire for worldly advancement. His 'business' of intelligence with Burghley may have come to an end when he procured the stewardship in the summer of 1585. After offering the final copy of his letters to the Secretary on 18 August, there were no more transcripts to Burghley. Paulet terminated his sales before Walsingham's main strategy of December 1585, when Phelippes arrived at Chartley to prepare the reopening of Mary's correspondence under Walsingham's control. Although Paulet did not stop sending letters to Burghley, the contents of these concerned nothing of Walsingham's intelligence moves, except to complain of the expenses of Mary's custody, and his request for Burghley to help in their defrayment.<sup>174</sup>

Royal trust, his spies' double obligations, and his own control over wardships, meant that Burghley did not become isolated from the English espionage activity around the Catholic conspiracies. But these sources merely gave second-hand and very limited access to Walsingham's hidden moves. In the 1580s the party polarisation between Burghley, Leicester and Walsingham seemed to become worse.

### **Conclusion**

Suffering a setback in the competition for intelligence in Paris, where Burghley emerged predominant thanks to Stafford's embassy and his own mastership of the wards, Walsingham won the advantage back at home. His successful counter-plots tore

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<sup>174</sup> BL, Harley MS 6993 f. 102, Paulet to Burghley, 17 Aug. 1585. Paulet to Burghley, 19 Aug., 27 Jan., 7 Mar., 11 Apr. 1586, Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, 89, 136, 157-58, 171-72.

off Mary's pretence of innocence in front of Queen Elizabeth, who eventually learned of her Scottish cousin's treacherous dealings towards 'the saviour of her life for many a year' and signed Mary's death warrant.<sup>175</sup> In the context of the domestic espionage of the 1580s, Burghley and his men suffered virtual isolation. This strengthened Walsingham's dominance in national policy, moving England towards war with Spain. Walsingham's successful discovery of the conspiracies finally urged the irresolute Queen Elizabeth to confront the impending crises.

The first four chapters have pictured the development of the relationship between Burghley and Walsingham in terms of their respective intelligence systems, which began with close cooperation, but ended in division. Their espionage, which should have been used to defend national security, had become a necessary tool for them to suppress each other and pursue their struggle for absolute dominance in the regime. The final two chapters will move the focus away from the subordinate intelligence employees, towards their spymasters and the authorities in high politics—in other words, from the process of intelligence gathering towards the influence of espionage on national policy and the relocation of power in Elizabeth's regime. We will see how Walsingham's intelligence system promoted his political prominence, and supported his enthusiasm for militant Protestantism. The source of these intelligence rivalries at home and abroad—the worsening hostility between Burghley and Walsingham—will be examined in the next chapter.

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<sup>175</sup> Doran, *Queen Elizabeth I*, 102.

## Chapter V: A 'Factional' Elizabethan Regime?

The issue of Elizabethan factionalism, introduced by William Camden and Robert Naunton, today remains deadlocked in a debate over three questions: the terminology of 'party' and 'faction'; the periods during which it existed; and its nature, whether about personal enmity, or material or ideological divisions. Conyers Read and John Neale were the first to discuss terminology, and whether the phenomenon was about policy or patronage. Simon Adams then develops the theory of faction in terms of personal enmity. Yet he and Wallace MacCaffrey together deny there was any element of Elizabethan factionalism before the 1590s. Many historians, including Paul Hammer, see the 1590s as being a different, even unique, decade, mired in vividly factional hostility between the Cecils and Robert Devereux, the second Earl of Essex, under the rulership of the aging Queen.<sup>1</sup> The research on the competition for intelligence between the individual Elizabethan spy systems, however, demonstrates the existence of partisan rivalry within English high politics from the late 1570s through to the 1580s. This rivalry originated not in personal enmity or struggles for patronage, but mainly in differences on the policy of English intervention in the international Protestant revolts.

In terms of research into the divisive Elizabethan intelligence systems, this chapter aims to develop an overall response to the issue of Tudor factionalism. First of all, the words 'party' and 'faction' in the Tudor reign will be redefined explicitly, by examining the diverse contemporary usage. The term 'party', rather moderate and less dangerous to political stability, seems more proper to represent the mid-Elizabethan

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<sup>1</sup> Paul E. J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: The Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge, 1999).



political divide. The second section verifies that a partisan rivalry existed in English high politics from the late 1570s and peaked around 1585. Irrelevant to personal enmity, this political divide resulted mainly from ideologies: whether English policy should serve first godly glory, or state interests. To promote their ideologies in the arena of policy debate, Elizabeth's ministers struggled for patronage, contesting positions in local and central government to enhance their partisan dominance over administration, and to finance their espionage. Specifically, to the traditional concern around the Leicester–Burghley antagonism will be added consideration of another alleged party leader, Walsingham, who reached his political apogee in the 1580s by monopolising the Secretaryship and intelligence supply. Finally, the chapter will explore how Walsingham's intelligence service worked in making policy concerning armed English intervention in the Dutch Protestant revolt of the mid-1580s.

### 1. 'Faction' or 'Party'?

The year 1578 saw political polarisation arising inside Elizabeth I's court when the second Anjou courtship formally entered the Council debates. The French ambassador Castelnau complained of some 'grands factions' at Elizabeth's court covertly thwarting this match.<sup>2</sup> The dispatches of the Spanish ambassador Mendoza to Madrid confirmed a distinct rivalry over the issue of foreign policy, invoked by the 'extremely self-seeking' Leicester and his 'spirit' Walsingham against Burghley.<sup>3</sup> In 1580, Lorenzo Priuli, the Venetian ambassador in France, was still observing that Queen Elizabeth 'is under great apprehension, especially as she has now a divided Council', principally over her matrimonial negotiations with Anjou. Offensive language passed

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<sup>2</sup> Susan Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London & New York, 1996), 152.

<sup>3</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 31 Mar. 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 573.

between the two opposing ‘parties’, which were centred around the key figures of Leicester and Burghley.<sup>4</sup> According to Jacques du Vray, one of Anjou’s financial secretaries, by 1582 this political quarrel had expanded beyond the court:

The erle of Sussex likewise had joyned with the principall nobility of the realme, in nature of a league, against the said Erle of Lecester, to ruine him & his howse, & had the Catholicks of his side, beside others (men of good spirite & vallew) which made in nomber more than 2 thirds of england, redy to take parte with Sussex. The said Duvray, naming particularly the noble men, that were of this confederacy...Only master Secretary Walsingham, might seme for his place & religion, to be his great support: but if the erle were once removed, one spurne should overthrow the said Sussex his adherents & credit.<sup>5</sup>

Around 1585, this divergence deteriorated sharply into a degree of open antagonism. Walsingham, at the beginning of 1585, declared that he would hold his old patron Burghley ‘rather as an enemye than as a frende’.<sup>6</sup> In March 1587, Burghley grumbled to Christopher Hatton of the Queen’s gratuitous aversion to him, ‘as my enemies presume her ears to be open to any calumniation to be devised against me’.<sup>7</sup> His ‘enemies’ implied Leicester and Walsingham, who together inspired Elizabeth’s suspicion of her Treasurer’s undue friendliness to the captive Mary Stuart.<sup>8</sup> Later in August, departing for the Dutch campaigns, Leicester prayed his ally Walsingham ‘to stand fast for your poor absent frend against calluminators’ in the Council. Three new Councillors favourable to Burghley were added during Leicester’s absence: John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, William Brooke Lord Cobham, and Thomas

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<sup>4</sup> Lorenzo Priuli to the Signory, 8 Sept. 1580, *CSP Venice, 1558-1580*, 646.

<sup>5</sup> TNA, SP 101/1 f. 96, Herle to Walsingham, 16 May 1582.

<sup>6</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.

<sup>7</sup> Burghley to Christopher Hatton, 15 Mar. 1587, Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1960), 374.

<sup>8</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

Sackville Lord Buckhurst, ‘being all three for theyr lives opposite to Leycester and to his desseingments’.<sup>9</sup> Was the Elizabethan regime factional in the 1580s?

William Herle denounced any foreign conjecture of English factiousness as arising from ‘jelouse’, designed to ‘nourish diffidence among us, the mother of factions’.<sup>10</sup> Walsingham, Leicester, and Burghley, who were all under great suspicion of nourishing factions, never stopped denying such accusations. In 1565 Cecil clarified his stance on partisanship: ‘I have no affection to be a party, but for the Queene’s Majestie.’<sup>11</sup> Leicester, as Chancellor of Oxford, defended his role in the controversial election to the rectorship of Lincoln College in April 1577: ‘I have never loved or favoured factious dealing, nor have used it in my whole course of this action.’<sup>12</sup> Walsingham in January 1585 protested at being defamed as ‘a partye’ of the ‘Factyon, that reyghnethe ordynaryly in coortes’.<sup>13</sup> Later in August, Herle reported to Burghley that King James of Scotland and his intimates reproached Burghley, first for his temporisation, which—‘with fayre semblans & with cracked promises & assurances, without end or any sincerity ment’—sought to starve the Dutch Protestants, and hence meant the loss of Antwerp. Other charges included Burghley’s building houses ‘ynfinite & eqwall to Kings palacs’, his son’s friendship with the rebellious Northumberland family, and Burghley’s maintenance of spies abroad. ‘England was

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<sup>9</sup> TNA, SP 84/17 f. 59, Leicester to Walsingham, 12 Aug. 1587. TNA, SP 53/17/33, Thomas Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, 21 Mar. 1586; Mons. de l’Aubespine to Mary Queen of Scots, 24 Feb. 1586, Conyers Read, ‘Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council’, *English Historical Review* 28 (1913), 56.

<sup>10</sup> TNA, SP 101/1 f. 96, William Herle to Walsingham, 16 May 1582.

<sup>11</sup> Thomas Wright, *Queen Elizabeth and her Times* (London, 1838), 209.

<sup>12</sup> Simon Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage, and Party: English Politics, 1550-1603’, *History Today* 32 (1982), 33.

<sup>13</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.

becom Regnum Cecilianum.’<sup>14</sup> Burghley refuted the ‘notable absurde lye’ that ‘owr Cowncellors yf they were ani thing, or woldd obtayne ani thing, must addresse theme sellves as Precarios to yow [Burghley] only’:

Yf it were considered, how and uppon whom for these late yeres all manner of offices good and badd, spirituall and temporall have bin bestowed, to whom the persones benefitted do belong, and whom they do follow, it will easilye be judged, how rarely I do or have dealt therin...I know my creditt in such cases so meane, and others I fynde so earnest and hable to obtaine anie thing, that I do uterly forbear to move for anie, Wheruppon manie my good freindes do justly challendge me as unwise, that I seeke to place neither man nor woman, in the Chamber, nor without to serve hir Majestie.<sup>15</sup>

The ‘whom’ of Burghley’s insinuations refers to the Walsingham–Leicester grouping. He claimed to be proud of his administrative justice, never placing his men, whether at court or in government. In March 1586 Walsingham complained to Leicester, then away in the Dutch enterprise, that ‘The opinion of my partyalytie conytnewethe noryshed by faction, which makethe me weerye of the place I serve in and to wysse myself emongst the trewe harted Swy.’<sup>16</sup> However, these denials do not verify whether the Elizabethan regime had lapsed into factiousness, but rather imply a contemporary loathing of the word ‘faction’, which signified social disorder, political disunity and treachery.

Conyers Read preferred the term ‘party’ to ‘faction’, in policy debates grouping the mid-Elizabethan Council into the ‘war party’ led by Walsingham and Leicester, against

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<sup>14</sup> TNA, SP 12/181/32, Herle to Burghley, 11 Aug. 1585.

<sup>15</sup> TNA, SP 12/181/43, Burghley to Herle, 14 Aug. 1585.

<sup>16</sup> Walsingham to Leicester, 28 Mar. 1586, John Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, during His Government of the Low Countries, in the years 1585 and 1586* (London, 1844), 192.

the Burghley-headed ‘peace party’.<sup>17</sup> But his preference for the term soon gained him the censure of other historians. John Neale redefined ‘party’ and ‘faction’:

In Elizabethan England there were no political parties as we know them. True, from time to time there were differences among statesmen, but since privy councillors played a merely advisory role in matters of policy, owed a personal and not corporate obligation to the Queen...there was neither the mechanism nor the mentality to foster party politics...The place of party was taken by faction.<sup>18</sup>

Geoffrey Elton voiced the severest criticism of Read: this ‘biographer of Burghley and Walsingham was able to write five large volumes without seemingly becoming aware that Court faction differed from political party, even if (possibly) one fathered the other’.<sup>19</sup> Both critiques share a misconception. Concerning his use of ‘party’, Read had explained in the same article that ‘it would perhaps be misleading to speak of these groups as political parties...nothing like party organization in the modern sense of the term. Yet each group had its leader and its programme, to which each lent a fairly consistent support’.<sup>20</sup> Blind to Read’s clarification, Neale and Elton wilfully and irrelevantly located the sixteenth-century ‘party’ or ‘faction’ on a modern model of party politics.

‘Faction’, whether as a noun or in its adjectival form ‘factious’ (or ‘factional’) has been one of the most over-used terms in Elizabethan historiography. Compared with the pejorative ‘faction’, it seems more appropriate to use the relatively moderate term

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<sup>17</sup> Read, ‘Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council’, 34-58; ‘Factions in the English Privy Council under Elizabeth’, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association* 1 (1911), 111-19.

<sup>18</sup> J. E. Neale, ‘The Elizabethan Political Scene’, *Essays in Elizabethan History* (London, 1958), 70.

<sup>19</sup> G. R. Elton, ‘Tudor Government: The Points of Contact. III. The Court’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Fifth Series 26 (1976), 225.

<sup>20</sup> Read, ‘Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council’, 39.

‘party’ that Conyers Read adopted to define the mid-Elizabethan political schism. In the seventeenth century, ‘party’ started becoming the notion of a formal political group, constituted on a national basis, which partook in government through public elections. In the Tudor period neither ‘party’ nor ‘faction’ were so developed. In contemporary usage both of them referred to an informal community, sharing either patronage or political and religious conviction, and linked to specific figures. However, ‘faction’ was mostly used in conjunction with ‘rebellious’ or ‘anti-English’ subjects, in contrast to ‘party’, which was associated with ‘Anglophile’ subjects; the two terms were thus polarised between negative and positive usages.

According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, ‘faction’ first appears in the Bishop of Rochester, John Fisher’s *Mornyng Remembraunce Countesse of Rychemonde* (1509). Delivering a sermon on Margaret Lady Beaufort, mother of Henry VII, he recorded her strict household rule. ‘If ony faccyons or bendes were made’ secretly among her head officers, ‘she..dyde boulte it oute’. Later in the Elizabethan reign the term was often used to condemn any association holding selfish or mischievous ends, or using unscrupulous methods, against its authority. ‘Faction’ implied social turmoil, national schism, and high treason. A judgement on a riot at Lynn in 1582 denounced faction as an evil seed breaching the social peace, and prohibited anyone from ‘raising or mayntaining of any faction’ in the said town. Responsible for this case, Walsingham declared that any surviving faction would be given ‘some charge, lesson, and admonition’.<sup>21</sup> Any power adverse to the church settlement and Queen Elizabeth—especially Mary Queen of Scots—was labelled as ‘faction’ as well.<sup>22</sup> For

<sup>21</sup> 11 May 1582, *Acts of the Privy Council of England 1581-1582*, 411.

<sup>22</sup> Memoryall at Hampton Court, from a Minute of Secretary Cecil, 10 Mar. 1569, *A Collection of State Papers, Relating to Affairs in the Reigns of King Henry VIII, King Edward VI, Queen Mary, and Queen Elizabeth, Transcribed from Original letters and Other Authentick Memorials, Left by William Cecill*

instance, perturbed by the abrupt rise of the Duke of Lennox in Scotland in the early 1580s, the English government accused him of abusing Catholicism for the purpose of faction.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, during his early French embassy, Walsingham had labelled Mary's followings as faction. 'Late I caused one under the couller [colour] of a Catholique to repayre to a Darbisheire, an Englishe Jesuyte in Paris, for that I understoode that ther ys a concurrencie of intelligence between hym and thos of Lovayne, and also with thos of the Scottishe Queene's faction.'<sup>24</sup> In August 1572, still shuddering at the recent St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, Robert Beale compiled a 'Discourse after the great murder in Paris & other places in France', claiming the safety of Queen Elizabeth and England rested on the survival of Protestantism in Europe. And touching England's own defences, 'the chiefest mischief is to be found inwardly, I mean the faction of the Queen of Scots and papists in this realm'.<sup>25</sup> In a conference with the complicit Mary after the Throckmorton Plot, Elizabeth's envoy William Waad attacked her overseas agents in Paris for investing her French dowry in nourishing a faction against Queen Elizabeth inside England.<sup>26</sup>

The term 'party' was more flexible and moderate, applied to both anti-English enemies and Anglophile alliances. In the second Anjou marriage negotiations, Burghley's personal memorandum detailed the national benefits likely to accrue from this royal match. 'Her majestie by her husband shall have a stronge partye in Fraunce of the

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*Lord Burghley*, I, (London, 1740), 579.

<sup>23</sup> TNA, SP 52/28 f. 4, Instructions to Captain Errington, [22 Feb.] 1580. TNA, SP 52/35/3, Walsingham to William Davison, 3 Jun. 1584.

<sup>24</sup> BL, Cotton MS Caligula C/III f. 230, Walsingham to Burghley, 4 Mar. 1571/2; TNA, SP 70/120 f. 66r, same to same, 8 Oct. 1571.

<sup>25</sup> John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 80-81.

<sup>26</sup> TNA, SP 53/13/20, Mr. Waad's conference with Mary, Apr. 1584.

relygyon and others, who by this meanes shalbe suer from the tyrrany of the King and the papists.’ It was urgent for her to ‘kepe a partye there’ to secure the Huguenots from massacre and assure the King of their service.<sup>27</sup> Walsingham used ‘party’ likewise in positive terms. In order to resist Lennox, Walsingham’s cousin by marriage, Thomas Randolph, was assigned to procure ‘a sufficient party’ in Scotland for the Queen.<sup>28</sup> ‘Her Majestie’s partye’ would secure support from ‘dyvers Barons and Borough townes in Scotland...yf they may be assured see some good hope to be backed and countenanced by her in the action’.<sup>29</sup>

The Elizabethan distinction between ‘faction’ and ‘party’ is clear. The friction amongst Elizabeth’s first-generation ministers never deteriorated so dangerously as to become rebellious ‘factionalism’, unlike the later hostility between the second Earl of Essex and the Cecils, which imperilled the state through domestic chaos. When that political polarisation peaked in 1598, Lord Grey complained in July that ‘my Lord of Essix...hath forced mee to declare my self either his only, or frend to Mr. Secretary and his enemy: protesting that there Could bee noe neutrality’.<sup>30</sup> Accordingly, Simon Adams denies the existence of factionalism in the period from the late 1570s to the 1580s.<sup>31</sup> Mid-Elizabethan politics did separate vividly into a variety of partisan competitions for espionage, patronage, and policy. However, Conyers Read praised the divided Council of the 1580s that had equipped England flexibly for impending crises. ‘Burghley’s prudence made England strong for the crisis, and Walsingham’s fine faith

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<sup>27</sup> CP 148/14r, The Anjou Marriage, Mar. 1578/9.

<sup>28</sup> TNA, SP 52/29/16, SP 52/29/20, Walsingham to Thomas Randolph, 28, 31 Jan. 1581.

<sup>29</sup> BL, Harley MS 6999 f. 34, [Walsingham] to Huntingdon, 6 Feb. 1581.

<sup>30</sup> CP 62/71, Lord Grey to Lord Cobham, 21 July 1598.

<sup>31</sup> Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party’, 37.



carried her safely through the crisis when it came.<sup>32</sup> Precisely because of its character as a lesser danger to political stability than ‘faction’, the moderate ‘party’ is a better term with which to define the English political controversy of the 1590s.

Prejudiced against ‘faction’, few Elizabethan politicians would have liked to style themselves as leaders of factions. And sufficiently aware that ‘faction’ would breed nothing good—except loopholes for their watchful foes to profit by—in making policies they tried to avoid factional demarcations.<sup>33</sup> In the spring of 1579, on the eve of the formal Council discussion of the second Anjou match, Walsingham asserted that,

The tyme requyreth a unities and perfect agreement rather in them that make profession of that truthe which is elswhere impugned, and hathe so mightie enemies and so cruel wars in kindling against it in their dayes amongst our fellow membres abroad. Our unities mighte be a strengthe to ourselves and an ayde unto our neighbours, but if wee shall like to fall at division among ourselves, wee must need lye open to the common enemy, and by our owne faulte hasten or rather call upon ourselves our own ruin.<sup>34</sup>

Likewise, Leicester specifically cleared himself of standing in the way of Council unity: ‘I have never byn wylling to make quarrels in this court, nor to breed any. My nowe honour and por credyt always saved. I nether have nor wyll be a peace breaker but a peace maker.’<sup>35</sup> Ironically, both Leicester and Walsingham broke their own manifesto for internal unity, precisely on this issue of the second Anjou match. Its effect on court politics, claims Susan Doran, was devastating: ‘Division which emerged in the Council spilled out into the country, threatening to paralyse policy

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<sup>32</sup> Read, ‘Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth’s Privy Council’, 58.

<sup>33</sup> TNA, SP 84/23 f. 324, [Walsingham] to Peregrine Bertie, Baron Willoughby of Eresby, 21 May 1588.

<sup>34</sup> BL, Harley MS 6992 f. 50, Walsingham to Randolph and Bowes, 16 Mar. 1578.

<sup>35</sup> TNA, SP 12/126/10, Leicester to Burghley, 17 Oct. 1578.

making and revolutionise political life.<sup>36</sup> Elizabeth's ministers would have liked to locate the interest of the whole situation above personal zeal, but they individually insisted that their own ideology—either Protestant internationalism or limited intervention—would be most profitable for England.

## 2. The Nature of Mid-Elizabethan Partisanship

This section aims to demonstrate that Elizabethan partisan rivalry did exist between the late 1570s and 1580s, but was due to ideological divergence rather than personal enmity or the struggle for patronage. William Camden and Robert Naunton, both as contemporary witnesses with first-hand access to high politics, were the first to colour Elizabeth's court with factiousness. Camden's *Annales* repeatedly represents Leicester as a troublesome and divisive element: Leicester against Sussex in 1565, Leicester and Norfolk against Cecil in 1569, and Leicester against Walter Devereux, the first Earl of Essex, in 1576.<sup>37</sup> Camden also exonerated his patron Burghley from the execution of King James's mother, and imputed it to the 'subtill practises' designed by Burghley's opponents Leicester and Walsingham. Similarly, Naunton's *Fragmenta Regalia* focuses on several of the antagonisms at the mid-Elizabethan court. Sussex appears as the 'direct opposite' of Leicester; 'they grew to a direct frowardnesse, and were in continuall opposition, the one setting the watch, the other the guard each on the others actions, and motions.'<sup>38</sup> As for Burghley, his dexterity and competence 'challenged a roome in the Queen's favour, which eclipsed the others overseeming greatnesse, and made it appear that there were others steered, and stood at the Helme besides

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<sup>36</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, 153.

<sup>37</sup> William Camden, *Annales or the Histories of The Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse ELIZABETH, Late Queen of England* (London: [Thomas Harper], 1635), STC 4501, 64, 104, 190.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia, or Observations on the Late Queen Elizabeth, Her Times and Favourites* (London, 1641), C1.

himself'.<sup>39</sup> Despite being disinclined to raise a party, Burghley's influence on the Queen naturally attracted both suitors and opponents.

Camden and Naunton delivered opposing judgements on Elizabeth's queenship in the politics of faction: whether it was a limited monarchy ruled by factions, or an absolutist one that ruled the factions. Camden diminished the extent of Elizabeth's power without her male counsellors by repeatedly emphasising her 'womanish impotency' in making decisions.<sup>40</sup> By contrast, Naunton complimented her as a veritable queen in both name and political reality, deft in manipulating factions to solidify royal supremacy. 'She ruled much by faction and parties which she herself both made, upheld, and weakened, as her owne great judgement adversed.'<sup>41</sup> She governed by 'her own Princely judgement'.

While Conyers Read equated mid-Elizabethan partisan politics with division over foreign policy, Neale read it as faction linked to patronage allocation. Faction, claimed Neale, was 'centred on what mattered supremely to everyone: influence over the Queen, and, through that influence control of patronage with its accompanying benefits'.<sup>42</sup> The sovereign dominated the whole downwards dissemination of vast patronage: grants of honour, offices, royal estates, export licences, and influence in business and wardships. Generally the monarch granted benefits via his or her trustworthy ministers. They, as handlers allotting royal resources, naturally attracted suitors, who either proffered allegiance in politics, or service as a client, as an

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., C2.

<sup>40</sup> See Chapter VI.

<sup>41</sup> Naunton, *Fragmenta Regalia*, A4.

<sup>42</sup> Neale, 'The Elizabethan Politics Scene', 70.

intelligencer, or in the household. In this way ‘an association of self-interest, a mutual-benefit society’ was formed.<sup>43</sup> The monarch could excite competition for patronage amongst factions in order to maintain a domestic equilibrium; ‘there could be no greater disaster than a single faction.’<sup>44</sup> More significantly, MacCaffrey agreed with Neale that royal control over patronage distribution could safeguard royal superiority over factionalism. In 1579, when her Council split on the issue of the Anjou courtship, Queen Elizabeth was urged to ‘have all men of value in your realm to depend only upon yourself’. Very cautiously, she refused to concentrate her confidence in a single favourite but kept ‘open a number of channels to her bounty’.<sup>45</sup> According to MacCaffrey, ‘It was she who brought the Council to life, in its collective consultative capacity, by asking its advice; without her command it could not function in this way.’<sup>46</sup> The initiative of policy hence rested solely with the sovereign.

Except for *Leicester’s Commonwealth* of 1584, however, Neale offers little consistent evidence to verify if ‘faction’ existed before the 1590s. MacCaffrey believed there was discord between Dudley and Cecil due both to issues of succession and the Dudley suit in the 1560s, but he argued that this antagonism had faded away with the termination of these conflicting policies. In the late 1570s, the new issues of the Dutch revolt and the second Anjou match fomented another split inside the Council, though at this time the division had ‘taken on a more impersonal tone and... focussed on

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 71.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>45</sup> Wallace T. MacCaffrey, ‘Place and Patronage in Elizabethan Politics’, in S. T. Bindoff, J. Hurstfield, C. H. Williams, eds., *Elizabethan Government and Society* (London, 1961), 108. Derek Hirst, ‘Court, Country, and Politics before 1629’, in Kevin Sharpe, ed., *Faction and Parliament: Essays on Early Stuart History* (Oxford, 1978), 110-11.

<sup>46</sup> MacCaffrey, ‘The Anjou Match and the Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy’, 70.

differences of opinion rather than on personalities'. After tiding over the crisis, the Council 'seems to have closed ranks and to have acted with general unanimity in support of the Queen's initiatives in the early 1580s'.<sup>47</sup> MacCaffrey doubted the survival of any Elizabethan partisan politics in the 1580s.

The theory of factional patronage which Neale initiated and MacCaffrey developed dominated subsequent historiography until the 1970s.<sup>48</sup> Eric Ives reaffirmed Tudor 'faction' as a group of people seeking objectives 'primarily in personal terms'—either gaining or keeping patronage for their associates, or denying this to rivals.<sup>49</sup> He quarrelled with the assumption that the essence of factional struggle was 'over-riding personal rivalry', because this phenomenon is only found during three specific crises: Anne Boleyn's faction against Thomas Wolsey from 1527 over the issue of Henry VIII's marriage; under Edward VI, the rise of John Dudley, later Duke of Northumberland, against Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset; and in the 1590s the antagonism between the Earl of Essex and Robert Cecil.<sup>50</sup> According to Ives, 'Burghley and Leicester—Elizabeth's closest confidant and her most intimate courtier—were recognised rivals, but there was never a complete breakdown of relations.'<sup>51</sup> Ives also depoliticised faction, questioning its nature as a 'recognisable ideological' form in the loyal political struggle of the sixteenth century to promote a desired policy, first, because the advancement of such concerns was likewise for personal advantage, and second, because 'policy debates would be resolved in terms of

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<sup>47</sup> Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy 1572-1588* (New Jersey, 1981), 458.

<sup>48</sup> Christopher Haigh, 'Introduction', *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 1984), 13.

<sup>49</sup> Eric W. Ives, *Faction in Tudor England* (London, 1979), 5.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

people', with the sovereign putting confidence in those who shared his or her opinions.<sup>52</sup> The monarch, as the ultimate dispenser of all major patronage, ensured that personal monarchy had control over faction. Couriers and ladies admitted to the Privy Chamber, 'rather than those who held formal appointments there', would earn more patronage from, and influence over, the sovereign. In brief, the politics of intimacy affected factiousness.<sup>53</sup> It is why in the locally litigious quarrels between the families of Talbot and Stanhope in the 1590s, the newly rising member of the gentry Thomas Stanhope of Shelford, who had strategically cultivated a foothold at court and in central office, and friendship with both Burghley and Robert Cecil, Queen Elizabeth's chief confidants, successfully beat the great territorial noble Gilbert Talbot, seventh Earl of Shrewsbury, whose position at court had become slight and uncertain.<sup>54</sup>

Nevertheless, Mitchell Leimon and Christopher Haigh doubted Neale's theory as being 'too far into an unrelenting materialism', from which personal enmity, politics, and ideology were entirely eliminated.<sup>55</sup> Haigh envisaged factions as ideological groupings.<sup>56</sup> Elton agreed with Haigh that 'faction existed for the purpose of promoting individual fortunes...it was the mechanism, which, at court, organised the satisfaction of personal ambition for wealth and power'. The element of ideology receives his attention as well. 'Every one of the factions that one can identify cherished and promoted political ends that had nothing to do with mere personal advancement or

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 7-9, 12, 20.

<sup>54</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, 'Talbot and Stanhope: an Episode in Elizabethan Politics', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 32 (1960), 73-85.

<sup>55</sup> Mitchell MacDonald Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1989), 62.

<sup>56</sup> Haigh, *The Reign of Elizabeth I*, 9-13.

the exploitation of patronage.’ However, regarding the Elizabethan factions of the 1580s, Elton wondered ‘whether the power of ideological politics was then quite as strong as it had been in the 1530s’.<sup>57</sup>

Simon Adams welcomes Elton’s query. There are only two Tudor periods, he believes, that were dominated by factional rivalry: the middle years of Edward VI’s reign (1548–1552) and the 1590s.<sup>58</sup> Adams questions the existence of any factionalism between Cecil and Leicester earlier in Elizabeth’s reign for three reasons. First, there is little evidence of intense competition over patronage between the heavyweights at Elizabeth’s court before the 1590s—Leicester may even have once assisted in Cecil’s promotion to the peerage as Baron of Burghley in 1571.<sup>59</sup> Second, no evidence shows that either Burghley or Leicester owned an exclusive following. Third, Adams stresses that Burghley and Leicester were ‘men from a similar political milieu’, sharing ‘too much in common for permanent antagonisms to be established’.<sup>60</sup> Even if there was some potential tension between them, or between Elizabeth’s household and Council, for the greater part of Elizabeth’s reign it could be resolved, ‘whether by accident or design, through her reliance upon men who were both leading household officers and major political figures’. In other words, any divergence on policy could be resolved ‘by the Queen in consultation with her intimates’ who were selected ultimately by the Queen in terms of her personal relationship with them.<sup>61</sup> Penry Williams suggests

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<sup>57</sup> Elton, ‘Tudor Government: The Points of Contact. III. The Court’, 226-27.

<sup>58</sup> Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party’, 34, 37.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 37. David Loades, *The Cecils: Privilege and Power behind the Throne* (Kew, 2007), 123.

<sup>60</sup> Adams, ‘Favourites and Faction at the Elizabethan Court’, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester, 2002), 59-60.

<sup>61</sup> Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party’, 33.

likewise: ‘while major issues of policy—the Queen’s marriage, the succession, foreign policy, military affairs, and religion—did stir heated debate and divide courtiers from one another at times, there was more agreement than dissonance among Elizabethan politicians, at least until the 1590s’.<sup>62</sup> John Guy agrees that the issue of military overextension during the 1580s divided Elizabeth’s Council into ‘the interventionists’ inclined to open outright war, and ‘the neutralists’ (‘Fortress English’) who argued for a coastal defence, but both sides operated under a broader Protestantism (though towards which Burghley worked more cautiously than Leicester and Walsingham). ‘That is not factionalism but judgement.’<sup>63</sup> Guy admits that a strong factional element only appeared under the aggression of Essex post-1596. In this light, therefore, Adams clarifies the nature of faction:

A faction was not the same thing as a clientage; nor was it the exercise of patronage; nor was it the taking of sides on a major political issue: a faction was a personal following employed in direct opposition to another personal following. A Faction struggle could involve disputes over patronage or debate over matters of state, but its essence was a personal rivalry that over-rode all other considerations.<sup>64</sup>

He therefore ascribes factionalism to personal enmity, which is different from both Conyers Read’s linking of factions to policy divisions and Neale and MacCaffrey’s understanding of faction as based in the struggle for patronage.

My research into the divisive Elizabethan spy systems and their competition for intelligence to fuel their patrons’ political rivalry can address Adams’s three doubts

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<sup>62</sup> Penry Williams, ‘Court and polity under Elizabeth I’, in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), 360.

<sup>63</sup> John Guy, *Tudor England* (Oxford, 1988), 286.

<sup>64</sup> Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage and Party’, 34.



discussed above. Turning from the traditional concerns around the Cecil–Dudley relationship, this thesis moves the focus towards the relationship between Burghley and Walsingham, which has received surprisingly little scholarly attention. First of all, Adams’s core concept of personal enmity is unhelpful in explaining the divided politics of the 1580s. Adams himself undermines it, as he finds little evidence at this point of personal antagonism or open rupture between Elizabeth’s councillors. There was a tension between Leicester, Sussex, and the latter’s friend Cecil, growing over the Queen’s matrimonial diplomacy. This discord, Adams notes, never added ‘up to a factional conflict, and the distinction becomes apparent when the real faction struggles are examined’.<sup>65</sup>

Their increasingly diametric ideologies did confuse Walsingham in his attitude towards Burghley. Walsingham was so grateful for Cecil’s early patronage which promoted him speedily into central office, that he devoted the time of his first French embassy service to Cecil’s overseas espionage and to supporting the first Anjou match. In 1573 their respective transfer to the offices of Lord Treasurer and the Secretaryship formally activated their potential divergence on the English policy of intervention in continental Protestant battles: whether their primary concern was for the glory of God, or for England’s interests and being mindful of ruling legitimacy. Treasurer Burghley shared the conservative outlook of Queen Elizabeth, urging peaceful diplomatic negotiations instead of costly wars. The new Secretary Walsingham, daily confronted with unpleasant news, the sorts of which would naturally infuse the recipient with alarm, was reinforced in his beliefs: ‘above all things I wish God’s glory and next the Queen’s safety’.<sup>66</sup> This position coloured his whole view of foreign policy, and led him to drift

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<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>66</sup> TNA, SP 70/117 f. 179v, Walsingham to Leicester, Apr. 1571; Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 64.

towards his aggressive ally Leicester. In September 1575, Burghley labelled Walsingham as a ‘courtier’ beside Leicester.<sup>67</sup> Thomas Smith’s resignation in 1576 marked, Leimon states, the real beginning of Walsingham’s escape from Burghley’s ‘tutelage’.<sup>68</sup> In January 1585 their discord reached a showdown. Discontented with Burghley for hindering his suit for a custom farm and for disagreeing over Dutch policy, Walsingham angrily declared their friendship was converted into enmity; the whole background to this division in policy will be discussed in the final section.<sup>69</sup>

The rupture between Walsingham and Burghley was chiefly restricted to policy issues. Once away from the Council table, Walsingham was a ‘very friend’ to Burghley, sharing in Burghley’s family joys or sorrows, and assisting in his family difficulties.<sup>70</sup> Edward de Vere, Earl of Oxford, Burghley’s son-in-law, was imprisoned in the Tower in March 1581, on a charge of fathering an illegitimate child (Edward Vere) with the Queen’s maid of honour, Anne Vavasour. Walsingham, jointly with Christopher Hatton, pleaded with Queen Elizabeth for the Earl’s liberty.<sup>71</sup> In late 1586, Burghley helped Walsingham with his late son-in-law Philip Sidney’s debts. It is wrong, therefore, to consider the political divide between Burghley and Walsingham in terms of Adams’s theory of purely personal enmity.

Secondly, Simon Adams believes there is little evidence of intense contention for

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<sup>67</sup> Leimon, ‘Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581’, 13.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>69</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.

<sup>70</sup> Stephen Alford, *Burghley: William Cecil at the Court of Elizabeth I* (New Haven & London, 2008), 208, 229-30, 238-41, 243, 246-47.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 208, 238-39.

patronage between the political heavyweights at Elizabeth's court before her last decade. Actually this competition had existed since 1578, when the Walsingham–Leicester party gained an overwhelming majority of central or local offices. Mendoza reported to King Philip in early 1578 that Queen Elizabeth 'sent all through the country fully authorised officers with powers such as never have been invested before, to seize and imprison Catholics, without appeal'. Most of these local officers were 'pernicious heretical Puritans and creatures of Walsingham, who is a great supporter of their sect'.<sup>72</sup> In central government, Walsingham led the Secretaryship from 1576 and had sole charge from 1581. Through it, he controlled all official papers to and from the Queen, as well as holding mastery over the Signet Office and the Privy Seal Office. He, via Thomas Heneage, also befriended Christopher Hatton, Lord Vice-Chamberlain, one of the chief functionaries of the court administration and gate-keepers of the Queen's 'house'. Significantly, the Walsingham–Leicester party coveted certain high offices originally held by Cecil's men. In November 1577, the second Secretaryship, vacant since Smith's retirement, was filled by Thomas Wilson. This old Leicestrian acted as a militant ally for Walsingham, for the 'glorie of God' endeavouring Mary Stuart's execution and England's international intervention against Catholicism. Now both the Secretaries were of the war persuasion. Meanwhile, Wilson, together with Hatton and Edward Horsey, 'a Leicestrian trio', were nominated as new Councillors. Horsey's appointment was foiled at the last moment; Wilson joined the Council in October though Hatton had to wait until December. The death of Nicholas Bacon, Burghley's brother-in-law, emptied the offices of Lord Chancellor and the Great Seal in 1579. Leicester and Hatton, promised rich rewards by the candidate Thomas Bromley, successfully

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<sup>72</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 22 Apr. 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 577.

advanced him to this vacancy, in spite of opposition from Burghley and Sussex.<sup>73</sup> After the Throckmorton Plot, the Earl of Shrewsbury was deprived of the custody of Mary Stuart, replaced by Amias Paulet. It was an outcome Walsingham and Leicester had striven towards since 1582, to remove Mary into their exclusive charge.<sup>74</sup> Shrewsbury's dismissal in 1584 announced Burghley's forced withdrawal from first-hand intelligence concerning Mary and her intrigues. *Leicester's Commonwealth*, published in the same year, accused Leicester of monopolising courtly offices and preferment, for his partisans:

In the privy Chamber, next unto her Majesties Person, the most parte are his owne creatures...his raigne is so absolute in this place, (as also in all other parts of the Court) as nothing can passe but by his admission, nothing can be said, done, or signified, whereof hee is not particularly advertised: no bill, no supplication, no complaint, no sute, no speech, can passe from any man to the Princesse (except it bee from one of the Councell) but by his good liking...Wherby hee holdeth as it were a lock upon the eares of his Prince...no man may bee preferred in Court...except hee bee one of *Leycesters* faction or followers; none can bee advanced, except hee bee liked and preferred by him.<sup>75</sup>

As polemic propaganda this contemporary pamphlet is not totally trustworthy. However, Elizabeth herself had felt astonished at seeing Leicester's over-expanding power both at court and in government, and that 'he had taken advantage of the authority she had given him to place kinsmen and friends of his in almost every port and principal place in the kingdom'.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Mendoza to Zayas, 21, 31 Mar. 1579, Mendoza to Philip II, 8 Apr. 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 658-60, 662-63.

<sup>74</sup> John Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet: Keeper of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1874), x. Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, II (Oxford, 1925), 354-55.

<sup>75</sup> Frank J. Burgoyne, ed., *History of Queen Elizabeth, Amy Robsart and the Earl of Leicester Being a Reprint of "Leycesters Commonwealth" 1641* (London, 1904), 61-63.

<sup>76</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 21 Jan. 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 267.

It is worth noting Walsingham's five-year monopoly over the Secretaryship, following Thomas Wilson's death in May 1581 until William Davison's appointment in September 1586. It was not Elizabeth's custom to appoint two Principal Secretaries—Cecil alone occupied this seat from her accession until 1572, and Smith briefly in 1572 and 1573. But at this period (1581–1586) a sole appointment was unusual. From the beginning of his official career, Walsingham was a known sufferer from chronic illness, constantly driven to retire from the court. A substitute Secretary seemed necessary, to share responsibility and be ready in case of emergency. Furthermore, the overexpansion of the Leicester–Walsingham group in the official administration had imperilled the power balance Elizabeth had cultivated so carefully. However, despite all this, strangely neither Elizabeth nor Burghley wanted to nominate a successor to Wilson, letting the post's responsibilities significantly devolve upon the militant Walsingham alone.

David Loades ascribes the absence of the second Secretary to Burghley's intention to reserve the post for his second son Robert, Cecil consequently dissuading the Queen from making an immediate appointment.<sup>77</sup> But in light of Burghley's decreasing control over intelligence affairs after leaving the office of Secretary, it seems unlikely that he would forsake this opportunity of placing his man in this office and thus risk it falling into the hands of opponents, as happened with the assignment of Davison in 1586. Queen Elizabeth was the one who determined to keep her second Secretaryship vacant, and for two reasons. First, she considered that two appointees would find it difficult to work cooperatively: 'how rare a thing it is to fynd colleagues and

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<sup>77</sup> Loades, *The Cecils*, 184, 187, 189.

companies in authority soundly to agree together'.<sup>78</sup> Her second reason was due to her financial caution. The regular allowance of the Secretary was £100 annually; not generous but extended with plentiful subventions. Thomas Wilson in 1579 was rewarded with the office of dean of Durham, worth £666 per annum. Two further assignments—the parsonage of Mansfield in Nottinghamshire, and the manor of Saltfleetby in Lincolnshire—brought him handsome revenues. Walsingham obtained more royal lands and patents, as well as more central and local offices profitable in substantial annuities.<sup>79</sup> Maintaining a single Secretaryship was expensive; Elizabeth was unwilling to have the charge of a second. Her financial caution, therefore, fostered the power imbalance in her regime.<sup>80</sup>

Walsingham himself was loath to share his Secretaryship with colleagues. Even when the position was held jointly with Wilson in 1576 and later Davison in 1586, both acted as merely 'a minister of the inferior order, and more exercised in the forms than essence of business'. 'And though it does not appear in what manner the province of secretary was then divided, yet it is probable that the secret part of it was entirely managed by Walsingham.'<sup>81</sup> Unlike Burghley's power which was rooted in the Queen's absolute confidence, and Leicester's in his role as her favourite, Walsingham's political prominence hinged on Elizabeth's reliance on his efficient espionage system. He needed to grasp its leadership fast and exclusively. Hence, he privatised his spy system, withdrawing it from government halls and the control of official colleagues,

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<sup>78</sup> William Davison to Leicester, 4 Nov. 1586, in Thomas Wright, ed., *Queen Elizabeth and her Times* (London, 1838), II, 322.

<sup>79</sup> See Chapter II.

<sup>80</sup> The issue of Elizabeth's financial caution is discussed in Chapter VI.

<sup>81</sup> Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, from the year 1581 till her death* (London, 1754), I, 7.

into his private residences and the hands of his household clients. Even when temporarily leaving for embassies, he let no colleagues deputise in his Secretaryship. Usually, Robert Beale was assigned as his substitute; his private secretariat and Walter Williams ensured the intelligence business worked as usual. Consequently, despite being antagonistic to her aggressive Secretary, Elizabeth had to rely on his skilled espionage and allowed him to keep, and further monopolise, the Secretaryship.

A surprising number of Elizabeth's diplomats abroad were little more than agents of Walsingham or Leicester. After Walsingham assumed the chief Secretaryship in early 1576, Amias Paulet assumed the embassy in Paris that September. Meanwhile, Leicester's and Walsingham's men had undertaken up to 87 per cent of the diplomatic visits to the Low Countries made from April 1576 (after Smith retired in March) to 1587. William Davison, Daniel Rogers and Thomas Wilkes were the candidates assigned most frequently.<sup>82</sup> All three had joined Walsingham's patronage network via diplomatic employment in the early 1570s. Other envoys there were also clients, like Edward Horsey (December 1576–February 1577), who was characterised by the scurrilous *Leicester's Commonwealth* as Leicester's 'great friend and a trustie servaunt'. He entered Leicester's clientele as early as the latter's Marian exile. Thomas Leighton (December 1577–February 1578) was one of Leicester's 'most obliged dependentes'; his family ties and marriage to Elizabeth Knollys located him at the core of the Dudley clientele.<sup>83</sup> Fulke Greville (March–April 1582) and Edward Dyer

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<sup>82</sup> Their special embassies to the Low Countries:

William Davison: Jan.-Feb. 1577; Aug. 1577-May 1579; Oct. 1584-Jun. 1585; Aug. 1585-Feb. 1586;  
(to Scotland: Dec. 1582-Apr. 1583; Apr.-Sept. 1584)

Daniel Rogers: Jun.-Feb 1576; Mar.-May 1578; Dec. 1578-Jan. 1579; late 1587- Jan. 1588 (to the Holy Roman Empire: Sept. 1580-Jan. 1585)

Thomas Wilkes: Apr. 1578; Jun. 1582; Jul.-Sept. 1586; Oct. 1586-Jul. 1587 (to Spain: Dec. 1577-Feb. 1578)

Gary M. Bell, *A Handlist of British Diplomatic Representatives 1509-1688* (London, 1990).

<sup>83</sup> D. C. Peck, ed., *Leicester's commonwealth: the copy of a letter written by a master of art of*

(January–March 1584) were allied with Leicester through their boyhood friendship with Philip Sidney, whose lyric celebrated the ‘happy blessed Trinitie’ they formed.<sup>84</sup> Thomas Randolph, Walsingham’s cousin by marriage and similarly sympathetic to radical Protestantism, often led embassies to Scotland.<sup>85</sup>

The growing monopoly of the Leicester-Walsingham party over government administration alarmed Burghley. Susan Doran and David Loades assume that Burghley’s assumption of the Treasurership, and tension with Walsingham over foreign policy, undermined his role in the Council. No longer attending daily on the Queen, as did the favourites Leicester and Hatton, and also as did Secretary Walsingham, Burghley had been reduced to a back seat in the formulation of policy.<sup>86</sup> In actual fact, as Stephen Alford suggests, Burghley was ‘never far away from the most secret counsels of Elizabethan and her Secretary’.<sup>87</sup> From 1578, when foreign policy reduced the Council to a state of partisan division, Burghley collaborated with the similarly conservative Queen Elizabeth, who applied her royal prerogative over official appointments to balance the scales of administrative power. The pro-Cecil Lord Cobham, William Brooke, was assigned to accompany Walsingham on the special embassy to the Low Countries in mid-1578. His brother Henry Brooke replaced Amias Paulet in the residential embassy in France in 1579; Stafford succeeded him from 1583

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*Cambridge (1584) and related documents* (Athens, Ohio, 1985), 105.

<sup>84</sup> With Sidney’s assistance, Greville in 1577 was appointed to two Welsh offices: the clerk of the Council and the clerk of the Signet. ‘Dyer, Sir Edward (1543–1607)’, Steven W. May in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/8346> (accessed November 13, 2013).

<sup>85</sup> Randolph’s special embassies to Scotland: Jan.-Apr. 1578, Jan.-Mar. 1581, and Jan.-Aug. 1586.

<sup>86</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, 159-60; Loades, *The Cecils*, 147-49.

<sup>87</sup> Alford, *Burghley*, 244.



to 1590.<sup>88</sup> Those new diplomats' kinswomen—Frances Lady Cobham and Dorothy Lady Stafford—who served in the royal bedchamber, strengthened Burghley's influence on the Queen. And the threefold connection between Burghley, the embassy, and the female chamber, created an alternative intelligence-diplomacy route at court, bypassing the formal secretarial procedure. It restrained Secretary Walsingham's monopoly over both national and foreign affairs, as well as the circulation of intelligence. In addition, Henry Carey, Lord Hunsdon, Elizabeth's first cousin, filled the office of Lord Chamberlain made vacant by the death of Sussex in 1583. After the failure of the Ruthven raiders who rebelled to wrest control from King James of Scotland in the spring of 1584, Hunsdon was authorised to open negotiations with James Stuart, Earl of Arran, about the possibility of an Anglo-Scottish league. Arran was now the most powerful intimate of James VI. Siding with Burghley, Hunsdon blamed Leicester and Walsingham as 'two princypale counselars [that] have so smale care of hyr majesty's estate [as] for theyr private causes to lose hyr majesty a King'. He warned of a 'further matter worse than this': their intention to secure the English succession for Henry Hastings, Earl of Huntingdon.<sup>89</sup> Hastings was Leicester's brother-in-law and a committed Protestant, standing distantly in line to the English throne through his mother's family, the Poles. In October 1562, when Elizabeth fell ill with smallpox, the radical group even planned to recommend him as a claimant to the throne. Walsingham despised Burghley's use of Hunsdon, whose only advantage was his nearness to the Queen through Boleyn kinship. Walsingham also suspected them of being in secret communication with Arran, 'both to my disgrace and the hindrance of her Majesty's service'.<sup>90</sup> Early in 1586, during Leicester's absence in the Dutch wars,

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<sup>88</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587. *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

<sup>89</sup> TNA, SP 52/36/72, Hunsdon to Burghley, 11 Sept. 1584.

<sup>90</sup> TNA, SP 52/35/55, Walsingham to Davison, 12 Jul. 1584; Read, *Walsingham*, II, 243.

three new pro-Cecil members—John Whitgift, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord Cobham and Lord Buckhurst—joined the Council.

The partisan competition over patronage included money as well. In his indignant letter to Burghley on 30 January 1585, Walsingham was infuriated by Burghley's hampering his claim for a farm of the customs. After the Babington Plot, Walsingham angled to be awarded Babington's forfeited estates, as repayment for his espionage and the mountainous debts left by the late Philip Sidney. However, in March 1587 the Queen granted Babington's Derbyshire properties to her favourite, Walter Raleigh; Burghley's role in this decision is unclear.<sup>91</sup>

Walsingham's efforts to secure financial patronage aimed to fund his costly espionage. Independent from the official administration, Walsingham's household-based secretariat had to recruit more members to cope with the daily growing business of the Secretaryship and espionage. Consequently the bulkiness of his secretariat, at least six times the size of Burghley's, incurred financial embarrassment. His pan-European espionage further emptied his purse. For Walsingham, if knowledge was needed it could never be too dear. When faced with the threats that stirred in Scotland in the early 1580s, he instructed Robert Bowes, English special envoy there, and Ambassador Henry Brooke in Paris, to 'spare no cost' to gather intelligence.<sup>92</sup> Walsingham's generosity fostered his spies' endless greed. The Frenchman Pierre d'Or, alias Henri Châteaumartin, demanded no less than £1,000 to meet his expenditure.<sup>93</sup> For these

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<sup>91</sup> Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, 66.

<sup>92</sup> Robert Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spy Master: Francis Walsingham and the Secret War that Saved England* (London, 2006), 100-101.

<sup>93</sup> TNA, SP 78/21/31, Châteaumartin's Demands and Expenses, (July) 1590.

ballooning costs, the royal warrants rising from £500 in 1585 up to £2,800 in 1588, were so insufficient that Walsingham was forced to pay out of his own purse.<sup>94</sup> In a literary appreciation written after his death, Walsingham is described in the following terms: ‘He did foster and help to prevent many dangers, practices [plots] as well as abroad as at home against his Prince and his country in discovery of which he was so largely liberal that he neglected much of his private estate as well as for health and wealth.’<sup>95</sup> Walsingham strove for patronage and burdened himself with debt in order to uphold his espionage, ultimately to further his policy of universal Protestantism: ‘the pursuit of God’s glory’.

The shortage of funds for spying forced Walsingham ceaselessly to request royal patronage. This point counters Simon Adams’s allegations of factional competition for patronage, and the exclusive nature of Burghley’s and Leicester’s respective followings. Adam states that regarding ‘Walsingham himself, Henry Killigrew, Robert Beale, William Herle—clear lines of allegiance have been very difficult to draw’. Firstly, this claim can be doubted because focusing narrowly on the Burghley–Leicester relationship, Adams overlooks the rising prominence of Walsingham in the regime. Indeed, Adams locates Walsingham within Cecil’s clientele, when in fact he had left around 1576 and risen to the very top official rank. Secondly, the lines of allegiance running between personal clientele and official duty could be confused and conflicting. Many officials were colleagues in government, albeit adversarial in politics and in competition for patronage. Furthermore, it was usual for Elizabethan politicians to assume multiple loyalties to different people, on the various bases of patronage

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<sup>94</sup> TNA, SP 12/229/49, ‘Note of the sums issued by warrant to Sir Francis Walsingham’, Dec. 1589. Williams, *The Tudor Regime*, 71. Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 309-10

<sup>95</sup> Hutchinson, *Elizabeth’s Spy Master*, 255.

transactions, intermarriage, and common ideology. Henry Killigrew, Cecil's brother by marriage, nonetheless shared radical sympathy with Walsingham, and in diplomacy served his lifelong patron Leicester. Nevertheless, away from officialdom, excluding the examples of double agents (like Herle and Parry), fidelity to a single patron can definitely be seen within the ministerial private secretariats. The research on Elizabethan espionage in the previous chapters has disclosed the intelligence-patronage followings, individually led by Burghley and Walsingham. Between the two systems there was little overlap of personal intelligence employees. In order to be away from Burghley's influence in government, Walsingham designed his intelligence administration towards the utmost privatisation, centred on his household clients. Accordingly, the official intelligence machinery under the Secretaryship was converted into a private clientele, pledging exclusive loyalty to its patron.

In contrast with Walsingham's household-based privatised system, Burghley attached his intelligence network to the government and the royal court. Although his retirement from the Secretaryship forced him to withdraw his information secretariat into his household, in fact Burghley's team remained in close alliance with the government. Along with clients, some of them were planted in government, not only for reasons of patronage but also to secure Burghley's control over official information.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, unlike Walsingham with his preference for gathering intelligence with private spies, Burghley allied himself with officials like Ambassadors Cobham and Stafford, who worked amongst the Catholic exiles, and the Earl of Shrewsbury who had ready access to Mary Stuart. Unavoidably, these diplomats came to owe official obligations to Secretary Walsingham, but their partisan loyalty to Cecil remained striking. Although

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<sup>96</sup> See Conclusion.

Sussex often worked with Leicester in the Council, he gave his unstinting support to Burghley and stuck ‘as near to you [Burghley] as your shirt is to your back’.<sup>97</sup> Burghley also befriended the kinswomen of these ambassadors who were appointed to the chief posts in the royal bedchamber, which therefore had an even stronger partiality for Cecil.<sup>98</sup> More significantly, these female intimates offered Burghley an alternative intelligence access to the Queen. In short, Walsingham’s intelligence system combined his Secretaryship with his household clients and spies. Burghley tied his network of intelligencers to the government and court, which was more stable and cheaper, and offered more opportunities to influence the Queen. Both systems fostered specific loyalty to their respective spymaster, although unavoidably the clients and spies of both often stumbled across one another in the course of government business.

These individual intelligence systems served the specific parties their spymasters belonged to. The achievements of those employed in hunting out intelligence won the initiative for their patron within the regime, and the patronage for themselves that ensured their own survival. This formed, therefore, a complicated triple relationship of interdependence between patronage, intelligence, and party. Simon Adams’s three doubts are thus resolved.

It seems fairly obvious that a political divide existed in the mid-Elizabethan regime, split over competition for influence and rewards. But why did parties struggle thus for patronage? The patronage in offices and emoluments profited Walsingham very little in terms of personal wealth, and even drew him into financial embarrassment for the

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<sup>97</sup> Sussex to Burghley, 8 Nov. 1578, Edmund Lodge, ed., *Illustrations of British History* (London, 1838), II, 133-34.

<sup>98</sup> See Chapter VI.

remainder of his life. He applied those royal rewards to establishing his own partisan dominance over the administration, and funding his private espionage. Both efforts were aimed at achieving success for godly Protestantism. In terms of the first, placing his men and associates in domestic office, parliament, and overseas embassies, Walsingham hoped to ‘have all reformations done by public authority’ rather than private zeal. Personal enthusiasm would carry policy further awry. Much of his financial patronage was, secondly, injected into espionage. His secret service fulfilled its national responsibility, defending the Queen, the state, and the church establishment, despite Walsingham being dissatisfied with the structure and doctrine of the latter. Through its success in counter-plots from 1583, Walsingham drove the Queen and national policy step by step away from Burghley’s conservative side and towards the Protestant battlefields against Spain. In short, the fundamental spirit of partisanship (or factionalism) was ideology, for which the competition for patronage was merely a prelude. This is the next issue to be discussed.

### **3. The Divided English Interventionist Policy**

During the second half of the sixteenth century, claims Simon Adams, the Protestant Reformation transformed the nature of conventional aristocratic clientage. The emerging self-identification of Protestants as the ‘godly’ created a new type of social allegiance, with individuals eager to execute their offices to honour God. ‘The Court, council and parliament took on a new importance, for they now became the means through which a godly policy would be formulated.’<sup>99</sup> Walsingham’s clientele network was the one of the first conforming to this newly ideological type. His private secretaries like Robert Beale, Ralph Warcop, Laurence Tomson and Thomas Phelippes,

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<sup>99</sup> Adams, ‘Faction, Clientage, and Party’, 35.

and his spies like Maliverey Catilyn, preferred Walsingham's employment mainly because of their godly affiliations. Walsingham's household service became a 'perfect hot-bed of Puritanism'.<sup>100</sup> By the 1580s, Leicester's clientage, 'based not upon vast inherited estates, but upon borough lordships and high stewardships acquired through being a courtier and a royal favourite', may have also assumed this new shape.<sup>101</sup> 'Loyalty to the Earl himself was increasingly overshadowed by his identification with the cause.'<sup>102</sup> In 1581 one Puritan Richard Knightley told him that,

You have lightened many a godly man's heart and I am sure you have thereby gotten you such friends as would be ready to venture their lives with your lordship in a good cause, even such as would not do it so much in respect of your high calling, as for that they espy in your lordship a zeal and care for the helping and relieving of the poor church.<sup>103</sup>

This image that Leicester fabricated himself as a godly defender successfully attracted numerous Protestant zealots.<sup>104</sup> This new type, the ideologically committed, also organised the pivot of Leicester–Walsingham party. Instead of materialism, ties by blood, intermarriage and godly ideology formed its heart: the Dudleys, the Sidneys, Francis Knollys, Walsingham and Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford. The cosmopolitan Protestantism of the three latter figures particularly was activated during their Marian religious exiles in Italy.<sup>105</sup> They defined the success of English foreign policy in terms of liberating all Protestants, notably the Dutch Calvinists and the French Huguenots,

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<sup>100</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, II, 261.

<sup>101</sup> Adams, 'The Dudley clientele and the House of Commons, 1559-86', *Leicester and the Court*, 196.

<sup>102</sup> Adams, 'Faction, Clientage and Party', 36.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>104</sup> Simon Adams, 'A Godly Peer? Leicester and the Puritans', *History Today* 40 (1990), 14-19.

<sup>105</sup> Simon Adams, 'The Dudley Clientele, 1553-1563', G. W. Bernard, ed., *The Tudor Nobility* (Manchester, 1992), 242.

from Catholic persecutions and menaces. Their universal Protestantism challenged the Burghley-led conservatism, which gave priority to England's interest and ruling legitimacy. From 1578 when the Dutch Protestants rose against Spain, this divergence split the Privy Council over whether England should interfere in the Dutch revolt.

This political divide was frequently reported to Madrid by the newly assigned Spanish ambassador Mendoza. On 31 March 1578, he observed that the Elizabethan regime was falling into inner division:

The bulk of the policy really depends upon the Queen, Leicester, Walsingham and Cecil, the latter of whom, although he takes part in the resolution of them by virtue of his office, absents himself on many occasions, as he is opposed to the Queen's helping the rebels so effectively and thus weakening her own position. He does not wish to break with Leicester and Walsingham on the matter, they being very much wedded to the States, and extremely self-seeking, as I am assured that they are keeping the interest of the money which the Queen has lent to the States...They urge the business under cloak of preserving their religion, which Cecil cannot well oppose, nor can he afford to make enemies of them, as they are well supported...Leicester, whose spirit is Walsingham, is so highly favoured by the Queen, notwithstanding his bad character, that he centres in his hands and those of his friends most of the business of the country.<sup>106</sup>

Mendoza accused Leicester and Walsingham, 'the reform party', of fomenting policy antagonism towards the anti-war Burghley, deliberately misleading the Queen into an open rupture with Spain, and profiting themselves on the strength of it. Elizabeth was persuaded by them that she could only ensure her safety and enhance England's strength by harrying Spain in long and costly wars. Accordingly, Leicester and Walsingham hatched up Drake's armed expedition and arranged for French Huguenot

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<sup>106</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 31 Mar. 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 573.



aid to help the Portuguese pretender, Don Antonio, in his enterprise to Portugal.<sup>107</sup> Mendoza also reproached Walsingham and Leicester for being driven more by avarice than by patriotism or faith. Their cooperation with the Prince of Orange both profited them financially, and in respect of the English succession. Queen Elizabeth promised Walsingham and Leicester that if they were able to persuade the Dutch rebels to pay 8 per cent of the costs annually, they would obtain its revenue.<sup>108</sup> In reward for their efforts at the English court, William of Orange had engaged to uphold their proposed succession of the Earl of Huntingdon, promising to support them ‘by sea with ships’ when the Queen died.<sup>109</sup>

Conyers Read cited Mendoza’s diplomatic reports as proof of the mid-Elizabethan political disunion. He divided the Council at this time into the ‘peace party’ and the ‘war party’, and marked their ‘partisan spirits’ by a list of neat antitheses between the party heads. Walsingham ‘was quite prepared to sacrifice England’s interests for the sake of what he considered the great cause’; Burghley was ‘chiefly guided by reasons of state...preferred national considerations before religious ones’. Walsingham supported any anti-Spanish movements, like the Dutch Protestant revolts, Francis Drake’s maritime robberies, and the Portuguese pretender Don Antonio’s rebels. By

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<sup>107</sup> Mendoza to Zayas, 3 Jun. 1578, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 587-88. Mendoza to Philip II, 18 Feb. 1579; Mendoza to Zayas, 11 Mar 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 648-51, 656. Mendoza to Philip II, 4 Jul., 23 July 1581; 6 Mar. 1582, *CSP Spanish 1580-1586*, 140-42, 151-52, 312-13. Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

<sup>108</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 15 Apr. 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 459.

<sup>109</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 17 Jan. 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 264-65. Mendoza also revealed other undercover plans for an alternative English succession led by Leicester and Walsingham. ‘Robert Bowes, this Queen’s ambassador, and Davison have informed the King, on behalf of Leicester and Walsingham, that if he will marry Dorothy, daughter of the Earl of Essex...they, Leicester and Walsingham, will have him declared by the judges to be the heir to the crown of England...Leicester still perseveres in the marriage I mentioned, of his son with the grand-daughter of the countess of Shrewsbury, who, after the queen of England, they say, is the nearest heiress. With Walsingham’s aid he is thus trying to get his son made King in right of his wife.’ Mendoza to Philip II, 17 Mar. 1583, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 451-52. TNA, SP 52/36/72, Hunsdon to Burghley, 11 Sept. 1584.

contrast, Burghley promoted the Anjou courtship, and the nomination of Stafford to the French embassy to counter Walsingham's monopoly on diplomacy and intelligence.<sup>110</sup> Burghley and Sussex supported the suppression of Catholicism via non-military means like negotiation, diplomatic alliances, or royal matrimony. This view met with fierce opposition from the godly group, and was denounced as an appeasement of Catholic tyranny. To free their persecuted coreligionists, the radicals believed that the most effective method was to counter violent Catholicism with violence. As a consequence of this stalemate in the foreign policy, the Elizabethan espionage service split from the late 1570s. The party heads individually organised and privatised their own spy systems, competing for valuable intelligence to further their partisan ideologies within policy debate, as well as to diminish each other's influence within the regime.

Mitchell Leimon, however, doubts this view of Read's concerning divisions in the Council before the Spanish Armada, and thinks Read's proof rests too narrowly on Mendoza's biased ambassadorial reports.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, certain contemporary and in the main strongly partial works, record the same political strife and ascribe it likewise to the divisions over policy. John Clapham, 'a clerk to the Lord Treasurer', compiled a treatise *Elizabeth of England* some twenty years later, accusing Leicester of 'being in great favour with the Prince and desirous for his own glory', who urged English intervention 'in the behalf of the United Provinces'.<sup>112</sup> William Camden wrote the *Annales* to publicise his old patron Burghley's moderation by condemning Leicester's personal immorality and his party's grandiose military policy. And he verified that in

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<sup>110</sup> Read, 'Walsingham and Burghley in Queen Elizabeth's Privy Council', 34-58.

<sup>111</sup> Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581', 60.

<sup>112</sup> John Clapham, Evelyn Plummer Read and Conyers Read, eds., *Elizabeth of England: Certain Observations Concerning the Life and Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1951), 59-61.

1584 Elizabeth's Council was mired in a worsening stalemate over the issue of whether England should offer more active aid to the Utrecht Union, then in both military and political collapse.

The new change in the Dutch war appeared to be quite adverse to the Protestant cause. Alexander Farnese, Prince of Parma, had overrun the part of Flanders south of Lys in 1583, and later in 1584 most of Brabant. By February 1585, Antwerp and Ostend were beleaguered, and Brussels was ready to surrender. Suddenly in May 1584 the Duke of Anjou died. Queen Elizabeth had used Anjou in the English diplomatic arrangements in the Low Countries to counter-balance the triple powers of the Dutch Protestants, France, and Spain. Anjou's English connection as a presumptive suitor of Queen Elizabeth temporarily placated the Dutch Protestants' request for English intervention. His proximity to the French succession and personal ambition discouraged his brother Henri III from occupying the Low Countries. Furthermore, Anjou's acting as a tie to the joint Valois–Tudor alliance made him a menace to Spain. Unfortunately, Anjou's demise upset this delicate power balance. More ruinously, Prince William of Orange was assassinated in July, and his son Maurice was too young to fill his place. The headless commonwealth was desperate for a foreign sovereign that could bring substantial military and financial aid; only Henri III of France and Queen Elizabeth of England qualified for their requirements.

Originally King Henri was their prime candidate. As early as the June of 1584, at the urging of William of Orange shortly before his murder, the State Generals had sent two envoys to Paris, formally offering Henri III his late brother Anjou's title accompanying

the right to garrison the principal Flemish and Brabantine towns.<sup>113</sup> Yet fear of the Guises motivated King Henri's refusal to act. Anjou's death had all but confirmed the Huguenot head Henry of Bourbon, King of Navarre, as the next heir presumptive to the French throne. Consequently, the Catholic League and the Guises armed to force King Henri to disinherit Navarre, and instead recognize as his heir the latter's uncle, the Cardinal Charles de Bourbon, and to root out the Huguenots. Therefore, in July 1584, King Henri refused the first offer of the Dutch Protestants.

While continuing in their attempts to persuade King Henri, the States Generals began to turn to the alternative candidate, Queen Elizabeth. In August their agents reached London with a request for succor of 6,000 foot, 3,000 horse, and 300,000 lbs of powder.<sup>114</sup> This new development compelled the Queen to ponder the feasibility of whether she could rescue the Dutch Protestants alone without French help. Doubtless it would be regarded by King Philip as a declaration of war. Her Council also fell into quarrels over whether or not to send military aid to the Dutch rebels against Spain.<sup>115</sup> Walsingham and Leicester headed the war party, denouncing Philip's suppression of the Dutch Calvinists, his pensioning of English exiles to further conspiracies, the anti-Elizabeth plots designed by his diplomat Mendoza (formerly in England but now in Paris), and the avaricious malice with which he fought against the whole Reformation. In one way, through the discovery of the Throckmorton Plot, Walsingham had successfully tempted his indecisive Queen to expel the complicit Ambassador Mendoza and break openly with Spain. This left England no alternative

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<sup>113</sup> MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy 1572-1588*, 305.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 306.

<sup>115</sup> Alan G. R. Smith, *The Emergence of A Nation State: The Commonwealth of England, 1529-1660* (London, 1984), 115.

but to turn to France as an ally. In addition, Walsingham also encouraged an activist policy, of direct, immediate, and armed intervention in the Low Countries by England ‘alone’, without waiting on the French. Walsingham justified the claim to open war, that while wars in pursuit of dynastic ambition were unacceptable, those ‘grounded on necessary, not for sovereignty but for safety, not to enlarge but to retain’, were justifiable.<sup>116</sup>

Burghley opposed this call for armed engagement because of its enormous expense, its threat to commerce, and the legitimacy of the Spanish suppression of its rebellious territories. Burghley defined the Dutch as rebels, and King Philip was only doing ‘a thing that any prince would do’.<sup>117</sup> Furthermore, Burghley argued, England should avoid being involved in wars, in order to preserve her strength for home defence:

if the Queene would intermeddle no more in the matters of the Netherlands, but most strongly fortifie her owne kingdome, binde the good unto her daily more straitly by her innated bounty, restraints the bad, gather money, furnish her Navy with all provision, strengthen the borders toward Scotland with garrison, and maintaine the ancient military discipline of England...So would England become impregnable and She on every side most secure, and dreadfull to her enemies. That this was the most commodious means for those which had ever mighty neighbours, to avoid warre...But they which were of this opinion, incurred heavy displeasure amongst martiall men, as inclining to the Spaniards party, degenerate, and faint-hearted cowards.<sup>118</sup>

Burghley was not callous towards non-English Protestants in distress. He chose to help them through diplomatic negotiations and a royal matrimonial alliance, on the premise of not damaging English interests. However, this only slowly effective remedy

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<sup>116</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 103-105.

<sup>117</sup> R. B. Wernham, *Before the Armada: The Growth of English Foreign Policy 1485-1588* (London, 1966), 369.

<sup>118</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 282, 410.

dissatisfied the eager Walsingham, who preferred a faster and more forcible strategy.

In stalemate over the Dutch policy, in mid-November of 1584 the Council dispatched William Davison to discover the Dutch intentions and hopes for English assistance. The initial information Davison sent back, probably deliberately, strengthened Walsingham's arguments. 'To conclude, I finde these countries yet so stronge, the meanes to maintaine the wares so great with good government, and the affections of the people universallie so aliened from the French, as if theie had any assurance of her Highness' disposition to relieve and help them, their treatie with France...wold coole of itself.'<sup>119</sup> Elizabeth was greatly encouraged, consenting to an initial investment of £6,000 to advance the cause. But this fund was transferred, for some unclear reason, to Truchsess, Elector of Cologne. Walsingham, absent from the court 'for the cure of my olde disease', attributed this change to the influence of Burghley, who 'as I suppose is principallie made acquainted with this despatche'.<sup>120</sup> Again during Walsingham's sick leave, on 14 January 1585 Burghley instructed Davison that the Queen 'hath heretofore at divers time offered to the Frenche Kinge to join with him in succouring [and protecting] of the States' against Spain.<sup>121</sup> Previewing this letter on 11 January, Walsingham addressed Burghley at length with his hard arguments. He impatiently described the Queen's 'good consideration' on the Dutch issue as irresolution at the wrong time. He appealed to her (and Burghley) to consider more 'the perilous state that those countries do presently stand in'. He once again asserted that the Queen should 'resolve to take the protection of them herself, which would be most profitable for the cause, the most surest course for herself, and the onlie and likeliest waie to

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<sup>119</sup> TNA, SP 83/23 f. 161v, Davison to Walsingham, 5 Dec. 1584.

<sup>120</sup> TNA, SP 83/23 ff. 211v-212r, Walsingham to Davison, 30 Dec. 1584.

<sup>121</sup> TNA, SP 84/1 f. 8, [Burghley] to Davison, 14 Jan. 1584/5.

drawe the malcontentes to revolte from the Spanishe course, which would worke more furtherance unto the cause than myllion of poundes'.<sup>122</sup>

Displeased at Burghley's interference in these matters during his enforced absence, Walsingham also observed that Burghley had hindered his petition for a farm of the customs of certain English ports. Consequently, the irritated Walsingham wrote Burghley a letter using exceptionally harsh rhetoric (some passages were later underlined by Burghley), first refuting certain libellous reports in the latter's hands, which 'myght work some doubtfull conceypt of my good wyll towards you'. Then he proceeded to reproach Burghley's 'opposytyon in my sute for the farming of the custome'. So many reasons, 'confyrmed so many wayes', induced him to believe 'the truthe of former reports of your L. myslyke of me'. The indignant Walsingham announced:

yt was a more save [safe] coorse for me to howlde your L. rather as an ennemye then as a frende...Nowe whyles I was possessed with this dyscontentement I confesse I sowght up sooche informatyons as heretofor (unsowght for) have ben gyven unto me, that myght any way towche your L., and meant...to have proceeded by conference with the partyes to have drawn some further lyght from them herin.<sup>123</sup>

His recriminations expose the papered-over antagonism beneath Queen Elizabeth's seemingly harmonious regime in the mid-1580s. Interestingly, Burghley underlined the terms respecting Walsingham's sources of such information, rather than his announcement of enmity. This implies Burghley's interest in knowing who offered Walsingham intelligence adverse to him, and Burghley's tolerance of his hot-tempered junior. Walsingham did not mention that his information came from his spies; he only

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<sup>122</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/5, Walsingham to Burghley, 11 Jan. 1585.

<sup>123</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/19, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.

used the word ‘informer’ in the following different context of Exchequer business: ‘And towching the partyculer matter your L makethe mentyon of in your letter that a cliente of myn should deale with an Esschequer man by my order for the searche of some matter that might towche your L. I doe assure your L I doe not remember any sooche matter and therfor doe howld my selve wronge therin by the informer.’

From Walsingham’s second letter of the same day, after Burghley’s speedy reply (now lost), we can assume that Walsingham gained his information not from spies, but from within the Privy Chamber, or even possibly from the Queen. He was reluctant to reveal his source to Burghley, writing rather delicately: ‘And towching the producyng of the reportes yf I myght doe yt with the credyt of an honest man I woold not fayle to satysfyie your L. therin Besydes yt may reatche to sooche persons as are not to be caused in question.’<sup>124</sup> If his information came from the Queen, it is well worth considering how Elizabeth ruled by faction in order to strengthen her royal supremacy. She passed on to Burghley intelligence from Walsingham’s spies like Walter Williams, and conversely to Walsingham some concerning Burghley. Elizabeth was cunningly skilful in creating or provoking tension between her chief ministers, in order to maintain the equilibrium between the parties in her regime. Moreover, at the beginning of this second letter, Walsingham was open in his appreciation of Burghley ‘for your frendely acceptyng of my playne manner of wrytyng: assuring your L that you shall fynde at my handes all dewe and synceare performaunce of my promysed good wyll towards your L’. It looked like reconciliation. But, after a week, Walsingham’s spy Edmund Neville denounced to the Queen a regicidal plot instigated by Burghley’s chief agent provocateur, William Parry. Parry was tried and convicted on 25 February

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<sup>124</sup> TNA, SP 12/176/20, Walsingham to Burghley, 30 Jan. 1584/5.



1587, and was hanged on 2 March. Parry died for his growing greed and his confused loyalty between his Queen and Catholicism. However his death was also probably in part due to Walsingham's remaining animosity towards his patron. This event might have somewhat damaged Elizabeth's confidence in Burghley's espionage.

The international climate in early 1585 developed in favour of the war party. On 27 February, Henri III restated his inability to help the Dutch, as his own estate was 'so fickle and so unsound within itself that he was to fear lest in going about to get upon others he should put in a venture to "leese" himself'.<sup>125</sup> This was true, and on 20 March, the Catholic League seized Chalons, signalling the outbreak of a new civil war in France; in June King Henri yielded to the League, agreeing to the Treaty of Nemours. Meanwhile, Philip II suddenly seized all the English ships lying in Spanish ports, on the excuse that he needed shipping for a fleet assembling at Lisbon. The Dutch revolt came to another point of military collapse. Brussels and Malines had surrendered to the Prince of Parma, and besieged Antwerp was parleying with him. These new dangers promoted Walsingham's interventionist claim for godly glory, and converted Burghley to the policy of giving aid to the Dutch. The Queen, too, reluctantly recognised that she could no longer stand as a spectator beyond the seas.<sup>126</sup>

In June 1585 a Dutch envoy arrived to offer Elizabeth their sovereignty. She refused in order to avoid a limitless obligation for their defence, as well as because of the risk of further infuriating Spain. In July, Walsingham may have ensnared Burghley through a double agent. There is some evidence that through William Herle, Walsingham was

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<sup>125</sup> Wernham, *Before the Armada*, 370.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

trying to inspire Burghley's support in the projected Dutch enterprise by tempting his greed with a very desirable profit. On 25 July, Herle informed Walsingham that 'as much as your instructions ymported' he had written to Burghley, persuading him of a scheme to help the Low Countries which would return a rich bonus, £10,000 monthly to the Queen and £1,000 to Burghley. Herle added that 'the matter sholdd passe scylently bettween theme'. Seemingly, Herle ingratiated himself with his new patron Walsingham by entrapping his old one, dangling a bribe in front of Cecil.<sup>127</sup> Conyers Read, however, assessed this differently, seeing Herle, as 'a clever scoundrel', who falsely played up to Walsingham in order to show Walsingham's trickery to his old patron Burghley. In short, he served Burghley as a spy inside Walsingham's system.<sup>128</sup>

Probably because of Herle's intelligence, Burghley was sufficiently alert. His response to this proposal effectively eliminated any design to corrupt him. He replied on 24 July:

How I can be tempted with allowance of a devise to gaine to hir majestie 10,000 l monethly, and to my self one other 1,000, so as hir majestie will help the states...But for ani offer to my self, I do utterly refuse either such, or a less sum, thinking it more charitie to yeild of myne owne to the comen Cawse, than to receive a peny.

In the postscript he added with caution,

I mervaile that anie malicious disourser can note me a Counsellor that I do abuse my credit to my private gaine. I may say boldly, that I have neither made nor had sute from hir majestie these ten yeres, by lease, lycence, gyfte, lone or any other waie worth ten li. How others ar fraught with sutes, the world may easely see, which I do not mislyke.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>127</sup> BL, Harley MS 286 ff. 68r-69v, Herle to Walsingham, 25 Jul. 1585.

<sup>128</sup> Read, *Lord Burghley*, 316.

<sup>129</sup> TNA, SP 12/180/46, Burghley to Herle, 24 Jul. 1585.

Burghley's words do not demonstrate his incorruptibility; he had been enriching his own purse via his mastery of wardships. But they show Burghley's discreetness and his insight into the Queen's real attitude towards the Dutch rebels.<sup>130</sup> In addition, the cunning Burghley had suspected Leicester of initiating these schemes to disgrace him. Faced with Burghley's questions, Leicester denied any charge, and continued attempts to canvass Burghley on how beneficial the diplomatic commission would be.

Eventually on 10 August, through the preliminary Treaty of Nonsuch, England agreed to dispatch and pay, as long as the war continued, an auxiliary force of 5,000 foot and 1,000 horses. The vanguard of the English auxiliary army, under John Norris, reached the Low Countries by mid-August. In September Leicester was assigned as their General, and crossed in December. At home, Walsingham and Hatton did their utmost to defend Leicester's Dutch expedition.<sup>131</sup> Walsingham particularly 'hath bene behind hand to no one of the rest in an honest and honourable defence of your [Leicester] doings, but th'opinion of his partiality to your Lordship hath somewhat prejudiced his credit with her [Majesty]'.<sup>132</sup> Walsingham, as Secretary regulating the flow of information and intelligence from and to the Queen, exercised real power through his office, and used it to protect his political and ideological policy.

Queen Elizabeth did know of Walsingham's manipulation of intelligence in his attempts to sway her opinions, so her relationship with her aggressive Secretary often

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<sup>130</sup> Read, *Lord Burghley*, 315-16.

<sup>131</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley to Leicester, 14 Mar. 1586, Bruce, ed., *Correspondence of Robert Dudley*, 175-76.

<sup>132</sup> Davison to Leicester, 28 Feb. 1586, *ibid.*, 143.

became tense. For example, one of the most polemical oppositions to the second Anjou match came from John Stubbs's *Discoverie of a Gaping Gulf whereinto England is like to be swallowed by another French marriage*, published in early August 1579 and widely distributed. Susan Doran points out that Stubbs's arguments against the match were quite similar to those listed in the Council meeting the previous spring, including Anjou's faith, his nationality, Elizabeth's age, and the dangers of a marriage to 'the brother of childless France'. Both Doran and Leimon labelled the *Discoverie* a 'politically factious' and 'factional' book. Elizabeth strongly suspected her Secretary Walsingham of having 'knowledge of this affair' and acting as Stubbs's informant. Hence in October 1579 the gossip in Paris was that Elizabeth had dismissed Walsingham from the Court as a 'protector of heretics'.<sup>133</sup> In the 1580s, the partisan combativeness of Leicester and Walsingham frequently enraged the Queen.<sup>134</sup> She blamed Walsingham for his expulsion of non-military men from the government, such as the replacement of the Earl of Shrewsbury by Paulet as Mary's keeper: 'you do nothing but stir up things to gain other ends, but it all ends in smoke'.<sup>135</sup> She condemned Leicester and Walsingham as 'a pair of knaves', who not only disturbed her marriage to Anjou, but led her to be 'in peril of losing her throne and her life by having burdened herself with a war'. She announced 'if she had done her duty as a Queen she should have had them both hanged'.<sup>136</sup> In March 1586 she even threw a slipper in Walsingham's face, when she discovered he had been downplaying the threat

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<sup>133</sup> Doran, *Monarchy and Matrimony*, 164-67. Leimon, 'Sir Francis Walsingham and the Anjou Marriage Plan, 1574-1581', 125. Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 122.

<sup>134</sup> Mendoza to Zayas, 31 Mar. 1579, *CSP Spanish 1568-1579*, 659. Mendoza to Philip II, 15 Jun. 1581, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 131-32.

<sup>135</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 1 Mar. 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 301.

<sup>136</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 4 May 1582, *CSP Spanish, 1580-1586*, 353; 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.

of the Spanish navy allegedly assembling at Lisbon, in order to avoid resources being spared from Leicester's campaign in the Low Countries.<sup>137</sup> Elizabeth's relations with Walsingham reached a new low.

But why would she have tolerated a Principal Secretary she found so obnoxious? Walsingham was allowed to keep his Secretaryship until his death in 1590, and even to monopolise it between 1581 and 1586. Walsingham rooted himself in Elizabeth's regime as a technical bureaucrat. For this aggressive but diligent Secretary, Queen Elizabeth always hesitated to give her favour as she had to Burghley, or to her 'eyes' Leicester. She never tried to hide her opprobrium or hostility towards Walsingham from the public. Poor Walsingham, flogging himself to death in the performance of governmental business, remained a Secretary and a mere Knight. Nevertheless, despite her loathing for his radicalism and the godly ideology which placed his faith before sovereignty, Elizabeth never doubted Walsingham's fidelity to her and to England. More significantly, Walsingham's highly efficient espionage consolidated Elizabeth's reliance on his supply of intelligence, and further pushed him to his political apogee in the 1580s. In 1581, Elizabeth accorded Walsingham the nickname 'the Moor', implying he was formally admitted into the élite circle of the Queen's intimates.<sup>138</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This thesis examines two power landscapes of the mid-Elizabethan regime in terms of espionage: partisan rivalry between ministers, and the balance of power between the Queen and her Council (or government). Touching the first issue of factionalism, this

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<sup>137</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 104.

<sup>138</sup> CP 11/97r, Leicester to Walsingham, 30 Jul. 1581.

chapter has demonstrated that the political divide had existed from the late 1570s to 1580s, mainly because of differences over English interventionism. Walsingham used his espionage quite well to irritate and drive the moody Queen Elizabeth towards his military policy. In a series of counter-plots, he brought Mary Stuart to the block, led England to a formal diplomatic break with Spain, and tied an English alliance most closely with France. Walsingham's administrative dominance and his espionage successfully gained him political prominence and promoted his party's godly ideology, moving England from the complacent Elizabethan Settlement, towards a cosmopolitan Protestantism.

It is noticeable that policy quarrels at this time never deteriorated into anything as fatal as factionalism. In 1587 the rivalry, indeed, seemed to have softened, partly because of the virtual certainty of Mary's execution, and partly because Burghley had assisted Walsingham to settle the late Sidney's debt and to achieve the patronage of the Duchy of Lancaster. Mostly, however, it was because a policy of war had been all but confirmed, and the diverging elements of the regime had thus reunited. Part of the evidence for this is that Walsingham started to admit Burghley into his espionage. The Stafford Plot in January 1587 saw cooperation in spying between Walsingham's system and the Burghley-Stafford one. William Stafford, the younger brother of English Ambassador Edward Stafford in Paris, who had been under an obligation to Walsingham from June 1585, worked with Michael Moody, a trustworthy servant of Ambassador Stafford's, to involve the new French ambassador Châteauneuf, and his secretary Des Trappes, in an intrigue to kill the Queen.<sup>139</sup> This plot was proposed in

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<sup>139</sup> For some unknown reason, William Stafford offered his loyalty to Walsingham: 'I am now as ever I was at your honors comandment, there is no man livinge to whome I am beholding but yourself. If I shold live to see my blode shedde in your honors cause, I shold thinke it but some recompence for the greate good I have received at your hands.' TNA, SP 15/29/18, William Stafford to Walsingham, 10 Jun. 1585. When the discussion between Stafford and Moody reached the very sensitive issue of the methods

order to strengthen the irresolute Queen Elizabeth, and push her into executing Mary. By drawing Ambassador Châteauneuf into this plot, it was intended to put him under house arrest during the time of Mary's execution and thereby cut off his link with France. In addition to cooperation over the Stafford Plot, later in June 1587, receiving Anthony Standen's intelligence from Spain regarding its naval preparations for the impending Armada, Walsingham passed this to Burghley. In a postscript he added, 'I humbly pray your Lordship that Pompey's letter may be reserved to yourself. I would be loathe the gentleman should have any harm though my default.'<sup>140</sup>

The portrayals of Camden and Naunton respecting Elizabethan factionalism bring into focus another controversy over Elizabeth's queenship: whether her monarchy was limited or absolutist. In the male-dominated world of espionage or 'faction', Queen Elizabeth remains silent in the historiography. According to the theory of patronage distribution, supported by Neale, MacCaffrey and Eric Ives, the monarch was at the top of the market for royal favour at court. His or her privilege of patronage distribution first ensured multiple channels of intelligence for the monarchy, second, balanced the power landscape in the regime, and ultimately safeguarded royal superiority. However, as Simon Adams states, Elizabeth's playing her leading councillors off against each other had its limits. 'The comparative unanimity of the inner ring of councillors provided for a basic political consensus, and maintenance of a common front against the Queen became a pronounced feature of the Council's advisory function.'<sup>141</sup> In

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by which to kill the queen (by poison or by laying a trail of gunpowder inside the Queen's bedchamber) at the beginning of 1587, Stafford went to Barn Elms to reveal the whole plan to Secretary Walsingham. In the interrogations afterwards all those involved except the French made confessions 'freelie without anie constraint'. TNA, SP 78/16 f. 148, Stafford to Burghley, 6 Nov. 1586. 'The True Foundation and manner of the horrible treason', 11 Jan. 1587, *CSPD, 1581-1590*, 380. Raphael Holinshed, *Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* (London, 1807-1808), 566, 576.

<sup>140</sup> Read, *Walsingham*, III, 289-91.

<sup>141</sup> Simon Adams, 'Eliza enthroned? The Court and its Politics', in Christopher Haigh, ed., *The Reign of*

brief, operating the leverage on parties/factions was risky. Any truce between factions for a common purpose, or ascendancy of one faction over another, would bring problems for sovereignty. In 1587, Walsingham and Burghley reconciled with each other in order to work towards Mary's execution. Their intelligence operations together isolated the Queen, as in the Council-led execution of Mary without Elizabeth's knowledge. These two opposite images have led Elizabethan historians to a debate the extent of either royal supremacy or the monarchical republic. The final chapter that follows will examine this second issue of the Elizabethan polity, by discovering the Queen's voice in espionage, and redefining her role within the politics of the regime.



## Chapter VI: A 'Rule Mixte'? Queenship and the Control of Information

Compared with the active involvement of Mary Queen of Scots in espionage, Queen Elizabeth and her female courtiers look relatively quiescent. Usually, Elizabeth appears either as a patron for her male ministers' espionage, or as a passive listener to whom they fed intelligence selected to favour their partisan policies. These two distinct images reflect her inconsistent queenship within patriarchal politics. Her dominance over patronage distribution, as Wallace MacCaffrey and Eric Ives suggested, ensured her royal superiority over factiousness, and resisted an intelligence monopoly. Spymasters from either party could hide little intelligence from her if they needed royal subsidies. Her royal prerogative of appointment to court and state offices assisted Burghley's party to break Walsingham's monopoly on intelligence and acted as a counter-balance to factionalism. Queen Elizabeth was speculating in intelligence. As will be argued here, Elizabeth's own less efficient female information system forced her to rely heavily on the male systems. While male partisan rivalry benefited her in providing multiple intelligence sources, when the parties became reconciled for a common purpose, their information systems could together blind the Queen by the selective presentation, or withholding, of intelligence, and thus deprive her of her initiative on policy. Elizabeth's inconsistent queenship has initiated a debate in the historiography: should the Elizabethan polity be characterised in terms of personal rule, or a monarchical republic?

It was William Camden's argument for Elizabeth's 'womanish impotency' in rule—which contrasted with Robert Naunton's assertion of her superiority over faction—that formally introduced this issue into the historiography. Patrick Collinson

joined this debate with his notable concept, the monarchical republic of Elizabeth I.<sup>1</sup> MacCaffrey defended Elizabeth's personal rule in terms of her monarchical control over patronage, and Natalie Mears likewise emphasizes her initiative in assembling the counsel group.<sup>2</sup> With regard to the female information network at court, the research of Pam Wright and of Charlotte Merton offers the best guide to Elizabeth's female chamber, and that of James Daybell to Tudor aristocratic women's information activities.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter proposes to discuss the two political issues that impacted on the Privy Council's decision to execute Mary Stuart without Queen Elizabeth's knowledge: Elizabeth's comparative weakness in the courtly circulation of news, intelligence and information, and the Privy Council's degree of independence from the monarchy. It first examines how Elizabeth employed her female chamber in the transmission of information and intelligence. Then, through consideration of Mary's execution, it presents Elizabeth's incapacity in her ministerial circulation of information. The reasons why the Council isolated their Queen—their appeal for a mixed rule, the traditional concept of female inferiority, and their antipathy towards Elizabeth's irresolution—will be discussed in terms of ministerial dominance over intelligence. The lack of control over intelligence had gradually reduced Elizabeth's regime towards

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Collinson, 'The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I', in John Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy* (London, 1997), 110-34.

<sup>2</sup> Natalie Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan Realms* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>3</sup> Pam Wright, 'A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603', in David Starkey, ed., *The English Court: from the Wars of the Roses to the Civil War* (London, 1987), 147-72; Charlotte Isabella Merton, 'The Woman who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth: Ladies, Gentlewomen and Maids of the Privy Chamber 1553-1603' (Ph.D. thesis, Cambridge University, 1992); James Daybell, 'Suche newes as on the Quenes hie wayes we have mett': the News and Intelligence Networks of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (c.1527-1608)', in James Daybell, ed., *Women and Politics in Early Modern England, 1450-1700* (Aldershot, 2004); James Daybell, *Women Letter-Writers in Tudor England* (Oxford, 2006).

an acephalous conciliar one. Certain pivotal ministers, usually also as spymasters and managers of state information, became alternative leaders of her regime. But these two heads, the monarchy and its Council, coexisted uneasily.

### 1. The Female Circulation of Information at Court

Conventional scholarship pays little attention to female participation in the Tudor news network. Queen Elizabeth is habitually imaged as being attached to her male officials' supply of intelligence. This section focuses on an alternative information service, centred on Elizabeth's female privy chamber, which served the Queen to break Walsingham's monopoly on intelligence, as well as to balance partisan power in the regime. But its low level of efficiency did not help the Queen become independent of the male systems of information supply.

Ian Atherton has presented a very masculine world of news transmission and readership. Firstly, men, by vocation, dominated a wider range of news than women. Acting as merchants, lawyers, officials and courtiers, men frequented the environments—St Paul's, the Inns of Court, and the royal court—where the bulk of news flourished and circulated. Furthermore, men were recipients of newsletters, whereas women, 'less interested in news', 'rarely included even a line of news' in their private letters. In terms of the nature of information in correspondence, women were traditionally deprecated as 'gossips', peddlers of trifling tittle-tattle, in contrast with men who were seen as 'intelligencers', suppliers of information of serious import.<sup>4</sup> Atherton ascribed to women an apolitical world of the family; the public one of politics

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<sup>4</sup> Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England, 1550-1720* (Oxford, 1998), 215, cited in Daybell, "'Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett'", 116.

and its information circulation was vested only in men.<sup>5</sup>

This picture of female insignificance in news networks originated in the traditional focus on the government system, with the absent women being viewed as apolitical or negligible political players. Mortimer Levine agreed that ‘the evidence would have it that what was true for queen consort surely held true for all women in Tudor England: they held no prominent place in Tudor government’.<sup>6</sup> Barbara Harris ascribed women’s eclipse in the Tudor political scene to the traditional focus of political historiography on formal institutions—monarchy, council, parliament, courts, and administrative bodies—that excluded women.<sup>7</sup>

Pam Wright developed the first full, convincing portrait of the Elizabethan Privy Chamber. In light of David Starkey’s model of the ‘politics of intimacy’ in Henry VIII’s reign, she illustrated that the accession of a female monarch incapacitated the Privy Chamber, now a female entity, from being a political forum.<sup>8</sup> Women were prevented from assuming key administrative offices like the Keepership of the Privy Purse, as well as from counselling the sovereign over key issues. This Henrician ‘cockpit of faction’ ceased to be a ‘barrier or cocoon’. In Elizabeth’s reign, it was

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<sup>5</sup> Ian Atherton, ‘The Itch Grown a Disease: Manuscript Transmission of News in the Seventeenth Century’, in Joad Raymond, ed., *News, Newspapers and Society in Early Modern Britain* (London, 1999), 49-50.

<sup>6</sup> Mortimer Levine, ‘The Place of Women in Tudor government’, in Delloyd J. Guth and John W. McKenna, eds., *Tudor Rule and Revolution: Essays for G. R. Elton From His American Friends* (Cambridge, 1983), 123.

<sup>7</sup> Barbara J. Harris, ‘Women and Politics in Early Tudor England’, *The Historical Journal* 33 (Jun. 1990), 259.

<sup>8</sup> David Starkey ‘Representation through intimacy: A study in the symbolism of monarchy and Court office in early modern England’, and ‘Court and government’, in Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy*, 42-78, 189-213. Starkey, ‘Intimacy and innovation: the rise of the Privy Chamber, 1485-1547’, in Stakey, ed., *The English Court*, 71-118.

shrunk into a purely household charge, attending to the Queen's daily routine, personal jewellery and dress. Its political role became 'accidental, rarely sustained, and never pursued to the uttermost'. Nevertheless, Wright argues that bodily attendance on the Queen privileged female chamberers into 'a free market economy of favours', as patronage brokers.<sup>9</sup>

In her as yet unpublished doctoral thesis, Charlotte Merton challenged Wright on her assertion of the feminised Privy Chamber's neutrality in politics. But she repeatedly narrowed the political function of female courtiers to patronage suits, away from a wider range of political activities, notably policy debate and governance. On the other hand, and most effectively, Merton added women to the news networks. In her narratives, female courtiers kept abreast of international 'information' on their own initiative. Quite often they served as a medium between the Queen and their male counterparts outside the Chamber, 'with regard to the gathering of information and rumour-mongering'.<sup>10</sup>

James Daybell and Natalie Mears both recognise the participation of noble women in news activities. Women at court, Daybell states, 'were at the very centre of where news was exchanged: Anne Talbot (née Herbert) thought the court a place to "learn" news "worthey the wrytynge"'. Female courtiers elevated themselves as privileged intermediaries to the royal presence, and as purveyors of information from and to the court. 'A court without women is like a body without a nervous system', Olwen Hufton argues, and 'women are part of a vital system of communications through which

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<sup>9</sup> Pam Wright, 'A change in direction: the ramifications of a female household, 1558-1603', 147-72.

<sup>10</sup> Merton, 'The Woman who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth', 154-202.

messages are transmitted, channels opened up'.<sup>11</sup> In light of the correspondence of Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury (better known as Bess of Hardwick), Daybell demonstrates women's information management, as gatherers, readers, purveyors and writers of news, and as spymasters. Far from being 'gossipers', women had interest in areas of news identical to the ones with which men were concerned: parliamentary business, war, armed rebellions and naval preparations.<sup>12</sup>

Mears does not doubt that the female correspondence bristled with gossip concerning the Queen's health and moods, court progresses, fluctuations in royal favour, aristocratic marriages and appointments to office. However, it also comprised political information from home and abroad. Hugh Fitzwilliam's letters to the Countess of Shrewsbury in the early 1570s offered an overview of continental and court news: the French civil war, Spain's armed suppression of the Moors and the Dutch revolt, and the arrest of the Duke of Norfolk.<sup>13</sup> Male courtiers were just as interested in so-called tattle, like the queen's health. 'Gossip was neither the preserve of women nor trivial.'<sup>14</sup> Both Daybell and Mears picture a gender-equal network. 'Information was shared between men and women and their networks of contact comprised both genders.'<sup>15</sup>

Initiated by Merton, and developed by Daybell and Mears, research on this theme has recognised women as an integral part of news networks. Women have been upgraded

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<sup>11</sup> Olwen Hufton, 'Reflections on the Role of Women in the Early Modern Court', *The Court Historian*, 5 (May 2000), 1.

<sup>12</sup> Daybell, 'Suche newes as on the Quenes hye wayes we have mett', 127.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>14</sup> Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 111-12.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 113-14.

from traditional patronage suitors and debased ‘gossips’, to gatherers and circulators of ‘information’. But the implications of this are unclear when considering female roles in the circle of ‘intelligence’, which remains overwhelmingly male. In fact, the attendance upon the Queen’s body facilitated the female chamber in running an alternative circulation of information and intelligence, unofficially but more closely linked to the Queen. Their male counterparts had to befriend or even ally with female chamberers, in order to gain timely enlightenment on the royal disposition. For Queen Elizabeth, an intelligence channel via her female companions that circumvented her male government could potentially free her from the male monopoly on intelligence.

Female chamberers, barometers of the Queen’s temper, exported credible intelligence of the capricious Queen’s mood and disposition to their counterparts outside the Chamber. Robert Beale suggested the secretary candidate Edward Wotton should ‘Learne before your accesse her Ma[jes]tie’s disposic[i]on by some in the Privie Chamber w[i]th whom you must keepe credit, for that will stande you in much steede.’<sup>16</sup> Their attendant observance of monarchical fickleness could make policy and requests work smoothly at the right times. In 1587 John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, sent a copy of a petition of the clergy of Ireland to Dorothy Lady Stafford, who since 1564 had served as Mistress of Robes responsible for the Queen’s clothes and jewellery, ‘desiering her in my name to geve it to her majestes, when shee sawe tyme’.<sup>17</sup>

Sometimes the female chamberers offered opportune cautions. Robert Cross, in a letter

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<sup>16</sup> Beale, ‘Instructions for a Principall Secretarie’, in Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Walsingham and the Policy of Queen Elizabeth*, I (Oxford, 1925), 437.

<sup>17</sup> TNA, SP 63/129/70, John Whitgift to Burghley, 7 May 1587.

dated 26 April 1600, appreciated Robert Cecil's 'so wyse' advice three years earlier, 'which was, that I depended and was at charge with wymon to solicit for me, and that the Queen would give them good words it [yet] the [they] should never effect sutte'.<sup>18</sup> In 1574, the marriage between Charles Stuart, Earl of Lennox, and Elizabeth Cavendish, the daughter to the Countess of Shrewsbury and her second husband William Cavendish, aggravated Queen Elizabeth. Several friends of the Countess at court worked for her. Frances, Countess of Sussex suggested she should appease the Queen by sending her a luxurious gift. Not gold or plate, she was especially reminded, but better a cloak of watchet (blue) or peach satin, 'embroidered with some pretty flowers and lined with sundry colours made with gold spangles; such fantastical things will be more expected than cups or jewels'. She also advised Bess to seek the help of other chamber staff—Secretary Walsingham, Blanche Parry, Mary Scudamore (née Shelton), and Dorothy Bradbelt—'these wyll Do more for my l[ady] than Mrs knoll'.<sup>19</sup>

Some messages were released by female intimates on the basis of royal orders. In August 1571, the Queen used Elizabeth Stafford, the daughter of Dorothy Lady Stafford, who had served in the Privy Chamber from 1568 and would remain until her own death in 1599, to recall the Earl of Rutland from Paris. Lady Stafford notified her cousin that his return would gratify the Queen, and cautioned that 'she looks for you

<sup>18</sup> CP 78/96r, Sir Robert Cross to Sir Robert Cecil, 26 Apr. 1600.

<sup>19</sup> Mary S. Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick: First Lady of Chatsworth 1527-1608* (London, 2005), 251. Mary Scudamore secured her appointment as a chamberer of the Privy Chamber on 1 January 1571 and continued until 1603, becoming one of the Queen's favourite sleeping companions. She, allying with Blanche Parry and the Countess of Warwick as 'A Trinity of Ladies able to work miracles', became a principal prop of her husband's (Sir John Scudamore) position at court. Dorothy Bradbelt-Abington served in the Queen's Privy Chamber from 1558 to 1577. 'Scudamore, Mary, Lady Scudamore (c.1550–1603)', Simon Adams in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, October 2006), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/69882> (accessed September 27, 2012); 'Scudamore family (*per.* 1500–1820)', Ian Atherton in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/71878> (accessed September 27, 2012).



shortly, and I hope she will not be deceived'.<sup>20</sup>

The state of the Queen's health, an issue of paramount political importance in a personal monarchy, was sometimes leaked by her female attendants. It is well known that Elizabeth fell dangerously ill of the smallpox in October 1562. However, in the previous autumn she may have had another close encounter with death, if the intelligence the Spanish Ambassador Alvarez de Quadra received was true. According to his budget of intelligence in September 1561, Elizabeth was dangerously ill, 'becoming dropsical and has already begun to swell extraordinarily...she is falling away, and is extremely thin and the colour of a corpse'. Regarding the high secrecy of Elizabeth's illness at court, Quadra learned this from three different sources and 'a person who has the opportunity of being an eye witness'.<sup>21</sup> Two of his informants may have been the two leading gentlewomen at court: Elizabeth Parr (*née* Brooke), first Marchioness of Northampton, 'who is in a better position to judge than anyone else', and her sister-in-law Frances Lady Cobham, a Chamberer of the Privy Chamber since 1559. Apparently, the ambassador adopted the advice of the Count de Feria, cultivating the Marchioness of Northampton, 'who is in high favour with the Queen, has served His Majesty [Philip II] when opportunity has occurred'.<sup>22</sup> Quadra's successor, Guzman de Silva, continued this contact with the Marchioness, praising her as 'a person of great understanding'.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Elizabeth Stafford to Earl of Rutland, 16 Aug. 1571, *HMC, The manuscripts of his grace the Duke of Rutland*, I, 95-96.

<sup>21</sup> Bishop Quadra to the King, 13 Sept. 1561, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 214.

<sup>22</sup> Memorandum from the Count de Feria, 29 Feb. 1559, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 36. Quadra to Philip II, 13 Sept. 1561, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 214.

<sup>23</sup> Guzman de Silva to the Duchess of Parma, 23 Sept. 1564, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 381.

At times female courtiers were suspected of betraying state confidences. Early in Elizabeth's reign, some of her leading ladies, including the Marchioness of Northampton, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Lady Clinton, Mary Sidney, and Frances, Lady Cobham, may have divulged national secrets to one of their former colleagues in Queen Mary's reign, Jane Dormer, Duchess of Feria. Mary Sidney wrote to this exiled kinswoman in Spain, promising to keep sending her English news.<sup>24</sup> The intelligence sent the Duchess—regular and exclusive concerning the English Queen and Ireland—enhanced her own value and that of her husband the Count de Feria within the Spanish court and the Catholic exiled community; her husband hence became King Philip's principal adviser on English matters. On 3 August 1559, Thomas Challoner reported to Queen Elizabeth on his first arrival in Ghent, of his puzzling at how the Count de Feria was privy to 'the most secret thinge of the State of Inghland'.<sup>25</sup> In addition, during the second Anjou courtship, Ambassador Mendoza fostered an informant at Elizabeth's court who offered trustworthy information on Walsingham's affairs, as well as on Elizabeth's Privy Chamber through a lady there. But by April 1579 he had lost this informant, 'with whom it is now almost impossible for me to communicate'.<sup>26</sup>

While exporting intelligence regarding both the Queen's status and national secrets, the female chamber also imported news to Elizabeth.<sup>27</sup> Its peculiar privacy, which bypassed the male-dominated procedures of the Privy Chamber and the Secretary's

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<sup>24</sup> The Bishop of Aquila to the Duke of Alba, 7 Sept. 1559, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 95-96.

<sup>25</sup> TNA, SP 70/6 f. 30v, Thomas Challoner to Queen Elizabeth, 3 Aug. 1559.

<sup>26</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 8 Apr. 1579, *CSP Spanish, 1568-1579*, 663.

<sup>27</sup> Simon Adams, 'Eliza enthroned? The Court and its Politics', in Christopher Haigh, ed., *The Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 1988), 73.

office, constituted it as an alternative route for the Queen's correspondence. In high politics and diplomacy, courtiers serving sovereigns in a physical proximity were seen as an extension of the royal body or sovereignty. Accordingly, Elizabeth's female inner circle was often assigned to participate in, or supervise, her courtship negotiations. Her initial suitors included two of the Holy Roman Emperor's sons, the Austrian Hapsburg Archdukes Ferdinand and Charles. In May 1559, Augustin Gyntzer, Secretary to the Hapsburgs, reported that he had delivered the Emperor's letter to the Queen but refrained from submitting the two Archdukes' portraits. Instead, he 'placed them so that they could not fail to catch the eyes of those noble ladies who are most in the Queen's good graces, and that, you may be assure, is as if the Queen herself had seen them. More I need not say'.<sup>28</sup> Female courtiers' eyes, he presumed, were the Queen's eyes.

Well aware of the symbolism by which her female companions were recognised in diplomacy as an extension of her royal person, Queen Elizabeth employed them in her marriage negotiations, using them as her representatives in place of male officials. For example, Mary Sidney joined in the negotiations regarding a marriage between Elizabeth and the Archduke Charles, which were being canvassed with the Spanish Ambassador de Quadra in 1559. Katherine Ashley and Dorothy Broadbelt supported the courtship of Eric XIV of Sweden in 1562. In 1565, the pregnant Lady Cobham was assigned to receive Cecilia, Marchioness of Baden-Baden and sister of Eric XIV, whose visit was widely supposed to be connected with negotiations for a Swedish match.<sup>29</sup> Regarding her suitors, Queen Elizabeth exercised her ladies as her eyes, ears

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<sup>28</sup> Report of Augustin Gyntzer to Count Helffenstein, May 1559, in Victor von Klarwill, ed., *Queen Elizabeth and some Foreigners*, transl. by T.H. Nash (London, 1928), 64.

<sup>29</sup> Queen Elizabeth to the Lady Cecilia of Sweden, 30 Aug. 1565; Challoner and Scudamore to Phayre, 8 Sept. 1565, *CSPF, 1564-1565*, 441, 454. Lord Cobham William Brooke to William Cecil, 1 Sept., 1565,

and mouthpiece. As Natalie Mears sums up, the Queen's ladies exported information to suitors outside the Privy Chamber, and equally, Elizabeth 'was able to exploit their social and correspondence networks to convey her wishes easily and informally'.<sup>30</sup> In terms of Elizabeth's use of her female intimates in matrimonial negotiations, Mears emphasises Elizabeth's supreme queenship, refuting Pam Wright's claim of the declining importance of the Privy Chamber in politics and a consequently weak queenship. Closeness to the Queen would win royal intimates access to the very heart of policy-making. Elizabeth's gender did not diminish her ultimate leadership over her regime. Yet Mears's arguments overlook a key element: Elizabeth's marriage was a national policy but also a personal issue. This is why, according to Mears, every marriage negotiation reveals a dominant Queen in contrast with her active but impotent male advisers. Yet it is insufficient to picture a consistently strong queenship based only on marriage policy.

Despite being absent from government and certain professional arenas like the Inns of Court, female courtiers still obtained entrées to political intelligence through their social contacts, status (sometimes associated with their spouses' work), and personal wealth. A number of Elizabeth's court women were Marian exiles, or were born and brought up abroad, consequently possessing first-hand experience of, and contacts with, foreign personages and courts. Frances Seymour, first Countess of Herford, resided in France before assuming a position as Maid of Honour in 1568 (retained until 1598), and retained a close friendship with a French peeress of the royal d'Angoulême

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*CSPD, 1547-1580*, 258. Guzman de Silva to Philip II, 2 Jul., 9 Jul. 27 Aug., 5 Nov. 10 Nov. 1565; Philip II to de Silva, 10 Oct. 1565, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 445, 446, 470, 505, 506, 492.

<sup>30</sup> Mears, 'Politics in the Elizabethan Privy Chamber', 74.

family.<sup>31</sup> Two of Queen Elizabeth's favourite chamberers, Dorothy Lady Stafford, and her daughter Elizabeth, were Protestant exiles with William Stafford, who initially sheltered in Geneva in 1555. Then in 1557 the newly widowed Lady Stafford moved to Basel, staying until early 1559. There she was joined by her cousin Elizabeth Sandys (later Lady Berkeley), who had accompanied Princess Elizabeth (as one of her three gentlewomen) to the Tower of London and then to Woodstock, although in May 1554 had been dismissed by Queen Mary from Elizabeth's household for her obstinate pro-Protestantism. Sandys may have been the source for John Foxe's portrait of Elizabeth's captivity. In August 1559, both women returned to England by way of France, probably instructed by the newly enthroned Queen Elizabeth to gather useful intelligence on the way. There they, as 'the queen's own gentlewomen', had an audience with Mary Queen of Scots, then Queen of Francis II.<sup>32</sup> Lady Stafford initially preferred the radical society in Geneva to the conservative ones of Frankfurt, Strasbourg or Venice, though she never became an effective advocate for the godly at court. This was partly due to her disillusionment with Calvin, and partly to her shrewd insight into Elizabeth's disfavour towards radical Puritanism. So she estranged herself and her family from the radical godly at court.<sup>33</sup> It was difficult for the female chamberers who had been Marian exiles to influence Elizabeth's religious settlement, doing little good and only straining their relations with the Queen. For example, the Marian émigré Katherine Bertie, Duchess of Suffolk, unduly urged Secretary Cecil and the Queen to promote a puritan faith, and in doing so damaged her relationship with

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<sup>31</sup> CP 31/113, Frances, Countess of Hertford to Sir Robert Cecil, 26 Apr. 1595.

<sup>32</sup> 'A Short Discussion of the Weighty Matter of Scotland', [August] 1559, *CSPF, 1558-1559*, 522.

<sup>33</sup> The strained relations between Elizabeth and another Marian exile, Katherine Bertie, Duchess of Suffolk, was a result of the latter's excessive urgings to Secretary Cecil and the Queen to promote a puritan faith. K.R. Bartlett, "The Role of the Marian Exiles", in P. W. Hasler, ed., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1558-1603* (London, 1981), Appendix XI, 102-110.

the Queen. Well aware of this, Lady Stafford devoted herself to patronage suits instead of religious ones. More significantly, she acted as a medium for the Queen's (and Burghley's) hidden intelligence correspondence with her son, Ambassador Stafford in Paris.

A surprising number of Elizabeth's resident ambassadors in France had kinswomen in daily attendance on the Queen. This conjunction between the female chamber and foreign embassy sometimes affected Elizabeth's appointments. Anne Carew, the wife of Nicholas Throckmorton, Elizabeth's first ambassador to France (1559–1563), was nominated to the Privy Chamber in 1559. She showed herself 'so good a sollicitor' to the Queen of her husband's desire to be recalled; she had her wish fulfilled and Throckmorton was replaced at the embassy by Thomas Smith.<sup>34</sup> Queen Elizabeth also used her female chamberers and their kinsmen in embassies to build an alternative intelligence-diplomacy route for herself. As Merton points out, Elizabeth expected her ladies with embassy connections and access to intelligence from foreign courts, to be more useful than merely 'to find and acquire various items on their mistress's behalf'.<sup>35</sup> Ambassador Stafford's wife Douglas Howard, for example, successfully made herself familiar with the French court via her friendship with the Queen Mother Catherine de Medici. Their female talk touching on Anjou's death was reported by her husband to his home government.<sup>36</sup>

On occasion, embassy intelligence reached the Queen via her female chamber,

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<sup>34</sup> TNA, SP 70/23 f. 167, Jones to Sir Nicholas Throckmorton, 28 Feb. 1561; TNA, SP 70/24 f. 42, Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford to Sir Throckmorton, 16 Mar. 1561; TNA, SP 70/36 f. 36, W. Honnyng to Sir Thomas Challoner, 14 Apr. 1562.

<sup>35</sup> Merton, *The Woman who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth*, 167-68.

<sup>36</sup> CP 163/25v, Sir Edward Stafford to Walsingham, 21 Jun. 1584.

bypassing Secretary Walsingham. This route emerged in 1578 when the Anjou courtship entered into official negotiations and continued throughout the 1580s, undercutting Walsingham's monopoly on intelligence and state information achieved through his office as Secretary. Over these dozen years, Elizabeth assigned Burghley's men to head the English embassy at Paris, the English headquarters for continental information and diplomacy: Henry Brooke and then Edward Stafford, both of whose kinswomen assumed the chief posts in her inner circle. This threefold connection between Burghley, embassy, and the female chamber introduced to the Queen other non-military voices, especially from Catholic Spain and the Guises. This mechanism also facilitated her maintenance of a balance of power within her regime, countering the Leicester-Walsingham grouping.

A mysterious report dated February 1580 brings this hidden intelligence route to light. It records a private audience granted to Anne Brooke, Lady Cobham, wife of Ambassador Henry Brooke in Paris, when she met with King Henri III and his young queen at the French court.<sup>37</sup> The first part of it reported Henri's discussion of the Anjou match and his insistent request to see Elizabeth's portrait, which Lady Cobham proposed to send to the ailing Queen Mother. This report was written in the first person, without signature. It was not compiled by Ambassador Brooke, whose handwriting does not match. It was possibly written by Lady Cobham or her secretary. The addressee is unclear as well, although Secretary Walsingham seems an unlikely candidate. In 1578, the Anjou match entered into formal consultation in the Council, and met with strong opposition from the radical Protestants headed by Walsingham and Leicester. Thereafter Queen Elizabeth started to exclude their party from this scheme.

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<sup>37</sup> TNA, SP 78/4A f. 24, Lady Cobham at the French Court, Feb. 1580.

In October 1579, their ally Amias Paulet was replaced by Henry Brooke as new ambassador in France. This appointment announced Elizabeth's will to proceed with her last chance for marriage. Later in 1580 Elizabeth excluded Walsingham from her communications with Anjou; after this, Ambassador Cobham rarely reported to his superior, Secretary Walsingham. The nomination of Henry Brooke may have been partly because the Cobhams retained a strong allegiance to Burghley, who was a close ally of Sussex, the outspoken promoter of the Anjou match, and partly because Brooke's sister-in-law, Frances Lady Cobham, had been elevated to the Bedchamber in the 1570s. Elizabeth resumed her use of her female chamber as an extension of her royal body in marriage negotiations. Neither addressed to Walsingham nor to Queen Elizabeth (evidenced by the use of 'her Majesty' in the letter), this diplomatic report may have been addressed to Burghley, or more probably to Lady Frances Cobham, for forwarding to the Queen.

From 1583 the route between embassy and chamber was dominated by the Staffords. Both Dorothy, Lady Stafford and her daughter Elizabeth, Lady Drury-Scot provided a chamber channel of correspondence direct to the Queen for their respective son and brother, Ambassador Stafford (appointed to Paris in 1583). Walsingham had tried to obstruct this secret intercourse which he could not control, by repeatedly issuing cautions and intercepting Stafford's private letters at the port of Rye. But his efforts were in vain. The informal route via Ambassador Stafford kept operating between Queen Elizabeth and certain foreign aristocrats like the Duchess of Guise, at least until early 1587.<sup>38</sup> The female chamberers cooperated with their kinsmen in government to acquaint the Queen with certain information withheld by her Secretary. It marked an

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<sup>38</sup> Mendoza to Philip II, 24 Jan. 1587, *CSP Spanish, 1587-1603*, 6-9.



interference of the female chamber in the foreign affairs of government.

Female political involvement also extended into domestic affairs. Some local officials submitted domestic intelligence directly to Queen Elizabeth via their kinswomen at court. Ruth Elizabeth Richardson states that during the Northern Rebellion of 1569–1570, John Vaughan, a member of the Council of the North, provided a source of intelligence for the Queen via his aunt Blanche Parry, the Chief Gentlewoman of Queen Elizabeth's Privy Chamber. His efforts were probably aimed at having his appointment to the office of Sheriff withdrawn. On his behalf, Lady Parry also interceded with the Queen for patronage.<sup>39</sup>

It is difficult to measure the amount of intelligence Queen Elizabeth learned from her female informers, because of the flexible (or unstable) employment of her female chamber, and their oral exchange of information. Being named on the list of chamber servants did not necessarily imply a resident attendance on the Queen; sometimes it just represented a royal honour for noblewomen who were absent from the court. Anne Dudley (née Russell), Countess of Warwick, was appointed as a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth in 1559; she was the one 'more beloved and in greater favour with the queen than any other woman in the kingdom'.<sup>40</sup> Controlling the extensive Russell and Dudley networks of patronage and of intelligence, in 1596 she received secret reports about the Landgrave of Hesse from an attendant on George, Lord Hunsdon, the newly designated envoy to Hesse. But the Countess, states Merton, always came to the court as an attendant rather than as a member of the Chamber staff. Her customary absence

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<sup>39</sup> Ruth Elizabeth Richardson, *Mistress Blanche, Queen Elizabeth I's Confidante* (Glasgow, 2007), 91-97.

<sup>40</sup> 'Dudley, Anne, countess of Warwick (1548/9–1604)', Simon Adams in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/69744> (accessed September 27, 2012).

from court and greater enthusiasm for her family interests, are barriers to accurately estimating the level of her involvement in the Queen's information network.<sup>41</sup>

Elizabeth's female information network functioned far less efficiently than its male counterpart. It is reasonable to ascribe this inefficiency to three factors: first, the self-interest of female informers led to an unstable supply of intelligence; second, Queen Elizabeth's financial caution caused her female system to stagnate; and third and most importantly, the protest of male officials against female involvement in politics hampered the flow of key state information to the female chamber.

In terms of the first point, Natalie Mears has summarised the reasons for 'courtiers' to gather intelligence: local rivalries, personal friendship, ideological beliefs, practical political issues, and self-defence.<sup>42</sup> In short, female intelligence work was born from self-interest, narrowly directed to the person or family. The case of the Countess of Shrewsbury's spying on the captive Mary Stuart characterises female espionage that was motivated more by egoism, than by an obligation or duty to the Queen.

Along with her husband, the Countess was Mary's guardian, but did far more than simply accompany Mary at her embroidery. Bess was one of the wealthiest women in Elizabethan England; she was able and had elaborated a pan-European network of intelligence. Whether at court or in any of her residences, she received regular letters from family, servants, friends, social contacts, and semi-professional writers of newsletters. They acquainted her with a wide range of up-to-date matters: from family

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<sup>41</sup> Merton, 'The Women who Served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth', 156, 165-66, 182-87.

<sup>42</sup> Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 118.

status and estate management, to events within the court or the locality, and further afield concerning the continental political scene. What assisted her most was her correspondence with Elizabeth's female intimates at court, including Dorothy Lady Stafford, Mary Scudamore, Frances Lady Cobham, Susan Countess of Kent, Elizabeth Wingfield, and Katherine Countess of Pembroke. Lady Wingfield, Bess's younger half-sister, the Queen's Mother of the Maids with responsibility for the supervision of the young Maids of Honour, often sent Bess news of the Queen's favour towards her. In the autumn of 1568, she informed Bess of Elizabeth's recent praise of her: 'I assure you there ys no Lady yn this land that I beter loue.'<sup>43</sup> On 2 January 1576, she reported the Queen's great pleasure at her New Year's gift: 'Her maj[estie] never liked any thinge you gave her so well the color and strange triminge of the garments...cost bestowed vpon yt hath caused her to geve out such speches of my lo[rd] and you la[dy] as I never hard of better.'<sup>44</sup> She further moved the Queen on Bess's behalf when the latter tumultuously separated from the Earl.

The Countess's intelligence work infiltrated into Mary's affairs as well, where she set a spy, Hersey Lassells, to offer her intelligence of all things and report on Mary's practices and devices only to her.<sup>45</sup> Queen Elizabeth commended Bess in this matter for her 'manner of service to us':

Thereby letyng you to understand, that we do most assuredly accept your faythfull

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<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth Wingfield to Lady Shrewsbury, 21 Oct. 1568, Folger [Folger Shakespeare Library] Xd. 428/129, cited in Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick*, 201.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Wingfield to Elizabeth Talbot, Countess of Shrewsbury, 2 Jan. 1576, Folger, X.d.428 (130), cited in Catherine Louise Howey, 'Busy Bodies: Women, Power and Politics at the Court of Elizabeth I, 1558-1603' (unpublished PhD thesis, New Brunswick Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, 2007), 116-17.

<sup>45</sup> CP 6/66, Examination of Hersey Lassells, 19 Oct. 1571. TNA, SP 53/7/54, Countess of Shrewsbury to Burghley, 22 Oct. 1571.

service towards us is as good part as yourself can desire, and what so ever occasion have bene given us to minister any doubt at the begynning of your lack of care about the charge committed to your husband. We ar well assured that your dedes have bene such as in dede we cannot conceave no such dout but think yourselves assured of a faythful servant and so shall you in contynuanee of your well doynge fynd us a frendly good mistress.<sup>46</sup>

The Countess, however, was playing a dangerous double game. On the one hand, she swore fidelity to Queen Elizabeth and spied on Mary. On the other, she pretended to befriend Mary, promising to help her escape if at any time her life was in danger, or if she was ordered to be removed from Shrewsbury's guardianship. It was an insurance policy that many other Elizabethans, like Burghley and Leicester, also adopted to ensure their future political careers—especially when rumours circulated of Elizabeth's impending death from illness or assassination, with Mary being the most likely successor.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, Bess's intelligence service acted more as self-protection than as a feudal obligation to the monarch. Often away from London in Sheffield while undertaking so sensitive a guardianship, the Countess had to keep abreast of domestic and foreign events, specifically those touching her Scottish prisoner.<sup>48</sup> In October 1571 Lassells was cross-examined by the Council for his suspected dealings with Mary.<sup>49</sup> The Countess confessed all her knowledge to Burghley, in order to defend herself and her family from any further accusation:

I assure your L. on my faith that I was never made privy nor knowe of any dealing between her and the duke of Norfolk done either by the said Lassells or by any other

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<sup>46</sup> TNA, SP 53/8/9, Queen Elizabeth to the Countess of Shrewsbury, 1 Feb 1572. CP 158/136r, The Queen to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 1 Dec. 1571.

<sup>47</sup> Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick*, 213-14.

<sup>48</sup> Mears, *Queenship and Political Discourse*, 114-15.

<sup>49</sup> Burghley to the Countess of Shrewsbury, 13 Oct. 1571, Edmund Lodge, ed., *Illustrations of British History, Biography and Manners in the Reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Elizabeth, and James I* (London, 1838), I, 528-29.

living creature or by any meanes els[e]. If I had I trust you L. think that I wold have discovered them same as I wold in dede according to my bounden duty to the Quenes Majestie as her true subjecte or other god grant me no longer to lyve.<sup>50</sup>

It was not a voluntary submission but a forced self-defence. Behind the common purpose of national security, both male and female intelligence operations ran with individual intentions: to drive the Queen towards their political ideologies or personal interests. However, the male officials practised espionage as a permanent ‘duty’ of state administration, so their supply of information was compulsory and stable. But female intelligence arrived irregularly, usually as a ‘gift’ or as ‘pleading’ when something happened that concerned personal or family interests. The irregularity of the supply of information forced the Queen to rely on male systems.

The second factor adversely affecting the efficiency of the female information network was the issue of cost. Not all female intelligence collectors were as rich as the Countess of Shrewsbury and thus able to run an extensive intelligence network. Women, forbidden from assuming key government offices—like Burghley’s mastership of the wards and control of the forfeited estates of émigrés, and Walsingham’s control over travel licences via the Privy Seal—were unable to employ relevant authorities to support their espionage. The double insufficiency—in wealth and in administrative resources—stopped the development of female news networks into forms as extensive and efficient as the male ones.

Furthermore, the Queen herself must assume some responsibility for the failure of the female intelligence network to integrate and become more efficient. For the financially cautious Elizabeth, espionage was too expensive to invest in further, beyond the

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<sup>50</sup> TNA, SP 53/7/54, Countess of Shrewsbury to Burghley, 22 Oct. 1571.

existing male networks. Frances Lady Cobham, for instance, could have become a spy who might have disclosed Mary's revolts, but Elizabeth did not cultivate this. At the point when Mary was exiled into England in 1568, Lady Cobham had been her main ally at Elizabeth's court. In 1571 Frances lost her place because of her husband William Lord Cobham's alleged complicity in the Ridolfi Plot. Thereby Frances tightened her connection with Mary.<sup>51</sup> In 1574 when she was 'growen into very good favour and lyking ageyn' at court, the discovery of Mary's secret correspondence centred on the Shrewsbury household servants again disclosed Frances's familiarity with the Scottish captive.<sup>52</sup> Henry Cockyn's confession under torture denounced Frances as a 'favourer' of Mary at court.<sup>53</sup> His accusation forced Lady Cobham to leave hastily for Kent. Thenceforth she may have terminated her correspondence with Mary. When Lord Cobham entered the Privy Council in 1585, Thomas Morgan advised Mary to revive her contact with Lady Cobham via Anne Dacre, Countess of Arundel, or Lord Stourton (Lord Cobham's son-in-law and a Catholic).<sup>54</sup> This letter was intercepted and placed in Walsingham's hands; Lady Cobham signed it to declare her innocence. This episode did her little damage; the Queen had known of her lady's friendliness with Mary. It was regrettable that Elizabeth wasted this excellent intelligence source.

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<sup>51</sup> Merton, *The Women who served Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth*, 168-69.

<sup>52</sup> 'Brooke, Frances, Lady Cobham (b. after 1530, d. 1592)', Simon Adams in *DNB* (Oxford: OUP, October 2006), <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.york.ac.uk/view/article/92462> (accessed September 27, 2012).

<sup>53</sup> TNA, SP 53/10/11, Henry Cockyn to Walsingham, 21 Feb. 1575. 'Havinge occasion to ride abrode this last somer, it was my chance to passe by a house of the Ladie Cobham's (wheare she then laye); with whome I had sum conference; and surelie, madam, I finde her to be your good freind and welwiller', TNA, SP 53/10/61, Words Touching Lady Cobham, 20 May 1575.

<sup>54</sup> Thomas Morgan to Mary Queen of Scots, with instructions for the Countess of Arundel, 31 Mar. 1586, *HMC Salisbury*, III, 136-37.

The third factor undermining female intelligence supply was the prejudice of male ministers against female inferiority and their consequent antipathy to female involvement in policy-making.<sup>55</sup> Tied by blood, marriage, or common interest, the two sides—male bureaucrats and female courtiers—would sometimes share intelligence, offer assistance to each other, and develop a specific allegiance. Leicester fostered his own female supporters in the chamber, such as his sister Mary Sidney, Blanche Parry and Dorothy Bradbelte, who ‘have been firm and stead to him through all the past troubles’.<sup>56</sup> Burghley’s patronage, notably his capacity as Master of the Wards and his household ‘train of attendants’, attracted aristocratic women.<sup>57</sup> Frances, Lady Cobham, firmly committed herself only to the Cecils, promising to smooth Burghley’s return in the aftermath of Mary’s death:

I do besyche your Lordship to hassten your comynge hether. Yf you wyll wryte I wyll delyver yt. I do desir to be commandid bi you. Others heyr in presence do spek for themselves and do excuse that wyche ys don in putting ther handes to the letter as thou they knewe not what they did not what was therin contayned. I do mene the ii lords [possibly Leicester and Lord Admiral Howard] wyche ar here.<sup>58</sup>

In spite of this, female involvement in faction remains unclear. Pam Wright defended women’s ‘tendency to a carefully cultivated neutralism’. The ties of kinship and family interests located women in an impartial position, familiar with each party. Blanche Parry retained affinity with Leicester and Hatton, as well as her ‘cousin’ Burghley. However, it is also true that certain female courtiers remained hostile or loyal to specific statesmen. The amity of Lady Stafford and Lady Cobham with the Cecils

<sup>55</sup> As to the male antipathy to female inferiority, see the next section.

<sup>56</sup> Guzman De Silva to Philip II, 15 Mar. 1567, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 627.

<sup>57</sup> George R. Morrison, ‘The Land Family, and Domestic Following of William Cecil, c. 1550-1598’ (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Oxford University, 1990), 154.

<sup>58</sup> TNA, SP 12/200/20, E. (probably a miswriting of F) Cobham to Burghley, 10 Apr. 1587.

against Leicester, for instance, greatly strengthened Burghley in the partisan rivalry for intelligence.<sup>59</sup>

Even friendship, though, could not alter male statesmen's traditional resistance to women's political participation. The Queen and her councillors vigorously suppressed any unauthorised meddling by her ladies or others outside the Council. Soon after Elizabeth's accession, she 'made a speech to the women who were in her service commanding them never to speak to her on business affairs'.<sup>60</sup> Christopher Haigh stated that the Queen 'was to be the only petticoat politician'.<sup>61</sup> The chief protest against female involvement in political debate came from Elizabeth's male councillors. It was a result of a tradition of misogyny, rooted partly in the Bible, and partly in Greek philosophy and medical theory. The Bible, notably Genesis, and the admonishments of Sts Paul and Peter, constitute a concept of the inherent inferiority of women. Women, who were originally subordinate to men as being created from Adam's rib, and who in Eden had reduced humanity to moral degradation, were strictly prohibited from assuming public offices or having 'authority over men'. Women were theoretically confined to the household, where they were to keep absolute silence and defer to men, their 'heads'.<sup>62</sup> Misogyny in classical Greek thought, as Amanda Shephard explains, further influenced the early humanists in the light of physiology and rationality. Plato affirmed female insufficiency in regards to judgement and strength. Aristotle's dichotomy characterised men by courage, fortitude and generosity, in sharp contrast to women, characterised by weakness, timidity and irrationality.

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<sup>59</sup> Wright, 'A change in direction', 165-66.

<sup>60</sup> Count de Feria to the King, 29 Dec. 1558, *CSP Spanish, 1558-1567*, 21.

<sup>61</sup> Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (New York, 1998), 101.

<sup>62</sup> Genesis 2:21-23, 3; 1 Corinthians 11: 3-9; 1 Corinthians 14: 34-5; 1 Timothy, 2:11-12.



‘Wheresoever women bear dominion, there must needs the people be disordered, living and abounding in all intemperancy, given to pride, excess and vanity.’<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, when early humanists constituted a new social hierarchy based on virtue, instead of birth as in feudalism, power was bestowed on men only. Women, with inferior virtue, were expelled from the public field of power, and limited to the private one of the household. Educated in humanism, naturally, Elizabeth’s male ministers opposed any style of female interference in politics, including gynaecocracy.

Therefore, Wallace MacCaffrey agreed with Haigh that Elizabeth’s Privy Council ‘denied [courtiers] any major role in power-brokering or decision-making’.<sup>64</sup> Simon Adams points out that Burghley disliked those within the court, especially female courtiers, becoming involved in affairs of state, and Leicester too restricted such discussions to the Council only.<sup>65</sup> Walsingham narrowed the official circulation of information to an essentially male network, which rarely transmitted to the female chamber. There is little doubt that the female news network had to rely greatly on male officials as sources of information. Sometimes male bureaucrats would be glad to exchange information for friendship. At crucial times their prejudice against female participation in politics would terminate the circulation of information or intelligence between court and Council.

Female information-gathering, then, to some degree released Queen Elizabeth from Walsingham’s monopoly on intelligence, and counter-balanced party politics within the

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<sup>63</sup> Amanda Shephard, *Gender and Authority in the Sixteenth-Century England* (Keele, 1994), 106-108, 148.

<sup>64</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton, 1981), 431-32.

<sup>65</sup> Adams, ‘Eliza enthroned? The Court and its Politics’, 62-63.

regime. But its limited efficiency never wholly mitigated the Queen's excessive reliance on the male system. When the rival parties became reconciled for a common interest, the Queen was in danger of being held captive by male intelligence manipulation. This did happen during the Council-led manipulation of Mary Stuart's execution in February 1587. The female news network failed to acquaint the Queen with her Council's closely held action, but reduced her to mortification at having been excluded from the core of policy-making by her own government. Both Elizabeth and her female network were together isolated from the government intelligence system. Lacking the initiative in gathering information and intelligence, Elizabeth's specifically female grasp on authority faltered. This is the next question that will be discussed, touching the Elizabethan polity and the organisation of the regime.

## **2. 'Rule Mixte' or Personal Rule?**

In the case of Mary's execution in February 1587, Elizabeth's queenship stumbled embarrassingly over her male ministers' superiority in intelligence and information. Walsingham and Burghley, who were the first to learn of Elizabeth's hesitation despite having given her agreement to the execution, called the Council and forestalled her withdrawal of the execution warrant. The whole process was undertaken in the highest secrecy, without Elizabeth's knowledge.

Walsingham's disclosure of the Babington Plot in 1586 finally convinced Queen Elizabeth to inflict the death penalty on her rebellious Scottish cousin, but she wanted Mary dead without shouldering any responsibility for this herself. Elizabeth preferred to use the Bond of Association (every subscriber to the Bond was obliged to kill anyone who threatened Queen Elizabeth's life or crown), rather than the 'Act of Queen's Safety', as the basis of action against Mary: achieving her death by civil

murder, rather than official execution. Elizabeth proposed the convenience of having Mary ‘violentlye murdered’ to Mary’s joint keepers, Amias Paulet and Dru Drury. In a letter drafted by Walsingham and Davison, the Queen reproached both keepers for ‘a lack of that care and zeal of her service’ that she looked for at their hands, and instructed ‘in all this time of yourselves (without other provocation) found out some way to shorten the life of that Queen’.<sup>66</sup> The guards rejected this secret errand as ‘dishonorable and dangerous’, and resolved to ‘have it done according to lawe’.<sup>67</sup> They soon replied to Walsingham:

I am so unhappy to have liven to see this unhappy day, in the which I am required by direction from my most gracious sovereign to do an act which God and the law forbiddeth. My good livings and life are at her Majesty’s disposition, and am ready to so lose them this next morrow if it shall so please her, acknowledging that I hold them as of her mere and most gracious favour, and do not desire them to enjoy them, but with her Highness’ good liking. But God forbid that I should make so foul a shipwreck of my conscience, or leave so great a blot to my poor posterity, to shed blood without law or warrant.<sup>68</sup>

Disappointed with this refusal, the Queen stormed at Paulet’s ‘daintynes’ and ‘perjurye’, and broke off her conversation with Davison when he was defending Paulet.<sup>69</sup>

Simultaneously on 1 February, Queen Elizabeth signed the warrant for Mary Stuart’s execution, either simply to validate this act of regicide as a legal and normal procedure,

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<sup>66</sup> Walsingham and Davison to Paulet, 1 Feb. 1587, in John Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet: Keeper of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 1874), 359-60.

<sup>67</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 639v, Touching the Commission of the Scottish Queene, 1587

<sup>68</sup> Paulet and Drury to Walsingham, 2 Feb. 1587, Morris, ed., *The Letter-Books of Sir Amias Poulet*, 361-62.

<sup>69</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 220r, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

or to appease the urge of her government to behead Mary. The Queen willed Secretary Davison to seal the signed warrant straightaway.<sup>70</sup> She merrily jested to Davison that on the way to Lord Chancellor Thomas Bromley he should show this signed warrant to Walsingham, then sick in bed at his London residence, and communicate the matter with him, because ‘the grieffe thereof would growe neere to kill him [Walsingham] out right’.<sup>71</sup> Unexpectedly, the following day, she commanded a postponement of the process if the warrant had not yet been sealed. When learning that it had, she muttered ‘what need that haste?’, and then ‘absolutely forbade me [Davison] trouble her anie further or let her heare anymore hereof till it was done’.<sup>72</sup> Elizabeth’s shift in attitude alarmed Davison that his Queen had started to ‘wash her hands of it all’, meaning the Queen was extricating herself from the performance of the execution, preparing to be a spectator so that her ‘innocency’ could be proclaimed in the aftermath. Thereupon, Davison showed the warrant to Lord Vice-Chamberlain Christopher Hatton, detailing ‘some doubtfull speeches of hirs bewrayenge a disposytyone to throwe the burden from hir selfs yf by any meanes she myghte’. He reminded Hatton of the example of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, whose execution ‘shee had layde hevelye vppon my Lord Treasorore for a long tyme aftere’. Accordingly, Davison announced ‘I was for my owne parte fully resolved, notwithstandinge the directyones that I had recaved to doe nothings that myghte geve hir any advantage to caste aburthen of so great weighte vppon my single and weake shoulderes’.<sup>73</sup> Davison refused to meddle in this alone, though in his study of Robert Beale, Mark Tavinier suggests this was ‘retrospective wisdom’ which Davison indulged in when later sent to the Tower for his

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<sup>70</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 222r, Relation by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>71</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 218v, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>72</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 222r, Relation by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>73</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 219r, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

part in the proceedings.<sup>74</sup> Davison was alert to the Queen's 'escape', though not enough of his colleagues'. He appealed to Burghley as his staunchest associate during Walsingham's illness. That Davison handed Burghley the warrant confirmed Burghley's charge of the whole proceedings from hereon. Regrettably, this new anchor did not act as trustworthily as Davison had presumed he would. During the later examination and trial, Burghley and other complicit councillors made Davison their scapegoat, and singled him out for prison.

Immediately on hearing from Davison, Burghley informed the still bed-ridden Walsingham of the Queen's possible change of heart. The latter soon planned a timetable for dispatching the warrant and for the execution, which he then passed to Burghley for inspection.<sup>75</sup> At 11 pm on 2 February, Davison sent a message to Robert Beale, the Clerk of the Council, to meet him at Walsingham's London house the next morning. At 9 am on 3 February, Walsingham showed Beale the sealed warrant, and informed him first of his new assignment from the Council to carry this down to Fotheringay Castle, where Mary was held captive, and second, that he should first accompany Davison to the Council meeting at Greenwich that morning.<sup>76</sup> Around 10 or 11 am, ten councillors—Burghley, Leicester, the Earl of Derby, Lord Admiral Charles Howard, William Lord Cobham, Lord Hunsdon, Francis Knollys, Hatton, John Wolley, Davison—and Beale, as the intended messenger, called together by means of Randolph Bellin, Keeper of the Council Chamber, gathered in Burghley's private

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<sup>74</sup> Mark Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity' (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, St. Andrew University, 2000), 218-19.

<sup>75</sup> CP 164/9, Memorial from Secretary Walsingham touching the Execution of the Queen of Scots, 2 Feb. 1587, printed in *HMC Salisbury*, III, 216-18.

<sup>76</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 636r, Touching the Commission for the execution of the Scottish Queene, 1587.

chamber.<sup>77</sup> After Burghley ‘shewed and read the warrant’ out aloud, the Council formally appointed Beale to carry the warrant and some attached Council letters to Fotheringay. He was to escort the Earls of Shrewsbury and of Kent, both of whom were chosen to direct Mary’s execution, and in order to cloak their real mission, pretend to go into Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire to hear hues and cries. More significantly, the councillors had all agreed to obey Burghley’s directive to dispatch the warrant ‘without troubling her Majestie anie further in that behalf’, and made a mutual oath that no one, including the Queen, was to be informed of their proceeding.<sup>78</sup> Then Beale took the accompanying Council letters for Walsingham’s signature in the afternoon.

At home, Walsingham was occupied in arranging for an executioner in the greatest secrecy. His servant Anthony Hall hired one, paying him £10 ‘for his Labor’. Not going with Beale, this executioner was escorted by George Digby, another servant of Walsingham’s, by way of Buldeck. Originally Walsingham gave Digby a letter for Walter Mildmay to arrange for their lodging at Mildmay’s house, Apthorpe, two miles distant from the castle. It is unclear whether in this letter Walsingham explained the clandestine mission to Mildmay. But Mildmay refused to receive them, probably out of dread of Queen Elizabeth’s possible reaction to his ‘collusion’. The executioner therefore had to stay secretly at the house of Jean Erust in the town of Fotheringhay.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 642r, Letters of the Privy Council issued in connection with Beale’s mission to take the death warrant to Fotheringay, 3 Feb. 1587. Taviner, ‘Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity’, 214-43.

<sup>78</sup> ‘They shold joyne together in sendinge it downe unto the commissioners according to that directon, without troubling her Majestie anie further in that behalf. She having done all what in lawe or reason could be required of her’. BL, Harley MS 290 f. 223r, Relation by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>79</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 636r, Touching the Commission for the execution of the Scottish Queene, 1587.

On 8 February 1587, around 10 am, Mary Queen of Scots finally laid down her neck for two strokes of the axe. Presumably, Queen Elizabeth was the last in London to learn of Mary's death. Around 3 pm on 9 February, 'all the bells of the town began to ring and bonfires of joy were made in the streets, with celebrations and banquets, in sign of the great rejoicing', but Elizabeth had been out riding with the Portuguese ambassador in the morning.<sup>80</sup> Later in the evening, she was apprised by Davison of this news, in public. Elizabeth was so astonished at being at open loggerheads with her Council, that Davison was committed to the Tower on 14 February, on the double charge of a breach of secrecy and of dispatching Mary's death warrant without royal approval. The aged Burghley and ailing Walsingham came close to accompanying him. Elizabeth vetoed this idea on grounds that imprisonment would kill Burghley, and Walsingham was too 'stout' and 'wold utter all', particularly of her secret order to murder Mary. Elizabeth's wrath directed at her complicit councillors paralysed the government for the next few months, hindering 'the necasserye consultatyon that were to be desyered for the prevencyon of the manyfest perryells that hang over this realme'.<sup>81</sup>

Queen Elizabeth claimed innocence in the matter of Mary's death by shifting all the blame onto her Council.<sup>82</sup> She wrote without delay in her own hand to James VI of Scotland:

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<sup>80</sup> Alexandre Teulet, ed., *Papiers d'État, pièces et documents inédits ou peu connus relatifs à l'histoire de l'Écosse au seizième siècle* (Paris, 1851) II, Letter to Chateaufort to Henri III, 27 Feb. 1587, London, 890-99, cited in Tavinier, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 221.

<sup>81</sup> Tavinier, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 214-43.

<sup>82</sup> William Camden, *Annales or the Histories of The Most Renowned and Victorious Princesse ELIZABETH, Late Queen of England* (London: [Thomas Harper], 1635), STC 4501, 349. John Guy, 'My Heart is My Own': *The Life of Mary Queen of Scots* (London, 2004), 494-96.

My dearest brother, would God thou knowest, yet selfest not, with what incomparable grieffe my minde is perplexed for this lamentable event which is happened contrary to my meaning, which for that my penne trembleth to mention, you shall fully understand by this my kinsman, I pray you, that as God and many others can witness my innocency in this matter.<sup>83</sup>

She shirked her responsibility for his mother's death, ascribing it to an accident: she had no will to implement the execution, despite having signed the warrant under pressure from her Council and Parliament; the warrant was dispatched by her presumptuous councillors without them notifying her. On the other hand, Elizabeth's 'innocency' exposed her relative powerlessness in the male-dominated circulation of information. The male dominance over espionage and state information benefited specific ministers, as managers of knowledge, in assuming the initiative over policy. Walsingham, who was the first to be informed by Davison that Mary's death warrant had been signed, and Burghley, informed also by Davison of Elizabeth's likely withdrawal from Mary's execution, both secured the command to call the Council and to direct the execution. Elizabeth was marginalised from this policy decision.

This episode roused two controversies: the councillors' 'unduly' independent action against the supreme monarch, and the fact that they prioritised their allegiance to the Council over the Queen. These two issues transformed Davison's resulting trial into another open polemic on the Elizabethan polity: whether it was governed by personal rule or was a monarchical republic. On 28 March 1587, Davison was tried in the Star Chamber before thirteen Commissioners and four members of the Queen's learned

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<sup>83</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 345.



counsel; none of the eleven complicit councillors was selected for this Commission.<sup>84</sup> Davison was formally prosecuted for betraying the privy of the signed and sealed warrant to the Council, and for dispatching this warrant without the Queen's approval. His punishment was set at a fine of 10,000 marks and imprisonment at the Queen's pleasure, and was passed by the whole Commission.

Faced with the two charges of contempt of queenship and misprision of the Secretaryship, Davison began his defence by attempting to move the Commission with patriotism. He alleged that all his actions were 'vpon a zeale for the saffte of her Queen and the realme and not vpon malice or vpon any bludthirstines for he had that all men knowe he was not blood thirstne'. He attributed his misunderstanding of the Queen's meaning that Mary should have been executed, to his inexperience with the Queen's manner of speech.<sup>85</sup> Actually, however, Davison had been alert to the unease that hinted at the Queen's likely impending change of mind about Mary's execution, when she had questioned, 'what need that haste?'. He acted swiftly in concert with Burghley, to whom he consigned the troublesome signed warrant. Davison was a well-trained and practised diplomat, who had been trusted by Walsingham with the intricate Dutch diplomacy; he was definitely not as green as he claimed. Davison laid more emphasis on the charge of his 'breache of secrecy' to the Council. He acknowledged that the Queen did caution him to seal the signed warrant in secrecy, 'leste the devulgyng

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<sup>84</sup> The thirteen Commissioners were: Christopher Wray, Chief Justice of England, acting as Lord Privy Seal; the Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift; the Archbishop of York; the Earls of Worcester, Cumberland and of Lincoln; Lord Grey; Lord Lumley; James Croft, Comptroller of the Household; Walter Mildmay, Chancellor of the Exchequer; Gilbert Gerrard, Master of the Rolls; Edward Anderson, Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas; Roger Manwood, Lord Chief Baron. The four members of the Queen's learned counsel were: Serjeant Gawdie; Serjeant Puckering; Attorney General John Popham; Solicitor General Thomas Egerton.

<sup>85</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 226v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

thearof befoare the executyon myghte, as she pretended, encrease hir daunger'.<sup>86</sup> But he clarified the fact that the Queen herself had already informed four members of the Council, 'namely hym self, the L. Admirall, mr. Sec. Walsingham and the Lo. Chancellor who ought to loke upon euey thing which he seaeth'. Burghley learned of the situation from the Lord Admiral and Leicester after the warrant was signed, and Hatton from the Queen herself.<sup>87</sup> Most significantly, he explained that as a privy councillor 'he knoweth no reason whie the lords of the councele beinge counsellors of estate should not be made privie & acquainted with a matter which ded so nerely concerne the state of the Realme.'<sup>88</sup> Davison upgraded the role of the Privy Council to be an alternative ruler of England. It is unclear whether this was one of Davison's intentions: to distract the Commission from his own guilt by introducing the question of an unduly powerful Council. As Taviner has pointed out, the oath to maintain secrecy had not been laid as 'an explicit responsibility' of Davison's, but was 'rather an act of mutual and shared connivance of the whole of the Privy Council'. Davison was loath to be singled out to shoulder the whole responsibility, either for the Queen or the Council.<sup>89</sup>

Queen Elizabeth called the Commission to confirm her innocence by declaring Davison's and the Council's guilt, as well as presumably to protect her personal rule against the rising Council. The Commission's verdict of Davison's guilt was opened by the chairman of the judges, Walter Mildmay. He alleged that Davison, fully entrusted

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<sup>86</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 218v, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587. BL, Harley MS 290 f. 222v, Relation by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>87</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 227v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587; BL, Harley MS 290 f. 221r, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>88</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 227v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>89</sup> Taviner, 'Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity', 234.

with the Queen's business and willed to keep secrecy, 'did not withstanding open it to the hole counsel'.<sup>90</sup> Davison's offence should be recognised as 'a grete contempte and misprison'.<sup>91</sup> Lord Lumley questioned the leniency of Mildmay's proposed punishment. He denounced Davison's misconduct as Secretary, in not seeking confirmation of the Queen's final intention.<sup>92</sup>

There were, nevertheless, contrary voices that honoured the patriotic performance of Davison and the Council against the evil of Mary Queen of Scots. Roger Manwood, Lord Chief Baron, viewed Davison's offence as an execution of justice, rather than a misprison.<sup>93</sup> 'That the execution of the Q. of Scotte vpon the delyverye of the commission by the commissioners was to do *justum*; yet that the deliverye therof by Mr. Davison was not *juste*.'<sup>94</sup> Lord Grey defended Davison with the greatest sympathy. He reminded the other Commissioners of Davison's praiseworthy achievement: he had saved England from the crises when that malicious Catholic pretender had been conspiring towards 'the death of our soveraigne, the invacion of the realme by forrayne power and our owne distructions'. Davison did his duty under two 'exigents'. Of these, the first was the Queen's danger. Grey posed a rhetorical question: 'if her majestie had miscaried and the warrant had ben found in his hand, that we ought to have counted hym a greater traytor then they which had so slayne her.' The other exigency was

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<sup>90</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 669r, Three Accounts of the proceedings and sentence in Star Chamber against William Davison, Secretary of State, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>91</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 229r, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>92</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 234v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>93</sup> 'If a judge alter an indictment, officers corrupt records, or sheriffs return burgesses to parliament or jurors being never sworn, these were misprisions, or if sheriffs hang a condemned man when commanded by the justices of assize to reprove him, "as also when he which is adjudged to go first to the place from whence he cam is presentlie hanged".' BL, Harley MS 290 ff. 232v, 233r, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>94</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 233r, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

Davison's own security if he had acted against the Queen's wishes. Grey commended Davison's bravery, in having ventured his land, living and life to perform such a duty at the risk of infuriating the Queen. 'He preferred the saftie of his prince and contrie before his owne welfare', so his altruistic effort and courage were worthy of being rewarded.<sup>95</sup>

Echoing Grey's position, Edwin Sandys, Archbishop of York, also pleaded for Davison. He insisted that obedience was a virtue, and resistance a vice, but that obedience should be first observed towards God, and then princes. He accepted Davison's excuse of administrative inexperience, believing that the Secretary had offended not wittingly but negligently. Davison was praised for his 'zeale [that] did move hym to cut of the head of our common enemy, whom justice wold not suffer to lyve'. This was an implied criticism of the Queen, whose undue charity had hazarded her state, people, and church in endless menaces inspired by Mary Queen of Scots. In sum, Mary's execution was just, though Davison's over-zealous actions in protecting the state did affront the monarchy, so in terms of punishment he agreed with Mildmay. Yet Davison's service, the archbishop also believed, glorified God, to whom was owed the highest allegiance.

Touching the definition of the role of the Privy Council in the Elizabethan polity, Lord Grey was the only supporter of Davison's allegation that the Council owned independent prerogatives to national secrecy. He agreed that counsellors were 'well knowen to haue ben acquainted with the greatest matters of secrecie concerninge her Majestie and the realme, since the beginning of her highnes reigne'.<sup>96</sup> He suggested

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<sup>95</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 235, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>96</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 672r, Three Accounts of the proceedings and sentence in Star Chamber

that the power of the Council rested on a public recognition of accustomed trust, established as early as 1558 when the Queen acceded to the English throne. However, the majority of the Commission supported an absolute queenship. Mildmay reiterated Queen Elizabeth's insistence on 'Councillors by choyce, and not by birth', and their subordinate position to the monarch:

For although they be all of her majesties priuie counsel by name, yet they are but onely soe farre priuie as it shall please her highness to call them unto it...to acquaint fewe, sometimes one with greate actiones of secrecie and importaunce (as she wished)...otherwise it might fall out dangerous many tymes to prince & state, that euerie one of counsel should be partaker of all secretes of princes.<sup>97</sup>

In light of royal absolutism, Mildmay ascribed the initiative to convoke the Council to the sovereign only.<sup>98</sup> Croft agreed that it was not essential to acquaint the whole Council with all of the Queen's doings, and Davison as her Secretary was supposed to devote his obligation to the Queen only.<sup>99</sup>

Lumley tied Davison's guilt in with the whole Council as a complicit body, who colluded to send the warrant 'without her [Elizabeth] privitie'. He condemned the 'mutuall promises of the lords of the counsel', which misguided the Queen's Council to the point that they 'conspire together in a privie chamber in her owne house'. 'This is the most haynous affair which he hath heard or held of to have ben committed

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against William Davison, Secretary of State, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>97</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 669r, Three Accounts of the proceedings and sentence in Star Chamber against William Davison, Secretary of State, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>98</sup> Walsingham to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 30 July 1582, Edmund Lodge, ed., *Illustrations of British History* (London, 1838), II, 276-77. BL, Harley MS 290 f. 229v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>99</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 234r, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

against the prince this manie yeares.’<sup>100</sup> Lumley denounced the action of those councillors as conspiracy, signifying the political tension within Elizabeth’s regime between those who supported a personal monarchy and those who defined the polity as a monarchical republic.

It is worth noting that the execution of Mary did not involve the whole Council. Burghley and Walsingham selected a narrow group of individuals, both trustworthy and available at court, to join in their action. Beale, not a councillor but a clerk of the Council, was selected on a ‘need to know’ basis, as ‘the fittest person theie could advise of to whome theie might commit that charge’.<sup>101</sup> This selective combination of certain councillors and specific individuals revealed a fact: the heart of the Elizabethan policy-making group was far from having a stable constitution. Instead it was flexible and mobile, in terms of time, agendas, and relationship with its conveners. These conveners were in general individuals who held espionage secrets or initial information. Their absolute control over information or intelligence empowered them to choose their companions to share such secrets and jointly make policy. In short, information managers, and those being notified of such information, constituted the core of the Elizabethan regime. Within this framework, as in the episode of Mary’s death, the male-dominated circulation of information, controlled by Burghley and Walsingham, restricted their Queen’s influence over certain vital political issues.

Except for declaring Davison’s punishment, the Commission reached no conclusion over the validity of Davison’s actions, whether they showed patriotism or allegiance to

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<sup>100</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 234v, Proceedings against Mr. William Davison, 28 Mar. 1587.

<sup>101</sup> Tavinor, ‘Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity’, 241.

God in addition to disobedience to the monarchy. Their debates reflected two divergences touching the Elizabethan polity: first, should the Council assume more power to assist the Queen, or even plenary power in the event of the Queen's untimely death? Second, did the initiative in organising the governing (counsel) group belong either to the Council or to the Queen, or alternatively, to certain oligarchic elites who dominated state information and intelligence?

The best way to start is by considering why those complicit councillors risked proceeding with Mary's execution without the Queen's knowledge, even though it was possible to foresee that the loss of their lives and estates might accompany the Queen's resulting fury. Davison wrote down the key reason:

Muche hir disavouynge of this justice was moare to bee feared, consydering the tymorousnes of hir sexe and nature, the quallety of the person who it concerned and respecte of hir frende with manye other cercomstances that myghte further and inclyne therunto.<sup>102</sup>

Elizabeth's three-decade governance had increased universal doubt about gynaecocracy, the government by a single woman. Her parsimony and irresolution constantly frustrated her government and strengthened their sense of insecurity under female rule, which originated from a theory of female inferiority and a tradition of misogyny.<sup>103</sup> Their doubts about the Queen's capability to rule drove them to exclude her from sensitive intelligence and relevant policy decisions, and promoted the Council to be an alternative 'ruler' in male politics.

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<sup>102</sup> BL, Harley MS 290 f. 219r, Discourse by Mr. William Davison, 20 Feb. 1587.

<sup>103</sup> Conyers Read, *Mr. Secretary Cecil and Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1955), 219.

Elizabeth's expenditure on fashion, but financial caution on matters of state, was seen as a lack of judgement. There had been complaints to the Queen that she was keen on gaining advantages from her subjects' wealth. In 1581, Elizabeth instructed the Earl of Shrewsbury to decrease Mary Stuart's custody fee weekly from £52 to £30. Actually, the Earl had paid far more than that—more than £3,000 annually simply to feed her—and personally covered the annual deficit by up to £10,000, including additional costs like the keeping of 40 soldiers to guard Mary, and meeting her extra requests.<sup>104</sup> The Queen's irregular payments for Mary's maintenance had already dissatisfied the Earl, and now he was faced with a budget cut. Walsingham feared an insufficient budget would produce an inefficient guardianship. He interceded in this case with the Queen:

How can my Lord maintain his people about him, and if she not been seen unto, she will escape. I beseech your Majesty, let not the pinching and sparing of a thousand pounds...work such extremities. And [even] if no such thing were to happen, I would not keep so dangerous a guest to gain as much money as my Lord.<sup>105</sup>

Consequently Walsingham was refused an audience for two weeks. There were similar setbacks when he urged the Queen to bestow diplomatic pensions. Elizabeth would become jealous at such requests, which were intended 'only to have drawn some treasure from her coffers'.<sup>106</sup>

More discontent arose with Elizabeth's 'irresolution' and 'delay', two terms repeated constantly in Walsingham's grumbles. That 'her Majestie beinge by sexe fearefull,

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<sup>104</sup> *HMC VI II Talbot*, P., Fol. 703, 369; Lodge, *Illustrations of British History*, II, 201, 180; Patrick Collinson, *The English Captivity of Mary Queen of Scots* (Sheffield, 1987), 19.

<sup>105</sup> *HMC Longleat, Talbot Papers*, V., 29, cited in Lovell, *Bess of Hardwick*, 292-93.

<sup>106</sup> TNA, SP 52/31 f. 45, Walsingham to Robert Bowes, [27 Feb.] 1583. Read, *Walsingham*, II, 190-91, 253.



cannot but be irresolute’, was a difficulty for policy decisions in times of dangerous uncertainty.<sup>107</sup> ‘Irresolution and long weytyng’, Thomas Smith confided to Burghley his frustrations with the Queen, ‘will make oportunyte and occasion to flit away’.<sup>108</sup> In February 1575, Walsingham remonstrated with Elizabeth frankly, that her ‘delaye in resolvyng doth not only mak me voyd of all hope to do anye good therin (the opportunitie beyng lost), but also quite discourages mee to deale in like causes, seeyng myne and other yours poore feythfull servants care for your safetie frutelesse’.<sup>109</sup> The following month, he again lamented her delay in accepting the Scottish offer of a mutual league of defence. This vacillation not only discouraged her devoted Council, but ‘breede in them [their Scottish ally] an opinion that your maajesties hath them in contempt, wherby there maye followe in them by some like conceipt on alienation uncurable’.<sup>110</sup> In the meantime, Walsingham felt frustrated at Elizabeth’s improper tolerance for Mary. Recently he had discovered Mary’s clandestine communication with the outside world via Henry Cockyn. But Elizabeth thwarted the investigation and forgave the collusive Henry Howard. Walsingham complained to Leicester in disgust: ‘her majesty’s strange dealings in this case will discourage all honest ministers that are careful for her safety to deal in the discovery of the sores of this diseased state, seeing her majesty bent rather to cover than to cure them.’<sup>111</sup> Walsingham consequently took leave, using the excuse of illness.

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<sup>107</sup> BL, Harley MS 168 f. 54r, ‘Whether it may stand with good policy for her Majesty to join with Spain in the enterprise of Burgundy’. John Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 75.

<sup>108</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 19 f. 178, Secretary Thomas Smith to Burghley, 31 Jan. 1574.

<sup>109</sup> TNA, SP 53/10/13, [Walsingham] to Elizabeth I, 26 Feb. 1575.

<sup>110</sup> TNA, SP 52/26/2 f. 159, Walsingham to Elizabeth I, 20 Mar. 1575.

<sup>111</sup> Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 169-70.

Queen Elizabeth's irresolution also caused her to be criticised in later historiography. William Camden called her a woman 'being naturally slow in her resolutions'.<sup>112</sup> In 1870, the Victorian historian James Froude reproached Elizabeth I for lacking all the necessary capacities for being a sovereign like her heroic father. He attributed the successes of her glorious reign to the efforts of her male bureaucrats:

Vain as she was of her own sagacity, she never modified a course recommended to her by Burghley without injury both to the realm and to herself. She never chose an opposite course without plunging into embarrassments from which his and Walsingham's [skills] were barely able to extricate her. The great results of her reign were the fruits of a policy which was not her own, and which she starved and mutilated when energy and completeness were most needed.<sup>113</sup>

So low an appraisal did he make of Queen Elizabeth's decisiveness.<sup>114</sup> Implicit in Froude's criticism was a reference to the withdrawal from her own queenship of the recently widowed Queen Victoria. John Black blamed Elizabeth for her 'illogicality, irresolution, and timorous clemency' towards the national foe Mary Stuart. Elizabeth acted mercifully as a cousin, shielding Mary from the fury of the English Protestants who had announced that 'so long as the "monstrous and huge dragon" lived, not only their own queen's life was in danger, but the security of the state'.<sup>115</sup> Yet the ungrateful Mary, professing the most amicable intentions, never abandoned her hope of bringing Elizabeth and the Protestant establishment to ruin. Black accused Elizabeth of being an unduly sentimental and irresponsible sovereign, putting England's security at

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<sup>112</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 338.

<sup>113</sup> J. A. Froude, *History of England from the Fall of Wolsey to the Defeat of the Spanish Armada* (London, 1856-70), XII, 508, cited in Collinson, 'The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I', 118.

<sup>114</sup> G. R. Elton, 'J. A. Froude and His History of England', *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government* (Cambridge, 1974-92), III, 401.

<sup>115</sup> J. B. Black, *The Reign of Elizabeth 1558-1603* (Oxford, 1959), 372.

risk from an abundantly plain aggression. For him, England and its Queen were lucky to be guided by a group of intellectual male ministers.

A long attendance on the capricious Queen trained Elizabeth's counsellors to exercise a high degree of vigilance over, and resistance to, her changeable mind. Walsingham therefore ran his espionage, applying decisive (or selective) intelligence to open her eyes 'to believe that the great increase of papists is of danger to the realm'.<sup>116</sup> His success in counter-plots did tempt his hesitant Queen to break off the traditional Anglo-Spanish alliance in 1584, and then to sign Mary's death warrant in 1587. Nevertheless, Elizabeth's gender had always been the problem, states Patrick Collinson, so the stuff of Elizabethan politics—especially the activities of Leicester, Burghley, and 'the Privy Council as a body'—had been the seeking of 'an acceptable path back to normality in the shape of a male successor, virile and virtuous in the Protestant sense': the essence of what Collinson has called 'the Elizabethan monarchical republic'.<sup>117</sup> The Tudor polity was never defined as royal absolutism, but instead thought of as a mixed rule. This concept originated, assumed Geoffrey Elton, from the 'king-in-parliament' creed of Henry VIII's chief minister Thomas Cromwell.<sup>118</sup> Under Edward VI's minority, this idea was rehearsed and became significant in the Protestant propaganda against Mary I's Catholic gynaecocracy. Marian exiles welcomed Elizabeth's succession as divine providence, but because of both traditional misogyny and Marian persecution, they urged the new Queen to be a 'godly Deborah' sharing her rule with parliament. John Hales ascribed Mary's failed regime to her refusal to

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<sup>116</sup> TNA, SP 12/155/42, Leicester to Walsingham, 5 Sept. 1582.

<sup>117</sup> Patrick Collinson, 'Elizabeth I and the verdicts of history', in *This England: Essays on the English nation and commonwealth in the sixteenth century* (Manchester, 2011), 152.

<sup>118</sup> G. R. Elton, 'The Political Creed of Thomas Cromwell', *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, II, 215-35.

acknowledge parliamentary superiority. In 1559, John Foxe, ‘on the restoration of the light of Gospel’, cautioned the Queen that she could only fulfil God’s promise to protect England if she sought the counsel of divinely ordained advisers; they were the wisest chosen ‘from the pious and the most pious from the wise’.<sup>119</sup> John Aylmer apologised for Elizabeth’s fitness to rule. She was ‘weake’, ‘feable’ and ‘softe in courage’, albeit being God’s choice. Female rule in England was not dangerous, he added, inasmuch as the Queen would do little under England’s peculiarly mixed polity: ‘the regiment of England is not a mere Monarchie, as some for lacke of consideracion thinke, nor a meere Oligarchie, nor Democratie, but a rule mixte of all these.’<sup>120</sup> One Presbyterian leader Thomas Cartwright defined the Elizabethan polity as a ‘mixed estate’, in which ‘monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy were admixed and conjoined in the forms of Queen, Privy Council, and Parliament’.<sup>121</sup> Female rule would be accepted only if the Queen co-ruled with a selected group of male elites.

Of the design of mixed monarchy, one key masculine element which counterbalanced Elizabeth’s sex and made her rule tolerable was the theory of godly assigned officials. Essentially male and ‘intellectual’, they came to form an alternative governing group, allowed to practise some kind of conditional resistance to stop Elizabeth abusing her royal prerogative or making false judgements in matters of state. Such officials believed in sovereignty, but more so that they could ‘serve God, by serving of the

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<sup>119</sup> Davis Loades, ed., *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (Aldershot, 2004), 185, 206, cited in Hoak, ‘Sir William Cecil, Sir Thomas Smith, and the Monarchical Republic of Tudor England’, 40.

<sup>120</sup> John Aylmer, *An harborovve for faithfull and trevve subiectes agaynst the late blowne blaste, concerninge the gouernme[n]t of vvemen. wherin be confuted all such reasons as a straunger of late made in that behalfe, with a breife exhortation to obedience* (London, [John Day], 1559), STC 1005, H2b-H3a.

<sup>121</sup> Guy, ‘Tudor monarchy and its critiques’, 100.

Queen, for all other service is indeed bondage to the Devil'.<sup>122</sup> Obedience was a virtue, though inapplicable in the case of tyrants and incapable rulers. From such spurious authorities, godly-assigned magistrates would have to 'protect' and 'preserve' the Protestant state at the expense of the Queen's instructions.<sup>123</sup> These ideological positions—the Marian exiles' appeal for the 'rule mixte', and the awareness of conditional resistance as an option for godly officials—were strengthened by Elizabeth's irresolute governance within practical politics and her accustomed absence from Council consultations.<sup>124</sup> This theory of resistance was, for example, fully applied in the case of the Council-led implementation of Mary's execution. Aware of Elizabeth's likely withdrawal of Mary's death warrant, this alternative governing group enforced the execution, and sealed the relevant information off from the Queen until 9 February. In these events, Queen Elizabeth found herself isolated from her ministerial circulation of intelligence and information. The male ministers involved denied that their behaviour was misprision or disregard of the monarchy. It arose, they believed, out of godly obligation and their understanding of the English polity as a mixed rule.

Walsingham was a follower of the theory of the godly mixed rule. John Cooper states that traditional concepts of female inferiority, the education of the Renaissance and Reformation, and his experience of exile in Basel and Padua shaped Walsingham's attitude towards monarchy. His relationship with Queen Elizabeth would never have been 'as simple as that of mistress and servant'.<sup>125</sup> Echoing Henry VIII's Secretary

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<sup>122</sup> Stephen Alford, 'The Political Creed of William Cecil', in John F. McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essay in response to Patrick Collinson* (Aldershot, 2007), 85.

<sup>123</sup> John Guy, 'Tudor monarchy and its critiques', in Guy, ed., *The Tudor Monarchy*, 97-98.

<sup>124</sup> Dale Hoak, 'Sir William Cecil, Sir Thomas Smith, and the Monarchical Republic of Tudor England'; John F. McDiarmid, 'Common Consent, Latinitas, and the "Monarchical Republic" in mid-Tudor Humanism', in McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England*, 37-54, 55-74.

<sup>125</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 36, 38, 41.

Thomas More's self-identification as 'the king's good servant, but God's first', Walsingham declared that 'above all things I wish God's glory and next the Queen's safety'.<sup>126</sup>

Burghley was of the same mind. Thomas Smith's *De Republica Anglorum*, written in 1565, reflected Burghley's definition of the Tudor polity. They, like Cromwell, all confirmed the Tudor sovereignty, worshipping the prince as 'the life, the head and the authoritie of all thinges that be done in the realme of England'. But they overruled the idea of English sovereignty as absolutism, denying the idea that 'the Queen really did attend personally to everything of any consequence which was done in her name'. 'Common wealthes or governements are not most commonly simple but mixt.'<sup>127</sup> There was a paradox in Burghley's political creed, situated in the struggle between being a royal servant and a civil official. Stephen Alford tries to clarify Burghley's religious character, which historiography has explored less than his political one. Alford pictures him as a 'tough and clever politician driven by the true religion'. In a letter home addressed his son in 1596, Burghley clearly placed service to the Queen ahead of everything except service to God: 'presuming that she being God's chief minister here it shall be God's will to have her commandments obeyed after that I have performed my duty as a counsellor'.<sup>128</sup> This conviction cultivated his crucial concept of the godly anointed counsel.

It was the duty of counsellors, responsible first to God, to oppose their sovereigns'

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 96, 38-39.

<sup>127</sup> Mary Dewar, ed., *De republic anglorum by Sir Thomas Smith* (Cambridge, 1982), 88, 85, cited in Collinson, 'The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I', 113-14.

<sup>128</sup> Alford, 'The Political Creed of William Cecil', 89.

false decisions. Accordingly, by December 1559, when Queen Elizabeth blocked the decision of the Council that she should send men and money into Scotland to expel the French, Cecil sorrowfully begged the Queen to dismiss him from her service (the surviving text is either a copy of the original, or a draft):

I will never be a minister in any your Majesty's service, wherunto your owne mynd shall not be agreable. for thereunto I am sworne, to be a minister of your Majesty's deternynations and not of myne owne, or of others though they be never so many. and on the other part to serve your Majesty in anythyng that my self can not allow, must nedes be an unproffitable service, and so untoward, as therein I would be loth your Majesty should be deceyved.<sup>129</sup>

Stephen Alford extols this passage as having 'a wonderful double edge'. It looks like a submissive announcement of obedience as a minister, but actually Cecil's use of the very strong word 'allow' conferred on counsellors 'the freedom to disengage from any course of action not conformable to judgement or conscience'.<sup>130</sup> Cecil's belief in conditional resistance to royal irrationality and in the concept of godly officials, brought Mary to the block in 1587 without Elizabeth's knowledge. Other councillors involved likewise submitted their first allegiance to the Council, not the wearingly irresolute Queen. They took it as their duty assigned by God to protect England from any harm resulting from the Queen's indecision.<sup>131</sup>

With respect to the composition of this godly advisory group—the pivot of the regime—Elizabethans fell into disagreement. Marian exiles like Hales and Aylmer preferred Parliament to constitute its core. Thomas Smith agreed that it should be

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<sup>129</sup> BL, Lansdowne MS 102 f. 1, 1560.

<sup>130</sup> Alford, 'The Political Creed of William Cecil', 85-86.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 74-76, 80, 81, 84.

based within Parliament, but confined to the House of Lords only, as ‘the highest court of the realm’.<sup>132</sup> Burghley inclined towards oligarchy. His plan for an Interregnum in the emergency case of Queen Elizabeth’s sudden or violent death, drafted in 1584 and 1585, envisaged a basically conciliar government: a Great Council or Grand Council. Its thirty members consisted of the privy councillors serving at the time of Elizabeth’s death, with selective recruitment from the principal offices of state and the House of Lords.<sup>133</sup> This temporary body would be authorised ‘to remedy all violence committed against’ the Queen, to recall the last Parliament to select a new sovereign, and to ensure ‘the government of the realme shall still contynew in all respectes’.<sup>134</sup> Burghley defined the Privy Council as occupying a position as the vice-sovereign.

Walsingham favoured a narrower oligarchy out of considerations of secrecy, and as the manager of intelligence and information he could assume the initiative of calling the counsel group to direct policy. As part of his manipulation of Mary’s execution, in his separate letter to Paulet and Drury carried by Beale dated 3 February 1587, Walsingham first cautioned both of them of the ‘greate care taken to haue the matter passé in secrecie’. He betrayed his deepest fear of Burghley’s over-expansive selection of insiders. There were ‘so manie commissioners consellers made acquainted withall’, that Walsingham worried that secrecy would not be maintained.<sup>135</sup> His fears in this regard reflect his character as a spymaster. Ironically, though, Walsingham seems to have forgotten to look back at his own unduly expansive intelligence secretariat. Walsingham’s concern for secrecy strictly enclosed information transmission within a

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<sup>132</sup> McDiarmid, ‘Common Consent, Latinitas, and the “Monarchical Republic”’, 63, 65.

<sup>133</sup> Taviner, ‘Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity’, 240-41.

<sup>134</sup> Collinson, ‘The Monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, 127-28.

<sup>135</sup> BL, Additional MS 48027 f. 644v, Walsingham to Paulet, 3 Feb. 1587.



very limited group, which was recruited mainly from the Council with the addition of certain professional or experienced individuals like Beale.<sup>136</sup>

Burghley preferred a larger and multi-departmental governing body, probably out of consideration for the power balance between the Council (government), court, and Parliament. His design conforms to the traditional assumption of a constitutional regime, like Penry Williams's courtly regime, or MacCaffrey's 'collective', 'quasi-organic' and 'stable' Council-regime.<sup>137</sup> The model of the polity Walsingham designed is narrow out of considerations of secrecy, and flexible and variable in its constitution. In other words, its membership would not be limited to holders of specific offices and to the noble class, but be selected and adjusted according to policy need and the relevance of individuals' professionalism and experience. These differences reflect their diverse characters. The conservative Burghley did everything by the rules; Walsingham broke the existing establishment, and adjusted the counsel team to new matters. Flexibility was necessary to the success of speculative espionage, and hence promoted Walsingham's outstanding performance in the Elizabethan secret service. Furthermore, in accordance with Walsingham's concept of a flexible governing group, the men controlling initial intelligence or information would be the organisers of it. In other words, only spymasters or information managers would be able to select suitable individuals to share information and jointly make policy.

It is unsurprising to see Queen Elizabeth's hostility to these theories and practices of resistance to her personal rule. John Guy observes that whenever certain crucial

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<sup>136</sup> Taviner, *Robert Beale and the Elizabethan Polity*, 241.

<sup>137</sup> Penry Williams, *The Tudor Regime* (Oxford, 1979). Wallace MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (London, 1969), 16, 28.

political issues—Elizabeth’s matrimony and succession, foreign policy (particularly in Scotland, France and the Low Countries), and the alteration of the religious settlement of 1559—were aired, Elizabeth attempted to forbid or limit discussion, or declined to take her councillors’ advice. She even consistently reserved matters ‘for her own decision—or more often indecision—by invoking ‘humanist-classical’ idioms to argue that she needed to be further “advised” on matters touching her Crown and state, thereby turning recognition of the need for ‘counsel’ into the excuse for rejecting her councillors’ advice’.<sup>138</sup> Moreover, Elizabeth had manipulated the dichotomy of the Queen’s two bodies to diminish suspicion over her ability to rule, and any attempt to reduce her limited queenship would also be suppressed. Consequently, John Aylmer, the promoter of the concept of a ‘rule mixte’ in 1559, waited another nineteen years for his bishopric of London. Edmund Grindal, Archbishop of Canterbury, was nearly forced to retire in 1583, probably partly as a result of his emphasis on Queen Elizabeth’s obligation to not only solicit and listen to, but also to follow, the counsel of the ‘bishops and other divines of your realm’ and ‘other head ministers’, who ‘were not mere agents of the royal will but bearers of authority’.<sup>139</sup> In 1582, Elizabeth further prepared to let her Council understand that ‘they are Councillors by choice, and not by birth, whose services are no longer to be used in that publike function then it shall please her Majestie to dispose of the same’.<sup>140</sup> She overruled the Council’s self-identity as god-assigned ministers born to assisting the monarch in matters of state, and here redefined them as ‘principall members of the Crowne’, ultimately by the Queen’s choice. The councillors were not destined by God, but replaceable as the

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<sup>138</sup> Guy, ‘Tudor monarchy and its critiques’, 95.

<sup>139</sup> Peter Lake, “‘The Monarchical Republic of Queen Elizabeth I’ (and the Fall of Archbishop Grindal) revisited’, in McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England*, 129-47.

<sup>140</sup> Walsingham to the Earl of Shrewsbury, 30 Jul. 1582, Lodge, *Illustrations of British History*, II, 276-77.

sovereign's willed. Queen Elizabeth asserted her unique initiative in organising her Council and regime.

Natalie Mears accepts Queen Elizabeth's argument, judging her to have been an authoritative monarch by ascribing to her the initiative in organising the advisory group. Mears agrees that Elizabethan policies were made not by the regular Privy Council, but by a flexible 'probouleutic group' which the Queen convened. The Queen selected her advisers in terms of her personal relationship with them, the specific agenda under consideration, and their inside knowledge, rather than their conciliar status. Hence her advisers ranged from councillors and ambassadors to her household officers.<sup>141</sup> Elizabeth's use of personally selected groups was intended to 'sideline the council and maintain control of policy-making'.<sup>142</sup> Nevertheless, regarding the Council's 'conspiracy' for Mary's execution, Mears is not able to illustrate why this royal initiative fell into the hands of Burghley and Walsingham. It remains unclear whether Mears ascribes this event to a simple accident of no threat to royal supremacy, or as a fact illustrative of a declining queenship accompanying a powerful and stable Council. This event exposes a monarchical crisis, when Queen Elizabeth lost her general control over government. The Privy Council, by controlling intelligence and information, was elbowing the Queen backwards, away from the pivot of policy decisions inside her regime.

### **Conclusion**

There is no doubt that Secretary Davison was sacrificed at the trial of March 1587.

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<sup>141</sup> Mears, 'Politics in the Elizabethan Privy Chamber', 67-82; *Queenship and Political Discourse in the Elizabethan realms*, 73-103.

<sup>142</sup> Natalie Mears, 'The Council', in Susan Doran and Norman Jones, eds., *The Elizabethan World* (Abingdon, 2011), 65.

Elizabeth used his trial and punishment, not only to exculpate herself from a Catholic Queen's death, but also to warn her Council against further pursuing the practice of a mixed polity. For Burghley and other complicit councillors, Davison had been prepared to be singled out as their shield, bearing the brunt of Elizabeth's fury. As William Camden argued, Davison, 'a man ingenuously good, and simply practised in Court arts', had been promoted to be a joint Secretary in September 1586 and 'brought upon the Court stage', simply to be a suitable scapegoat for the tragedy of Mary's execution. 'Soone after, this person being taken away, as if he had failed in the last act, hee was thrust downe from the stage, and not without pittie of many, shut up a long time in prison.'<sup>143</sup> Tavinor, in his study of Robert Beale, pictures a cunning and somewhat immoral Burghley, who for reasons of personal survival kept unloading his own crime onto a colleague who was as yet inexperienced in court arts. Davison was alert to Queen Elizabeth's intended withdrawal from Mary's execution, but not alert enough to avoid being used as cannon fodder by the Privy Council.

This chapter confirms knowledge as having been a key source of power in the Elizabethan regime. In contrast to the traditional concern with male espionage systems, it has presented an alternative information network, based on the female chamber. However, the low efficiency of this network did not protect the Queen within the operation of patriarchal politics. Her male ministers, as spymasters and managers of state information, were taking over her initiative in policy decision.

It is still unclear whether Elizabethan England was a monarchical republic. From her accession, Elizabeth's personal rule ceaselessly encountered appeals for a mixed

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<sup>143</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 348-49.

rule—first from the Marian exiles, then from Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum*, and from Burghley’s proposed ‘Great Council’ in 1584. The Council-led action for Mary’s execution brought this debate into public view in the context of Davison’s trial in 1587. Today, modern historians are divided, either in defence or refutation of Elizabeth’s personal rule. Natalie Mears stresses Elizabeth’s unique initiative in organising her regime, countering Patrick Collinson’s concept of the Elizabethan ‘monarchical republic’. Other historians vacillate within this dichotomy. Geoffrey Elton’s portrait of the policy decisions taken by an absolute Queen Elizabeth obviously contradicts his previous claim of a Tudor power transfer from the court to the government.<sup>144</sup> Likewise, Wallace MacCaffrey pictured a powerless Elizabeth within her patriarchal Council in the early years of her reign, but stressed a royal absolutism that had been safeguarded by her prerogative of patronage.

Their paradoxes result from Elizabeth’s inconsistent queenship on different political issues. As Susan Doran states in the context of research into Elizabeth’s courtships, certain specifically personal issues like marriage, or royal prerogatives like patronage, revealed Elizabeth’s great strength as a monarch. Others concerning national security, diplomacy, and espionage, empowered her male ministers instead.<sup>145</sup> These ministers affected or directed policies, either by—together with Parliament—turning the screws on the Queen, or by manipulating intelligence. Walsingham was the one that excelled in the latter art. He often felt frustrated with his Queen’s irresolution and short-sightedness, and used his espionage to hasten her decisions. His successful counter-plots infuriated the moody Queen to a point where she broke openly with

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<sup>144</sup> G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the Reign of Henry VIII* (Cambridge, 1966). Elton, ‘The State: Government and Politics under Elizabeth and James’, in *Studies in Tudor and Stuart Politics and Government*, IV (Cambridge, 1992), 35.

<sup>145</sup> Susan Doran, *Monarchy & Matrimony: The Courtships of Elizabeth I* (London & New York, 1996).

Spain and executed Mary Stuart. Elizabeth's undue reliance on the male intelligence (or information) system weakened her queenship. Certainly she was cunning enough to apply her prerogative over patronage and official appointments to counter-balance faction at court, and successfully broke Walsingham's monopoly on intelligence. Yet it meant that Queen Elizabeth rested her sovereignty on the power lever of faction. This was highly risky. If the parties on either side collapsed, or they became reconciled for a common purpose, the exercise of queenship would be hijacked. Such a reconciliation did happen when Walsingham and Burghley cooperated to promote Mary's execution. Elizabeth's male officials shared a strong suspicion of her female inferiority, and grew weary of her irresolution. When faced with sensitive policy issues, male ministers selected intelligence in order to affect her decisions, or isolated her from their intelligence-information system to act by themselves. Elizabeth was in danger of becoming a figurehead. And her male-based government, by controlling espionage and information, was securing increasing initiative over policy decisions. The case of Mary's execution was just one of the inevitable encounters and quarrels during this transfer of power from court to government.

## Conclusion

On 6 December 1602, four months before she died, Queen Elizabeth made the final journey of her reign, visiting her Principal Secretary Robert Cecil at Salisbury House in the Strand. As part of the entertainment there, the majestic Rainbow Portrait of Queen Elizabeth was presented to the Queen.<sup>1</sup> The canvas is undated, but had probably been painted by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger over the previous two years. In this portrait, Queen Elizabeth emerges in a golden light from the darkness, the ageless mask of youth and beauty a contrast to her actual 67-year-old decline. Her ruby-jewelled crown is decorated with a crescent moon at the top. On each side of it is a wired veil protruding in hoops and bordered with pearls. An orange-crimson mantle, embroidered with eyes and ears (as well as mouths, evident on the unnatural lateral creases) lies across her spring-flowered dress. Her left sleeve is adorned with a serpent, from whose mouth hangs a heart-shaped ruby with an armillary sphere above its head. Her right hand clasps the cylinder of a colourless rainbow, with a motto above it: ‘NON SINE SOLE IRIS’ (no rainbow without the sun).

The iconography of these symbols proceeds diversely from courtly panegyric, the Bible, and the worship of absolute sovereignty, which come together in this portrait as a glorification of Elizabeth’s reign. Frances Yates and Roy Strong read the portrait according to Renaissance allegory and English courtly eulogy. Using Cesare Ripa’s *Iconologia* (Rome, 1593) reveals that the eyes, ears, and mouths all over the cloak may represent the Queen’s fame, ‘flying rapidly through the world, spoken of by many mouths, seen and heard by many eyes and ears’. The court poet John Davies’s acrostic *Hymnes to Astraea* of 1599 suggests that the flowers on the Queen’s bodice allude to

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I in this thesis.

the return of 'Astraea, Queen of Beauty'. Elizabeth grasps the rainbow as an architect of peace; her rule by wisdom and prudence leads England away from that 'angry aged Winter' towards a golden age.<sup>2</sup>

Where Yates and Strong found political encomiums, René Grazaini read professions of Christian imagery. The mantle is re-evaluated to signify that the Queen, wearing God's blessing, becomes 'one who has seen and heard, an exemplary Christian and someone specially favoured'. Her clutching at the rainbow implies her hold on a Divine promise, and a thanksgiving for the repulse of the Spanish Armada threat. The portrait, states Grazaini, 'keeps a fine balance between what belongs to the Queen as a great Christian sovereign on the one hand and on the other confession of utter dependence on God'.<sup>3</sup> Daniel Fischlin, however, doubts both Grazaini and Strong's interpretations, as being caught up in a 'diffuse and rather clichéd' symbolism. He chooses instead to elaborate on the Renaissance embodiment of kingship. In an example of publicity for the absolute monarchy, the eyes and ears symbolise sovereigns' ceaseless vigilance, encouraging subjects' conformity to the state. Elizabeth's seizure of the bow-sized rainbow intimates her female superiority over men, or a 'political androgyny'.<sup>4</sup>

All these readings of the painting narrow themselves to pure iconology and the fabrication of supreme queenship, but overlook the 'realpolitik' of 1602 that lay behind

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<sup>2</sup> Frances A. Yates, 'Appendix I: Allegorical Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I at Hatfield House', in *Astraea: The Imperial Theme in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1975), 216-18. Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London, 1999), 50-53; *Gloriana: The Portraits of Queen Elizabeth I* (London, 2003), 157-61.

<sup>3</sup> René Grazaini, 'The "Rainbow Portrait" of Queen Elizabeth I and Its Religious Symbolism', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 35 (1972), 252-53, 256, 259.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Fischlin, 'Political Allegory, Absolutist Ideology, and the "Rainbow Portrait" of Queen Elizabeth I', *Renaissance Quarterly* 50:1 (1997), 177, 183, 187, 190.



the painting. What the portrait extols is, presumably, not the false omnipotence of Queen Elizabeth, but its potent patron Secretary Robert Cecil and the Cecils' political ideology of a monarchical republic. Roy Strong was the first to associate the portrait with the Cecils' client John Davies. Commissioned by Robert Cecil, Davies first composed *Hymnes to Astraea* in 1599, and *A Contention betwixt a Wife, a Widdow and a Maide* for an entertainment in 1602. Kevin Sharpe developed an analysis of this new interrelationship, disclosing the political ambition of Robert Cecil, 'to be the queen's eyes and ears...at a time of jockeying to be the principal minister'.<sup>5</sup> Eyes and ears, in the sense of politics, symbolise those who watch and listen to supply intelligence to rulers, which in the context of Tudor government implies the office of Principal Secretary.<sup>6</sup> This post, strengthened successively by William Cecil and Francis Walsingham, had assumed full charge of official diplomacy and espionage by the late Elizabethan period. Robert Cecil succeeded his father Burghley as the Secretary in 1596; when his factional rival Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex was executed in February 1601, Cecil took over Essex's intelligence resources. Hereafter, Cecil became those exclusive eyes and ears (as well as mouths), enveloping Queen Elizabeth by monopolising state information and intelligence.<sup>7</sup> The victory of the Cecils in the factional struggle drove the divided Elizabethan espionage system—which had developed in the policy rivalry between Burghley and Walsingham from the mid-1570s—towards a union.

In this thesis, the focus of the investigation into the world of intelligence and espionage

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<sup>5</sup> Kevin Sharpe, *Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England* (New Haven & London, 2009), 384-86.

<sup>6</sup> Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 52.

<sup>7</sup> Strong, *Gloriana*, 157.

has moved away from the traditional concern for national defence, towards a new location within the power politics of the mid-Elizabethan regime from 1568 to 1588. Intelligence services here emerge no longer as simply existing for national security, but as a support for power rivalry within the regime. Ministers organised their individual spy systems to contest intelligence for policy debates, to monitor opposing colleagues, and even to restrain the monarchy. Far from being an officially united department, Elizabethan espionage worked as individuals collaborating, revealing two power landscapes in high politics: a policy rivalry between parties, and another between bureaucracy and sovereignty. Firstly, the different approaches to English intervention abroad, whether conditional on account of realpolitik and ruling legitimacy, or based on support for universal Protestantism, drove the mid-Elizabethan ministers into a partisan divide between Burghley's peace party and the militarists led by Walsingham and Leicester. The machinery of English espionage hence split into individual systems from the late 1570s, which contested intelligence as a necessary tool to benefit their parties in policy debate. Secondly, ministerial dominance over the circulation of official information and private espionage provoked a power competition between court and government. Male ministers, as spymasters and information managers in government, enveloped Queen Elizabeth either in selective intelligence favourable for their policies, or in ignorance. The court, inefficient in its control over government intelligence and information, gradually handed over the royal initiative on policy decisions to the male-based government. The Elizabethan polity was transferring from personal monarchy towards a mixed rule.

This thesis began by revealing the shift from an early espionage alliance between William Cecil and Francis Walsingham, which was based on patronage, to a point where they were working separately and to some degree in opposition. From 1568 to

1573, Cecil's espionage clientele promoted Walsingham to the very heart of the regime. From the late 1570s, their deepening divergence over the policy of English intervention in the continental Protestant wars, and their accompanying office transfers to the Secretaryship and the Treasurership, withdrew Walsingham from Burghley's 'tutelage' and towards his own espionage system. This policy quarrel separated the Elizabethan intelligence service into individual cliental networks, leading to intelligence competition which lasted until 1602. Walsingham aimed through intelligence manipulation to devote England to the advancement of the Gospel. For the sake of gaining information for his exclusive use, his system was extremely privatised, employing personal residences and clients instead of government halls and officials. During Walsingham's Secretaryship, the national intelligence machinery became a private clientele.

In contrast with Walsingham's household-based intelligence team, Burghley attached his system closely to the government and the royal court. While his resignation from the Secretaryship retired his information team back into household service, some part of his manpower was planted within the government administration to ensure his continuing patronage and access to information. Burghley also befriended the female privy chamber, via which he had the Queen's ear. More significantly, his sympathy for Elizabeth's anti-war conservatism and her aversion to intervention in foreign quarrels on behalf of rebellious subjects earned his party key appointments, particularly in the Privy Council and the Paris embassy, which countered the rising Leicester-Walsingham party. This court-based alliance created an alternative intelligence route for Burghley, and broke Walsingham's monopoly on information.

With the shared aim of national security, but divided over individual policies, the two

systems competed for intelligence at home and abroad. Paris, England's key location for continental news and the prime refuge of English Catholic exiles in the 1580s and 1590s, became their main arena for overseas competition. To support the second Anjou matrimonial negotiations and for multiple sources of intelligence, from 1579 to 1590 Queen Elizabeth assigned Burghley's men to her residential embassy there: Henry Brooke and then Edward Stafford, whose kinswomen assumed royal bedchamber attendance. This threefold connection between Burghley, the Paris embassy, and the female chamber offered Elizabeth an alternative intelligence-diplomacy route, bypassing the formal Secretarial procedure. This thwarted Walsingham's expanding control over national diplomacy and information/intelligence circulation, and maintained the equilibrium of the regime. Burghley's control over the French embassy obliged Walsingham to dispatch his personal spy team to Paris. Walsingham's spies monitored Ambassador Stafford, and accused him of selling diplomatic secrets to the Guises and the Spanish Ambassador Mendoza. In actual fact, Stafford was preparing for secret diplomacy to be conducted between Burghley (and Queen Elizabeth) and Madrid. Through Stafford's route, Burghley hoodwinked Spain by divulging false intelligence, and exculpated himself and his Queen from Mary Stuart's execution. Meanwhile, the two systems contended for the loyalties of the English Catholic exiles. The exiled Catholic community had become mired in its internal divisions: the struggle of English patriotism against the threat of foreign invasions, the dilemma between faith and survival, and the secular party's hostility to the Jesuits' aggression towards secular governance. This benefited the English spymasters, and made possible their use of the dual strategies of coercion and mercy. In this area, Burghley stood to advantage thanks to his exclusive mastery of wardships and the credibility of Stafford's official embassy. As Treasurer, Burghley's command over forfeited home estates and his mastership of the wards exerted effective control over the family fortunes of aristocratic exiles. Some

secular exiles hence yielded conditional obedience, submitting intelligence to Burghley in exchange for pardons.

Suffering a setback in the espionage competition in Paris, Walsingham won overwhelming dominance in the domestic counter-plots of the 1580s. His manipulation of evidence in the Throckmorton Plot formally terminated the traditional Spanish–Tudor alliance, and left England no alternative choice of ally except France. Later in 1586, he trapped those behind the Babington Plot to reveal themselves. This success pushed Queen Elizabeth to sign the execution warrant of Mary Queen of Scots, consequently forcing England into an open declaration of war against universal Catholicism. In the Walsingham-led counter-plotting of the 1580s, Burghley and his party were either excluded—like Mary’s guardian the Earl of Shrewsbury, who was replaced by Walsingham’s partisan Amias Paulet—or else simply isolated. In March 1585 Burghley’s chief agent provocateur William Parry was hanged on the official charge of regicidal plotting, partly because of his greed and confused loyalties, and probably partly because of Walsingham’s fury over Burghley’s obstructing him in the matters of patronage and intervention in the Dutch wars.

Walsingham’s intelligence system, although rather meteoric (lasting less than two decades), was significantly effective, and has been praised as a paragon of espionage in early modern Europe. It is reasonable to ascribe its outstanding achievements to Walsingham’s flexible character. Compared with Burghley, who did everything by the rule within the expectations of his constitution and class, Walsingham tolerantly employed a broader range of people. Unlike Burghley’s and Leicester’s gentry-based household service, Walsingham constituted his clientele from men from further down the social scale and from Protestant idealists. The education of this comparatively

low-born team was rarely inferior to that of its high-born counterparts, specifically in the arts of ciphering and counterfeiting, and even more so in cosmopolitan experience and contacts. The professionalism of these agents enhanced Walsingham's espionage in the 1580s. Walsingham's character of flexibility was likewise reflected in his advocating a very limited counsel team to be the pivot of the regime: to be selected on a professional basis, regardless of class and office. This model differed from both the initially promoted idea of a Parliament-based committee, and also Burghley's Grand Council, which was founded narrowly on the House of Lords and the Privy Council. Walsingham's character equipped him with a flexible approach towards the speculative espionage world.

It is worth noting, however, that Walsingham's intelligence and espionage abilities have been unduly credited by legend. He wrongly left Roberto di Ridolfi at liberty in 1570 to plot again in the following year. Dudley Digges bemoaned Walsingham's failure in discovering too late 'the barbarous and bloody Massacre on St. Bartholomews Eve...till he was almost overwhelmed in it himself'.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Walsingham's espionage expanded too massively to remain secret and efficient. Unlike the conservative Burghley, who conducted intelligence business alone, Walsingham fully authorised his intelligence secretariat in order to train it to capably deputise during his frequent absences caused by illness, royal tournaments and diplomatic embassies. Yet this empowerment caused internal conflict, with two leading secretaries, Francis Mylles and Thomas Phelippes, individually allying with spies to contend for patronage. Moreover, Walsingham's extremely privatised spy system caused him financial embarrassment for the rest of his life. Outside the government system,

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<sup>8</sup> Dudley Digges, *The Compleat Ambassador, or, Two treaties of the intended marriage of Qu. Elizabeth of glorious memory comprised in letters of negotiation of Sir Francis Walsingham...* (London, 1655), iii.

Walsingham's household-based secretariat required constant recruitment to cope with the growing business of the Secretaryship and espionage needs; Walsingham's suspicious nature further enlarged its size. This bulkiness in scale burdened him with heavy patronage payments. What emptied his purse more, however, was his massive espionage reach at home and overseas, which extended as far as Turkey. The ballooning costs were far from covered by royal funds, and weakened Walsingham's private estates and burdened him with debt.<sup>9</sup> On 3 April 1590, shortly before he died, he sold some land to a consortium which included Francis Mylles, probably as a reward for the latter's efforts against the Babington Plot.<sup>10</sup> On the evening of 7 April 1590, Walsingham was buried in the north side of old St Paul's. The obsequies were performed quietly and hurriedly, without any extraordinary ceremonies, according to his will signed on 12 December 1589, 'in respect of the greatnes of my debtes and the meane state I shall leave my wife and heire in'.<sup>11</sup>

Most destructively of all, privatisation meant the disorganisation of Walsingham's spy system immediately he died. The loss of Walsingham's personal papers disconnected many of Walsingham's spies from the English government. And Walsingham's death with no male heirs meant the surviving portion of his intelligence service was divided between the Earl of Essex, the new royal favourite and Walsingham's son-in-law, and, ironically, his conservative rivals the Cecils. This immediate transfer of the spy network originated in its weak foundation on private clientele: if patrons could not pay, then individuals transferred their allegiance elsewhere. This kind of movement was

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<sup>9</sup> TNA, SP 12/229/49, 'Note of the sums issued by warrant to Sir Francis Walsingham', Dec. 1589. John Cooper, *The Queen's Agent: Francis Walsingham at the Court of Elizabeth I* (London, 2011), 309-10.

<sup>10</sup> Cooper, *The Queen's Agent*, 323.

<sup>11</sup> TNA, PROB 11/75, sig. 33.

usually triggered by either power shifts inside the regime, or the death of patrons and their families' decline at court. Robert Beale saw his exile from court between 1593 and 1597 as hinging upon his pro-Puritan activity in the Parliament of 1593, but also partly because of the death of his powerful ally Walsingham. The majority of Walsingham's secretaries, servants and spies were anxious to salvage their careers by adhering to either Essex or the Cecils. Most of them preferred service with the latter as it was more profitable, and held out the prospect of office in government that Walsingham had rarely offered. Nicholas Faunt transferred his loyalty to the Cecils and received rich rewards: crown lands in Yorkshire in 1594, an appointment as a Clerk of the Signet in 1595, and a lease of archiepiscopal lands for twenty-one years in 1600. Arthur Gregory served Robert Cecil until 1596. Thomas Lake entered the Parliaments of 1593 and 1601, and assumed the Clerkship of the Signet, both through Cecil's patronage. Some of Walsingham's informants, like Anthony Standen, Charles Chester (July 1592), the exile Anthony Roston, and the London grocer Thomas Millington, also offered their intelligence services to the Cecils.<sup>12</sup> In October 1596, the spy John Mychell, used by Walsingham in Italy after the Spanish Armada, appealed to join Robert Cecil's service, particularly in Ireland.<sup>13</sup> Meanwhile, with perfect Spanish and French, Geoffrey Davis, who had been employed by Walsingham in Spain, may have served Robert Cecil too.<sup>14</sup> Robert Poley was on the secret payroll of Secretary Robert Cecil until 1601,<sup>15</sup> and in August 1601 John Owen, another servant of the late Walsingham, was introduced to Cecil by Lord Cobham and Lord Henry Seamer.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> 'Burghley's instructions to Edward Burnham, sent to Calais', 4 Dec. 1590, *CSPF 1590-1591*, 14. Hutchinson, *Elizabeth's Spy Master*, 98.

<sup>13</sup> John Mychell to Robert Cecil, 11 Oct. 1596, *HMC, Salisbury*, VI, 426.

<sup>14</sup> W. Borough to Robert Cecil, 27 Oct. 1596, *HMC, Salisbury*, VI, 457.

<sup>15</sup> Stephen Alford, *The Watchers: A Secret History of the Reign of Elizabeth I* (London, 2012), 317.

<sup>16</sup> John Owen to Robert Cecil, Aug. 1601, *HMC, Salisbury*, XI, 371.



Some opportunists served both sides for the rewards of double patronage. From 1591, Thomas Phelippes made an unstable career in deciphering and continental intelligence working simultaneously for the Cecils and for Essex. He was accompanied by Thomas Barnes and William Sterrell (alias Robert Robinson or Henry Saint Martin), two veteran spies from the late Secretary's time who were valuable for their contact with the exiled leaders Charles Paget and Hugh Owen.<sup>17</sup> From mid-1597 when Essex's failure became clear, these three formally joined Robert Cecil's espionage. Another spy, Thomas Harrison, lacked this keen sense of power politics. Walsingham had employed him with Egremont Radcliffe, the half-brother of the Earl of Sussex, to murder Don John of Austria in the Low Countries in 1578. Radcliffe and his man Graye were executed at Namur in January 1579; Harrison cunningly escaped. After Walsingham died, Harrison continued his dual gamble between Essex and the Cecils. Nevertheless, not all clients were motivated by material concerns: Laurence Tomson, loyal to Walsingham because of their shared religious affiliation, resigned from his public career simultaneously with his master's death.<sup>18</sup>

The posthumous blank Walsingham left in both his personal papers and in politics has made it difficult for historians to assess his reputation. William Camden used his *Annales* to defame his patron Burghley's militant antagonists, Walsingham and Leicester, charging them with personal immorality and political combativeness, and imputing the death of King James's mother Mary Stuart to their 'subtill practises'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, 153-54, 157.

<sup>18</sup> P. W. Hasler, ed., *The House of Commons, 1558-1603* (London, 1981), I, 18.

<sup>19</sup> Camden, *Annales*, 290-91, 261, 269.

This influential calumny, in the following centuries, presented Walsingham to the public as a gloomy, brutal, and aggressive schemer. By contrast, the so-called ‘regnum Cecilianum’, a force in English high politics until today, has prettified its founder William Cecil into a bright, moderate and intellectual prime minister guiding the wilful Queen Elizabeth. The shadowed portrait of Walsingham partly originates from his obscure work as a spymaster, and was reflected initially in his epitaph and later in popular works. Drawing on Walsingham’s will, John Cooper, in the concluding pages of his latest biography of Walsingham, returns us to the original man—‘a godly Protestant’. Beneath the surface equipment of the cunning spymaster existed a Protestant heart, eager for salvation and the ‘most merciful protection’ of Christ. He prayed for an ‘increase of faith, strength and power to make a good Christian end’; his espionage, arising from his anxiety and conscientiousness, worked to benefit the cause of universal Protestantism, and ultimately to glorify God.<sup>20</sup> Walsingham expected a posthumous assessment in heaven rather than on earth. Shortly before he died, he even stated his scorn for secular titles:

As for titles, which at first were the marks of power and other rewards of virtue, they are now according to their name...like the titles of books, which for the most part, the most glorious things they promise, let a man narrowly peruse them over, the less substance he shall find in them. I say, let a man by doing worthy acts deserve honour and although he do not attain it, yet he is much happier than he that gets it without dessert.<sup>21</sup>

Walsingham built neither effigy nor even a tomb to provide his epitaph: God had, he believed, made evaluation of his work.

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<sup>20</sup> Cooper, *The Queen’s Agent*, 323-23.

<sup>21</sup> Hutchinson, *Elizabeth’s Spy Master*, 243, cited from James Howell, ed., *Cottoni Posthuma* (London, 1675), 338.

In terms of research into the competition for intelligence between the divisive mid-Elizabethan spy systems, the second part of the thesis offers an overall response to the historiography respecting the issue of Elizabethan factionalism. A misconception that factions existed only in the 1590s has been revised. A political divide arose between Burghley and Walsingham from the late 1570s, and peaked in 1585 to 1586. Rather than being based in personal enmity, it resulted chiefly from their differences over English intervention in the continental Protestant wars. Both sides of this divide grouped together to contest for patronage—offices and money—in order to strengthen their partisan dominance of government and to finance their espionage, ultimately in order to promote their partisan ideologies. However, this policy quarrel never deteriorated into full factionalism, as did the hostility between Essex and the Cecils in the 1590s that imperilled the state through domestic chaos. Indeed, it started easing in mid-1587, partly because of Mary's execution and Burghley's timely assistance with Walsingham's financial difficulties, but more so because of the near confirmation of open war against Spain. Queen Elizabeth was stirred to sound the bugle herself, for battle against Catholicism.

Not surprisingly, Queen Elizabeth did not attempt to end the contest between the espionage systems and integrate them into a collective and official institution. She benefited from their rivalry. Privatised intelligence employment saved her money, and their competition both brought her a highly efficient security service and prevented the monopolisation of intelligence by a specific ideology. More significantly, the Queen kept this political rivalry alive and in balance, so that it supported her supreme monarchy. The exclusive responsibility of the Secretaryship for information going to and from the sovereign had increased the strength of the office-holder, Walsingham. His power expanded speedily after Thomas Smith retired in 1576, and reached a peak

after 1581 when he virtually monopolised the office of the Principal Secretary. Aware of the expanding power of Walsingham and his military party, Queen Elizabeth kept them in check by employing her Privy Chamber as an alternative medium for news. Simultaneously, she nurtured other powers by adjusting office appointments, assigning Burghley's party to her French embassy from 1578 to 1590. In mid-1587, during Leicester's absence for the Dutch campaigns, she added three new pro-Burghley appointments to the Privy Council, John Whitgift, Archbishop of Canterbury, William Lord Cobham, and Thomas Sackville Lord Buckhurst. Later in the 1590s, the same strategy of equilibrium was again applied to the factionalism between Essex and the Cecils. The death of first Leicester and then Walsingham dangerously promoted the hegemony of the Cecils, who resumed the office of the Secretary until the Queen's death. Elizabeth may have in turn decided to elevate Essex, appointing him to the Privy Council in February 1593 and to the employment of foreign intelligence.<sup>22</sup>

It was perilous, though, for Elizabeth to gamble her success in intelligence and royal absolutism on such masculine rivalry. Her empowerment of, or indulgence towards, her male intimates in their privatising of espionage for competitive purposes risked her and her court being marginalised from the male-dominated circulation of government information and intelligence. Elizabeth's inefficient female network, which worked outside the government and chiefly for self-interest, did not compensate for this. If her ministers became reconciled for a common purpose, their intelligence operations could together take the Queen hostage, as with the Council-led execution of Mary without Elizabeth's knowledge. Similarly, Elizabeth's operation of a power balance via party or faction would weaken her queenship further if either side failed, as happened when

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<sup>22</sup> Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, 152-98.

Essex's failure led to the union of the Elizabethan intelligence systems under Secretary Robert Cecil's sole control. This time the aging Queen was unable to create another power to counter the exclusively powerful Cecil.

Returning to the Rainbow Portrait, by the time that it was painted its patron Robert Cecil had united the divided intelligence systems into one network under his personal control. He became those eyes and ears, exclusively enveloping the Queen through intelligence. Apparently, Secretary Cecil was discontented with just being the Queen's collector of news; he expected to act as her mouthpiece and jointly make policy. Roy Strong denied any sign of mouths on the mantle, seeing only eyes and ears. For him this implied that the Queen saw and heard many things, but—having the only mouth portrayed in the painting—'Judgement and Election are her own'.<sup>23</sup> This defines the portrait as a eulogy for Queen Elizabeth's absolute monarchy. However, this portrait really mirrors the perceived inferiority of female rule. First, it relocates the traditional political roles of men (head) and that of women (body) that had been inverted in Elizabeth's reign. Eyes, ears and mouths are relocated onto the body, symbolising male bureaucracy at work; the Queen becomes a figurehead. Second, the female features and natural weakness of Elizabeth are central to the portrait. She is labelled as the Moon, via the symbolism of the jewellery on her crown, which alludes to her chastity as the Virgin Queen and also serves as a reminder that she is a female ruler.<sup>24</sup> In the absence of a Sun, an icon suited for kings, Elizabeth's moonlight blanches the peaceful rainbow into an unusual pallor. To the right of the rainbow lies the serpent embroidery, which casts doubt on the Queen's qualities as a sovereign. Roy Strong suggested that the

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<sup>23</sup> Strong, *Gloriana*, 158-59

<sup>24</sup> Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 52.

serpent implies the Queen's rule by 'wisdom' or 'prudence'. Ironically, it was this virtue that the Queen fell short of, as her male ministers knew all too well. Her inappropriate financial caution in matters of state compared to her spending on personal fashion was identified as vanity and lack of judgement. Her notorious irresolution and fickleness, 'by sexe fearefull', increased political uncertainty and frequently drove England to the edge of crises.<sup>25</sup> It is reasonable to assume the potential beholders of this portrait were a very limited group of high officers or intimates of the Queen. Their education in Renaissance allegory, together with their frustrations in serving the Queen would make them aware of this irony.

To this group of elite bureaucrats, the portrait conveyed the political ideology of its patron Robert Cecil: the monarchical republic. The heart-shaped ruby hanging from the serpent's mouth evokes 'Counsel', pleading with the stubborn Queen to seek the counsel of her male advisers, who were the wisest chosen 'from the pious and the most pious from the wise'. Among them, Robert Cecil expected that he would himself be the 'principal minister'. His client John Davies may have praised him in the *Hymnes to Astraea*:

E ye of that mind most quick and clear,  
L ike Heaven's eye, which from his sphere  
I nto all things prieth;  
S ees through all things everywhere,  
A nd all their natures trieth.<sup>26</sup>

Secretary Cecil was the eyes, ears and mouths, ordained by God to assist the Queen in

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<sup>25</sup> BL, Harley MS 168/54r, 'Whether it may stand with good policy for her Majesty to join with Spain in the enterprise of Burgundy'.

<sup>26</sup> Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth*, 52.

co-ruling England. This sense of divine obligation, in association with that female inferiority verified by Elizabeth's inefficient rule, constituted an alternative governing group, essentially male and Council-based. These self-identified godly magistrates never doubted the existence of royal supremacy, but more so considered that they could 'serve God by serving of the Queen'.<sup>27</sup> The mantle embodied with the eyes, ears and mouths of male offices, and worn by the Queen, proposed to propagate this mixed polity between the monarchy and the Council-led government. It still granted the Queen her royal prerogative in selecting her own counsel, as with that replaceable mantle, using her favour and personal relationships. However, it is clear that certain leading councillors, by asserting their control over intelligence and information, were securing a status equal to the sovereign in the making of policy. This dichotomy of power between court and government was leading to a silent transformation in early modern England—as Wallace MacCaffrey stated as long ago as 1969, 'from an age of dynastic politics to one of national politics'.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Stephen Alford, 'The Political Creed of William Cecil', in John F. McDiarmid, ed., *The Monarchical Republic of Early Modern England: Essay in response to Patrick Collinson* (Ashgate, 2007), 85.

<sup>28</sup> Wallace MacCaffrey, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (London, 1969), 315-17.

## APPENDIX I

Elizabeth I: The Rainbow Portrait, at Hatfield House, Herfordshire, probably painted by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger during 1600-1602



Source: <http://www.marileecody.com/gloriana/elizabethrainbow1.jpg>



## ABBREVIATIONS

BL	British Library, London
CP	Cecil Papers, Hatfield House, Hertfordshire
CRS, II	Smith, J. P., ed., 'Miscellanea II', <i>Catholic Record Society</i> , II (1906).
<i>CSPD, 1547-1580</i>	Lemon, Robert, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series in the Reigns of Edward VI, Mary, Elizabeth 1547-1580</i> (London, 1856).
<i>CSPD, 1581-1590</i>	Lemon, Robert, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series in the Reign of Elizabeth 1581-1590</i> (London, 1865).
<i>CSPD, 1591-1594</i>	Green, Mary Anne Everett, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, 1591-1594</i> (London, 1867).
<i>CSPD Addenda, 1566-1579</i>	Green, Mary Anne Everett, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, Addenda, 1566-1579</i> (London, 1871).
<i>CSPD Addenda, 1580-1625</i>	Green, Mary Anne Everett, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series in the Reigns of Elizabeth and James I, Addenda, 1580-1625</i> (London, 1872).
<i>CSPF, 1558-1559</i>	Stevenson, Joseph, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, November 1558 to September 1559</i> (London, 1863).
<i>CSPF, 1562</i>	Stevenson, Joseph, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, May-December 1562</i> (London, 1867).
<i>CSPF, 1564-1565</i>	Stevenson, Joseph, ed., <i>Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1564-1565</i> (London, 1870).

- CSPF, 1566-1568* Crosby, Allan J., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1566-1568* (London, 1871).
- CSPF, 1569-1571* Crosby, Allan J., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1569-1571* (London, 1874).
- CSPF, 1575-1577* Crosby, Allan J., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth, 1575-1577* (London, 1880).
- CSPF, 1577-1578* Butler, Arthur John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, July 1577-May 1578* (London, 1901).
- CSPF, 1578-1579* Butler, Arthur John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, June 1578-June 1579* (London, 1903).
- CSPF, 1579-1580* Butler, Arthur John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, July 1579-December 1580* (London, 1904).
- CSPF, 1581-1582* Butler, Arthur John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, January 1581-April 1582* (London, 1907).
- CSPF, 1582* Butler, Arthur John, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, January May-December 1582* (London, 1909).
- CSPF, 1583* Butler, Arthur John, and Sophie Crawford Lomas, eds., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, 1583* (London, 1913).
- CSPF, 1583-1584* Lomas, Sophie Crawford, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, July*

- 1583-July 1584 (London, 1914).
- CSPF, 1584-1585* Lomas, Sophie Crawford, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, August 1584-August 1585* (London, 1916).
- CSPF, 1586-1588* Lomas, Sophie Crawford, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Foreign Series in the Reign of Elizabeth, June 1586-June 1588* (London, 1927).
- CSPF, 1590-1591* Wernham, R. B., ed., *List and Analysis of State Papers, Foreign Series, Elizabeth I, preserved in the Public Record Office, July 1590-May 1591* (London, 1969).
- CSP Rome, 1572-1578* Rigg, J. M., ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Relating to English Affairs. Preserved Principally at Rome, in the Vatican Archives and Library (Rome), Vol II. Elizabeth 1572-1578* (London, 1926).
- CSP Scotland, 1563-1569* Bain, Joseph, ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, vol. II, 1563-1569* (Edinburgh, 1900).
- CSP Scotland, 1571-1574* Boyd, William K., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, vol. IV, 1571-1574*(Edinburgh, 1905).
- CSP Scotland, 1584-1585* Boyd, William K., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, vol. VII, 1584-1585*(Edinburgh, 1913).
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- CSP Scotland, 1586-1588* Boyd, William K., ed., *Calendar of State Papers Relating to Scotland and Mary, Queen of Scots, vol. IX, 1586-1588*(Edinburgh, 1915).

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- CSP Spanish (Simancas), 1568-1579* Hume, Martin A. S., ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, vol. II: Elizabeth 1568-1579* (London, 1894).
- CSP Spanish (Simancas), 1580-1586* Hume, Martin A. S., ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, vol. III: Elizabeth 1580-1586* (London, 1896).
- CSP Spanish (Simancas), 1587-1603* Hume, Martin A. S., ed., *Calendar of Letters and State Papers Relating to English Affairs, preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, vol. IV: Elizabeth 1587-1603* (London, 1899).
- CSP Venice, 1558-1580* Brown, Rawdon, and G. Cavendish Bentinck, eds., *Calendar of State Papers and manuscripts relating to English Affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy, vol. VII, 1558-1580* (London, 1890).
- CSP Venice, 1581-1591* Brown, Horatio F., ed., *Calendar of State Papers and manuscripts relating to English Affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy, vol. VIII, 1581-1591* (London, 1894).
- CSP Venice, 1603-1607* Brown, Horatio F., ed., *Calendar of State Papers and manuscripts relating to English Affairs, existing in the archives and collections of Venice and in other libraries of Northern Italy, Vol. IX, 1603-1607* (London, 1900).

- DNB* Matthew, H. C. G., and Brian Harrison, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography in association with the British Academy from the earliest times to the year 2000* (60 vols, Oxford, 2004).
- HMC, Salisbury, I* ‘Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House’, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 9, part I, 1306-1571 (London, 1883).
- HMC, Salisbury, II* ‘Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House’, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 9, part II, 1572-1582 (London, 1888).
- HMC, Salisbury, III* ‘Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House’, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 9, part III, 1583-1589 (London, 1889).
- HMC, Salisbury, V* Roberts, R. A., ed., ‘Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. The Marquis of Salisbury Preserved at Hatfield House’, *Historical Manuscripts Commission*, 9, part V, 1594-1595 (London, 1894).
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- HMC, Rutland, I* *The manuscripts of His Grace the Duke of Rutland K.G. preserved at Belvoir Castle, vol. I* (London, 1888)
- SP State Papers  
TNA The National Archives, London

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